CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. The Problem of Evil

Definition and the Logical Problem of Evil

The term theodicy arose from G.W. Leibniz’ book in 1710 entitled *Theodicy*. Robert M. Adams (1996) notes that the word theodicy is from the Greek, as *theos* is God and *dike* is justice. Theodicy is a defence of the justice of God in the face of objections arising from the problem of evil in the world. Dewi Zephaniah Phillips admits that ‘philosophizing about the problem of evil has become common place.’ There are ‘theories, theodicies and defences abound.’ These are all seeking to somehow justify God, or to render the concept of God as untenable. Phillips rightly reasons that such work should be done with fear, as approaches to

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3 Adams (1996: 794). David Hume in *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* explains that geniuses over the ages have continued to look for proofs and arguments concerning God. Hume (1779)(2004: 2). Theodicy would involve demonstrating that God exists and is good even as the problem of evil exists.
4 Unfortunately Phillips died within the time frame of writing this thesis (1934-2006).
the problem of evil in error could ‘betray the evils people have suffered.’ Such explanation should never be overly simplistic, insensitive or ridiculous. Phillips warns that pro-religious philosophical presentations can often do more damage to the cause of theodicy than can the work of critics. David Hume (1779)(2004) discusses the danger of traditional superstition in religious presentations, and doubtless a reasonable, open-minded, philosophical approach from a theist would be far more helpful within a theodicy. He also warns against theistic claims of being able to adequately understand the Supreme Being, if there is one. This Being’s attributes would be ‘incomprehensible’ and it basically impossible for the theist to understand the nature of this being. If Hume is correct, constructing a theodicy would be largely meaningless. To counter this problem, Biblical Revelation would be required in order that God reveals self in context of the issue of theodicy.

Augustine (388-395)(1964) deduces that God is good and therefore does not commit evil. The cause of evil is therefore not to be traced back to God, but to the person that does evil. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1710)(1998) reasons God always chooses what is best, freely within his nature and is vindicated within his creation, even though it contains evil. God

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11 Phillips (2005: xi). I can agree with this point in general terms, but there will certainly be disagreement between writers on the negative and positive aspects of various theodicy.
12 Phillips (2005: xi). Henry Blocher warns that theodicy as a philosophical defence of God fails on its own, unless backed up by Scripture. Blocher (1994: 84). Phillips and Blocher would both be critical of poorly constructed theodicy approaches, even as their perspectives on theodicy are not identical.
18 Blocher (1994: 84). German philosopher F.W.J. Schelling’s philosophy is noted within the ‘Introduction’ in Of Human Freedom to include the idea that God’s revelation is ‘a genuine metaphysical necessity.’ This is in the context of understanding what is ‘morally necessary’ concerning God. Gutmann (1845)(1936: xxxvi).
20 Augustine (388-395)(1964: 3).
co-operates in all the actions of his creatures, and yet is not the author of sin.\textsuperscript{24} Philosopher of Religion, John Hick (1970) writes that the fact of evil is the most serious objection against the Christian belief in a God of love, and is probably the most difficult objection to write about.\textsuperscript{25} It can be disastrous to say too little or too much.\textsuperscript{26} Christian philosopher, Alvin C. Plantinga (1977) notes many philosophers believe that the existence of evil constitutes a difficulty for the theist,\textsuperscript{27} and many critics reason that the presence of evil and its abundance makes a belief in God unreasonable and irrational.\textsuperscript{28} For Reformed theologian John S. Feinberg (1994), perhaps anyone that has suffered affliction or has friends or family that have suffered, must wonder why there is so much pain if a loving God exists that has the power to remedy evil.\textsuperscript{29}

Delton Lewis Scudder (1940) writes that the problem of evil arises from the theistic attempt to be loyal to the concepts concerning: (1) the sovereignty of God,\textsuperscript{30} who is the creator and sustainer of the universe, (2) the reality of evils in the world,\textsuperscript{31} and (3) the goodness of God.\textsuperscript{32} Peter Kreeft (1988) explains that the problem of evil is the most serious problem in the world,\textsuperscript{33} and is a very serious objection to theism.\textsuperscript{34} Theologian John Frame (1999) notes that for many throughout history and today, the problem of evil is the most serious objection to Christian theism.\textsuperscript{35} Ernest Valea (2007), a scholar on comparative religions,\textsuperscript{36} admits that although God is considered good within Biblical Christianity, it can be clearly seen in the world that evil exists in

\textsuperscript{24} Leibniz (1710)(1998: 61).
\textsuperscript{25} Hick (1970: xi).
\textsuperscript{26} Hick (1970: xi).
\textsuperscript{27} Plantinga (1977: 7).
\textsuperscript{29} Feinberg (1994: 11).
\textsuperscript{30} Scudder (1940: 247).
\textsuperscript{31} Scudder (1940: 247).
\textsuperscript{32} Scudder (1940: 247).
\textsuperscript{33} Kreeft (1988: 54-58).
\textsuperscript{34} Kreeft (1988: 54-58).
\textsuperscript{35} Frame (2000: 1).
\textsuperscript{36} Valea (2007: 1).
an awful measure.\textsuperscript{37} Greg Welty (1999), Assistant Professor of Philosophy from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary,\textsuperscript{38} deals with the issue of whether the existence of evil is logically compatible with the belief in an omnipotent\textsuperscript{39} and good God.\textsuperscript{40} Welty explains that for many critics these concepts are incompatible.\textsuperscript{41} Greg Ganssle (1998) in his lecture on the problem of evil at Dartmouth College,\textsuperscript{42} explains it is deduced since God is omnipotent and all loving, he should eliminate evil, and that it is a challenge to demonstrate God exists in a reality where evil flourishes.\textsuperscript{43} William Ferraiolo (2005) notes many anti-theists deduce that the all-powerful God would not allow his children\textsuperscript{44} to suffer, and therefore the God of theism is an irrational concept.\textsuperscript{45} Philosopher Theodore P. Rebard (1996) states that the logical problem of evil exists since God is omnibenevolent\textsuperscript{46} and omnipotent,\textsuperscript{47} and writes critics can view the logical problem as meaning that if God cannot end evil, he is not omnipotent, and if he can prevent evil and does not, he is not omnibenevolent or all loving.\textsuperscript{48} Rebard concludes that God either does not exist or is misunderstood.\textsuperscript{49} It should also be stated that the problem of evil is not only an intellectual problem,\textsuperscript{50} but as R.K. McGregor Wright (1996) notes, a great deal of moral and emotional

\textsuperscript{37} Valea (2007: 1).
\textsuperscript{38} Welty (1999: 1).
\textsuperscript{39} Theologian Kenneth Cauthen (1997) in ‘Theodicy’ describes God’s omnipotence as meaning God is all-powerful. Cauthen (1997: 1). Stanley J. Grenz, David Guretzki and Cherith Fee Nordling explain omnipotence as God’s attribute and ability to do whatever is consistent with his character. Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling (1999: 85-86). God is only limited by his character and not by a lack of power. R.K. McGregor Wright states that God cannot violate his own attributes and could not, for example, make a stone too heavy for the almighty to lift. Wright (1996: 278).
\textsuperscript{40} Welty (1999: 1).
\textsuperscript{41} Welty (1999: 1).
\textsuperscript{42} Ganssle (1998: 1).
\textsuperscript{43} Ganssle (1998: 1).
\textsuperscript{44} In context Ferraiolo is describing human beings.
\textsuperscript{45} Ferraiolo (2005: 1).
\textsuperscript{46} Cauthen describes this as perfect goodness and love. Cauthen (1997: 1). Henry Thiessen in Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology states that the goodness of God includes his benevolence and love. Thiessen (1956: 130).
\textsuperscript{47} Rebard (1996: 1).
\textsuperscript{48} Rebard (1996: 1). Greek philosopher Epicurus was known to have made a similar statement. Epicurus (341-270 B.C.)(1949: 80).
\textsuperscript{49} Rebard (1996: 1).
\textsuperscript{50} Wright (1996: 178).
freight goes along with the problem of evil. He connects this to the fact that many philosophers have viewed the problem of evil as a disproof of God. I shall explain throughout this thesis that God has been largely misunderstood and, although Biblical revelation, theology, and philosophy do not provide an exhaustive and absolutely conclusive answer to the logical problem, there are reasonable solutions to the difficulty of evil existing within God’s creation. The logical problem of evil will be the main focus of my thesis, but shall be dealt with while interacting with practical and empirical theology and data.

Gratuitous Evil

Another aspect of the problem of evil is the evidential or gratuitous problem of evil. I shall deal with this relevant issue in Chapter Four: John Hick: Soul-Making Theodicy, but the evidential problem is not the main focus of my research. Kirk Durston (2000) explains gratuitous evil is commonly understood as evil that God could have prevented without forfeiting a greater good, or permitting a worse evil. Welty explains that throughout recent academic literature concerning the problem of evil the focus has shifted from the logical to evidential problem. He writes that a major reason the evidential problem is researched and written about more academically than the logical problem is the success of Alvin Plantinga’s Free Will

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52 Wright (1996: 178).
53 In my view the most reasonable of these explanations is a sovereignty theodicy, which shall be explained in Chapter Three.
54 Chapters One to Four.
55 Chapters Five and following.
56 Welty (1999: 1)
57 An argument for gratuitous evil shall be discussed in Chapter Four.
59 I fully admit the intellectual and academic importance of the evidential, gratuitous problem and therefore have made it a priority to deal with the issue in this thesis.
60 Durston (2000: 67).
61 Welty (1999: 1).
Defense,\textsuperscript{62} which shall be reviewed in Chapter Two: Free Will Theodicy. Richard Swinburne (1998) notes that many theists and atheists, due to Plantinga’s work,\textsuperscript{63} have accepted the logical problem of evil has been eliminated,\textsuperscript{64} and the evidential problem remains.\textsuperscript{65} Swinburne writes that whether or not the logical problem has been eliminated depends on how it is defined, and this ends up being a debate between certain theists and atheists on what hypothetical state of affairs would mean that God does not logically exist.\textsuperscript{66} Michael Peterson (1982) reasons that Plantinga’s free will defense is sound in regard to the logical problem of evil and can be used to show that God must allow gratuitous evil or deny human free will.\textsuperscript{67} Peterson thinks Plantinga’s defense does not succumb to gratuitous evil.\textsuperscript{68} Philosopher Doug Erlandson (1991) writes that theist and anti-theist have been debating the problem of evil for centuries,\textsuperscript{69} and the basic differing philosophical assumptions made by the two groups means that the debate shall continue. William Hasker (2000) within Process Studies explains that the problem of evil has been written about more in the last ten years than the other theistic proofs put together,\textsuperscript{70} and the trend continues.\textsuperscript{71}

I am primarily researching and writing on the logical and not the evidential, gratuitous problem of evil, since although I can accept that Plantinga has primarily successfully dealt with the logical problem of evil, as described within his system and assumptions,\textsuperscript{72} I reason that Plantinga’s free will approach is not the best and most effective system within Christian theism.

\textsuperscript{62}Welty (1999: 1).
\textsuperscript{64}Swinburne (1998: 13-20).
\textsuperscript{65}Swinburne (1998: 13-20).
\textsuperscript{66}Swinburne (1998: 13-20). Therefore there are some theists and atheists that still reason that the logical problem of evil has not been solved or dealt with adequately.
\textsuperscript{67}Peterson (1982: 204).
\textsuperscript{68}Peterson (1982: 204).
\textsuperscript{69}Erlandson (1991: 1).
\textsuperscript{70}Hasker (2000: 194-208).
\textsuperscript{71}Hasker (2000: 194-208).
A well constructed sovereignty approach, such as will be presented by John S. Feinberg in Chapter Three: Sovereignty Theodicy, is better equipped at dealing with both the logical and gratuitous problem. I also embed my own sovereignty theodicy throughout this thesis, particularly in Chapter Three. Within this thesis my own concepts of sovereignty theodicy are discussed in contrast to the approaches reviewed. Plantinga’s (1982) approach is problematic due largely to his support of the idea that God could not create significantly free, good creatures that would only commit good acts at all times. Welty rejects Plantinga’s idea that God cannot create a world containing moral good and no moral evil, and raises the objection that God brought Christ into the world as a sinless human being. Welty’s point here is that every human being could have therefore been sinless and the world could contain good and no evil with significantly free human beings that would not commit wrong actions. I have a similar objection to Welty’s, which shall be discussed in Chapters Two and Three. Within my theodicy, I reason that God could have, if he wished, made significantly free human beings, or human like beings who would have been perfectly morally good and would not commit wrong actions. God’s choice not to create such beings, in my mind is not a sign of a lack of power, or moral failure, but rather the use of his own perfect and significantly free will for good purposes.

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73 This will be discussed primarily in Chapters Two and Three.
74 With Reformed theological deductions.
75 Previous academic advisers concerning the problem of evil, such as Dr. Stephen Wellum formerly of Trinity Western University, and Dr. William Kay of Wales, Bangor have accepted the academic notion that theodicy in the plural form is not correctly spelled ‘theodicies.’ Therefore, I have used the term ‘theodicy’ in the plural tense for my MTS, MPhil and PhD theses.
76 It is similar, but not identical to Feinberg’s approach, which I shall point out.
77 It is not necessary for me to present my own theodicy Chapter within this work, as my views shall be explained throughout this thesis.
78 Plantinga (1982: 166-167). This is an aspect of incompatibilism, which shall be primarily defined and discussed in Chapter Two.
80 Welty (1999: 1).
81 Welty (1999: 1).
82 Welty (1999: 1).
83 Welty (1999: 1).
84 This is an aspect of compatibilism, which shall be primarily defined and discussed in Chapters Two and Three.
In Chapter Four, with my discussion on the evidential, gratuitous problem of evil, it shall be seen that a sovereignty theodicy can reasonably and successfully deal with both the logical and evidential problem of evil, and therefore the evidential problem is not a greater difficulty for theists than the logical one, rather it is simply a newer type of criticism since theism has been able to defend itself substantially through the use of free will approaches. However, I can agree with Durston that even if there is no such thing as gratuitous evil, which is my position, large amounts of evil that appear gratuitous will exist. This would be evil that I would consider unexplainable, humanly speaking, but would not be gratuitous from God’s perspective. God can use evil for his greater purposes, but this does not mean that any person will completely understand why certain evils exist. God’s attribute of omniscience provides him knowledge in order to work his plans for the greater good within creation that no other being can possess without God revealing this information.

Theodicy further explained

Simon Blackburn (1996) writes that theodicy is the part of theology concerned with defending the omnibenevolence and omnipotence of God while suffering and evil exists in the world. A reasonable definition of theodicy is the explanation of how the infinite, omnipotent,

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85 Freewill approaches can be logically coherent, although not necessarily true.
88 To be further discussed in Chapter Four.
91 This attribute denotes that God knows all things, and has direct cognition of all events in his creation. Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling (1999: 86).
92 Blackburn is a secular humanist philosopher who has been very helpful in my study of philosophy of religion.
93 Theodicy is an important aspect of Christian philosophy as well. O. Fielding Clarke writes that theodicy or the justification of God has engaged the attention of philosophers and theologians for centuries. Clarke (1964: 9). Obviously not all of these philosophers have been non-Christian and many of my Christian sources in this thesis will be philosophers and not necessarily theologians.
and omnibenevolent, all loving God accomplishes his plans within his creation where the problem of evil exists. Philosopher Derk Pereboom (2005) writes that it is a project attempting to defend God in the face of the problem of evil.\textsuperscript{96} Christian apologist, Art Lindsley (2003) reasons that it can be understood as a justification of God’s ways.\textsuperscript{97} John King-Farlow and Niall Shanks (1988) comment that theodicy is a central mystery of theology\textsuperscript{98} and something in life where only a limited understanding can be made.\textsuperscript{99} Kenneth Cauthen explains that it is an attempt to hold to the omnipotence and loving nature of God without contradiction.\textsuperscript{100} Edward R. Wickham (1964) explains that it asks how human suffering can be reconciled with the goodness of God.\textsuperscript{101} How can evil occur if God loves humanity?\textsuperscript{102} Rolf Hille (2004) notes that the issue with theodicy is not only how God can allow suffering in the world, but on a different turn, why do evil persons prosper in God’s creation?\textsuperscript{103} Hille explains that these considerations on evil and the existence of God led to a criticism of Christianity and religion in Europe in the Eighteenth century and to some degree earlier.\textsuperscript{104} The Eighteenth century\textsuperscript{105} was when Leibniz’ book \textit{Theodicy}\textsuperscript{106} was published as was previously noted, and this era of history was when much of the modern debate concerning the problem of evil and theodicy began\textsuperscript{107} William Hasker (2007) in his review of Peter van Inwagen’s book \textit{The Problem of Evil}, explains that a theodicy, unlike a defence, attempts to state the true reasons why evil exists\textsuperscript{108} in a creation and world ruled

\textsuperscript{95} The unlimited and unfixed. Blackburn (1996: 193). God is considered infinite and his creation finite and therefore limited.

\textsuperscript{96} Pereboom (2005:1).

\textsuperscript{97} Lindsley (2003: 3).

\textsuperscript{98} King-Farlow and Shanks (1988: 153).

\textsuperscript{99} King-Farlow and Shanks (1988: 153).

\textsuperscript{100} Cauthen (1997: 1).

\textsuperscript{101} Wickham (1964: vii).

\textsuperscript{102} Wickham (1964: vii).

\textsuperscript{103} Hille (2004: 21).

\textsuperscript{104} Hille (2004: 22). This took place in the era of the Enlightenment will shall be defined in Chapter Six.

\textsuperscript{105} Hille (2004: 22).

\textsuperscript{106} Leibniz, G.W. (1710)(1998).

\textsuperscript{107} Hille (2004: 22).

\textsuperscript{108} Hasker (2007: 1).
by God. 109 Theistic and Christian theodicy are therefore largely a response to initial Seventeenth, and primarily Eighteenth century and forward, secular criticisms of the theology and philosophy of God within religion and Christianity.110

Is Theodicy Important?

A major reason for the existence of this thesis is that I value the importance of theodicy; however, not all scholars would share my view.111 Some dismiss theodicy entirely and some view it as only having limited value.112 Hille reasons that a satisfactory self-coherent answer to the question of the justice of God cannot be found in theology or philosophy.113 Ferraiolo explains that many critics of theism would claim the existence of gratuitous evil makes a theodicy a difficult thing to establish in our present world filled with evil.114 He concludes his article by noting it is not obvious that human suffering is reconcilable with theism.115 Pereboom writes that despite some important work within theodicy over the last thirty years, the problem of evil still remains the greatest challenge to theistic belief.116 Lindsley notes that many persons are unimpressed by Christian attempts at theodicy.117 He suggests that theodicy must be careful not to portray itself in a way that it is speaking for God.118 I fully admit and reason that theodicy is a speculative exercise to a degree, and any person writing on the subject should with humility

109 Plantinga states that a defence and theodicy are different, and this shall be discussed in Chapter Two. Plantinga (1977)(2002: 28). In Chapter Two I explain why a defence can be reviewed under the intellectual umbrella of theodicy. In my view there are enough similarities between defence and theodicy to allow a defence to be reviewed under the general heading of theodicy.
112 Theodicy is a general philosophical term, and yet there are different types, and therefore I reason that a critic needs to be careful in dismissing theodicy in general terms.
113 Hille (2004: 26).
114 Ferraiolo (2005: 1).
115 Ferraiolo (2005: 1).
117 Lindsley (2003: 3).
118 Lindsley (2003: 3).
approach it very carefully.\textsuperscript{119} Marcel Sarot (1997) comments that many feminist theologians see theodicy as dominated by white males,\textsuperscript{120} and these feminists reject notions of God’s omniscience, omnipotence, and perfect goodness.\textsuperscript{121} An important point here is that it needs to be remembered that each writer of theodicy is approaching the subject from theological assumptions.\textsuperscript{122} Many theodicy views are written by men and some of these male writers may not adequately portray female and feminist perspectives on the problem of evil. I have sought within the text and questionnaire to provide female perspectives.\textsuperscript{123} Theologian Carl Henry (1983) writes that empirical and philosophical considerations devoid of revelation cannot vindicate God in this evil world.\textsuperscript{124} I can accept Henry’s point,\textsuperscript{125} as from a traditional Christian perspective,\textsuperscript{126} Biblical revelation is viewed as explaining God’s workings in his creation,\textsuperscript{127} although this revelation does not exhaustively discuss the problem of evil.\textsuperscript{128} Henri Blocher (1994) notes theodicy are failures in themselves and must have ideas within that square with Biblical revelation in order to be true and beneficial.\textsuperscript{129} I do not agree that all theodicy are

\textsuperscript{119} Lindsley (2003: 3).
\textsuperscript{120} Sarot (1997: 29).
\textsuperscript{121} Sarot (1997: 29).
\textsuperscript{122} As is the author of these thesis.
\textsuperscript{123} My own theological views are not particularly feminist or non-feminist, but as females are half the population these perspectives should not be overlooked within a theoretical and empirical work on theodicy.
\textsuperscript{124} Henry (1983: 282).
\textsuperscript{125} Henry (1983: 282).
\textsuperscript{127} Thiessen writes that Biblical revelation is the basis for theology, in particular systematic theology. Thiessen (1956: 31). Much of the philosophical theology and philosophy of religion presented in this thesis is related to and overlaps with the discipline of systematic theology.
\textsuperscript{128} Sovereignty theodicy is both theological and philosophical and attempts to present arguments that do not contradict Scripture.
\textsuperscript{129} Blocher (1994: 84).
failures in themselves, but can grant a Christian theodicy needs the support of Scripture, which connects the reader to the salvific work of Christ.

It should be noted that a theodicy written from a sovereignty perspective, to be very valuable, needs to focus on how God’s divine plans and purposes are accomplished through the development of human beings. Erlandson explains that many theodicy are fatally flawed since they are too focused on the idea of God creating a world for the best possible state of human beings. The ideas of Erlandson are in line with sovereignty theodicy, which places greater emphasis on God’s perfect and holy plans in willingly allowing the problem of evil to exist in creation, than does free will theodicy. Concerning the idea of God being holy, Stanley J. Grenz, David Guretzki and Cherith Fee Nordling (1999) write the term holy is a Biblical idea, generally meaning to be set apart. It is described of God who is set apart from his creation, pure from any of the evil within it. Mennonite Old Testament scholar Elmer A. Martens (1990) suggests holiness is concerned with the idea of separation, not separation from something, but separation to something. Biblically this type of holiness has to do with separation of a person to God.

Scudder comments that if the sovereignty of God is stressed, and evil is still considered to be reality, then this logically leads to the idea that God causes evil and it is part of a

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130 Blocher (1994: 84).
132 Rowan Williams suggests Scripture becomes the Word in fidelity to Christ, as preaching becomes the Word in fidelity to Scripture, and Christ is himself the divine act as such. ‘God reveals himself through himself.’ Williams (2007: 108-109). I agree, God reveals himself through the Holy Spirit inspiring Scripture and presenting Christ.
133 Erlandson (1991: 1).
136 This will be seen in Chapter Three.
137 Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling (1999: 60).
139 Martens (1990: 94).
140 Martens (1990: 94).
141 Scudder (1940: 248).
predetermined plan. I agree with this notion, but Scudder deduces that a strong view of God willing evil for the greater good means evil could be understood as not really being evil. I can understand how a scholar could come to such a conclusion, but a Reformed influenced sovereignty theodicy does not need to agree with this idea which is foreign to both traditional Reformed and conservative theology. Robert H. Mounce (1995) explains that God directs the affairs in life, for those who love him, for the greater good. C.E.B. Cranfield (1992) comments that although God can will grievous and evil things to occur, God in Christ works these things towards the greater good, in particular in the context of salvation for those that know Christ.

Evil and sin are not to be confused with goodness and obedience within Reformed traditions, but as God willingly allows evil things to occur, his purposes and motives are pure. David Ray Griffin (1976) critically disagrees with this concept of John Calvin and others, but correctly defines the idea that God’s will must be regarded as righteous, even when we as human beings cannot fully understand the rightness of his judgments, since God is the definition of righteousness. Wright reasons the problem of evil can be solved in a straightforward manner by proposing that God predestines evils to occur for a particular purpose, and that persons do not have an answer back for God. This comment from Wright is accurate from a Reformed

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142 Scudder (1940: 248).
143 Scudder (1940: 248).
144 Scudder (1940: 248).
145 Scudder (1940: 248).
146 Scudder (1940: 248).
152 In Chapters Three and Six, I shall explain in further detail how within Reformed theology and theodicy, God can remain holy and pure while willing evil for the greater good.
153 Calvin’s perspective shall be mentioned throughout this work and particularly in Chapter Three.
156 Wright (1996: 197).
perspective. I can interject and state that academically solving the logical and gratuitous problems of evil by tying them back to God is an ultimate intellectual solution, but there are still practical ramifications to deal with, such as why certain evils occur. The fact that a sovereignty theodicy can logically and reasonable solve its problem of evil, does not mean that suffering often comes with an explanation.

I reason that free will theodicy in the case of Augustine and Plantinga which shall be described in Chapter Two, can logically and reasonably solve their problems of evil, but more difficulties remain than with a well constructed sovereignty theodicy which accepts compatibilism. I therefore can understand the dismissive and negative attitudes towards theodicy of some within academia, but do not think that all theodicy are equal, or should they be necessarily all judged as failures. However, as noted earlier, theists and atheists debate the problem of evil, and it is safe to state that no particular theodicy will ever be accepted by all theists and atheists, or even acknowledged as logical or reasonable by all critics. I see no conclusive reason to abandon theodicy as an intellectual practice. I rather agree that a theodicy needs to be supported by Biblical revelation and must be for it to be theologically sound. Practical theology and empirical data can strengthen and complement a successful Biblically inspired sovereignty theodicy by explaining how the common church member and attendee deals

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158 Wright (1996: 197).
159 Wright (1996: 197).
160 This is where practical and empirical theology can be very helpful when they offer practical assistance to those suffering under the problem of evil.
161 I explain why I favour compatibilism mainly in Chapter Three.
162 In particular critics of theism and Christianity.
166 A Christian theodicy at least needs to have Scriptural support.
with theological concepts relating to theodicy.\textsuperscript{169} A theodicy can be adjusted in order to better assist persons in the Christian Church by being adaptable in message without compromising Biblical and intellectual integrity.\textsuperscript{170} I also reason that a logical and reasonable sovereignty theodicy presentation, even with its limitations, provides greater comfort to those trusting in the Biblical God and Christ than does fear inspired silence which completely capitulates to notions that human beings cannot in any meaningful way possibly understand why a holy God willingly allows evil within his creation.\textsuperscript{171}

The Importance of Practical and Empirical Theology

Chapter Five, Practical/Empirical Theology and Theodicy shall be dedicated to discussing practical and empirical theology, and in order to avoid unnecessary repetition this section shall be fairly brief. Phillips reasons that practical ‘existential’\textsuperscript{172} evils must be dealt with properly by theodicy.\textsuperscript{173} Philosophical presentations should not sidestep practical sufferings\textsuperscript{174} in regard to evil, for it is by these problems it is known that there is a logical problem.\textsuperscript{175} Therefore, as evil should not be overlooked,\textsuperscript{176} practical and empirical theology should be used as tools in understanding theodicy. Donald G. Bloesch (1987) explains that the knowledge of God leading to theological dogmatics should be for the sake of ethical service for God.\textsuperscript{177} Dogmatic theology should not exist for the sake of itself.\textsuperscript{178} Practical theology, according to Charles E. Winquest (1987), is the theological specialty that deals with, and is

\textsuperscript{169} To be discussed in Chapters Five and Six.
\textsuperscript{170} This shall be demonstrated in Chapter Six and the Appendix.
\textsuperscript{171} As Dr. William Kay pointed out to me when reviewing my MPhil thesis, finite human knowledge concerning theodicy does not necessarily equate with human error.
\textsuperscript{172} Phillips (2005: xii).
\textsuperscript{173} Phillips (2005: xii).
\textsuperscript{174} And therefore practical theology should not be overlooked.
\textsuperscript{176} Phillips (2005: xiii).
\textsuperscript{177} Bloesch (1987: 12).
\textsuperscript{178} Christians should live in service to their neighbours. Bloesch (1987: 12).
grounded in theory and practice and the need to bring self-consciousness to ministry.\textsuperscript{179}

Theological agendas are replicated in practical ones, and therefore both theology and related practice should not be shallow.\textsuperscript{180} Wilhelm Grab (2005) explains that practical theology involves reflecting on the rules of Christian leadership\textsuperscript{181} and considers theories of Christianity in modern society and interacts with other theological disciplines.\textsuperscript{182} Emmanuel Larrey (2000)(2007) comments that practical theology is a way of doing theology and being theologians,\textsuperscript{183} as it is not simply or primarily a branch of theological knowledge or a method of theological action.\textsuperscript{184} Practical theology is not primarily philosophical or systematic in nature,\textsuperscript{185} but as Larrey notes is attempting to examine the content of faith and practice.\textsuperscript{186} It is looking to find the content of faith, considering tradition, context and experience.\textsuperscript{187} Larrey points out a perceived weakness by some with practical theology in that it derives knowledge from other disciplines.\textsuperscript{188} In the case of this thesis it would be primarily deriving its information and knowledge\textsuperscript{189} from the theology and philosophy expressed in the three approaches to theodicy that shall be examined. Importantly in his concept, Larrey includes situational analysis of theology, response, experience, situational analysis for a second time, and finally theological analysis.\textsuperscript{190} The fact that he allows theological analysis\textsuperscript{191} presents the intellectual possibility, in my mind, that Christian doctrine and related theology can be analyzed in the context of practical and empirical

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
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\item[179] Winquest (1987: 1).
\item[180] Winquest (1987: 1).
\end{thebibliography}
findings, but this does not necessarily mean that the theoretical nature of the doctrines are completely abandoned. My practical and empirical findings within this thesis are to examine and question theoretical and philosophical approaches to theodicy, but not overturn them. Practical and empirical theology is a complement to my theoretical work on theodicy, and not a replacement for it.

Leslie J. Francis (2005) writes that an element of practical theology is the use of empirical data. Emanuel S. Goldsmith (2003) defines empirical theology as discussion of God grounded in human experience. William Dean (1990) comments that empirical theology begins with a particular speculative view of life, which in turn leads to the use of the empirical method. An empirical theologian interprets the world and the empirical method refers to how that interpretation is made workable and is revised if needed. Mark J. Cartledge (2003) reasons empirical theology has the objective of finding the faith and practice of the people concerned.

2. Methodology of Practical Theology

Methodology: Pattison and Woodward

Stephen Pattison and James Woodward (2000)(2007) explain in ‘Introduction to Pastoral and Practical Theology’ in the text, which they serve as editors, The Blackwell Reader in...
Pastoral and Practical Theology\textsuperscript{203} that although it is difficult to provide a comprehensive and universal list of the methodology of practical theology,\textsuperscript{204} the list below contains many of the important elements.\textsuperscript{205} One, practical theology is a transformational activity,\textsuperscript{206} in that with both process and outcome, it aims to change the lives of persons, and create greater understanding in the contemporary world.\textsuperscript{207} Theoretical, Philosophical theology from both conservative and liberal perspectives can also offer an alteration in the thinking and life of a student of theology,\textsuperscript{208} but in many cases persons will not view doctrine as life changing and need to understand theoretical, philosophical concepts concerning theodicy clearly in the practical context,\textsuperscript{209} in order for theology to offer any possibility of impacting his/her life significantly.\textsuperscript{210} Most persons do not receive specialized theological training and it is therefore reasonable to assume that a strictly and/or mainly theoretical approach will not significantly assist or impact the lives of many that attend Christian churches.\textsuperscript{211}

Two, practical theology is not only concerned with the propositional, logical, and rational aspects of life and theology.\textsuperscript{212} Emotions, even if at times presented in an irrational manner, need to be understood within theological reflection of the human condition.\textsuperscript{213} I should point out that emotions need not necessarily be irrational. Emotional reactions to the problem of evil and to

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnotetext{203}{James Woodward and Stephen Pattison (eds.), The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing.}
\footnotetext{204}{Pattison and Woodward (2000)(2007: 13).}
\footnotetext{205}{Pattison and Woodward (2000)(2007: 13). In other words, the methodological approach to doing practical theology and the stages taken in the process. Cartledge (2003: 248).}
\footnotetext{206}{Pattison and Woodward (2000)(2007: 13).}
\footnotetext{207}{Pattison and Woodward (2000)(2007: 13).}
\footnotetext{208}{My research of theodicy with MPhil and PhD work has definitely heavily influenced how I evaluate both academic and personal issues involving evil.}
\footnotetext{209}{Pattison and Woodward (2000)(2007: 13).}
\footnotetext{210}{Pattison and Woodward (2000)(2007: 13). Practical theology aims to integrate theology with practice in order for the value of theology to be better understood. The gap between ‘understanding and explaining’ is sought. Anderson (2001: 26).}
\footnotetext{211}{In the same way that a theologian, not heavily educated in another discipline, would not be impacted significantly in many cases by complex academic work within that other discipline.}
\footnotetext{213}{Pattison and Woodward (2000)(2007: 13).}
\end{footnotesize}
theology and philosophy,\textsuperscript{214} which deal with theodicy, can be reasonable and should not be automatically discounted as intellectually useless.\textsuperscript{215} Understanding human emotions is vital for pastoral theological care,\textsuperscript{216} which needs to reason out theology in artistic and imaginative ways.\textsuperscript{217} While maintaining theoretical theological propositions,\textsuperscript{218} I have no difficulty with examining the problem of evil from emotional perspectives.\textsuperscript{219} This should be a natural human reaction for any person studying the problem of evil,\textsuperscript{220} whether this person is a professional theologian/philosopher or not. I deduce there is no reason to conclusively assume that theoretical theodicy cannot work hand in hand with emotions.\textsuperscript{221} A person can feel and experience evil and suffering,\textsuperscript{222} and yet have some understanding of it within a logical and reasonable theodicy. I reason not only that theological/philosophical theodicy can be complemented by practical and empirical theology, but also that emotions and suffering under evil does not necessarily have to lead one to disbelief in theodicy.\textsuperscript{223} In contrast, the better the theodicy, the more it shall assist a suffering person. A human being is often going to experience evil and suffering on both emotional and intellectual levels and both should be adequately dealt with by theology and philosophy. There is no need to detach emotion from the problem of evil for intellectual purposes.\textsuperscript{224}

\textsuperscript{214} The implications of theology are an important aspect of practical theology. Cartledge (2003: 249).
\textsuperscript{216} Pattison and Woodward (2000)(2007: 13).
\textsuperscript{218} Such as Reformed doctrines and views developed through the study of Philosophy of Religion.
\textsuperscript{219} Gary Collins admits that emotions can be crippling, but this provides opportunities for Christian pastoral counseling. Collins (1988: 16).
\textsuperscript{220} This should be natural for anyone dealing with the suffering of another from a theological perspective. Pattison and Woodward (2000)(2007: 13).
\textsuperscript{221} Collins (1988: 16). The Christian message can be presented within the context of one suffering.
\textsuperscript{222} Practical theology should deal with the inner core issues of an individual. Anderson (2001: 28).
\textsuperscript{223} Collins (1988: 16).
\textsuperscript{224} Pattison and Woodward (2000)(2007: 13). Cartledge (2003: 249). Rather these would be an aspect of individual life experience which can be theologically analyzed with the use of data.
Three, practical theology is confessional and honest.\textsuperscript{225} This requires an objective evaluation of the world that is not philosophically committed to a particular faith or theological perspective in a close-minded fashion.\textsuperscript{226} Real suffering should not be denied for the sake of any theological system,\textsuperscript{227} as the logical and reasonable nature of a good theodicy does not take away the seriousness of suffering. Only God alone can ultimately free his creation from suffering,\textsuperscript{228} but a theodicy may explain to some degree, how God works within his creation that contains evil and suffering. Concerning objectivity, within this thesis my Reformed perspective shall not be spared from an objective evaluation and critique as a result of empirical findings.\textsuperscript{229}

Four, it is unsystematic, throwaway theology that constantly needs to reinvent its tasks and methods.\textsuperscript{230} In my mind, this can work with certain strands of traditional theology, which Pattison and Woodward state are unchangeable and unchallengeable.\textsuperscript{231} This is so, since although for example, Reformed and Roman Catholic theological systems\textsuperscript{232} have certain dogmas that make them what they are, human reaction to these systems will often vary. Therefore, as a moderately conservative, Reformed theologian, even though I reason there are certain theological essentials\textsuperscript{233} that I bring into my theodicy, the human reaction to these doctrines shall not always be the same,\textsuperscript{234} and at the same time how the theology is understood and expressed may not be identical in different eras\textsuperscript{235} even though the essential doctrines remain the same.

Calvinist, Millard J. Erickson (1994) comments that doctrines need not be maintained precisely

\textsuperscript{228} Although human beings can somewhat minimize the suffering of others in many cases.
\textsuperscript{229} This shall be presented within Chapter Six and the Appendix.
\textsuperscript{232} And Eastern Orthodox as well.
\textsuperscript{233} Reformed methodology which be discussed in Chapter 3.
\textsuperscript{234} Nor will be the various experiences of persons be the same. Therefore these differing experiences need to be theological considered, as Cartledge points out. Cartledge (2003: 249).
\textsuperscript{235} Erickson (1994: 37).
with the same form of expression that they were in Biblical times. Erickson also points out that not all other sources of knowledge and truth need to be excluded from Christian teaching. Scriptural truth revealed from God remains the same, but practical and empirical findings can alter how certain theological dogma are implemented with a particular society, group, or individual. Jerry W. McCant (1991) provides the idea that New Testament doctrines were definitely presupposed within, but the doctrines are not systematic or fully developed. I reason there are at times clearly defined Biblical doctrines, but McCant is correct that the systemizing of these doctrines did not take place. This systemization would be a task of systematic theology and philosophy of religion. Practical and empirical theology can provide opportunities to evaluate practically systematic theology and philosophy of religion in regard to the problem of evil.

Five, practical theology is truthful and committed to changing the world through its intellectual findings. Awkward findings concerning theological perspectives should not be glossed over. Criticisms that are leveled at certain doctrines or the way these doctrines are presented within the context of theodicy does not necessarily mean that a doctrine is incorrect or needs revision. It may be the case that the particular doctrine needs to be better explained by the Christian Church, and in particular within the tradition(s) for which it originates and is associated.

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245 Pattison and Woodward (2000)(2007: 14). These include a ministry focus where Christ is seen as the means of reconciliation between the world and God. Anderson (2001:62).
Six, it must be contextual and situational related. Practical theology can use the Bible and other historical data, but its main concern is to explore and contribute to immediate contexts, situations, and practices. From traditional and Reformed Christian perspectives, the Bible serves as the key Scripture and reference in regard to matters of faith. Cambridge theologian, J.S. Whale (1958) explains that within Protestant thought the Bible represents the whole counsel of God and nothing can be added whether by new revelation or tradition. Whale, however, correctly warns against the idea of the Bible becoming a law book, and the Scripture needs to stay a historical living word as opposed to a narrow book of rules. This goes back to Erickson’s point that God’s word, although an unchanging message must be interpreted for each era. This in no way allows for an overhaul of major, traditional Christian doctrines from traditional and Reformed perspectives, but with the use of practical and empirical approaches there would be opportunities to understand Christian theology in modern terms. In other words, the very same Biblical doctrines that were given in the contexts of ancient Israel, Europe, Asia, and Africa need to be explained in the contexts of twenty-first century Western civilization, and other societies in the world. Theological principles would remain the same, but theological application can vary within eras and locations.

Seven, practical theology is sociopolitically committed. Persons from ‘below’ are a focus of practical theology, these being people who experience institutionalized injustice and
oppression. The Church should not simply attempt to raise itself to heaven in a sense, but needs to focus on working within the world. Robert McAfee Brown (1984) comments that in the Bible, in places such as Exodus, God takes a position against those who promote oppression and injustice. God at times does take sides in human struggles, and God does side with the oppressed. Christians are sometimes in the delicate and tricky position of staying true to Biblical standards and yet standing with those who are oppressed and within the world system, even if they are not believers and live outside of Christian morality. Those in power who call themselves Christians need to be respectfully challenged if they are perceived with a significant deal of evidence, to be involved in abusive practice. Western Christians need to examine the side they are on in many of the world’s social struggles, particularly in regard to the third world. In my mind there is a danger that Christianity, whether conservative or liberal, becomes overly influenced by cultures where it exists. Christian thought must stay true to Biblical and theological principles at the expense of being led astray by societal movements that later in history may be deemed to have been corrupt. Any historical corruption of the Christian Church is, in the end, a poor witness of Christ and the gospel and weakens the credibility of Christian ministry in the minds of many critics.

261 Anderson (2001:181). The Church must work within the world without being worldly at the expense of being true to the Holy Spirit. This is no easy task for a large institution such as the Church.
266 A good Christian witness will treat non-believers with love, care and respect.
269 Anderson reasons the Church needs to repent for wrong doing in its existence. Anderson (2001: 180-181).
Eight, practical theology is experimental, and personal experience of people’s religious life.\textsuperscript{270} There is room for discussion in how doctrines should be practically implemented.\textsuperscript{271} As people’s religious reflection needs to be taken seriously,\textsuperscript{272} and this has my total support, I reason this can be done within traditional Christian perspectives, including Reformed ones, without overthrowing doctrines that are considered Biblical and essential.\textsuperscript{273} Again, this is not to indicate, in any way, that I wish to avoid intellectual challenges to Reformed theology as concepts from both conservative and liberal perspectives shall be reviewed and examined within this work.\textsuperscript{274} J.I. Packer (1973) states those that know God have great thoughts concerning him.\textsuperscript{275} These types of thoughts require personal experiences beyond Biblical and theological knowledge alone. The God of academic and devotional theology needs to be personally experienced to seriously impacts lives.\textsuperscript{276}

Nine, practical theology is often reflectively based.\textsuperscript{277} Persons are encouraged to analyze their own life and experiences.\textsuperscript{278} Theological reflection should be an integral part of both theoretical and practical/empirical approaches.\textsuperscript{279} Packer reasons that persons need to meditate on, think over, dwell on, and personally apply the things of God.\textsuperscript{280} In my view, revealed theology to be understood reasonably well in theory and practice requires a person to pray and reflect on this over time. God must be contemplated.\textsuperscript{281} Followers should reflect on Biblical,\textsuperscript{282} theological and other truths in order to hopefully lead to correct practical applications.

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\footnotetext[271]{Pattison and Woodward (2000)(2007: 15).}
\footnotetext[274]{Notably in the surveys.}
\footnotetext[275]{Packer (1973: 24).}
\footnotetext[277]{Pattison and Woodward (2000)(2007: 15).}
\footnotetext[278]{Pattison and Woodward (2000)(2007: 15).}
\footnotetext[279]{Packer (1973: 18).}
\footnotetext[280]{Packer (1973: 18).}
\footnotetext[281]{Packer (1973: 18).}
\end{footnotes}
Ten, practical theology, in its interrogative nature, unlike traditional, orthodox theology, is not primarily interested in staying within confined thought, but asks good questions concerning the nature of reality. Although I have stated that I am not interested in overturning primary Christian orthodox theology, at the same time this theology must be critically analyzed in order that persons within the Christian Church are being taught and understand concepts correctly. Packer warns of the real danger of knowing about theology and apologetics and yet not really knowing much about God. One can know certain Biblical, theological doctrines, but without a serious reflective, and perhaps interrogative type of evaluation of these views, God will not necessarily be known. It is possible this ties back to what Brown stated, as certain Christians may be on the wrong side of history on certain social issues. Perhaps in some cases this is because Christians, or persons that claim to be Christians, possess Biblical and theological knowledge, and yet have not seriously interacted with material to have a reasonable understanding of how knowing the Biblical God should lead one to treat fellow human beings with love and respect.

Eleven, practical theology is interdisciplinary, meaning it uses methods from academic approaches that are not overtly theological. Although I reason none of these other disciplines should alter essential Biblical theology, I can agree with Pattison and Woodward

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285 Secondary doctrines are different and can be overturned within Christian orthodoxy.
292 Packer (1973: 21-22). Matthew 22:39 and Mark 12:31 both command the believer in the Biblical God to love others as one loves self. Clearly this would mean that no person or group should face mistreatment from a true believer, if that believer is obeying God. Obeying God would be a sign of knowing God.
when they explain that disciplines such as economics, sociology, and psychology could impact practical theology. As noted earlier, truth can be found outside of the Bible, and I deduce that other academic disciplines can certainly be used to help those in the Christian Church better understand theology. Christian theology in regard to theodicy is already relying on the related, but different discipline of philosophy. Within this thesis, I shall review Augustine and Feinberg who are noted theologians, but Plantinga and Hick are, in my view, philosophers or philosophers of religion. If theology can rely on philosophy for assistance in regard to theodicy, it can rely on disciplines such as sociology, psychology, and science as well.

Twelve, practical theology is analytical and constructive, meaning it analyses situations and attempts to provide constructive ideas for change. Warren S. Kissinger (1975) when discussing German pietism notes that the Christian faith was understood to have practical consequences, and have an antagonism towards worldliness. Christian faith and philosophy needs to have a progressive, practical nature, which seeks to find problems in the Christian life, and with God’s help sets out to change and improve things, both on an individual and corporate level. The antagonism should not be against the world, but opposed to acting in worldly ways which promote evil, instead of promoting God inspired goodness. Christian ministry to

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297 Philosophy of Religion.
298 It is wise to have an open mind concerning academic disciplines outside one’s own. No discipline, including theology, adequately deals with all truth and therefore much can be learned from other types of knowledge and thought.
300 Kissinger (1975: 37).
301 Kissinger (1975: 37).
302 Kissinger (1975: 37).
304 Kissinger (1975: 37).
be effective should not hold animosity toward persons it is attempting to reach, but should present the gospel respectfully.

Thirteen, the authors comment that practical theology is dialectical and disciplined. There is a creative tension within the discipline with theory and practice, religious tradition and contemporary experience, written texts and present experience, theology and other disciplines, and the religious community and outside communities. Here it can be admitted that although I reason the Bible is God’s revealed word for humanity and the Church, what is written in Scripture as conduct and practice is not always followed by those within the Christian Church. Harold Lindsell (1976) explains it is always a possibility that persons in the church can in practice deny what they believe in principle, although principle and practice should work together. Disciplined conversation can allow practical and empirical theology to discern at times where certain church groups and related organizations are not perhaps representing Scripture in the best way possible.

Fourteen, for the final point, practical theology is noted to be skillful and demanding. The authors explain that there is much to learn concerning the different methods involved in this approach. Francis reasons that the disciplines of the social sciences will be applied as methodology for studying practical and empirical theology. Social sciences, science, and

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313 Thiessen (1956: 79).
318 Francis (2005: 2-3).
philosophy should be sought to assist theological understanding in the overall pursuit of truth. The hope is that through difficult study and research practical theology can be both genuinely practical and authentically theological.

Methodology: Alistair Campbell

Alistair Campbell (2000)(2007) also deals with several methodological issues concerning practical theology. One, practical theology is concerned with the study of specific social structures and individual initiatives from which God’s work can continue in the present world. The hope is that this shall lead to renewal, and the source of this type of initiative and renewal can be found within or outside the life of the church. Basically, God’s work does not necessarily always have to be done within a Christian organization. A Christian for example, could be working for a secular organization feeding the poor, and/or working against numerous forms of social injustice. Ivone Gebara (2002), a Catholic and feminist theologian, writes the message of Christ on the cross brings persons to the idea that suffering comes from injustice and this will ultimately lead to redemption and victory over opponents. The work of Christians should involve ending, and not promoting evil, whether in a Christian or secular work environment.

Two, Campbell explains that the functions of ordained ministry can no longer be seen as normative for the division of subject matter and the scope of work. Campbell writes that acts of charity and such, which were in the past on the periphery of church work, need to move to the

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centre. I reason that the atoning and resurrection work of Christ for believers must remain an essential element of Christian preaching, teaching and ministry. However, Brown believes the Bible teaches that there is hope for those in the world who are poor and oppressed. Brown explains that if God sided with these suffering persons in Biblical times, he also does today. I can grant this proposition and state that although the salvific work of Christ for humanity should remain the core of Christian faith and philosophy, simultaneous to this Christians must help in an earthly physical sense, those they are attempting to assist in a spiritual sense. This is an important and essential way of making theology practical.

Three, practical theology has a relationship to other theological disciplines which is ‘lateral’ rather than ‘linear.’ Practical theology, by Campbell’s methodology, is not in a linear fashion following a canon of relevance as he describes it, nor is it connected to some type of orthodoxy. My methodology and approach is somewhat different than Campbell’s. I agree that practical and empirical findings need to be objective in order to constructively critique theological systems, including Reformed theology in regard to theodicy and related issues. I reason that if the theoretical, theological work in regard to theodicy is logically and reasonably done, it can contain truth. As practical and empirical theology can also contain truth, these types of theological approaches may at times follow, in a linear manner, theoretical theology,

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even if it was not the original intention of the practical/empirical work. I therefore am not as convinced as Campbell that practical theology will often lead to theological conclusions that are inconclusive and ambiguous.\textsuperscript{341} I must add if one assumes the theoretical nature of philosophical theology that is under review is inconclusive and ambiguous,\textsuperscript{342} it is quite possible this will be the same result deduced from the related practical and empirical findings.\textsuperscript{343} A traditional orthodox Christian perspective would be that Scripture, at least with primary doctrines, is not inconclusive or ambiguous, but trustworthy\textsuperscript{344} as the Holy Spirit inspired chosen persons to write the Scriptures and what is written is what God desired.\textsuperscript{345}

Four, since practical theology uses situation based methods, it is fragmentary and poorly systemized.\textsuperscript{346} Since it is constantly seeking out and presenting new situations,\textsuperscript{347} it cannot present a comprehensive theology of itself.\textsuperscript{348} These are strong words from Campbell,\textsuperscript{349} but the critic should understand that this does not make empirical theology useless. I can understand that Campbell is presenting an experimental theological approach in contrast to a theological system.\textsuperscript{350} Practical and empirical theology is a theological approach that examines theological systems, and is not a system in itself.\textsuperscript{351} Within this thesis the practical and empirical approach and findings shall be used to critique and strengthen understanding of the theoretical theodicy discussed.\textsuperscript{352}

\textsuperscript{343} Campbell (2000)(2007: 85).
\textsuperscript{344} Lindsell (1976: 30).
\textsuperscript{345} Lindsell (1976: 30). Of course the original autographs are missing and presumably nonexistent. Therefore, the Bible consists of copies and portions of manuscripts.
\textsuperscript{352} In particular in Chapter Six which discusses the questionnaire statistics.
Five, practical theology should result in concrete proposals developed to restructure the Christian Church in life, witness, fellowship and service.\textsuperscript{353} This should be true for the work of Christians within secular structures in society as well.\textsuperscript{354} David Lyon (1998) discusses the Christian Church and social changes,\textsuperscript{355} and explains that the cultural memory of some aspects of Christianity has been eroded.\textsuperscript{356} Secularization may have played its part in this erosion.\textsuperscript{357} He warns against the dangers of fundamentalism and hedonism/nihilism\textsuperscript{358} and states that the goodness and grace of the Christian God is the only hope for the world.\textsuperscript{359} In a secularized Western culture\textsuperscript{360} the Christian Church needs to restructure where necessary certain practices without denying the Biblical revelation which provides hope for persons.

3. Methodology of Empirical Theology within Practical Theology

Its Relation to Science

By evaluating free will, sovereignty and soul-making theodicy with the use of practical theology, it shall be examined to what degree the theological assumptions and concepts within these perspectives are understood and accepted empirically by questionnaire respondents.\textsuperscript{361} As noted, Francis writes that the disciplines of the social sciences will be applied as methodology for studying practical and empirical theology.\textsuperscript{362} He reasons that the work of practical and empirical theology can be tested by the social sciences.\textsuperscript{363} R. Ruard Ganzevoort (2004)(2005)

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\item \textsuperscript{353} Campbell (2000)(2007: 85).
\item \textsuperscript{354} Campbell (2000)(2007: 85).
\item \textsuperscript{355} Lyon (1998: 279).
\item \textsuperscript{356} Lyon (1998: 279).
\item \textsuperscript{357} Lyon (1998: 279).
\item \textsuperscript{358} Lyon (1998: 294).
\item \textsuperscript{359} Lyon (1998: 294).
\item \textsuperscript{360} Lyon (1998: 279).
\item \textsuperscript{361} This provides an empirical balance to theoretical theology.
\end{itemize}
explains his view that theology is a forum where various scientific disciplines meet.\textsuperscript{364} Theology is like science in that various theological disciplines investigate language and other symbols in relation to religious experiences, beliefs, and actions,\textsuperscript{365} and therefore are concerned with understanding how ‘God speaks.’\textsuperscript{366} This thesis, within its methodology accepts that the theoretical, philosophical views within the reviewed theodicy\textsuperscript{367} shall be examined theologically within the Chapters,\textsuperscript{368} but also shall be reviewed practically, sociologically, and psychologically to some degree. This is done by examining the empirical questionnaire results and statistics within social science.\textsuperscript{369} Theological theories therefore, within this thesis, are not only presented for and by professional theologians and philosophers, but also by respondents that attend Christian Churches from various denominations and church groups.\textsuperscript{370} This thesis therefore, in the context of theodicy related ideas, shall to some extent bridge the intellectual gap between professional theology/philosophy in regard to the problem of evil, and how persons that attend Christian Churches respond to these theories.\textsuperscript{371} Theology does not exist primarily for theologians and philosophers, but for all church attendees and members.\textsuperscript{372} Therefore, any mistrust or misunderstanding of theology in regard to theodicy within the church by laypersons needs to be corrected and the use of questionnaires and empirical data provides a vehicle for correction.

\textsuperscript{367} Three basic theodicy and four exemplars and approaches.
\textsuperscript{368} Mainly Chapters Two to Four.
\textsuperscript{370} Christian theology should not only be created and exist for professional theologians and scholars, but also for church members and attendees. Practical and empirical theology can be created through questionnaire responses by those within the church that shall never be professionals.
\textsuperscript{371} I am not a professional sociologist or psychologist, but the questionnaire respondents will quite naturally not only deal with theological and philosophical responses to questions, but also practical ramifications that deal with issues within the social sciences.
\textsuperscript{372} Therefore this is a need for practical theology.
Hans-Gunter Heimbrock (2005) notes that since religion and faith is experimental within empirical theology, the social sciences have been used to examine social dynamics, conditions and contexts of religious life. He reasons that pastoral work has also been assisted in this process. There has been increased discussion involving standards and criteria for appropriate empirical research in theology. Philosophically, I do not view Christian faith and philosophy as primarily experimental, although I can grant Heimbrock’s point that the social sciences can deal with the existing experimental aspects of religion and assist in understanding. The experimental nature of empirical theology can not only lead to a better understanding of practical theology within the Christian Church, but when applied the theodicy related questions in this project, can help to explain how the theoretical theories of theologians and philosophers are being understood and accepted by persons that attend church. If there are misunderstandings and disagreements between professionals and amateurs in regard to theodicy concepts, the empirical aspect within this thesis allows for both pastoral work and theoretical theology to be assisted by feedback from church attendees of various denominations and groups. The professional teacher within Christianity is therefore given the opportunity, after reading my work, to better explain and/or reconsider the presentation of certain doctrines based on results of the empirical data.

Professor of philosophy and religion, Karl E. Peters (1992) comments in his abstract that empirical theology is in contrast to science in that it seeks to understand the nature and source of

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human fulfilment,\footnote{Peters (1992: 297-325).} and science seeks to understand the world regardless of the implications of human welfare.\footnote{Peters (1992: 297-325).} Empirical theology is like science in that it affirms naturalism,\footnote{Peters (1992: 297-325).} accepts limitations on human knowledge, and therefore makes all religious knowledge tentative.\footnote{Peters (1992: 297-325).} Both scientific causal and religious explanations are sought for meaning in life, and a key criterion for justifying ideas is to explain experience and to focus on new research.\footnote{Peters (1992: 297-325).} Within my Reformed perspective there is an acknowledgement that science is dependent on the use of naturalism.\footnote{Peters (1992: 297-325).}

Y. Krikorian (1944)(2007) explains naturalism is part of nature, contains nothing supernatural,\footnote{Krikorian (1944)(2007: 1).} and that the scientific method should be used to explain all aspects of reality, including those assumed to be ‘spiritual’ in nature.\footnote{Krikorian (1944)(2007: 1).} C.A. Dubray writes that naturalism is not primarily a special system as much as a view held by many within philosophy and religion.\footnote{Dubray (1911)(2007: 1).} It is not so much a set of positive or negative doctrines, but a general attitude which influences many ideas.\footnote{Dubray (1911)(2007: 1).} Nature is viewed as the fundamental and original source for all that exists,\footnote{Dubray (1911)(2007: 1).} and therefore all reality needs to be explained in terms of nature.\footnote{Dubray (1911)(2007: 1).} All events find an adequate explanation within nature itself.\footnote{Dubray (1911)(2007: 1).} I can accept that science must use natural and not supernatural means\footnote{Dubray (1911)(2007: 1).} and is clearly often a discipline with different methods than theology or philosophy. One should not expect scientific method to be religious in nature.\footnote{God is revealed in Scripture to be spiritual in nature as described in John 4:24, therefore God could never be proven to exist through the empirical, scientific testing of matter. Science is therefore a discipline outside of the realm of the supernatural.}\footnote{Krikorian (1944)(2007: 1).} Many Christians of
moderate positions and various traditions would disagree with the concept that nature is the fundamental and original source for all that exists.\textsuperscript{397} James W. Sire (1977) notes there have been theistic critics that have found fault with naturalism.\textsuperscript{398} This was based on the conviction that a personal God was behind the universe and that naturalism in itself did not provide an adequate reason why human beings were valuable.\textsuperscript{399} Human beings are unique, but so are gorillas, and there remains the problem of establishing the value of human beings within naturalism, according to Sire.\textsuperscript{400}

Bloesch reasons naturalism philosophically reduces humans to creatures that commit instinctual drives.\textsuperscript{401} Wheaton professor, Henry Clarence Thiessen (1956) explains that since naturalism holds that nature is the whole of reality, everything that occurs is due to the laws of nature.\textsuperscript{402} He comments Scripture recognizes the existence of the laws of nature, but it is reasoned they do not operate independently of God.\textsuperscript{403} God concurs with the laws he has established,\textsuperscript{404} and Thiessen reasons that miracles and revelation can occur when God operates outside of laws he established.\textsuperscript{405} William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. (1993) suggest miracle stories in the Gospels serve to demonstrate who Jesus Christ was and that God was breaking into human history.\textsuperscript{406} Miracles are not typical, but were primarily used in the New Testament to highlight the ministry of Christ.\textsuperscript{407} Naturalists and moderate Christians would not necessarily disagree on scientific facts, but many Christians would accept a revealed

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Dubray (1911)(2007: 1).
\item Sire (1977: 74).
\item Sire (1977: 74).
\item Sire (1977: 74).
\item Bloesch (1987: 174).
\item Thiessen (1956: 186).
\item Thiessen (1956: 186).
\item Thiessen (1956: 186).
\item Thiessen (1956: 186).
\item Thiessen (1956: 186).
\item Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard (1993: 340).
\item Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard (1993: 340).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
supernatural source behind nature,\textsuperscript{408} the naturalist would deny.\textsuperscript{409} It can be reasoned therefore that Christians can embrace the similarities that science has with empirical theology,\textsuperscript{410} without a necessary abandonment of the belief that God revealed himself and his plan of salvation within history.\textsuperscript{411} Empirical theology within practical approaches\textsuperscript{412} can therefore without necessary contradiction, complement philosophical theology in the context of theodicy.

Methodology: William Dean

Dean explains that for empirical theology, method is the outcome of content and not the other way around.\textsuperscript{413} The empirical method contributes to the continual development, correction and revision of speculative content.\textsuperscript{414} He writes that empirical method is distinctive in making experience the highest authority;\textsuperscript{415} however, he reasons that even anti-experimental theologians depend on Scripture and related tradition when they are trusted and experienced.\textsuperscript{416} Erickson appears to agree with this notion to a point as he comments that in theology, truth and experience are always related.\textsuperscript{417} This connection would be denied or questioned, but theological truth will always impact experience.\textsuperscript{418} F.W. Dillistone (1999) writes that it is a distinctive aspect of Christianity that one learns continually through religious experience.\textsuperscript{419} Revelation through Christ is the source of that experience.\textsuperscript{420} Theological empiricism examines its perspectives to

\textsuperscript{408} Thiessen (1956: 186).
\textsuperscript{410} Peters (1992: 297-325).
\textsuperscript{412} Francis (2005: 1).
\textsuperscript{413} Dean (1990: 2).
\textsuperscript{414} Dean (1990: 2).
\textsuperscript{415} Dean (1990: 3).
\textsuperscript{416} Dean (1990: 3).
\textsuperscript{417} Erickson (1994: 29).
\textsuperscript{418} Erickson (1994: 29).
\textsuperscript{419} Dillistone (1999: 207).
\textsuperscript{420} Dillistone (1999: 207).
determine if they are connected to the experienced world.\textsuperscript{421} To Dean, empirical theology, one, begins with a speculative view of life as a struggle.\textsuperscript{422} He also states that, two, from moment to moment empirical theology uses a speculative model to generate piecemeal conclusions in the face of little reliable empirical knowledge.\textsuperscript{423} For Dean method is the outcome of content, as empirical research and findings shall determine the reasonable plausibility of the theology. In the end, the assumptions of practical theology must be examined by consequences, and if the theology does take root in the real world.\textsuperscript{424}

Methodology: Tyron Inbody

Tyron Inbody (1995) describes three methodological assumptions of empirical theology.\textsuperscript{425} One, as a result of the general attitude of the empirical thinker, empirical theology has an attitude of total openness towards experimental evidence. Knowledge is dependent on observable data supplied by evidence and experience.\textsuperscript{426}

Two, empirical theology uses a method of inquiry, and a way of organizing the data that is experimental.\textsuperscript{427} Empirical theology is not an appeal to experience alone, but uses a method of inquiry with the use of data.\textsuperscript{428} All public theological claims based on empirical data are open to public inspection and correction.\textsuperscript{429} If the data is deemed as common experience, according to Inbody, it can be accepted as empirical theology.\textsuperscript{430}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{421} Dean (1990: 5). \\
\textsuperscript{422} Dean (1990: 5). \\
\textsuperscript{423} Dean (1990: 5). \\
\textsuperscript{424} Dean (1990: 5). \\
\textsuperscript{426} Inbody (1995: 215). \\
\textsuperscript{427} Inbody (1995: 215-216). \\
\textsuperscript{428} Inbody (1995: 216). \\
\textsuperscript{429} Inbody (1995: 216). \\
\textsuperscript{430} Inbody (1995: 216).
\end{flushleft}
Three, empirical theology is an appeal to common human experience as the source for justification for theological assertions. Empirical theologies appeal to experience as the primary source and the empirical method as the primary norm for justifying a theological claim. From my perspective, I can acknowledge that empirical methodology has to be open to empirical evidence, and I can tentatively accept Inbody’s first point. With point two, I do not have a difficulty with empirical data being open to public inspection, in fact I would welcome a public review of my findings in regard to theodicy. With point three, within Reformed tradition, I reason that revealed Scripture is the final authority for justifying a theological claim, and therefore would see the empirical method’s evaluation of Biblical theology as very important, but not primarily or singularly important in determining the truthfulness of a doctrine. Although I reason that Christian doctrine and practice must be grounded in revealed Scripture, this does not negate the fact that theodicy reviewed within this thesis can be examined through the empirical data, and therefore my disagreement with Inbody on his third point, does not in any way subtract from the effectiveness of this work.

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436 Presenting the data in book, journal and blog article format is another way of receiving public feedback, in particular from those within the Christian community.
437 This is called the Scripture principle. Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling (1999: 106).
441 A moderate conservative using empirical data to evaluate and critique his own tradition and related sovereignty theodicy, along with two other perspectives, should in my opinion be viewed as a positive and open-minded academic development.
Methodology: Daniel Day Williams

Daniel Day Williams (1969) comments that there are certain broad foundations of the empirical method that can perhaps be agreed upon.\textsuperscript{442} One, experience in the empirical method is the felt, bodily, organic action of human history.\textsuperscript{443} This experience includes sense data, but is not limited by it.\textsuperscript{444} Williams writes that there is a mysterious disclosure of God by which God is revealed metaphysically, and he reasons that human faith cannot survive without interpreting this metaphysical experience that is manifested in all things.\textsuperscript{445} Traditional Christian thought can agree that, in a sense, God reveals things about himself outside of revealed Scripture.\textsuperscript{446} Through creation God provided sufficient evidence for his existence,\textsuperscript{447} and therefore persons would be accountable for denying this revelation.\textsuperscript{448} This is known as natural revelation and is distinguished from special revelation.\textsuperscript{449} Special revelation would include Scripture and the gospel message,\textsuperscript{450} and therefore natural revelation would provide natural information concerning God,\textsuperscript{451} but not specific information in regard to salvation.\textsuperscript{452} The knowledge of God for humanity is limited when restricted to natural theology.\textsuperscript{453} It is not the same knowledge of God that is revealed supernaturally in Scripture.\textsuperscript{454} James D.G. Dunn (1988) writes it is clear that within the Romans text the concept of God revealing himself through natural theology exists.\textsuperscript{455}
This natural theology has always been apparent to humanity, and has been present as long as the cosmos have existed.\textsuperscript{456} Two, God is experienced as a power and process, immanent, and therefore working within the world, creating ways in which God is experienced by rational communities.\textsuperscript{457} Williams asks that if there is a way of getting knowledge outside of science, what is it?\textsuperscript{458} Conservative Christians and some liberals would of course answer that God has revealed spiritual knowledge through prophets, apostles and scribes through Scripture.\textsuperscript{459} Williams recommends the phenomenological method, which deals with understanding and clarifying human experience.\textsuperscript{460} For Williams, human beings are animals, but a special kind of animal that needs to be understood in the context of human suffering and how this impacts the human relationship with God.\textsuperscript{461}

Three, the knowledge of the character of things is derivable from a disciplined and critical analysis of the structures in experience and testing of the theological propositions concerning God and humankind.\textsuperscript{462} Empirical theology has often denied religious claims that are deemed to be private or related to a church.\textsuperscript{463} Williams admits, however, that this view is problematic as every empirical theology stands within a historical religious perspective.\textsuperscript{464} Even though Williams states that each empirical theology is coming from a historical perspective,\textsuperscript{465} it does not mean that claims and doctrines within a historical approach should be beyond

\textsuperscript{456} Dunn (1988: 57). There is no assumption here that human beings existed at the creation of the cosmos.  
\textsuperscript{457} Williams (1969: 176).  
\textsuperscript{458} Williams (1969: 178).  
\textsuperscript{460} Williams (1969: 178).  
\textsuperscript{461} Williams (1969: 178).  
\textsuperscript{462} Williams (1969: 177).  
\textsuperscript{463} Williams (1969: 180).  
\textsuperscript{464} Williams (1969: 180).  
\textsuperscript{465} Williams (1969: 180).
criticism. Ganzevoort explains that for the empirical method, Scripture is not limited to its original understanding, and it may be directed to uncover interpretive potential for today. Doctrines and creeds within tradition will be questioned, as will overall religious worldviews. Ganzevoort reasons that for Biblical theology, other disciplines are often used in the process, such as linguistic and literary sciences, archeology, and of course history. The other disciplines can yield insights on Biblical texts, the implication being that empirical theology is a discipline outside of Biblical theology, which can also assist in the understanding of Biblical texts. Philosophically, I reason that for the sake of religious truth, a member of a faith group, and in particular a scholar such as myself, must be willing to, while striving for objectivity, examine his historical religious perspectives and doctrines, and this can occur through the use of disciplines other than Biblical studies, theology, and philosophy. This work of empirical theology will provide the opportunity to examine the views and doctrines of free will, sovereignty, and soul-making theodicy, and also to evaluate the criticisms of these approaches as well.

Four, empirical theology has a formal structure that is tentative with correctable assertions. This would seem to be essential as empirical theology by nature is awaiting data and reviewing the quality of that data in order to form conclusions.

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466 Williams (1969: 180).
474 Williams (1969: 177).
475 Williams (1969: 177).
based on theological deductions, before empirical data exists, would be the work of philosophical and not empirical theology.

4. Original Work

Author’s Viewpoints

Ganzevoort provides the opinion that theology as a discipline is underdeveloped and at times diverse to a troublesome extent. As a result of its underdeveloped and diverse nature, Ganzevoort reasons that it is in danger of disintegration, because it is in constant dialogue with other disciplines such as science, social sciences, literary sciences, philosophy, anthropology, and history. I can add that theology is diverse since there are various denominations and traditions. An object of this thesis is to, primarily in the English speaking Western world, sample a wide range of persons that attend Christian Churches. My sample of 213 respondents is not excessively large, and yet is substantial. Within, there is diversity in my research, as most of the persons surveyed are outside of my Reformed tradition.

This thesis will provide statistical data in regard to free will, sovereignty and soul-making theodicy. From my research, I deduce that the problem of evil, especially in regard to sovereignty theodicy, within a Reformed tradition, needs further discussion. Through the use of a dual methodology of both theological/philosophical examination of theodicy, and

478 I do not hold the view that theology is underdeveloped in every case. A purpose of writing a theodicy is to present a developed presentation.
481 Within my questionnaire, I sampled Christians from conservative and liberal traditions, and those that attend Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and non-denominational churches.
482 Since this is a British thesis.
484 This was intentionally done.
485 Mainly within Chapter Three and Chapter Six.
ramifications related to the social sciences,\textsuperscript{486} with practical and empirical theology data, this work does constitute an original approach to learning which adds to the overall body of knowledge. It demonstrates a systematic study in regard to both theological/philosophical research and evaluation, and the practical/empirical results. Feinberg’s work, particularly in \textit{The Many Faces of Evil}\textsuperscript{487} presents a sovereignty theodicy, which I largely agree with, but his work does not provide statistics. Works from Dutch empirical theologians\textsuperscript{488} do connect theodicy with symbols and provide a questionnaire and statistics, but my work specifically deals with three theodicy and in the review of my statistics I shall provide an original analysis for each of these three perspectives.\textsuperscript{489} In particular, I will discuss the current state of Reformed theology and sovereignty theodicy, my personal view.\textsuperscript{490} At the end of three Chapters featuring theoretical theodicy, I will present a section entitled summary and practical theology,\textsuperscript{491} which shall present some issues from the Chapters that will be translated into propositional questions on the questionnaire.\textsuperscript{492}

Why This Thesis is Beneficial

As noted previously, Ganzevoort wrote that theology is underdeveloped.\textsuperscript{493} Theodicy, as an aspect of theology can as well be underdeveloped.\textsuperscript{494} For this reason, within the Christian Church, I will review and explain free will, sovereignty, and soul-making theodicy. The free will and sovereignty perspectives exist within a moderate conservative tradition, and soul-

\textsuperscript{488} These are discussed in Chapter Five.
\textsuperscript{489} My work is also a more in-depth study of theodicy from a theoretical perspective than is the work of the Dutch school.
\textsuperscript{490} In regard to theodicy, and not an overall examination of Reformed theology.
\textsuperscript{491} My original advisor, Dr. Mark Cartledge, views these summaries as precursors for the statistics.
\textsuperscript{492} The idea being that survey questions could begin development at this stage of my work.
\textsuperscript{493} Ganzevoort (2004)(2005: 1).
\textsuperscript{494} Therefore, this type of project can still be valuable academically.
making within a progressive liberal one.\textsuperscript{495} Within my survey propositions Christians from various theological perspectives will be provided concepts from three general perspectives and four authors\textsuperscript{496} to promote better understanding of the problem of evil. This should assist questionnaire respondents to better explain their Christian faith and philosophy with those outside of the Christian Church.\textsuperscript{497} I hope that my work can also provide some peace of mind to those suffering in this world of many evils. There is intellectual evidence that the Christian Church can still provide reasonable answers, and that intellectual progress has been made.\textsuperscript{498}

Theodicy is a definite theological problem for Christianity and theism,\textsuperscript{499} but Christians can be confident that it can be intellectually, adequately dealt with, in particular in my view, with an emphasis on the sovereignty of God.\textsuperscript{500} I do not hold to free will theodicy, but reason that it presents a logical and reasonable case,\textsuperscript{501} and that soul-making theodicy has some elements of truth within it.\textsuperscript{502} As a moderate conservative that holds to Reformed theology, I reason that the atoning and resurrection work applied to believers in the eventual culminated Kingdom of God\textsuperscript{503} is the ultimate remedy for the problem of evil. I must be clear: \textit{theodicy is not the remedy to the problem of evil}, but a speculative, and in my case, Biblically based attempt to explain how God deals with evil in his creation.\textsuperscript{504} In similar fashion, practical and empirical theology do not offer solutions to the problem of evil, but are theological disciplines\textsuperscript{505} which assist persons to

\textsuperscript{495} This conservative/liberal distinction is not always clear-cut, as some concepts do overlap, and this shall be observed through the reviews.
\textsuperscript{496} Augustine and Plantinga both write from a free will perspective.
\textsuperscript{497} 1 Peter 3:15 tells the believer to always be ready to give a defence to everyone that asks, and therefore Christians, both scholars and student are wise to have some knowledge concerning theodicy.
\textsuperscript{498} Swinburne (1998: 13-20).
\textsuperscript{500} Erdlandson (1991: 1). Although objections to this idea are duly noted throughout this thesis.
\textsuperscript{501} Peterson (1982: 204).
\textsuperscript{502} This will be discussed in Chapter Four.
\textsuperscript{503} Mounce (1990: 369-397).
\textsuperscript{504} Lindsley (2003: 3).
\textsuperscript{505} Winquest (1987: 1). Francis (2005: 1).
understand how evil is comprehended and dealt with in the Christian community and in society at large.

Even with the understanding that God and Christ will eventually save the world from evil, and that this can be explained in ways through theodicy, does not mean that I or any theologian or philosopher can always provide specific reasons and answers for each instance of evil and suffering in creation. Although I do not side with critics that doubt that theism can be squared with the evil that takes place in this world, I fully admit that in many cases of evil and suffering, only God has a comprehensive understanding of what is occurring, and why it is occurring. Is this a weakness particular for theism? I reason not, in that atheists and critics such as Ferraiolo will also not be able to fully explain evil and suffering in many cases, and therefore cannot conclusively intellectually deny that the infinite, omnipotent God can use occurrences of evil in creation for his good purposes. Therefore, theists and atheists from various perspectives are all left with degrees of ignorance in regard to the problem of evil. No person can fully understand evil and the suffering that results in every case. Theists and atheists are therefore left with using reason, and in the case of the Christian theist, the Bible to work out theories concerning the problem of evil.

Science has made discoveries that have assisted humanity, and has helped persons understand many realities. My Reformed perspective deduces that human corruption cannot be

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507 I can approach my theodicy presentation with confidence, but should always possess great humility.
509 Ferraiolo (2005: 1).
510 The idea of God using evil for the greater good, without being evil in nature himself is central to sovereignty theodicy. This will be discussed in the context of gratuitous evil in Chapter Four.
entirely corrected scientifically,\textsuperscript{515} but human beings are changed permanently to avoid evil only by the completed regeneration work of God.\textsuperscript{516} I reason that scientific progress has helped humanity tremendously to live better quality lives,\textsuperscript{517} but human beings are capable of committing as grotesque and intense evils as ever in the twenty-first century.\textsuperscript{518} This is so, in my view, because scientific knowledge has not as of yet, been able to change the essential nature of human beings. Even if science could perfect the physical nature of persons to avoid evil actions, assuming for the sake of argument human beings have a spirit,\textsuperscript{519} it needs to be considered if materially based science could perfect the human spirit as well to avoid all wrong actions. This would appear doubtful. Philosophy and theology have assisted human beings throughout history to better understand life,\textsuperscript{520} but neither of these disciplines can provide a remedy to the problem of evil;\textsuperscript{521} however, they can help to explain evil and suffering through effective theodicy.\textsuperscript{522}

By reviewing free will, sovereignty, and soul-making theory, and an examination of empirical data this thesis can shed light on the issue of theodicy in general terms, and at the same time reason that the culmination of God’s plans will provide the remedy for evil.\textsuperscript{523} An additional benefit to the empirical questionnaire approach has been the fact that in order to receive 213 completed surveys, I needed to contact a few thousand persons with the questionnaire. Several respondents have informed me in person, and through email,\textsuperscript{524} that this is a valuable academic exercise. It is helpful to share my work with others in this extended way.

\textsuperscript{515} Divine supernatural assistance is required to overcome evil.
\textsuperscript{517} Krikorian (1944)(2007: 1).
\textsuperscript{518} For example, nuclear technology has made nuclear weapons possible since the 1940s and there are nuclear weapons in the world which can do tremendous damage to humanity on a large scale within a few hours.
\textsuperscript{519} Genesis 2:7. H.L. Ellison (1986) explains that in the Old Testament breath or spirit came from God and provided life and individuality. This is a complex issue outside the depths of this thesis.
\textsuperscript{520} Scudder (1940: 247).
\textsuperscript{522} Scudder (1940: 247).
\textsuperscript{523} Feinberg (1994: 141).
\textsuperscript{524} There were of course critics as well, but for the most part persons appreciated the opportunity to ponder on the complex issues of theodicy.
and this *could not* take place similarly, if this work was strictly theoretical. It shall be seen in the statistics in the Appendix, that the problem of evil and theodicy is not explained sufficiently in Western society, in particular from a sovereignty perspective, and I am pleased that outside of the actual written thesis work I was able to assist some people in thinking about evil and suffering in our world. 

**Why Do I Review Both Philosophical and Practical Theology?**

Philosophical approaches to the problem of evil have been covered over the centuries. There have been views critical of theism such as Epicurus, David Hume, Antony Flew, J.L. Mackie, and William Rowe, as well theological defences within a type of Christian tradition such as Augustine, G.W. Leibniz, Alvin C. Plantinga, John Hick and John S. Feinberg, to name major players within this thesis. From my initial work on the subject with a Master of Theological Studies degree, to Master of Philosophy and Doctoral thesis, the consensus among my advisors has been that there needs to be a practical element connected to theoretical theodicy that would better connect practical ramifications of the atoning and resurrection work of

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525 I cover this issue on blogs as well.
526 For example, the problem of evil can be found in the Old Testament book of Job.
529 Both will be discussed with Chapter Two.
530 His argument concerning gratuitous evil will be discussed in Chapter Four.
531 He shall be reviewed within Chapter Two as a primary exemplar.
533 A primary exemplar in Chapter Two.
534 The primary exemplar in Chapter Four.
535 Feinberg’s view will be reviewed with Chapter Three.
536 From Trinity Western University.
537 From the University of Wales, Bangor.
Christ to the theoretical views on the issue. So, having come to primarily Reformed conclusions I seek to analyze these conclusions and other views, such as Plantinga and Hick, through the use of questionnaires. The survey results would provide practical theological data that I could review and also form practical theological conclusions in regard to the various views discussed.

Why an Atheistic Anti-Theodicy is not Included in the Thesis

One, my sample has to be a certain group, and my advisors for both my MPhil and PhD work determined it must be persons within the Christian Church. Therefore, sampling atheists would need to be necessarily excluded and I would not review as a primary philosophical presentation a perspective that could not provide me with an empirical sampling.

Two, there are key atheistic presentations within the work. The problem of evil itself is largely a critical and sometimes an atheistic criticism of theism and Christianity. This can be seen as the problem, as framed within the initial pages of the introduction, and with the atheistic objections of Flew and Mackie, as well as with the argument for gratuitous evil from William Rowe, and with critics of John Hick’s theodicy. Atheism and an overall critical view of

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538 For the sake of both Christians and non-Christians that would read my thesis and complete related questionnaires, the sometimes complex theoretical perspectives presented need to be associated with practical theology that are relevant.
539 Through my research on theodicy, I was not born or brought into the tradition.
540 The segment of a population selected for research. Bryman (2004: 543). Therefore in this context, it is the group of people I chose to survey. The material within my thesis is directly relevant to people within this population segment.
541 For my MPhil thesis sample, it was Bible school and seminary students within the Christian Church.
542 For my PhD thesis sample, it was those that attend culturally Christian churches.
543 By the same reasoning I also would not sample agnostics, Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, etcetera.
544 D.Z. Phillips and his, in a sense anti-theodicy, are quoted throughout this thesis.
546 In regard to Plantinga, in Chapter Two.
547 Chapter Four.
548 Chapter Four.
Christianity, from traditional and progressive perspectives, will be examined within this work,\textsuperscript{549} but the sample group is those that attend Christian Churches. Therefore, it was deemed not necessary or appropriate within the context of this thesis to review an atheistic position against theodicy as there are plenty of critical and atheistic citations and critiques within my work, and far more importantly I would not be able to sample those that represent noted positions as they are not within the Christian Church. This work is not seeking to place God in the docks or primarily to take God out of the docks.\textsuperscript{550}

I should point out that the majority of scholars cited within this thesis do not agree with my Reformed sovereignty theodicy. Certainly Feinberg’s view is similar as would be John Calvin’s\textsuperscript{551} but Hick’s would be radically different,\textsuperscript{552} and I would not likely receive support from the empirical theologians discussed.\textsuperscript{553} I am also citing many atheists and critics of traditional Christian views that would not agree with my perspectives.\textsuperscript{554} I have not attempted to write a thesis where I face little opposition, as on the contrary, even many of the traditional Christians cited would oppose my Reformed sovereignty perspective, such as Plantinga and incompatibilists.\textsuperscript{555} I also have included many positions critical of my own, such as non-traditional views on omnipotence that follows and the views of Immanuel Kant concerning religious dogma and belief.\textsuperscript{556} Within Chapter Three where I discuss Reformed methodology, I

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item\textsuperscript{549} Any critical evaluation of the problem of evil would include atheistic critiques evaluating theism.
  \item\textsuperscript{550} Doubtless many critics of theism and Christianity do place God in the docks and so a work should deal with these concepts.
  \item\textsuperscript{551} Although Calvin did not write a theodicy, his views on free will and determinism are similar to mine as will be documented throughout the thesis.
  \item\textsuperscript{552} Hick’s theodicy is a non-traditional approach as he freely admits and I document in Chapter Four.
  \item\textsuperscript{553} It will be seen in Chapter Five that Reformed and Calvinist views of God’s retribution and punishment for humanity are not strongly emphasized and supported. The overall presentation of the Dutch empiricists is Christian, but not Reformed.
  \item\textsuperscript{554} Frankly, a thesis minus serious critiques of theism and Reformed Christianity would not only be untenable in a secular PhD context, but also a Christian one as well.
  \item\textsuperscript{555} This will be discussed in Chapters Two and Three.
  \item\textsuperscript{556} Within Chapter Four.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
also discuss different non-Reformed perspectives. As shall be discussed in Chapter Five, many of the questionnaire respondents do not agree with my theodicy on key points.\(^{557}\)

### 5. Traditional and Non-Traditional Views on the Omnipotence of God

#### Traditional Explanation

The omnipotence of God, from traditional Christian and Reformed perspectives,\(^ {558}\) was mentioned earlier within this Chapter and briefly\(^ {559}\) within the problem of evil discussion.\(^ {560}\) Concerning omnipotence and God from traditional Christian view points, Thiessen defines this as meaning the creator is able to accomplish whatever he wills,\(^ {561}\) as long as it does not oppose his nature.\(^ {562}\) Roman Catholics Peter Kreeft and Ronald K. Tacelli (1994) suggest that God faces no real barriers in actions he wishes to commit, and that only what God allows, such as human sin, could thwart God’s plans.\(^ {563}\) Humanist Simon Blackburn, from a non-theistic critical perspective, reasons there are difficulties with the concept of an omnipotent God not being able to make a stone so heavy he could not lift it, as this would make God possibly contradictory\(^ {564}\) but does explain that the classic explanation is that God cannot commit the logically impossible.\(^ {565}\)

Baptist and Reformed theologian Millard Erickson writes that God cannot do any arbitrary thing he desires,\(^ {566}\) as he can only accomplish what is logical and not illogical and

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\(^ {557}\) Please see questionnaire results in Chapter Five, and the graphs in Appendix.

\(^ {558}\) These perspectives are similar in that they take traditional, Biblical positions concerning omnipotence.

\(^ {559}\) For the sake of context when discussing the problem of evil and theodicy.


\(^ {562}\) Thiessen (1956: 126).

\(^ {563}\) Kreeft and Tacelli (1994: 96).


\(^ {566}\) Erickson (1994: 277).
contradictory. Erickson also reasons, interestingly, that God cannot undo the past, although he may take away the effects and memory of it. God cannot logically violate his own nature or fail to live up to a promise. Otto Weber suggests God has unlimited capacity and unrestricted will. God is unrestricted in what he determines within self and outside of self. Presbyterian theologian John M. Frame admits the term omnipotence is not in Scripture, but reasons the concept is Biblical. He deduces that based on the Bible, it is impossible for anything to occur outside of what God has willed to happen.

John Frame and D.Z. Phillips

The ‘all things’ God can accomplish does come with some need to interpret. Frame explains that God cannot perform logically contradictory actions, as in making a square circle, committing that which is immoral and sinful, and interestingly, God cannot commit actions ‘appropriate only to finite creatures.’ This would include ‘buying shoes’ and ‘taking medicine for a cough.’ Philosopher, D.Z. Phillips within The Problem of Evil and The Problem of God, disagrees with this basic notion and writes that since God cannot commit the...

569 Erickson (1994: 277). The implication being that God could hypothetically change all the results of a past occurrence, but could not logically make the past occurrence to have not occurred, even if only he had any ultimate knowledge of it.
583 Frame (2002: 520).
584 Frame (2002: 520).
actions of finite creatures such as ‘riding a bicycle’\(^{585}\) he is not omnipotent.\(^{586}\) Phillips reasons it is not logically contradictory for one to ride a bicycle and therefore God should be able to do it and yet he cannot.\(^{587}\) Therefore, God is not omnipotent.\(^{588}\)

One approach to Phillip’s argument\(^{589}\) is to admit that God, as non-finite, cannot commit finite actions\(^{590}\) and is therefore not omnipotent\(^{591}\) as classically reasoned by many within traditional thought.\(^{592}\) A second approach is in agreement with Frame’s point that even though God cannot by nature commit the actions of finite creatures,\(^{593}\) this does not disqualify God as being omnipotent within his infinite nature.\(^{594}\) God’s lack of finiteness is actually a strength.\(^{595}\) Frame states God could commit the type of finite actions discussed if he so desired by taking human form.\(^{596}\) I reason God could take human form to accomplish the task of riding a bicycle, as for example, God is stated in Genesis\(^{597}\) to have walked and spoken\(^{598}\) in the Garden of Eden.\(^{599}\)

Although I do not reason this is a ridiculous suggestion to deduce God could take bodily form\(^{600}\)

\(^{585}\) Phillips (2005: 113).
\(^{587}\) Phillips (2005: 113).
\(^{588}\) Phillips (2005: 113). For Philips, God’s inability to do finite things is a weakness making God less than all-powerful. For Frame it is a strength which maintains God as omnipotent. Frame (2002: 520).
\(^{589}\) Phillips (2005: 113).
\(^{591}\) Phillips (2005: 113).
\(^{594}\) Frame (2002: 520). A traditional perspective would not view the lack of finite nature of God as a negation, but God would be understood in the positive sense as not lacking power by being infinite.
\(^{595}\) Frame (2002: 520). With Phillips’ view, God could be considered less than omnipotent with my own example I provide here, because it is not illogical for a being to sleep, and God cannot sleep. However, it could be stated that it is a strength for God to not need to sleep or be able to sleep.
\(^{596}\) Frame (2002: 520). Phillips would more than likely view this as an ‘absurd suggestion’ with no contextual warrant, as he describes similar attempts to counter his argument. Phillips (2005: 113).
\(^{598}\) Old Testament scholar Victor P. Hamilton reasons this could be taken from a literal (to some degree) reading. Hamilton (1982: 48).
\(^{599}\) I realize there is debate on the creation story in Genesis concerning whether it is to be taken as plain literal, figurative literal, myth or a combination of approaches. La Sor, Hubbard, and Bush reason there is definitely metaphorical language in Genesis. La Sor, Hubbard, and Bush (1987: 72). My example does serve well as agreement with Frame’s point, however. Aspects of Genesis will be further discussed within this thesis.
\(^{600}\) Hamilton (1982: 48).
to walk or ride a bicycle, it certainly would not be within God’s nature to typically ride a bicycle.

Philips summarizes his view on God’s omnipotence in three points. One, God would only be omnipotent if he could do anything that can be explained that is done without contradiction. Two, he then reasons there are many countless activities that God without contradiction cannot do. Three, his conclusion is that God is not omnipotent. Philips’ view can be accepted as reasonable and for some God’s omnipotence would need to be redefined. However, I reason Frame’s explanation adequately offers the points that God can only do what is logically possible and as well what is not contrary to his infinite and spiritual nature.

Friedrich Schleiermacher

Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) according to W.A. Hoffecker (1996), is considered to be a very influential theologian of the nineteenth century, and the father of liberal Protestant theology. Schleiermacher’s views on omnipotence can be contrasted with

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607 Traditional perspectives would still reason that God’s omnipotence need not be redefined as a lack of finiteness would demonstrate God’s lack of impotency.
traditional view discussed. Editors H.R. Mackintosh and J.S. Stewart (1821)(1928)(1976) within the Editors Preface of Schleiermacher’s 1821 text *The Christian Faith* provide the opinion that besides John Calvin’s *Institutes*, *The Christian Faith* is the most important work covering Christian theology and doctrine within Protestantism. George Cross within his 1913 text, *The Theology of Schleiermacher*, explains that in Schleiermacher’s theology human religious consciousness expresses a relation between God and the world, and therefore the consciousness of a dependence on God only arises in connection with the world. God-consciousness is connected with every human experience and this is a demand upon human nature and means every ‘world-impression’ must be able to connect with religious feeling. God-consciousness is not only a contingent aspect of human experience, as this would not allow God omnipotence to be an obtained expression in this world. God’s omnipotence can only be referred to as finite human beings are affected by it through our God consciousness. Divine omnipotence will be conceived by persons as eternal and omnipresent as everything in reality is already ‘posited through finite causes in time and space.’ Everything that exists by natural order still takes places through divine omnipotence and therefore through One, that being God. W.B. Selbie (1911)(2009) explains that for Schleiermacher, the almighty nature of God

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613 Traditional and Reformed.
616 As discussed and referenced from Schleiermacher’s text *The Christian Faith*. See also Selbie (1911)(2009: 68-70).
619 This will be further discussed in Chapter Four, as Schleiermacher’s views have influenced John Hick.
622 Cross (1913)(2009: 1).
624 Cross (1913)(2009: 1).
625 Cross (1913)(2009: 1).
is ‘grounded in the infinite causality’ of the divine God. Persons understand the manifested causality of God through human dependence on everything that comes from this divine being. There is little difference for Schleiermacher between what God can do and what God will do. God’s omnipotence is energy everywhere in action and equates to all possible things. God can do what he wills, and ‘whichever is greater than the other, the will or the ability, there is always a limitation.’ This limitation is only done away with for Schleiermacher when what God can do and will do, are equal in range. The inner power of God to do something and his will do it cannot be separated. God’s almighty power is not the power to do anything, but instead anything God pleases. The divine power of the Almighty is subject to self-limitations which are connected to both God’s moral nature and the freedom of his human creatures. The one all-embracing divine will is identical with eternal omnipotence.

Schleiermacher’s approach redefines Christian religion as a unique element of human experience, not located in the intellectual and moral aspects of persons as these produce indirect knowledge concerning God only. God is instead experienced through feeling. The infinite God is experienced through human experience with the finite world and not primarily from rational and doctrinal concepts. Therefore, with Schleiermacher, unlike many traditional and

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629 Selbie (1911)(2009: 68). Within natural order every effect has been ordained by divine causality.
Reformed approaches with the omnipotence of God \textsuperscript{643} the approach is not primarily concerned with a dogma and doctrine \textsuperscript{644} concerning the omnipotence of God, but is instead focused on how God is experienced by persons, \textsuperscript{645} and this would include God’s attribute of omnipotence. I personally still favour a doctrinal approach \textsuperscript{646} but also grant that an understanding of God, which can include both intellectual and emotional \textsuperscript{647} aspects, can be reasonably theologically considered. Also, there is at least minimally, some truth to the notion that the omnipotence of God with the approach of Schleiermacher, can be experienced by persons through the finite world. \textsuperscript{648} God’s almighty power and will \textsuperscript{649} can be somewhat deduced through his creation that human beings experience daily. \textsuperscript{650}

William James

William James (1842-1910) \textsuperscript{651} is a well-known American philosopher, \textsuperscript{652} psychologist \textsuperscript{653} and a founder of the philosophy of pragmatism. \textsuperscript{654} John K. Roth (1892-1907)(1969) explains within the Introduction to The Moral Philosophy of William James that James’ pragmatism

\textsuperscript{643} Such as Erickson and Frame.
\textsuperscript{646} In particular a Reformed perspective.
\textsuperscript{648} Schleiermacher (1821)(1928)(1976: 212-213).
\textsuperscript{650} Romans, Chapter 1 indicates this idea and C.E.B. Cranfield explains that since creation persons have viewed within that creation God’s eternal power and his divine nature. Cranfield (1992: 32). Robert H. Mounce reasons God is explained within this Chapter as being understandable to persons as powerful and existing beyond natural order. Mounce (1995: 78). The Bible of course does not deal with the philosophical term ‘omnipotence’ but implies in Romans 1 that God is almighty and beyond the visible physical realm.
\textsuperscript{653} McDermott (1996: 385). Burr and Goldinger (1976: 145). James found that his study and teaching within psychology brought up philosophical issues that were not always covered within psychology. Roth (1892-1907)(1969: 2).
emphasizes the human ability to choose an individual lifestyle from several actual and authentic possibilities. Pragmatism emphasized the need for a community of free thought that was open to inquiry and testing. Concepts are to be considered without ‘initial prejudice.’ A pragmatic approach should analyze and clarify forms of human experience and action in order to bring harmony to human community. David Paulsen (1999) within *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* explains that James rejected some of the traditional philosophical views concerning the nature of God, which would include concepts of God as infinite and unchangeable. James reasoned there was a very distinct difference between the God of classic philosophy, orthodox theology, and what the Bible actually taught. James in his 1902 text, *Varieties of Religious Experience* writes that since philosophy could do little to legitimately demonstrate God’s existence, it would not fare better in accurately describing God’s divine attributes. Most importantly, James rejected the God of orthodox theology because this being lacked significant practical meaning. When applying pragmatism to theories of ‘God’s metaphysical attributes’ they are ‘destitute of all intelligible significance.’ James examines many of God’s

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655 Roth (1892-1907)(1969: 3-4).
658 Roth (1892-1907)(1969: 14). Even a critic of James’ pragmatism can admit communities with harmony often bring about positive consequences for those of various worldviews within it. Peace, would be a prime example.
659 The article is entitled: ‘The God of Abraham, Isaac, and (William) James.’
660 Paulsen (1999: 1). The concept that God cannot change is one of immutability. God cannot change in attributes, consciousness, and will.’ Thiessen (1956: 127). The idea being that God does not change or develop, but some scholars reason this understanding is to be more attributed to influences from Greek philosophy than the Bible. Grenz, Guretzki and Nordling (1999: 64). Some reason, as do I, that God is eternally immutable, but can change in how he deals within temporal situations with finite beings. Grenz, Guretzki and Nordling (1999: 64).
661 Paulsen (1999: 1).
662 Within the text Writings 1902 – 1910.
663 I strongly doubt that God as a spiritual being, could ever be proven empirically and physically to exist. Philosophical attempts, in general terms, at proving God’s existence will be discussed briefly in Chapter Four.
supposed attributes as distinguished from his moral qualities, and seriously questions how ‘such qualities as these make any definite connection with our life?’ He reasons there is not even the smallest consequence religiously whether any of the philosophical deductions concerning God’s attributes were true. In contrast, James’ views concepts of God’s moral attributes as beneficial and they ‘positively determine fear and hope and expectation, and are foundations for the saintly life.’ Religion can provide for James metaphysical support for moral efforts of human beings. Pragmatically God’s moral attributes are on a stronger intellectual footing. James reasons the existence of a personal God is ‘an ultimate brute fact.’ This personal God is inconceivable and the human mind can only know its own thoughts and yet a ‘moral imperative exists’ and ‘spiritual principle in every one.’ James desired to make room for religious belief if it was pragmatic, even if the entire worldview expressed by a religion was not verifiable. Religion had its practical emotional benefits. As a result of James’ pragmatic philosophy, Paulsen explains that God’s omnipotence is rejected in

670 James (1902-1910)(1987: 400). For James the source of religious experience is not important, but rather the fruits that are produced by religious experience are important. Geisler (1975: 60). Therefore, understanding God’s attributes, and in a theory of God, is not vital for James as are the results within persons that have religious belief.
672 Roth (1892-1907)(1969: 12).
673 Paulsen (1999: 6).
674 James provides this view within The Will to Believe (1897), which is within a textual compilation of his work entitled The Moral Philosophy of William James. James (1892-1907)(1969: 202).
675 As would be traditional theories of omnipotence to James.
a traditional sense, but rather God’s omnipotence provides the power to secure the triumph of good, and not the power to bring about any logical state of affairs.

Within this view, God’s knowledge of the future is finite and therefore not much different than that of human beings. God would only have knowledge of facts and possibilities. Therefore, a classic view of divine omnipotence would need to be abandoned and God would only be able to bring about a logical state of affairs that would be under constraints based on the actions of other agencies. God is a morally perfect being that is working out history within time. The environment God is working in includes significantly free human beings that have choices that cannot be controlled or absolutely foreknown. For James, human beings and not God alone shape the future of the world. He holds to a view that the future is open-ended for both God and humanity. God’s knowledge of the future would be incomplete as far as with what actually will occur.

James’ view on omnipotence, can be considered to be somewhat subjectively based. Roth does raise this legitimate criticism which I do not think is completely answered by James,

\[681\] More so the human idea of God’s omnipotence is meant here.
\[683\] Paulsen (1999: 6).
\[684\] Foreknowledge which will discussed throughout the thesis, including by Augustine in Chapter Two.
\[685\] Paulsen (1999: 9).
\[686\] Paulsen (1999: 9). I would suggest even if God was finite, his knowledge based on intelligence and a longer existence would provide him with better understanding of possible situations in comparison to his creations.
\[687\] Paulsen (1999: 9).
\[689\] Paulsen (1999: 9).
\[691\] Roth (1892-1907)(1969: 12).
\[692\] Roth (1892-1907)(1969: 12). Within The Will to Believe, James explains that there was an ‘endless chain of causes’ in reality but God was the ‘absolute first cause.’ James (1892-1907)(1969: 203). For James, there would be many causes within the endless chain not in God’s absolute control.
\[693\] Roth (1892-1907)(1969: 15).
\[694\] Roth (1892-1907)(1969: 15).
or by Roth of his behalf.\textsuperscript{695} A significantly subjective view of God that assumes he is omnipotent in some way\textsuperscript{696} and claims that this view can lead to some power to overcome evil for good for humanity\textsuperscript{697} seems on somewhat shaky philosophical ground.\textsuperscript{698} A critic\textsuperscript{699} can state that there is no objective reason to believe that God, if there is one, has the actual power to rid the world of evil, as James’ view could just be a figment of the imagination and misplaced optimism based in emotionalism and a desire for a God based morality as James desired.\textsuperscript{700} A world filled with evil may not be seen by critics as being good in the long run pragmatically,\textsuperscript{701} just because some type of omnipotent and good God may exist.\textsuperscript{702} A traditional Christian and Reformed view on omnipotence would be more philosophically based.\textsuperscript{703} I would add that it also favours an objective approach. The objection was raised, that from James’ perspective Christian theistic views on omnipotence were not really Biblical.\textsuperscript{704} Erickson does point out that within the Bible God is called Almighty,\textsuperscript{705} and that for God all things are possible.\textsuperscript{706} Within Job it is explained that no purpose of God can be restrained.\textsuperscript{707} I can accept these as reasonable claims made through Scripture\textsuperscript{708} concerning the all powerful nature of God and do not see them as meaningless\textsuperscript{709} when these claims are systemized into philosophical theology. However, the Bible is an ancient text and does not deal with the modern term and concept of omnipotence.\textsuperscript{710}

\textsuperscript{695} Roth (1892-1907)(1969: 15-16).
\textsuperscript{698} I am not stating that there are not human subjective aspects to understanding God’s omnipotence, but that the objective understanding of this concept is still important.
\textsuperscript{699} Atheistic or theistic.
\textsuperscript{700} James (1902-1910)(1987: 401).
\textsuperscript{701} Roth (1892-1907)(1969: 15).
\textsuperscript{704} Paulsen (1999: 1).
\textsuperscript{708} Frame (2002: 515).
\textsuperscript{710} Frame (2002: 515).
Therefore, I can accept that there are, even within orthodox Christian approaches, several ways of examining omnipotence Biblically and as well differing conclusions of what this exactly entails in regard to Almighty God philosophically and theologically.\textsuperscript{711}

John K. Roth

John K. Roth (1981) also explains within ‘A Theodicy of Protest\textsuperscript{712} that the finite, limited God of William James offered him some intellectual appeal.\textsuperscript{713} He reasons that to deny God completely would be going too far, but to affirm God’s total goodness and to apologize for a weak God in anyway would also be going too far.\textsuperscript{714} Roth’s theodicy of protest puts God on trial,\textsuperscript{715} and any human repentance will have to be matched by God.\textsuperscript{716} Stephen Davis (1981) suggests that Roth has given up the notion that God is ‘perfectly morally good.’\textsuperscript{717} Roth insists that most theodicy approaches very wrongly legitimize evil.\textsuperscript{718} They can attempt to make suffering all deserved, and/or create happy endings due to God’s ultimate goodness.\textsuperscript{719} There is within this view ‘no legitimation of evil to acknowledge its existence.’\textsuperscript{720} The excessive amount of evil that exists in human history demonstrates that there is an evil side to God which willingly allows it.\textsuperscript{721} Davis explains that for Roth, God is not really omnipotent as God does not possess the perfect goodness to redeem all evil.\textsuperscript{722} Human beings lack the ability to envision how God

\textsuperscript{711} I reason this can be done while still taking a primarily objective approach.
\textsuperscript{712} Within Encountering Evil, Stephen T. Davis (ed.)
\textsuperscript{713} Roth (1981: 9).
\textsuperscript{714} Roth (1981: 10). I can agree that if God is indeed weak, it should be pointed out as such, and not defended.
\textsuperscript{715} Roth (1981: 10). And God’s supposed omnipotence as well, I would suggest could naturally be challenged.
\textsuperscript{716} Roth (1981: 10). Roth’s position assumes that God has moral weakness which finite human beings could intellectually detect. God would have to share the blame for the problem of evil. Phillips (2005: 116-117).
\textsuperscript{717} Davis (1981: 22). Phillips writes that Roth’s analysis leads to the idea that God is not perfectly good. Phillips (2005: 27).
\textsuperscript{718} Roth (1981: 19).
\textsuperscript{719} Roth (1981: 19).
\textsuperscript{720} Roth (1981: 19).
\textsuperscript{721} Davis (1981: 22).
\textsuperscript{722} Davis (1981: 23).
could use all the evil within world history for the greater good.\textsuperscript{723} Roth, in contrast to Davis, states that he actually shares with Davis a belief in God’s omnipotence.\textsuperscript{724} Davis speculates that Roth’s approach weakens a view on God’s omnipotence,\textsuperscript{725} but Roth’s claim that he holds to omnipotence should be taken seriously.\textsuperscript{726} Roth’s interpretation makes sense, as if Roth sees God as all-powerful then the evil God willingly allows that cannot all be used for greater good, is not redeemable\textsuperscript{727} and therefore God should repent of his evil.\textsuperscript{728}

I share with Roth an intellectual and personal frustration with the evil that God willingly allows.\textsuperscript{729} A theodicy of protest is not completely unmerited as all persons have suffered by the hand of God that is ultimately responsible, logically, as he is all-powerful.\textsuperscript{730} Within my Reformed sovereignty theodicy view which I explain within Chapter Three in particular, I reason God does use all evil for the greater good with pure motives.\textsuperscript{731} This view accepts a traditional view of omnipotence.\textsuperscript{732} Roth does have hope as he looks for a resurrection of the dead in the future, and in the present realm hopes that somehow ‘the waste’ as in unnecessary evil, will be placed in check.\textsuperscript{733} He views the traditional concept of God that Davis has as a God that is ‘hidden, absent, even non-existent.’\textsuperscript{734} A trust and hope in any type of God is risky, but he

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{723} Davis (1981: 23). There is certainly a degree of truth to the idea that the evil God allows often cannot be reasonably understood by persons. This could, however, be due as much, or even more, to finite human nature and reasoning as opposed to a moral deficiency or lack of omnipotence with God.


\textsuperscript{725} Davis (1981: 23).

\textsuperscript{726} Roth (1981: 32).


\textsuperscript{728} Roth (1981: 10).

\textsuperscript{729} Roth (1981: 8-10).

\textsuperscript{730} Roth (1981: 32).

\textsuperscript{731} Gratuitous evil is also reviewed and discussed in Chapter Four.


\textsuperscript{733} Roth (1981: 35). Phillips dislikes the use of the term ‘waste’ in regard to humanity and evil and suffering and reasons a loss and gain approach in regard to individual persons is not reasonable. Phillips (2005: 70-71). This is an important point, for the loss suffered by a single individual should never be underestimated for the sake of many persons that do not suffer in the same way and may in some way possibly gain from the suffering of one.

\textsuperscript{734} Roth (1981: 35).
\end{footnotesize}
reasons that the hope does not completely die.\textsuperscript{735} I question whether an omnipotent God with less than perfect motives that would will so much evil, not for the greater good throughout history, would ever change his ways or be convinced by finite creatures to do so.\textsuperscript{736}

John Stuart Mill

John Stuart Mill (1806-1873),\textsuperscript{737} is a well-known British philosopher,\textsuperscript{738} economist,\textsuperscript{739} political and social theorist,\textsuperscript{740} and empiricist.\textsuperscript{741} Fred Wilson (2007) suggests Mill’s views on empiricism and liberal political views on society and culture are among the most effective in modern thought.\textsuperscript{742} Blackburn states Mill is ‘the most influential liberal thinker of the nineteenth century.’\textsuperscript{743} He is the son of Scottish philosopher James Mill (1773-1836).\textsuperscript{744} George W. Carey (2002) writes that John Stuart Mill reasoned that traditional Christianity needed to be replaced\textsuperscript{745} and Mill introduced a concept of a ‘limited God.’\textsuperscript{746} Mill reasons there is a ‘final cause’ that appears to be God working within the natural order,\textsuperscript{747} but this God was not omnipotent and had limited powers that were incapable of bringing about the full reality of what God wanted.\textsuperscript{748}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{735} Roth (1981: 35).
\textsuperscript{736} It is also possible that given God’s omnipotence as Roth accepts, what he and others with similar views understand as evil within God’s nature is simply all goodness. Roth (1981:32). This is not my Reformed view which views evil as separate from good, and not part of God’s nature, but is a reasonable deduction based on Roth’s assumptions on the all-powerful nature of God.
\textsuperscript{742} Wilson (2007: 1).
\textsuperscript{743} Blackburn (1996: 243).
\textsuperscript{745} Carey (2002: 115).
\textsuperscript{746} Carey (2002: 115).
\textsuperscript{747} Carey (2002: 115-116). Mill within Theism discusses the need for a cause and beginning to a series of individual facts. Mill (1833)(1985)(2009: 7). Everything persons know of has a cause and owes existence to a cause. He ponders on how the world can be indebted to a cause for which the world has its existence. He deduces ‘that not everything which we know derives its existence from a cause, but only every event or change.’ Mill (1833)(1985)(2009: 10).
\textsuperscript{748} Carey (2002: 116). David Gordon writes that Mill believed God was limited in nature and therefore not omnipotent. Gordon (2002: 3).
\end{footnotesize}
within Theism from 1833 explains that there could be no real belief in a ‘Creator and Governor’ until humankind had begun to understand the confused phenomena which existed around them.\textsuperscript{749} Humanity must bring itself out of the chaos and confusion of reality to have a workable system in able to work out ‘a single plan’.\textsuperscript{750} This type of world was anticipated ‘by individuals of exceptional genius’ but could only become true after a long period of scientific examination and thought.\textsuperscript{751} Mill desired to replace the God of Christianity with a Religion of Humanity.\textsuperscript{752} He reasoned traditional Christianity had been overrated in its promotion of human virtue and morality in society.\textsuperscript{753} The Christian God was not the actual creator of the world.\textsuperscript{754}

Mill theorized of a God that resembled the ‘Platonic Demiurge’.\textsuperscript{755} This God did not measure up to the highest human morality and was not concerned with the greatest possible happiness for the greatest possible number of human beings.\textsuperscript{756} Since God was so limited, it was up to humanity to bring about greater human happiness.\textsuperscript{757} However, Mill still reasoned that God as is, without omnipotence, would have intelligence and power beyond that of human beings.\textsuperscript{758} Mill embraced a type of secular altruism and a selfless concern for society as a whole.

as opposed to concerns with personal salvation for the typical person.\textsuperscript{759} Within Mill’s philosophy there was room within the world for human beings to improve it and the for persons within it to improve.\textsuperscript{760} Mill desires to philosophically develop a positive view on the material universe and the place of human beings within it.\textsuperscript{761} Within \textit{The Utility of Religion} which was published in 1874, after his death in 1873, Mill reasons the improvements that have taken place in humanity and that will continue to proceed over time should produce religion with the best human morality.\textsuperscript{762}

The religious goodness can be reasoned out from ‘philosophical, Christian, or any other elements.’\textsuperscript{763} Modern religion, once it has freed itself from the questionable consequences of concepts of bad doctrine,\textsuperscript{764} can be examined for its philosophical usefulness.\textsuperscript{765} Religious belief should serve as an instrument of social goodness for humanity.\textsuperscript{766} Mill’s views strike me as being influential within modern secular thought,\textsuperscript{767} and modern western religious concepts.\textsuperscript{768} I can support, in limited terms, human effort to understand reality\textsuperscript{769} and improve human conditions.\textsuperscript{770} Indeed humanity should come together as much as possible to develop a plan in order to benefit all of humanity.\textsuperscript{771} I would not support a ‘Religion of Humanity,’\textsuperscript{772} but do

\textsuperscript{759} Carey (2002: 116).
\textsuperscript{760} Wilson (2007: 36).
\textsuperscript{761} Wilson (2007: 1).
\textsuperscript{762} Mill (1874)(2002: 3).
\textsuperscript{763} Mill (1874)(2002: 3).
\textsuperscript{764} For example, Mill within \textit{Utilitarianism and On Liberty} within the essay ‘On Liberty’ from 1859 is critical as a ‘narrow theory of life’ of the Calvinistic theory that a great offence of humanity against God is human self will. That being, human nature is very corrupt and there is no redemption unless human nature dies. God must be obeyed for redemption. Mill (1789-1861)(2003: 136).
\textsuperscript{765} Mill (1874)(2002: 3).
\textsuperscript{766} Mill (1874)(2002: 4).
\textsuperscript{769} Mill (1833)(1985)(2009: 6).
favour persons of various religious and non-religious backgrounds working together for human benefit.

Mill rejects Christianity and traditional Christian doctrine concerning omnipotence. Mill’s deity is similar to the ‘Platonic Demiurge’ and this deity simply develops matter from preexisting chaos and therefore would not only be limited in power but also finite in nature. Mill supports a concept of a first cause as in a series of events but this leaves the nagging question and problem of what was the cause of the Demiurge? An infinite eternal God can be understood as the first cause not needing a cause. A finite deity, although admittedly logically possible, requires further explanation. If the being is not revealed through Scriptural revelation, it is a God of primarily philosophical speculation and requires further elaboration on the part of Mill in regard to, for instance, why humanity should believe in and follow this type of deity, assuming that there is not a greater, infinite, eternal first cause that would necessarily exist behind that being.

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780 God’s essence is eternal and necessary (logically must exist), and the finite universe is temporal and contingent (not necessary). Shedd (1874-1890)(1980: 191 Volume 1). God as a necessary being is therefore the cause of contingent creation. Frame reasons God is the creator and the Lord of the beginning of history. This occurs within his eternal plans. Frame (2002: 389). Within this view God is the implied first cause that exists necessarily prior to everything else. Pojman (1996: 596).
781 Hypothetically, humanity and the universe could have been created by a finite God that was created by another cause.
782 In contrast to God in the Hebrew Bible, God in the New Testament and Allah in the Qur'an.
Edgar Sheffield Brightman

Edgar Sheffield Brightman (1884-1953) is a philosopher and theologian noted for believing in a finite God. John H. Lavely (2007) explains that Brightman ‘carved out’ a concept of ‘theistic finitism.’ Brightman within A Philosophy of Religion (1940) calls God the ‘finite-infinite controller of the given.’ He developed an original view on the finite God different than John Stuart Mill, William James and Alfred North Whitehead. His view features a shift from traditional theism, but this is not a rejection of the Christian faith. Instead he offers from his perspective, a true Christian expression within a more reasonable approach to traditional supernaturalism. Brightman explains in The Problem of God (1930) the new concept of God has not confined the divine creative work to a single week, and God does not cease to produce and maintain newer life forms. As there is scientific evolution and progression in the material realm, he reasons there can be expansion with God as in more far reaching goals and development for the physical realm than persons had previously realized.

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788 Lavely (2007: 122). This is not to state there are no similarities in views.
789 Lavely (2007: 123). Brightman explains that some do not like to consider a change in fundamental religious concepts. It was absurd for persons to think that a view concerning God could not be improved. Brightman (1930: 9-10). He also notes that it is ‘ludicrous’ for one to reason the whole truth about God is personally known. Brightman (1930: 63). I can agree that even if God is finite, a finite human being is going to be unable to completely understand this superior being.
790 Lavely (2007: 24). Brightman reasoned, because of the problem of evil, God could not be both omnipotent, in a traditional sense and omnibenevolent. Lachs and Talisse (2008: 84). Brightman suggested it absurd to state that there was no evidence for the existence of God. Brightman (1930: 62).
792 Many moderate conservative and liberal Christians are not convinced that God necessarily created the world in one week, or six days to be more precise. I discuss Genesis and the fall in Chapter Two, and I am not convinced that all of the creation account must be taken plain literally in order to stay true to Scripture. Figurative literal approaches are possible at some points.
793 Brightman (1930: 68).
794 Brightman (1930: 68). Those within the Church prior to the development of scientific evolutionary theory would be at an intellectual disadvantage in coming to similar conclusions to Brightman.
Brightman reasons that God is not fixed but is still growing and expanding. He questions traditional concepts that God is a metaphysical unity that is perfectly at peace with self, as in no struggle, instead God may not be so separate from the physical world and the struggles that go with it. Brightman reasons there are struggles within the divine being and God has genuine problems to deal with in the physical realm as a finite and limited God. The expansion of God means he must lack some knowledge and power, and this view contradicts those within theology that place a strong emphasis on God’s sovereignty, as does Calvinism.

According to Gordon Clark (1959) Brightman is also a noted empiricist and works out philosophy of religion along these lines; however, philosophical interpretations should be reasonably understood within human experience and should never be under the subordination of logic or empiricism. Persons were not to follow the logic of the rationalists, but a reasonable approach is to follow a set of empirical principles and concepts by which human beings organize their experience within the universe. Brightman subscribes to a view of ‘personalism’ as in the term referring to the ‘ultimate and irreducible unit of reality,’ and there exists no realities other than persons. James Richmond (1999) notes it is the philosophical viewpoint which views human personality as the starting point, and this may include a personal

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796 Brightman (1930: 94).
797 Brightman (1930: 94).
798 Brightman (1930: 102).
801 Clark (1959: 34). A rationalist holds that there is knowledge that can be understood independent of empirical experience. Edwards and Papp (1973: 666). A view that certain things can be innately known by the mind, even without being experienced. Pojman (1996: 599).
802 Clark (1959: 34).
God as a key to understanding the nature of the world. God was the uncreated creator of humanity, ‘the ground of all being’ and the one that sustains the universe. God was also person. Personalism would include God’s creations and reality is a community of persons sustained by God, the Supreme Person. The total view of human experience leads one to a belief in some sort of Supreme Being, who is also supremely good, beautiful and of reason. Creation did not come ex nihilo from the hand of God, and matter is not something external from God. Matter and the physical world is therefore not completely separate from God, and in a sense nature is a representation of the divine creator.

Lavely reasons that Brightman’s view on omnipotence is ‘ambiguous’ and is difficult to explain within his overall description and understanding of God. Omnipotence may literally describe the quality of everything to God, in other words God is omnipotent, not in a traditional sense but rather God has all the power there is, and all the power that is available. God is omnitemporal as opposed to unchanging.

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807 Lachs and Talisse (2008: 84).
811 Brightman (1930: 63).
816 Brightman (1930: 11).
817 Lavely (2007: 132). This is a reasonable point.
820 Lachs and Talisse (2008: 84). God would not be considered immutable.
the finite realm and not beyond it, and God can also change and expand within that realm.\textsuperscript{821} God is ‘creative, supreme, and personal’ yet is limited\textsuperscript{822} and there are experiences which are eternally existent which he does not create.\textsuperscript{823} Nevertheless, God can control the experiences that he did not create.\textsuperscript{824} Any understanding of God as omnipotent would be ‘derived predominantly from abstract thought’ as the view and theory cannot be based on experience alone, although humanity does experience the power of God.\textsuperscript{825} Our finite human experiences cannot express omnipotence.\textsuperscript{826} As with the previous approaches, I view the finite God as logically possible but would still leave the need for the infinite first cause.\textsuperscript{827}

Process Theism: Alfred North Whitehead

David Viney (2008) suggests that Brightman is one of the twentieth century proponents of Process theism.\textsuperscript{828} Although Brightman’s views were primarily independently made,\textsuperscript{829} process theism refers to a general group of theological concepts attributed to Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947)\textsuperscript{830} and Charles Hartshorne (1897-2000).\textsuperscript{831} Whitehead is the more preeminent exemplar and within Process and Reality (1927-1929)(1957) explains he desired to complete an account of humanity and its experience in relation to philosophical problems.\textsuperscript{832} In

\textsuperscript{821} Lachs and Talisse (2008: 84).
\textsuperscript{822} God’s will and power is limited within this view. Delaney (1996: 575).
\textsuperscript{823} Brightman (1930: 10).
\textsuperscript{824} Brightman (1930: 10). At the same time Brightman believes that supposed revelation from God needs to be judged by human reason. Clark (1959: 34). God controls all experiences but religious ideas were still better understood through human experience and reason.
\textsuperscript{825} Brightman (1930: 98). Main values and religious concepts would need to be discovered through human experience. Clark (1959: 34). Omnipotence would therefore remain largely a philosophical issue.
\textsuperscript{826} Brightman (1930: 98).
\textsuperscript{827} Ultimately I reason that even if human beings were created by a finite God, the ultimate first cause is the one that human beings should ultimately appeal to as this being could overrule the lesser deity. I would make any appeal for everlasting life to the most powerful good being in existence.
\textsuperscript{828} Viney (2008: 35).
\textsuperscript{829} Viney (2008: 35).
\textsuperscript{831} Viney (2008: 1).
\textsuperscript{832} Whitehead (1927-1929)(1957: vi).
Religion In The Making (1926) Whitehead explains it is legitimate to attempt with a more
definite knowledge of metaphysics, to interpret human experience, but these general principles
must be amplified and adapted into one general system of truth.\textsuperscript{833} Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E.
Olsen (1992) explain that antiquated pre-scientific concepts of the divine creator that view God
in absolute and sovereign terms are rejected.\textsuperscript{834} Whitehead disagreed with a traditional view of a
‘transcendent creator, at whose fiat the world came into being, and whose imposed will it
obeys.’\textsuperscript{835} The nature of God needed to be philosophically constructed anew.\textsuperscript{836} A balance is
sought between God’s immanence\textsuperscript{837} and transcendence,\textsuperscript{838} and a concept of static transcendence
is rejected as instead God is understood to have a evolutionary transcendence.\textsuperscript{839} God and the
physical realm are immanent with each other and God’s transcendence means their realities are
not identical and not always determined by each other.\textsuperscript{840} God is fully reasoned to be involved
and influenced by temporal events and processes.\textsuperscript{841} These processes unfold as sequences of
events over time.\textsuperscript{842} God, contrary to classic and traditional Christian theism is finite, temporal,
changeable\textsuperscript{843} and experiences intense emotion, pain and sadness.\textsuperscript{844} Whitehead explains that ‘It
is not true that God is on all respects infinite.’\textsuperscript{845} Process theology is a philosophical approach

\textsuperscript{833} Whitehead (1926: 149).
\textsuperscript{834} Grenz and Olsen (1992: 131).
\textsuperscript{835} Whitehead (1927-1929)(1957: 404).
\textsuperscript{836} Whitehead (1926: 150).
\textsuperscript{837} God is actively present within reality and creation. Erickson (1994: 302).
\textsuperscript{838} God by nature is beyond and separate from his material creation. Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling (1999: 115).
\textsuperscript{839} Grenz and Olsen (1992: 132). A balance needed to be sought as there were extreme views concerning God as
impersonal force behind the universe as in deism and also the view that God has absolute sovereignty as the sole
\textsuperscript{840} Viney (2008: 10).
\textsuperscript{843} God is not immutable as is classically defined. See Thiessen (1956: 127). Grenz, Guretzki and Nordling (1999:
64).
\textsuperscript{844} God is not impassible according to this view. This concept will be further discussed within Chapter Five. Surin
(1982: 97). My view would not be strictly classic by this definition.
\textsuperscript{845} Whitehead (1926: 153). Whitehead claims that if God was infinite in all ways this would make him as infinitely
evil as he is good. I doubt logically and reasonably that an infinitely holy and good God could at the same time be
infinitely evil and so I can grant Whitehead half a point here. However, God could still be infinite completely in
that does not rely on any kind of divine revelation. Instead it relies on a process of change over time as a theory of metaphysics. God’s actual concrete nature is responsive and influenced by the processes that take in the world, and therefore God is limited. Some things are unknowable for God, that he only can realize as they happen, and as these new things develop God’s knowledge processes over time. Divine sovereignty is questionable and certainly no longer absolute within this system.

Whitehead, a mathematician and philosopher, established a speculative philosophy of metaphysics within a scientific non-metaphysical reality. This system is an attempt to adequately explain all individual beings in existence, including God. Basically a system of metaphysics needed to be developed that would work with modern scientific theories and reality, and therefore God was not a ‘static essence’ but a process. The ‘actual entities’ that make up this process are non-permanent and transient and each action and activity is dipolar having a physical pole of the past and a mental pole which is a possibility that can be achieved. The physical pole feels the physical reality of actual entity, while the mental pole feels or prehends as Whitehead calls it, the eternal objects by which actual entities have conceptual definiteness. These physical and mental poles are an aspect of every real being/actual entities although they nature and willingly allow evil to exist within his creation, which shall be discussed particularly in Chapter Three as a Reformed view. I definitely agree with Whitehead that an infinitely good and evil God would be a God of nothingness. Whitehead (1926: 153). I doubt this being could logically exist.

847 Viney (2008: 1).
are not real things themselves. Prehends is the feeling of grasping the physical and conceptual information concerning actual entities. This will occur within a stream and series of occasions. All occurrences take place within the process of these actual entities. Each event is partially self-created and partially influenced by other occasions and entities. God is also dipolar and his nontemporal pole is where God conceives the infinite variety of external objects and sees the possibilities and provides the opportunity for the process of becoming. God is an actual entity and being. God has a primordial nature and consequent nature, with the primordial being conceptual, while the consequent nature is God as conscious. Whitehead explains that the ‘consequent nature is the weaving of God’s physical feelings upon his primordial concepts.’ God’s primordial conceptual nature is infinite and does not have negative prehension/feelings, and is eternal and unconscious. This nature is permanent as God works out endless possibilities. God in his vision can determine every possibility and adjust details where needed. The consequent nature of God originates with physical experience with the material temporal world and it is integrated with the primordial conceptual nature. The consequent nature as conscious is determined, finite and incomplete. These two aspects of God’s deity can be distinguished but are inseparable. This consequent conscious nature had

859 Viney (2008: 8).
866 Viney (2008: 9).
870 Viney (2008: 9).
874 Viney (2008: 9).
God constantly acquiring new experiences. A problem arises that if God’s primordial nature is eternal and unconscious it precedes the consequent nature that is temporal and has consciousness. I question whether an unconscious deity would in any way proceed to a conscious temporal reality. Where did God’s consciousness come from? I reason consciousness would have to exist eternally to lead to a finite reality of consciousness.

Panentheism

Process theism approaches are sometimes referred to as being panentheistic. The two approaches are not identical but process theism moves in the direction of panentheism. David H. Nikkel (2003) defines panentheism as from the Greek meaning ‘all is in God.’ Both God’s transcendence and immanence are accepted, as the world and matter is in God, and God is ‘all-encompassing with respect to being.’ Panentheism is not identical to pantheism which postulates that ‘God is identical with everything’ or that God is in everything and that God and the universe are one. The difference being that panentheism understands ‘God is in all things’ but not identical with all things as with pantheism. As example, God in pantheism may be considered to be equal with a tree. God in panentheism may be considered beyond the tree, but the vital force within it, where as in my traditional Christian theistic understanding God

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Viney (2008: 9).


An eternal reality of unconsciousness should lead to a finite reality of unconsciousness.


Grenz and Olsen (1992: 142). I am not stating that this is the case in every documented view of process theism, but it is generally true that the two views are closely related.

Nikkel (2003: 1).

Nikkel (2003: 1).


Martinich (1996: 556). Blackburn also explains Benedictus de Spinoza (1632-1677) is noted for this view within Western philosophy.
is beyond a tree and sustains it, but is not the vital force within it. Panentheism attempts to ‘avoid the pitfalls’ of traditional theism. God is prohibited from having a true and genuine relationship with matter and the universe because of traditional theistic views such as that God is immutable, impassible, and eternal and timeless. Panentheism is an intellectual compromise between traditional theism and pantheism. God is more than just the material universe, as there is an unchanging aspect to God’s being and also a dynamic aspect to God as the divine being changes as matter and the universe do. German philosopher, F.W. J. Schelling (1845)(1936) reasons: ‘As there is nothing before or outside of God, he must contain within himself the ground of his existence.’ He reasons God’s nature is inseparable from God and yet can be distinguished. Panentheism can reasonably be understood as an overarching view within many process theism approaches which I have contrasted with my own views.

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887 This is my example based on Erickson’s presentation. Erickson (1994: 303-307).
894 Schelling sought to deflect criticisms that he was a pantheist. ‘Unity is of essence, but so is diversity.’ Gutmann (1845)(1936: xxxi). However, his comments make it possible that he had views which were perhaps panentheistic. Material things are dependent on God and yet independent.
896 My views are Reformed but not strictly within a certain camp such as Presbyterian or Baptist. I have primarily come to my Reformed views through MPhil and PhD research.
CHAPTER TWO

FREE WILL THEODICY

1. Introduction

Free Will Theodicy Defined

John S. Feinberg the author of *The Many Faces of Evil*, writes in his review of free will theodicy, that it assumes God is not the cause of evil, but rather it is the abuse of human free will that leads to the problem evil. God is considered to have given human beings free will in order that they would freely choose to commit good actions, including worshipping their creator. Despite the fact God knew human beings would commit evil actions when he made them, God was not guilty of wrong doing because he did not force human beings to commit evil; human beings did this freely. Richard Schoenig (1997) states free will theodicy claims, contrary to God’s commands, human beings misuse their free will and cause moral evil. In opposition to critics’ ideas, God would therefore remain omnibenevolent despite the moral

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897 My primary exemplar for Chapter Three.
899 Feinberg (1994: 56). Lubac provides and discusses a viewpoint that human beings were created by God with natural abilities, although limited, to see and understand God. Humans were created righteous. Lubac (1965)(2000: 150-151).
failings of his creation according to free will theodicy. Clark Pinnock (1986) explains that God could have made a world in which he determined every last detail, but God did not, and instead there exists a world where significantly free moral agents exist. The created universe therefore does not always follow God’s intentions.

Within free will theodicy, human beings are understood to have a mind and will that is truly conscious and able to make independent decisions apart from coercive or any substantial influence from another being. Tim Mawson (1999) indicates free will theodicy assumes moral evil that accompanies free will is necessary as a universe with free will is better than one without free will. The idea being that within free will theodicy significant, unfettered, human freedom, is vital for meaningful existence. God is therefore justified in having evil exist in his creation because the amount of overall good produced with significant human free will would far outweigh the negatives within the problem of evil, even though many persons reject God. A greater good could not be realized unless God allowed his human creatures to freely reject him, since this was the only means by which they could also ultimately love, trust, and obey God. A free will theodicy therefore assumes God exists, and is morally perfect. The evil that results in his creation is not caused by the creator, but by his creatures.

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Incompatibilism

Philosopher Tim Mawson reasons that incompatibilism, which is also known as libertarianism in regard to human free will, believes that true human free will must be uncaused by preceding states. Thus within incompatibilist theory, a human action would never truly be free because God would have willed and determined it on his own before he simultaneously willed it with a given person. David M. Ciocchi (2002) describes the incompatibilist idea as being God can determine that an agent commit action $x$, but he cannot determine that an agent commit action $x$ freely. Frederick Ferre (1973)(1976) presents an incompatibilist view called self-determinism. Ferre reasons that, although there are external conditions relevant for every action, the outcomes of these actions are not fixed by any causal chain. Ferre here is suggesting that for some events there is not a prior determined cause. Therefore, within this theory some human actions would not be caused or simultaneously determined by God or any external force, and some human actions could be considered self-determined. Norman Geisler (1986) describes a form of incompatibilism which he, like Ferre, calls self-determinism. Moral choices are not caused or uncaused by another being, but are self-caused. Incompatibilists, therefore, do not deny there are outside forces that influence significantly free human actions; however, they do not accept any notion that a free act can be

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927 Geisler (1986: 75).
928 Geisler (1986: 75).
929 Geisler (1986: 75).
caused in a determined sense by one being upon another and remain a significantly free act.\textsuperscript{930}

An act cannot be determined or simultaneously determined and remain truly free within incompatibilism.\textsuperscript{931}

Feinberg, who has written extensively on the concepts of free will and determinism, explains incompatibilism is defined as the idea within free will theodicy that a person is free in regard to an action if he or she is free to either commit, or refrain from committing the action.\textsuperscript{932}

There can be no antecedent\textsuperscript{933} conditions or laws that will determine that an action is committed or not committed.\textsuperscript{934} Hugh McCann (2001) explains there can be no independent determining conditions of human deeds, and human actions are committed voluntarily.\textsuperscript{935} Incompatibilism states it is incompatible for human beings to be significantly free in committing actions while,\textsuperscript{936} at the same time, God or any other being forces, coerces, or simultaneously determines those same actions.\textsuperscript{937} Gregory A. Boyd (2001) explains incompatibilism assumes, since human beings are free their wills and resulting actions are not, in any way, determined by any outside force.\textsuperscript{938}

In contrast, human beings have self-determining freedom.\textsuperscript{939} John Sanders (1998) writes that in incompatibilism it is believed genetic or environmental factors are not ignored in the process of human actions,\textsuperscript{940} but it is thought a human being could always have done otherwise in any given situation.\textsuperscript{941}

\textsuperscript{932} Feinberg (1994: 64).
\textsuperscript{933} In his article entitled ‘Conditional’ Simon Blackburn writes that an antecedent exists if $p$ causes $q$. $P$ is the antecedent or prior cause of $q$ which is the conditional and the consequence. Blackburn (1996: 73-74).
\textsuperscript{934} Feinberg (1994: 64).
\textsuperscript{935} McCann (2001: 115).
\textsuperscript{936} Feinberg (1994: 64).
\textsuperscript{937} Feinberg (1994: 64).
\textsuperscript{938} Boyd (2001: 52).
\textsuperscript{939} Boyd (2001: 52).
\textsuperscript{940} Sanders (1998: 221).
\textsuperscript{941} Sanders (1998: 221). That would be significant freedom for incompatibilism.
Blackburn explains free will theory requires autonomous beings that are able to perform free actions without any significant influence upon their will.\textsuperscript{942} He describes autonomy as the ability of agents to govern themselves,\textsuperscript{943} and for this to occur autonomous agents must commit actions which are truly their own.\textsuperscript{944} Autonomy cannot occur when an outside force is coercing or forcing a will to act.\textsuperscript{945} Therefore incompatibilism states God could not have made human beings in a way that they were both truly free and, at the same time, guarantee human beings always committed actions God desired.\textsuperscript{946} Feinberg writes that for this view, freedom is incompatible with contingently sufficient nonsubsequent conditions of an action.\textsuperscript{947} The contingently sufficient nonsubsequent actions\textsuperscript{948} would be God making people in such a way that they only freely did one thing or another.\textsuperscript{949} Michael Peterson (1982) explains the problem of evil for this system would therefore be a natural result of God creating beings with free will,\textsuperscript{950} and he could not cause them to do good actions without eliminating their significant freedom.\textsuperscript{951} Peterson (1998) reasons a world filled with significantly free creatures would have more value than a world filled with creatures that had their actions determined.\textsuperscript{952}

Feinberg importantly writes that just as the incompatibilist does not claim that all actions are significantly free,\textsuperscript{953} the compatibilist also does not attach significant freedom to all acts.\textsuperscript{954} Feinberg then admits that it is difficult for compatibilists to determine intellectually if certain acts were done by an individual with significant freedom, or with the use of some type of

\textsuperscript{942} Blackburn (1996: 31).
\textsuperscript{943} Blackburn (1996: 31).
\textsuperscript{944} Blackburn (1996: 31).
\textsuperscript{945} Blackburn (1996: 31).
\textsuperscript{946} Feinberg (1994: 60).
\textsuperscript{948} Feinberg (1994: 60).
\textsuperscript{949} Feinberg (1994: 60).
\textsuperscript{950} Peterson (1982: 104).
\textsuperscript{951} Peterson (1982: 104).
\textsuperscript{952} Peterson (1998: 35).
\textsuperscript{953} Feinberg (2001: 637).
\textsuperscript{954} Feinberg (2001: 637).
compulsion. He then states that this intellectual difficulty does not disprove compatibilism. I agree that it does not disprove compatibilism, but the fact that both compatibilists and incompatibilists admit that some actions are not significantly free would make the self-deterministic notions of Ferre and Geisler unlikely. If some actions are determined and caused by God or an external force, then a system that generally adopts a strong view of God’s sovereignty and limited significant human freedom is preferable. If to both compatibilists and incompatibilists, human beings at times can be forced to commit actions against their will, it is ever more likely that the human will is not the primary cause in human actions, but the secondary cause if it is allowed to be a secondary determining factor by the primary cause. This concept is describing soft determinism as stated previously in this work.

Compatibilism

This approach within theodicy needs to be noted at this point because it is often compared to incompatibilism. Grenz, Guretzki and Nordling define compatibilism as the theory that human free will is compatible with God’s sovereign prerogative to determine or will all events. Within compatibilism human freedom is considered to be analogous to God’s freedom but not equal with it; human freedom is considered limited while God’s is absolute. Louis P. Pojman (1996) explains the difference between determinism, which is also known as hard

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960 These actions would be done without significant human freedom and therefore it would be intellectually untenable to attach human moral responsibility to such actions.
determinism,\textsuperscript{966} and compatibilism, which is also known as soft determinism.\textsuperscript{967} Within determinism or hard determinism, God\textsuperscript{968} causes an act and no created being is responsible for his or her moral actions,\textsuperscript{969} while for compatibilism or soft determinism, although God causes actions, created beings are responsible where they act voluntarily.\textsuperscript{970} Leibniz made it clear that human beings must be free, even though human freedom may appear incompatible with divine nature, as persons must have freedom in order to be considered worthy of punishment for wrong actions.\textsuperscript{971} W.T. Stace (1952)(1976) explains that moral responsibility is consistent with determinism in the context of soft determinism and requires it.\textsuperscript{972} If human actions are uncaused then reward or punishment would be unjustified.\textsuperscript{973} Stace reasons that there must be at least some human cause within human actions to make them morally responsible.\textsuperscript{974} If human actions were coerced or forced with hard determinism, persons could not be held morally responsible.\textsuperscript{975} At the same time, if human beings are not at least a secondary cause\textsuperscript{976} of actions primarily caused by God, then human actions would be morally insignificant.\textsuperscript{977} If one reasons that human actions are random and uncaused, and there is no primary or secondary cause to human actions, meaning neither determinism/hard determinism or compatibilism/soft determinism exists, this would make human actions amoral and morally irrelevant and insignificant.

\textsuperscript{966} Pojman (1996: 596).
\textsuperscript{967} Pojman (1996: 596).
\textsuperscript{968} This could be an outside force, as well, that is not God. An atheist may be a compatibilist and/or an incompatibilist, or one could hold to hard determinism. Schelling suggests that ‘absolute causal power in one being leaves nothing but unconditional passivity for all the rest.’ Schelling (1845)(1936: 11). This would be a difficulty with accepting hard determinism.
\textsuperscript{969} Pojman (1996: 596).
\textsuperscript{970} Pojman (1996: 596).
\textsuperscript{971} Leibniz (1710)(1998: 123).
\textsuperscript{972} Stace (1952)(1976: 29).
\textsuperscript{973} Stace (1952)(1976: 29).
\textsuperscript{974} Stace (1952)(1976: 30).
\textsuperscript{975} Pojman (1996: 596).
\textsuperscript{976} Stace (1952)(1976: 30).
\textsuperscript{977} Stace (1952)(1976: 30).
Within hard determinism God would be the only cause of human actions, while with soft determinism God would be the primary cause of human actions and persons the secondary cause. Compatibilism, like incompatibilism, holds to free will but in a limited form. P. S. Greenspan (1998) writes compatibilism holds to free will and determinism being compatible. Feinberg, a noted compatibilist, describes compatibilism as stating certain nonconstraining conditions could strongly influence actions in conjunction with human free will performing these actions. Feinberg (2001) explains that with this viewpoint, there will be no contradiction in stating God would create human beings who were significantly free, unconstrained, and yet committed actions that God willed. Sovereignty theodicy, which will be discussed in the next Chapter, does hold to a modified form of free will and believes human beings freely choose actions for which they can be held fully responsible. This would be, as noted, as soft-determinism and also compatibilism. However, since compatibilism, in contrast to incompatibilism, believes external forces can simultaneously influence the human will and actions with soft determinism, compatibilism is generally rejected within free will theodicy.

Alexander R. Pruss (2003) notes a key difference between incompatibilism and compatibilism in regard to committing an action. The incompatibilist thinks if someone freely refrains from an action, they must not have been causally determined or significantly influenced.

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980 Pojman (1996: 596).
987 Compatibilism/soft determinism will be rejected by some incompatibilists as a slightly watered down version of determinism/hard determinism. Others may reject it even while understanding its major differences from hard determinism.
to do so.\textsuperscript{989} The compatibilist thinks if someone refrains from an action, they have the power to do this and were not constrained from doing the action by an outside force.\textsuperscript{990} Compatibilism allows for significantly free human beings to commit free actions, simultaneously influenced and determined by an outside force,\textsuperscript{991} but never with the use of constraint, coercion or force.\textsuperscript{992} Incompatibilism denies that any outside influence can significantly will any action,\textsuperscript{993} or impose itself on a significantly free being for a truly free action to occur.\textsuperscript{994}

John Calvin’s (1543)(1998) theology holds to a strong view on God’s sovereignty\textsuperscript{995} and to a limited view of human freedom.\textsuperscript{996} In modern, but not Reformation era terms, Calvin could be considered a compatibilist\textsuperscript{997} and explains that those who committed wrong actions performed them willfully and deliberately.\textsuperscript{998} Calvin viewed God as working his good purposes through the evil conduct of people,\textsuperscript{999} but he pointed out that God’s motives in willing these deeds were pure while those who committed wrong had wicked motives.\textsuperscript{1000} Leibniz writes that the holy God co-operates in human evil.\textsuperscript{1001} Human beings committed these actions freely within their nature and people were not forced or coerced by God to commit wrong actions.\textsuperscript{1002} Calvin’s views shall be discussed further in Chapter Three.
Author’s Viewpoints

I personally do not hold to free will theodicy but to a compatibilist sovereignty theodicy.\textsuperscript{1003} My research, however, has shown that Augustine and Alvin C. Plantinga have written logical, reasonable presentations for free will theodicy,\textsuperscript{1004} although within \textit{God, Freedom, and Evil}, Plantinga calls his presentation a defence which I will discuss later.\textsuperscript{1005}

Augustine and Alvin C. Plantinga

Augustine’s approach was mainly theological with some philosophy, and Plantinga’s approach was mainly philosophical with some theology, so a synthesis is not the best approach and I shall review them separately.\textsuperscript{1006} I will discuss primarily where their viewpoints are similar in order to provide a cohesive evaluation of free will theodicy, bearing in mind that Augustine existed over 1500 years earlier than Plantinga.\textsuperscript{1007} This, of course, means Augustine could have influenced the understanding of Plantinga, and Plantinga does explain Augustine wrote a free will theodicy which has some similarities to his Free Will Defence.\textsuperscript{1008} As shall be seen in the coming review, the writings of Augustine and Plantinga agree God was not the cause of evil,\textsuperscript{1009} and that human free will was required in order for human beings to truly commit good actions and to be in line with God’s ultimate purposes.\textsuperscript{1010} Both men agree some type of corruption and depravity took place in humanity.\textsuperscript{1011} Augustine (421)(1998) names it privation and Plantinga

\textsuperscript{1003} Feinberg presents this theodicy type in Chapter Six of \textit{The Many Faces of Evil}. My views on theodicy would be similar, but not identical to Feinberg’s. Feinberg (1994: 124-143).

\textsuperscript{1004} Their approaches are basically logical and successful in dealing with the evil they set out to discuss, although I still favour a Reformed type theodicy more.

\textsuperscript{1005} Plantinga (1977)(2002: 28).

\textsuperscript{1006} It is important to review these views separately in order for their historical context. Augustine is an ancient theological writer, Plantinga is a modern philosophical one.

\textsuperscript{1007} Plantinga therefore used modern terms that Augustine would not have had the opportunity to be familiar with.


calls it transworld depravity, both of which shall be explained later.\footnote{Augustine (398-399)(1992: 149). Human beings are left to their own powers even while the soul is still capable of knowing God. Humanity is still left in a ‘powerlessness’ and needs God’s grace. Lubac (1965)(2000: 151-152).} These two men, especially Plantinga, also deal with the idea of natural evils and attempt to explain why they existed, so I will discuss natural evils.\footnote{Augustine (426)(1992: 197).} I will not be dealing in depth with the differing approaches to the topic of free will theodicy between Augustine and Plantinga since they are beyond the scope of this thesis, although some differences should be noted briefly.\footnote{Augustine (398-399)(1992: 149).} Augustine’s writings feature some controversial theological issues Plantinga did not primarily deal with as Plantinga’s approach was more narrowly focused and less dogmatic.\footnote{Augustine is both a theologian and philosopher of religion, Plantinga is a philosopher of religion. This can be seen as Plantinga is more abstract in presentation and Augustine relatively more interested in theology and Scripture.} Augustine’s writings supported the idea of the fall of humanity,\footnote{Augustine (426)(1958: 254-255).} a theological concept that Plantinga does not deal with to any great degree in regard to his defence. The fall, however, was a background to understanding the corruption aspect of Augustine’s theodicy.\footnote{Augustine (426)(1958: 254-255).} In *The City of God*, Augustine (426)(1958) writes the fault of an evil will begins when a person falls from God, the Supreme Being, and becomes something less.\footnote{Augustine (426)(1958: 254-255).} He clarifies later by stating a person does not fall into sin, but rather sinfully falls.\footnote{Augustine (426)(1958: 254-255).} Augustine applies this theological concept to the Biblical story of the fall of Adam and Eve as he postulates in an earlier work, *Confessions*, he freely chooses to sin because he is a son of Adam.\footnote{Augustine (426)(1958: 149).} Augustine notes that in Adam’s first sin we all died.\footnote{Augustine (421)(1998: Chapter 13: 8). Plantinga (1982: 184-189).} Augustine deduces Adam, who he believed was the first man, sinned and therefore the fall took place that corrupted humanity and enslaved all of Adam’s biological descendents to
I note the fall because Augustine describes a literal fall\textsuperscript{1023} and corruption of humanity that led to the literal problem of evil.\textsuperscript{1024} Understanding Augustine’s basic assumptions concerning the condition of humankind\textsuperscript{1025} is important when reviewing views within his theodicy.

For many secular and Biblical scholars from mainline denominations, the Biblical story of the fall is likely fiction.\textsuperscript{1026} As John G. Jackson (1941)(2006) notes many liberal Christian apologists do not believe in a literal fall of humanity.\textsuperscript{1027} Adam and Eve have been relegated to the realm of mythology.\textsuperscript{1028} Terence E. Fretheim (1994) of Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary, is not dogmatic\textsuperscript{1029} but appears to favour the idea that the fall is metaphorical in Genesis 3.\textsuperscript{1030} He does not think a traditional, conservative view of a single human fall into sin is supported by the Genesis text\textsuperscript{1031} which is filled with metaphorical, symbolic language.\textsuperscript{1032} He does, however, believe the Genesis text is providing a general, but not specifically literal, idea of how sin and evil became part of the cosmos.\textsuperscript{1033} Fretheim raises a very important point in whether or not a scholar looks at the fall story in Genesis as fiction, or non-fiction, the metaphorical and symbolic use of words and concepts used within should not be ignored.\textsuperscript{1034} William Sanford La Sor, David Allan Hubbard, and Fredric William Bush (1987) reason the author of Genesis is writing as an artist and storyteller who uses literary device.\textsuperscript{1035} They point

\begin{thebibliography}{1035}
\bibitem{1022} Augustine (398-399)(1992: 197).
\bibitem{1025} Augustine (426)(1958: 254-255).
\bibitem{1027} Jackson (1941)(2006: 1).
\bibitem{1028} Jackson (1941)(2006: 1).
\bibitem{1029} Fretheim (1994: 152).
\bibitem{1030} Fretheim (1994: 152).
\bibitem{1031} Fretheim (1994: 152).
\bibitem{1032} Fretheim (1994: 153).
\bibitem{1033} Fretheim (1994: 153).
\bibitem{1034} Fretheim (1994: 153).
\bibitem{1035} La Sor, Hubbard, and Bush (1987: 72).
\end{thebibliography}
out it is imperative to distinguish which literary device is being used within the text of Genesis.\textsuperscript{1036} The literary use of metaphor and symbolism within Genesis 3,\textsuperscript{1037} and the story of the fall means there are tenable academic ways to interpret that fall as less than literal.\textsuperscript{1038} For those scholars who view the fall as myth and fiction,\textsuperscript{1039} but wish to accept free will theodicy, they would have to explain human evil and corruption in terms separate from Augustine’s concept of the human fall\textsuperscript{1040} from God’s original plan. As I noted earlier, Plantinga’s free will defence does not discuss the fall so this option is academically viable.

Plantinga argues against atheists of his day who think theism contradictory and untenable because of the problem of evil,\textsuperscript{1041} but this is not a key to Augustine’s theology. I will not discuss this in any great detail, although I will review Plantinga’s disagreement with atheistic compatibilism.\textsuperscript{1042}

2. Augustine

Augustine’s Background

Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430)\textsuperscript{1043} is historically an important Christian Theologian.\textsuperscript{1044} Mark D. Jordan (1996) notes Augustine’s influence is impossible to circumscribe.\textsuperscript{1045} Earl E. Cairns (1981) explains Augustine’s work has had great impact throughout the centuries on many theological writers as he was a key Church Father.\textsuperscript{1046}

According to Michael Peterson, William Hasker, Bruce Reichenbach, and David Basinger (1996)

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{La Sor, Hubbard, and Bush (1987: 72).}
\footnote{La Sor, Hubbard, and Bush (1987: 72).}
\footnote{Fetheim (1994: 153).}
\footnote{This could include those within progressive liberal Christian churches.}
\footnote{Augustine (426)(1958: 254-255).}
\footnote{Plantinga (1977)(2002: 22).}
\footnote{Plantinga (1977)(2002: 22).}
\footnote{Frend (1999: 55).}
\footnote{Jordan (1996: 52).}
\footnote{Cairns (1981: 311).}
\end{footnotes}
Augustine was one of the first writers to comprehensively deal with the problem of evil,\footnote{1047} and so it would seem important for me to review his approach in this Chapter.

Augustine’s Influences

Manichaeism

According to Alan Richardson (1999), as a student Augustine was attracted to Manichaeism,\footnote{1048} a movement began by the Persian, Manes (ca 215-275).\footnote{1049} Vernon J. Bourke (1958) writes that Augustine was in this religion for nine years from 373 A.D.\footnote{1050} The Manichees, according to Augustine scholar Henry Chadwick (1992), held that matter itself was evil.\footnote{1051} Augustine rejected Manichaeism when he converted to Christianity,\footnote{1052} but this does not mean with certainty the views of Manes have no influence whatsoever on Augustine’s theodicy.\footnote{1053} However, Augustine is historically known to have eventually challenged Manichaeism by denying its views as mythology,\footnote{1054} and in disagreement with what he viewed as orthodox Christianity.\footnote{1055} Augustine’s view of the corruption and privation of matter and nature was that they were good things as created originally by God,\footnote{1056} but had become less than they were originally intended through the rebellion of creatures.\footnote{1057} This view would therefore contradict Manichaeism\footnote{1058} which saw matter as always by nature being inherently evil.\footnote{1059}

\footnote{1047} Peterson, Hasker, Reichenbach, and Basinger (1996: 231).
\footnote{1048} Richardson (1999: 344).
\footnote{1049} Richardson (1999: 344).
\footnote{1050} Bourke (1958: 7).
\footnote{1051} Chadwick (1992: xiv).
\footnote{1052} Chadwick (1992: xiv).
\footnote{1053} Chadwick (1992: xv).
\footnote{1054} Chadwick (1992: xiv).
\footnote{1055} Chadwick (1992: xv).
\footnote{1058} Chadwick (1992: xv).
\footnote{1059} Chadwick (1992: xiv).
Platonic Philosophy

Augustine was also documented to have been influenced by Platonic philosophy.\textsuperscript{1060} Scott MacDonald (1989) explains in his article ‘Augustine’s Christian-Platonic Account of Goodness’ that Augustine held views influenced by Platonic thought.\textsuperscript{1061} Platonic philosophy was largely created by Plato (427-347 B.C.).\textsuperscript{1062} Richard Kraut (1996) notes Plato was a preeminent Greek philosopher who conceived the observable world as an imperfect image of the realm of the unobservable and unchanging forms.\textsuperscript{1063} Plato, in Timaeus, written in 360 B.C., viewed these forms as divinely moved objects.\textsuperscript{1064} Mark D. Jordan (1996) notes Augustine was primarily affected by Neoplatonism before his conversion to Christianity.\textsuperscript{1065} Augustine (398-399)(1992) states in Confessions he examined Platonist writings that supported his Biblical understanding of the nature of God.\textsuperscript{1066} Jordan states the Platonic writings helped Augustine to conceive of a cosmic hierarchy in the universe in which God was immaterial and had sovereign control over his material creation.\textsuperscript{1067} However, Jordan states Augustine saw philosophy alone as being unable to change his life as only God himself could do.\textsuperscript{1068} Augustine’s use of Plato does not in itself invalidate his understanding of Biblical writings where the two may happen to be in agreement.\textsuperscript{1069} From my overall research of Augustine and his free will theodicy, he places much emphasis on Biblical theology as primary,\textsuperscript{1070} and therefore although it is possible he could read

\textsuperscript{1061} MacDonald (1989: 485-486).
\textsuperscript{1062} Pojman (1996: 6).
\textsuperscript{1063} Kraut (1996: 619-620).
\textsuperscript{1064} Plato (360 B.C.)(1982: 35).
\textsuperscript{1065} Jordan (1996: 52).
\textsuperscript{1066} Augustine (398-399)(1992).
\textsuperscript{1067} Jordan (1996: 53).
\textsuperscript{1068} Jordan (1996: 53).
\textsuperscript{1069} Augustine (398-399)(1992).
\textsuperscript{1070} Augustine (398-399)(1992).
Neoplatonism into his understanding of theodicy, it is also very likely he rejects Neoplatonism where it contradicts his Scriptural findings through in depth study.  

3. The Problem of Evil is Caused by Human Free Will, Not God

Augustine’s View

Augustine states God is not the cause of evil. The creator is perfectly good, and it is wrong to believe otherwise. He writes that God is holy and the sovereign divine governor of the universe who is completely just in punishing evildoers, and God is not the cause of their wrong actions. God can rightly judge people because each evil person is the cause of his/her rebellion against God. Augustine (388-395)(1964) notes there is not one cause of evil, but that each evil man is the cause of his own undoing. Since each human being willfully rebels against God, according to Augustine’s theodicy, it is completely just for God to punish those who used their free will to disobey their creator. To Augustine, the human will is the origin of human wrongdoing, and it would be senseless to try to deduce if something is behind the human will.

D.C. Schindler (2002) notes Augustine does, in his writings, recognize the danger of infinite regression. If one seeks to find what causes human will, then the cause of that cause

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1073 Augustine (398-399)(1992). Human beings reflected God’s goodness. As a result, it is believed by Roman Catholics and most Protestant that all God created initially was good, very good in fact. Schreck (1984: 14).
1074 Augustine (388-395)(1964: 3).
1080 Augustine (388-395)(1964: 3).
would have to be found, and so on, and so on.\textsuperscript{1083} Schindler quotes Karl Ulb in noting that in whatever way one gives account to a human action, it ultimately will end with an appeal to the human will as the original source.\textsuperscript{1084} It seems Augustine’s writings would be in agreement as he reasons human beings have a will,\textsuperscript{1085} and it is that will that is the source of significant freedom in order to make decisions and act rightly.\textsuperscript{1086} Augustine appears to assume a form of incompatibilism with his view of the origin of human evil.\textsuperscript{1087} To him, human beings have been made significantly free\textsuperscript{1088} and reject God’s laws by the use of their will without any kind of significant outside interference.\textsuperscript{1089} God has established laws of nature which Augustine calls eternal laws.\textsuperscript{1090} Many, according to Augustine, freely and without being coerced, forced, or heavily influenced by God, disobey these laws and follow temporal laws and pursue temporal things.\textsuperscript{1091} Frederick Russell (1990) explains Augustine thought some people, by subjecting themselves to lower things, were in the voluntary human pursuit of things that constituted evil.\textsuperscript{1092} Augustine states God cannot be blamed for giving people free will when they could freely use these wills to seek eternal laws, but instead sought temporal laws.\textsuperscript{1093} Augustine explains it is clear things are not to be blamed when a person makes evil use of them, but rather it is the person who is guilty.\textsuperscript{1094}

\textsuperscript{1083} Schindler (2002: 621).
\textsuperscript{1084} Ulb in Schindler (2002: 61). Human beings were given a genuinely free will by God. Schreck (1984: 21).
\textsuperscript{1085} Augustine (388-395)(1964: 36).
\textsuperscript{1086} Augustine (388–395)(1964: 36).
\textsuperscript{1087} This will be discussed later in this Chapter in regard to the writings of John Calvin.
\textsuperscript{1088} Schreck (1984: 21).
\textsuperscript{1089} Augustine (388-395)(1964: 33).
\textsuperscript{1090} Augustine (388-395)(1964: 33).
\textsuperscript{1091} Augustine (388-395)(1964: 33).
\textsuperscript{1092} Russell (1990: 703).
\textsuperscript{1093} Augustine (388-395)(1964: 33).
\textsuperscript{1094} Augustine (388-395)(1964: 33).
As Rowan A. Greer (1996) notes Augustine is arguing God is not the cause of evil, even though he gives human beings free will which they then use to commit evil actions, because God’s intentions are flawless. According to Greer, Augustine believes free will is a good thing that can lead to happiness if used correctly. Free will is supposed to lead humanity to the unchangeable good and happiness of following God, and so its misuse does not affect the goodness of free will in itself. At the same time, the good nature of God in giving free will is not affected by its misuse. To Augustine, God permits evil in order that human beings can have the use of significant free will, with some being open to God and his ultimate goodness and the happiness that would be experienced. However, Augustine (421)(1998) notes that God did well, even in the permission of what was evil, as he permitted it for the sake of judgment, and his justice is perfect. Augustine would not have viewed God’s foreknowledge as a philosophical problem. Augustine rejected the idea that God’s prior knowledge of what a person would do in the future meant he forced that person to commit any action. Thiessen writes God knows the future, and that is defined as foreknowledge. He also points out that God’s prescience does not mean God predetermined these actions. Thiessen is noting that human acts within God’s prescient foreknowledge are still significantly free. Leibniz has a different view than Thiessen, that is deterministic and reasons that foreknowledge has to do with God’s

1100 Greer (1996: 482).
1101 Greer (1996: 482).
1105 Thiessen (1956: 125).
1106 Thiessen (1956: 125).
1107 Thiessen (1956: 126).
1108 Thiessen (1956: 126).
1109 Thiessen (1956: 126).
determined will and is not dependent on free human actions.¹¹¹⁰ This predetermination should not be understood as by necessity eliminating all human choice.¹¹¹¹ Erickson takes a reasonable compatibilist position and writes God with foreknowledge sees many possibilities and influences that will be present, and then acts accordingly to his will.¹¹¹²

Augustine reasoned that when people acted rightly with God’s guidance, without forcible influence, they would be suitable to God.¹¹¹³ Augustine explains: ‘If a man is good and cannot act rightly unless he wills to do so, then he must have free will, without which he cannot act rightly.’¹¹¹⁴ Augustine went on to indicate God is not to be thought of as giving humanity free will so evil could occur, but rather God gives it because goodness cannot occur unless human beings freely chose to follow God.¹¹¹⁵ Augustine notes no righteous act can be performed except by the choice of the free will, and that is why God granted free will.¹¹¹⁶ To Schindler, Augustine with his view of freedom and goodness equated freedom with power, in particular the power of determination.¹¹¹⁷ Schindler thinks it is impossible for human beings to be responsible agents without free will,¹¹¹⁸ and there is nothing that belongs to human beings more profound and intimate than a significantly free determined will.¹¹¹⁹

¹¹¹⁹ Schindler (2002: 621). This freedom allows persons to turn to Christ by the grace of God within a Roman Catholic understanding. Schreck (1984: 21). This view is also commonly held among much Protestant and evangelical scholarship within an incompatibilist model. Thiessen (1956: 248).
4. Corruption and Depravity

Augustine on Corruption and Privation

Augustine believes every nature, meaning substance that was not infinite, could be corrupted.\textsuperscript{1120} To Augustine, the term substance, particularly in regard to God, is not necessarily physical substance, but instead is the very core of a being.\textsuperscript{1121} Each nature and substance that could become less good would still be good, and every nature would become less good when it was corrupted.\textsuperscript{1122} Augustine assumed God to be perfectly good\textsuperscript{1123} and that everything God created, including the nature of rational beings, to be perfectly good in origin.\textsuperscript{1124} It was Augustine’s belief that due to wrong choices made by humanity the race was fallen.\textsuperscript{1125}

Augustine points out in \textit{Enchiridion}, that there would still be goodness in humanity because evil cannot exist by itself, as it has no substance in itself.\textsuperscript{1126} Thomas Aquinas (1261)(1920) writes in \textit{Summa Theologiae} that evil was only possible from a corruption of the good.\textsuperscript{1127} Leibniz noted that evil itself only comes from privation.\textsuperscript{1128}

Since evil cannot exist by itself\textsuperscript{1129} it would be impossible, in Augustine’s view, for all good to be removed from the nature of a being as there would therefore be no entirely, purely evil entity.\textsuperscript{1130} He went on to say that an incorruptible nature, such as that of God, would be far better than a corruptible nature,\textsuperscript{1131} but for the corruptible nature to exist it must possess some

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{1120} Augustine (388-395)(1964: 116).
\textsuperscript{1121} Augustine (388-395)(1964: 117).
\textsuperscript{1122} Augustine (388-395)(1964: 116-117).
\textsuperscript{1124} Augustine (388-395)(1964: 117).
\textsuperscript{1125} Augustine (388-395)(1964: 3).
\textsuperscript{1127} Aquinas (1261)(1920: 1.48.1).
\end{footnotesize}
goodness. He stated that every substance is either God or from God since every good is either God or from God. To Augustine, evil and corruption lessened the good in nature, but the nature still remains somewhat good having been created by a perfectly good God. For any creation to maintain existence, Augustine thought it had to possess some goodness, that being a reflection of God the ultimate good.

As Scott MacDonald writes, Augustine views anything that has being in creation as not being contrary to God’s divine being. In other words, any being’s essential essence has to originate with God.

Frederick Russell notes that with Augustine’s view evil cannot exist apart from good, even though good can exist without evil. There has to be good in existence for there to be any evil at all. Within Augustine’s free will theodicy there is no means by which evil can exist on its own. It is dependent on the privation of the good. Atheistic philosopher, William Rowe (1996) describes privation as the philosophical idea that evil itself is only a lack of good. Privation occurs when a created thing loses some goodness after becoming corrupted and evil by turning from the higher good of serving God. Greer indicates Augustine viewed privation as meaning evil has no ontological status, but from his writings Augustine does not seem that naïve.

T. Patrick Burke (1999) describes ontology as dealing with the doctrine of being.

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1138 MacDonald (1989: 50).
1139 MacDonald (1989: 50).
1140 Russell (1990: 69).
1141 Russell (1990: 69).
1147 Greer (1996: 482). This appears to be speculation on the part of Greer.
Erickson and philosopher R. Douglas Geivett (1993) point out that the term ontology is also used in context of arguments for the existence of God. Augustine dealt primarily with the idea of evil as negation, and I doubt he would fail to see after corruption had taken place in creation that actual beings who commit evil works do exist. He explains every human being that exists is good, but is evil where it is defective. Therefore within Augustine’s theology and theodicy it could be stated that defective evil people do ontologically exist.

5. Natural Evils

Augustine’s Perspective

Philip L. Quinn (1996) defines natural evils as the bad consequences of impersonal forces operating in nature, and this is a good secular definition. Feinberg explains the concept of natural evils is often considered to be missing from Augustine’s theodicy; however, ideas taken from Augustine can shed light on his leanings. Feinberg notes the fact Augustine does not deal specifically with natural evils is not a devastating problem. To Feinberg, Augustine’s work is successful because the free will theodicy is logically presented without contradiction, and solves the moral problem of evil presented within Augustine’s work. It accomplishes its

\[^{1147}\text{Burke (1999: 416).}\]
\[^{1148}\text{Erickson (1994: 272).}\]
\[^{1149}\text{Geivett (1993: 53).}\]
\[^{1150}\text{Augustine (421)(1998: Chapter 13: 8).}\]
\[^{1151}\text{Augustine (421)(1998: Chapter 13: 7).}\]
\[^{1152}\text{Augustine (421)(1998: Chapter 14: 8).}\]
\[^{1153}\text{Quinn (1996: 610).}\]
\[^{1154}\text{Feinberg (1994: 58).}\]
\[^{1155}\text{Feinberg (1994: 80).}\]
\[^{1156}\text{Augustine (388-395)(1964: 111).}\]
\[^{1157}\text{Feinberg (1994: 80).}\]
\[^{1158}\text{Feinberg (1994: 80).}\]
purpose as natural evil is not the same as moral evil, \(^{1159}\) and Augustine does not need to deal with natural evils in order for his theodicy to be successful. \(^{1160}\) Augustine wrote that humanity is in bondage to the prince of the world, Satan, who makes people subject to him through persuasion. \(^{1161}\) Augustine understood humanity as losing its dominion over creation, \(^{1162}\) and that dominion has been awarded substantially to Satan who he calls the prince of this world. \(^{1163}\) Feinberg points out that natural evils are not specifically explained by Augustine. \(^{1164}\) Natural evils will be discussed further in this Chapter in the context of Plantinga.

6. Calvin on Augustine

I include this section because as Augustine is listed as a forefather of free will theodicy, \(^{1165}\) as his ancient view would be considered incompatibilistic according to modern philosophy. \(^{1166}\) Calvin, however, throughout The Bondage and Liberation of the Will claims that Augustine supports his case for a free will theory in which human beings are in bondage to sin, unable to follow God on their own. \(^{1167}\) As an academic I cannot, in good conscience, use both Augustine and Calvin in this thesis without dealing with this matter. \(^{1168}\) As Augustine wrote a free will theodicy, \(^{1169}\) which included the idea that human beings require the ability to freely choose or reject God, in order to please the Almighty. \(^{1170}\)


\(^{1160}\) Feinberg (1994: 80).

\(^{1161}\) Augustine (388-395)(1964: 111).


\(^{1165}\) Peterson, Hasker, Reichenbach, and Basinger (1996: 231).


\(^{1167}\) Calvin (1543)(1996: 95-96).


\(^{1169}\) Peterson, Hasker, Reichenbach, and Basinger (1996: 231).

\(^{1170}\) Augustine (388-395)(1964: 37).
A.N.S. Lane (1996) notes that one problem with Calvin and his use of Augustine was Calvin rejected the use of the term *free choice*. Calvin did state that although he rejected the term, he believed his views to be in line with Augustine on human free will, that the will was free in the sense that it was not coerced but voluntary and self-determined. Lane states that after centuries of debates between Catholic and Protestant scholars, many concluded Calvin correctly understood Augustine.

When reading Augustine’s theodicy, it appears to be supporting incompatibilism as human beings are noted to have the ability to freely choose or reject God. He states that a human being could not act rightly unless he/she willed to do so, and to do that the person must have free will in order to act rightly. Calvin notes that this concept of free choice by Augustine would not be applicable to a fallen will, and could only be applied to Adam and Eve before the fall in Genesis occurred. This point by Calvin, however, was never clearly demonstrated in Augustine’s writings; instead, Augustine has been viewed historically as a theologian who held to free will theory within incompatibilist freedom in modern terms, and a strong view of God’s sovereignty. Feinberg believes that Augustine was not the ancient equivalent of a modern compatibilist, but made the error of writing a theodicy, which featured free will and incompatibilist thought, and yet held to a theory of God’s sovereignty, which would necessitate some type of determinism. It would seem Augustine either made a logical error in

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1171 Lane in Calvin (1543)(1996: xix).
1174 Lane in Calvin (1543)(1996: xxiv).
accepting the ancient equivalents of incompatibilist human free choice and compatibilist sovereignty for God, or he simply failed to adequately explain the connection in particular whether or not his free will theodicy applied equally to pre-fall and post-fall humanity. Lane points out that Calvin, in *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, lacked the library resources needed and loosely quoted Augustine. Calvin was familiar with Augustine’s traditionally strong view of God’s sovereignty, and perhaps he rightly or wrongly interpreted that sovereignty as applying to Augustine’s concept of free will. I would postulate in agreement with Feinberg that Augustine’s free will theodicy appears to be incompatibilistic in regard to human free will and is likely compatibilistic in regard to God’s sovereignty. The connection between the two concepts seems not to be adequately explained by Augustine. Rowan A. Greer states that it was realized by Augustine there was a difficulty holding to free will theodicy and a strong view of God’s sovereignty. Greer concluded that Augustine always maintained a free will approach, and held that God had sovereign control in the universe to punish evildoers. Greer thought Augustine’s solution to the problem that his free will theodicy perhaps contradicted his views on sovereignty, would be to restrict the concept of free will to Adam and Eve before the fall. It should be pointed out that this is Greer’s assumption and, although it agrees with Calvin’s idea, Greer speculates that Augustine viewed his free will

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1185 Lane in Calvin (1543)(1996: xxiii).
1187 Lane in Calvin (1543)(1996: xxiii).
1192 Greer (1996: 481).
idea as appropriate for Adam and Eve before the fall, and not for humanity after it.\textsuperscript{1196} Greer however, like Calvin,\textsuperscript{1197} was not able to produce a distinct Augustine reference that stated this, and so in my mind this supports the idea that it is still unknown whether or not Augustine, when discussing this idea of human freedom, was including post-fall humanity in that concept.\textsuperscript{1198} It is therefore reasonable to deduce that Augustine quite possibly held that fallen humanity still had some ability to freely choose and reject God.\textsuperscript{1199} which would place him in the incompatibilism camp in regard to human free choice.\textsuperscript{1200}

Regardless of Calvin’s views,\textsuperscript{1201} in modern scholarship Augustine and his free will theodicy are primarily reviewed within incompatibilist camp.\textsuperscript{1202}

7. Plantinga

Plantinga’s Background

According to Feinberg, in contemporary literature no person has done more to develop and defend the free will defence than Plantinga.\textsuperscript{1203} Feinberg believes Plantinga logically and reasonably answers the atheistic compatibilism of Antony Flew and J.L Mackie, who shall be discussed later.\textsuperscript{1204} Plantinga gives the free will defence its most thorough and sophisticated presentation,\textsuperscript{1205} it is essential reading for anyone studying the problem of evil and theodicy.\textsuperscript{1206}

\textsuperscript{1197} Calvin (1543)(1996: 96).
\textsuperscript{1200} Feinberg (1994: 98).
\textsuperscript{1201} Calvin (1543)(1996: 96).
\textsuperscript{1202} Therefore Augustine is primarily reviewed as such.
\textsuperscript{1204} Feinberg (1994: 63).
\textsuperscript{1205} Feinberg (1994: 63).
\textsuperscript{1206} Feinberg (1994: 63).
R. Douglas Geivett (1993) suggests Plantinga is ‘highly celebrated’ and contributed significantly to the development of the free will defence. Howard-Snyder and O’Leary-Hawthorne (1998) explain Plantinga is viewed by many scholars as one responsible for a shift in thinking, as now the concepts of God and evil are considered intellectually compatible. There is an intellectual consistency with the existence of both God and evil. Plantinga has established this philosophical possibility. Pruss notes Plantinga has answered Mackie’s atheistic compatibilism objection, and indicates it is logically possible that even an omnipotent God may be contingently unable to create any significantly free creatures that only do what is right.

Plantinga’s Influences

Augustine

Augustine, as I have already discussed, is known as a forefather of the free will theodicy, and Plantinga is considered a preeminent scholar in regard to a modern free will defence. Their approaches are similar and it can be deduced that Augustine has influenced the approach of Plantinga. In his book God, Freedom, and Evil, in the Chapter entitled ‘The Problem of Evil’ Plantinga suggests Augustine is one of the greatest and most influential philosopher-theologians in the history of the Christian Church. Plantinga notes Augustine’s

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1212 Pruss (2003: 211).
writings claim God could create a better world by permitting evil than by not doing so.\textsuperscript{1218} Plantinga went on stating Augustine’s view was a universe containing free creatures that committed evil was better than one that did not have free creatures at all.\textsuperscript{1219} Clearly Augustine’s concept is the pivotal idea in Plantinga’s defence, as Plantinga defines this idea as a central tenet of his free will defence, and quotes Augustine when defining it.\textsuperscript{1220}

In regard to the problem of natural evil, Plantinga likely has been influenced by Augustine.\textsuperscript{1221} Augustine was thought by Plantinga to believe that Satan rebelled against God and, along with his cohorts, caused natural evils.\textsuperscript{1222} Plantinga, as shall be discussed later, states a similar view.\textsuperscript{1223}

Defence versus Theodicy

Plantinga wrote a free will defense, with the American spelling of the word defense.\textsuperscript{1224} Plantinga differentiated between free will defence and free will theodicy, and I will explain his reasoning.\textsuperscript{1225} Within this work, however, I will review his defence within Chapter Two, because both defence and theodicy are dealing with a free will presentation that is trying to defend the idea of the infinite, omnipotent, and holy God,\textsuperscript{1226} existing in a creation filled with evil.\textsuperscript{1227} In traditional Christian theology the infinity of God would mean God is not only unlimited,\textsuperscript{1228} but he is also unlimitable.\textsuperscript{1229} God is deemed to be a limitless being, considered not

\textsuperscript{1218}Plantinga (1977)(2002: 27).
\textsuperscript{1219}Plantinga (1977)(2002: 27).
\textsuperscript{1222}Plantinga (1977)(2002: 58).
\textsuperscript{1223}Geivett (1993: 185-186).
\textsuperscript{1224}For the purpose of this British thesis, I will use the British version of the word defence.
\textsuperscript{1225}Plantinga (1977)(2002: 28).
\textsuperscript{1226}As discussed in Chapter One.
\textsuperscript{1227}There is minimal difference between a defence and theodicy in my view.
\textsuperscript{1228}Erickson (1994: 272).
\textsuperscript{1229}Erickson (1994: 272).
to have a physical body. I would suggest, from a Reformed perspective, what God allows as an omnipotent being, he therefore wills, but remains moral and holy in nature. It should be noted, however, God will not do things contrary to his nature such as opposing truth and love. G.R. Lewis (1996) explains God does, at times, choose to work through angelic and human intermediates. This would be a means by which God uses evil for his good purposes. Roman Catholic theologian Alan Schreck (1984) notes that because of God’s holy nature, sin is opposed to God’s purity. Nothing impure or sinful can enter God’s presence. Bloesch mentions that followers are to be holy by being separated by God from the world system, in a nearness to God. Bloesch deduces this is not the same as ‘moral uprightness’ but consists of followers living in Christ.

Plantinga states his defence is mainly a logical presentation, whereas theodicy is more dogmatic in approach, but I view both defence and theodicy as equally speculative. Philip L. Quinn notes Plantinga’s view of a defence instead of theodicy means Plantinga does not speculate on God’s reasons for permitting evil, but merely argues that God’s existence is logically consistent with the problem of evil. I agree with Quinn. Plantinga is mainly arguing God’s existence can be shown as logical in regard to the problem of evil with his defence; however, Plantinga does speculate within his defence concerning incompatibilism, transworld

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1231 A compatibilistic model.
1242 Geivett reasons Plantinga is correct to protect against presuming too much in regard to how God and evil coexist within the world. Geivett (1993: 136).
depravity and natural evils. This type of speculation is perhaps not done as forcefully as some in theodicy, but Plantinga is theorizing on how the problem of evil can be understood within our known world. For this reason, his free will defence can be reviewed under the umbrella of free will theodicy.

Theodicy is by nature somewhat speculative, and therefore theodicy, like a defence, is also dealing with a possible reason for God to permit evil. A theodicy may be more dogmatic than Plantinga’s defence in its assertions and arguments, but it is still speculative. Plantinga writes in The Nature of Necessity, that one who writes a theodicy assumes it is true, while one who writes a defense is stating that it is possibly true. However, even the person writing the theodicy does not have infinite knowledge of God’s reasoning in regard to the problem, and I therefore conclude free theodicy and free will defence are both equally speculative, although perhaps not equally dogmatic.

8. Plantinga’s Free Will Defence

Incompatibilism

Plantinga, like Augustine, is assuming a form of incompatibilism with his free will defence. Augustine assumes God cannot be blamed for creating free creatures that have a

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1246 As well Plantinga’s work has some Augustinian influence.
1247 Scripture does not exhaustively explain the problem of evil.
1252 Plantinga (1982)(166-167). Howard-Snyder and O’Leary-Hawthorne (1998: 1). J.E. Barnhart mentions that even as Plantinga is from a Reformed tradition, he does not write a Calvinistic theodicy. Barnhart (1977: 2). In my view, Plantinga’s presentation is not Reformed in a classic sense, but has more in common with modern evangelical free will perspectives. I reason this is demonstrated with questionnaire results.
choice to follow temporal or eternal laws, and then choose to disobey God by following temporal laws leading to evil. Plantinga believes, for human beings to have significant freedom they must be able to commit or refrain from actions without the interference of any cause, including God. So Plantinga did not see the concept in terms of laws but, like Augustine, he saw the need for human beings to commit, or refrain from committing, actions in order to have the possibility to perform right or wrong actions that are in line with God's original intentions in creation. Plantinga notes that an action is only morally significant when it can be understood whether an action is right or wrong, and this requires significant freedom in the area of thought.

To Plantinga, God is not to blame for evil because no antecedent conditions or laws from an outside force, including God, can coerce, force or simultaneously determine human actions. If this is done, significant freedom cannot exist. Since this is the case, the fact that God is omnipotent does not mean it is possible for God to create significantly free beings without at least the potential for rebellion. Augustine states no true human goodness can be performed except by a free choice of the human will. Plantinga concludes in a similar fashion significant free will is required for humanity because a world containing significantly free creatures that perform more good actions than evil ones, is more valuable to God than a world containing no free creatures.

1255 Plantinga took a more philosophical perspective.
Definition of Plantinga’s Defence

Plantinga postulates since a world containing significantly free creatures where good outweighs evil is more valuable than a world with automatons or robots, it is logically possible and plausible God could not have created free creatures and, at the same time, guarantee they would only commit right actions. If God had done that, he would have eliminated the significant freedom within these creatures, and they would not be acting freely. This idea is in line with Augustine’s view that a human being cannot act rightly unless he/she wills to do so. Augustine thought if God had created creatures that only did right actions, then these creatures would not have the option to commit wrong actions against God’s will. Thus their obedience to God would be meaningless and not truly righteous or, to Augustine, worthy of membership in the Kingdom of God.

Plantinga believes it apparent some of the creatures God has created make wrong decisions and commit moral evil. Sadly human freedom was misused. To Plantinga, the fact this occurs, and free creatures sometimes do wrong actions, is not to be counted against God, his omnipotence or his goodness. God could only have avoided the possibility of moral evil by removing the possibility of moral good, and by removing significant freedom from the creatures. Plantinga speculates the problem of evil is unfortunate but worthwhile because it is...
possibly the only way God could create truly good creatures. \textsuperscript{1275} Without the use of significant freedom, creatures could not choose to be morally good and thus could not please God. \textsuperscript{1276}

Antony Flew’s Objection

Plantinga, living some fifteen hundred years after Augustine, has a greater number of critics of free will approaches to deal with. Plantinga has dealt with Antony Flew’s atheistic objection, \textsuperscript{1277} but the criticism of Flew could be equally applied to Plantinga’s or Augustine’s approach. \textsuperscript{1278} Flew’s article from 1955 ‘Divine Omnipotence and Human Freedom’ in \textit{New Essays within Philosophical Theology} states it is reasonable God could have created free creatures who are free to do what is right or wrong, but are causally determined by God to do only what is right. \textsuperscript{1279} Persons could be constituted to always act uprightly. \textsuperscript{1280} Feinberg notes that for Flew, unconstrained determined free will is an option instead of incompatibilist free will. \textsuperscript{1281} Plantinga suggests Flew’s objection is utterly impossible, \textsuperscript{1282} and it is implausible for Flew to suppose God could make free creatures, and then cause and guarantee these persons only do what was right at all times. \textsuperscript{1283}

Andrew Eshleman (1997) in his article ‘Alternative Possibilities and the Free Will Defence’ explains Flew’s arguments against free will incompatibilism \textsuperscript{1284} have merit, but it is not

\textsuperscript{1277} Geivett notes Flew questions the existence of an infinitely good God and his divine omnipotence in light of the problem of evil. Geivett (1993: 9).
\textsuperscript{1278} Plantinga (1977)(2002: 31).
\textsuperscript{1280} Geivett (1993: 159).
\textsuperscript{1281} Feinberg (1994: 61). Flew holds to a type of determinism, as a human being is only free within certain parameters. Geivett (1993: 189).
\textsuperscript{1284} Flew (1955: 150-153).
true that belief in God hangs in the balance.\textsuperscript{1285} In other words, even if Flew’s theory is true, atheism is not necessarily true by default.\textsuperscript{1286} Eshleman notes that if Flew is correct, the free will defence simply needs to become more robust.\textsuperscript{1287} It seems sensible there is room for greater depth with free will approaches,\textsuperscript{1288} particularly in light of the incompatibilism, compatibilism debate. I agree with Eshleman\textsuperscript{1289} that rejecting incompatibilism for compatibilism does not mean one should logically hold to atheism. If Flew’s theory is correct, it would simply disprove most incompatibilist free will approaches;\textsuperscript{1290} however, there would still be compatibilist theodicy approaches to review before totally disregarding theism, not to overlook other types of theistic theodicy.\textsuperscript{1291} Plantinga’s criticism of Flew seems plausible,\textsuperscript{1292} but if Flew is stating that God with the use of soft determinism\textsuperscript{1293} can create people in a way they always act freely without being forced or coerced, then I view his understanding as tenable.\textsuperscript{1294} God could seemingly create beings that freely always did what was right,\textsuperscript{1295} but if by causally determining people to do what is right Flew’s system requires God to use force or coercion, then clearly human actions will not have been done freely. Flew’s objection is seemingly outright contradiction if he uses hard determinism,\textsuperscript{1296} which would see God as the only cause of human actions.\textsuperscript{1297} His atheistic determinism would not be in line with much of theistic compatibilism,\textsuperscript{1298} which would view God

\textsuperscript{1285} Eshleman (1997: 286). There are compatibilistic sovereignty theodicy approaches in existence, such as Feinberg’s presentation.
\textsuperscript{1286} Eshleman (1997: 286).
\textsuperscript{1287} Eshleman (1997: 286).
\textsuperscript{1288} Eshleman (1997: 286).
\textsuperscript{1289} Eshleman (1997: 286).
\textsuperscript{1290} This would make Plantinga’s free will approach very likely untrue.
\textsuperscript{1291} Besides sovereignty approaches, there are also soul making perspectives like that of John Hick. I also acknowledge there are non-Christian attempts at theodicy.
\textsuperscript{1292} Plantinga (1977)(2002: 32).
\textsuperscript{1293} Pojman (1996: 256).
\textsuperscript{1294} There have been intellectual attempts to understand how determinism may work with human free will. Blackburn (1996: 102). This is a reasonable intellectual pursuit.
\textsuperscript{1295} Flew (1955: 150-153).
\textsuperscript{1296} Plantinga (1977)(2002: 32).
\textsuperscript{1297} Pojman (1996: 256). Therefore denying the possibility of a human secondary cause in human actions.
\textsuperscript{1298} Or most Reformed perspectives which use compatibilism.
as the cause of circumstances and events by which the human will would be determined, but without compulsion. Flew (1983)(1996) within his view, does not grant that God is guiding humanity. On the contrary, he reasons, the idea of God’s divine work cannot be demonstrated in any convincing way and is meaningless. He states concepts such as God having a plan, or God having created the world, are mere assertions that are unlikely to succeed in becoming orthodox or effective because they cannot be proven empirically true or false. Flew’s concept which has God determining no human beings commit a wrong act at any time, is not reasonable according to Plantinga; however, my objection to Flew would come if he uses a form of hard determinism and yet claims human beings would still act freely. This seemingly would require God to have human beings commit actions without the use of any type of free will. Michael Peterson supports Plantinga’s view against Flew’s compatibilism. Peterson states Flew’s concept produces an illogical, impossible state of affairs, which is not reasonable. If Plantinga and Peterson are correct, then Flew’s compatibilism is not really compatibilism at all, but simply hard determinism. Flew’s view would be a nonsensical equivalent of stating that God can have people non-freely, freely do what he wants them to, avoiding wrong actions.

J. L. Mackie and the Best Possible World Objection

The next objection Plantinga deals with is Mackie’s atheistic compatibilism\textsuperscript{1313} which, in part, assumes a perfectly good God\textsuperscript{1314} should have created, if he exists, a best possible world.\textsuperscript{1315} Leibniz believes God had an infinite number of worlds to choose from to create, and chose the best possible world.\textsuperscript{1316} Mackie’s ‘Evil and Omnipotence’ in *Mind* (1971) removes the possibility of hard determinism and postulates God could have made free creatures that only do what is right.\textsuperscript{1317} They do not have to be determined because God could have made people in a way they freely always chose what was right even though, unlike Flew’s determinism,\textsuperscript{1319} wrong actions would be a technical possibility.\textsuperscript{1320} Plantinga admits it is logically possible, in a broad sense, there could be a world containing creatures that only do what is right.\textsuperscript{1321} Plantinga explains and rejects Mackie’s concept of possible worlds and does this with two main objections.\textsuperscript{1322} First, no matter how wonderful a world appears to be, no matter how many incredibly happy people there are, it is always possible there is an even better world containing more people who are even happier.\textsuperscript{1323} Plantinga’s reasoning appears sound as any finite world God would create could always be better.\textsuperscript{1324} Only an infinite world would be the best possible world, and it is debatable and unlikely God could create an infinite world. The fact that a world is created means it is not infinitely old or eternal, and so this would seemingly make the concept of a created infinite world untenable.

\textsuperscript{1313} Plantinga (1977)(2002: 32-34).
\textsuperscript{1316} Leibniz (1710)(1990).
\textsuperscript{1318} LaFollette (1980: 2).
\textsuperscript{1322} Plantinga (1977)(2002: 32-64).
\textsuperscript{1323} Plantinga (1977)(2002: 34).
\textsuperscript{1324} Plantinga (1977)(2002: 34).
Plantinga’s second objection to Mackie’s best possible world idea concerns the concept of human free choice. Plantinga describes Paul (1) accepting an offer, or (2) rejecting an offer. Whichever choice Paul makes, either (1) or (2), God would not be able to actualize that world. If Paul would make a wrong choice at any point, the problem of evil would occur, and the world would no longer be the best possible as Mackie describes. To Plantinga, the result of God creating significantly free creatures is that their decisions did impact which type of world God created, and how much evil it would contain. God’s omnipotence, to Plantinga, could not guarantee a best possible world free from evil, because there is always a possibility of human decisions that are contrary to what God would have desired. Since significantly free creatures exist, it is never up to God alone in regard to which world is actualized.

Augustine, like Plantinga, seemingly did assume free creatures will eventually make one wrong decision, this making Mackie’s idea that human beings could always freely choose the right seem untenable to these free will proponents. At the same time, both Augustine and Plantinga would reject Mackie’s notion that if God is understood and accepted, as in traditional Christian theism, he should have created a best possible world filled with perfect creatures that never do wrong actions, and because God did not do this atheism would be the preferred philosophy to adopt. Both free will advocates have stated that significantly free creatures by definition could not be guaranteed by God to avoid wrong actions, and thus when wrong

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1332 Augustine (388-395)(1964: 3).
actions occur it is because of the human abuse of free will only. God is not to be blamed for creating a good thing, that being free will, which is willfully turned towards something evil by his human creation.

Plantinga and Transworld Depravity

Plantinga, like Augustine, states human beings’ wrong decisions and abuse of free will have led to an evil creation. Plantinga did not propagate privation but instead developed a theory of transworld depravity. The concept of transworld depravity is a further response to Mackie’s possible world approach. Transworld depravity notes the idea that in any possible world, including our actual one, each person would make at least one wrong decision and the resulting bad action would lead to evil occurring within that reality. Persons would always choose at least one wrong action, and God could not actualize a world where this was not the case. Plantinga describes transworld depravity as: ‘A person P suffers from transworld depravity if and only if the following holds: for every world W such that P is significantly free to W and P only does what is right in W, there is an action A and a maximal world segment S’ such that (1) S’ includes A’s being morally significant for P; (2) S’ includes P’s being free with respect to A; (3) S’ is included in W and includes neither P’s performing A nor P’s refraining

1336 Augustine (388-395)(1964: 33). Plantinga (1982: 170-171). The free will theist that reasons evil is adequately explained is left with the religious problem of individual suffering, according to LaFollette. LaFollette (1980: 1).
1341 LaFollette (1980: 6).
from performing; and (4) If $S'$ were actual, $P$ would go wrong with respect to $A$. Bloesch notes that in every human system of ethics there is demonstrated a human flaw that prohibits people from fulfilling a moral requirement. Such a flaw can be philosophically and theologically considered to perhaps relate to Plantinga’s theory.

Plantinga notes if people suffered from transworld depravity, it would not be possible for God to actualize any possible world he could think of, specifically a world containing significantly free creatures that only commit good actions. The price, according to Plantinga, of God creating significantly free creatures would be they would eventually go wrong with an action, leading to the problem of evil existing. Transworld depravity, to Plantinga, would be possible and likely, even if God had created a different universe with a completely different type of rational beings with significant freedom. This is so because significant freedom will eventually lead to at least one wrong action being made by each person. Within this system, as long as one person makes a wrong decision the problem of evil will exist and the depravity caused will alienate that person from God’s original plan and lead to a multiplication of wrong actions.

Howard-Snyder and O’Leary-Hawthorne suggest a concept of transworld sanctity. They demonstrate that transworld sanctity is no less intellectually possible than is transworld

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1343 Bloesch (1987: 34). Bloesch is discussing ethical systems and not a defence or theodicy, but still the concepts of human nature and actions relate.
depravity.\textsuperscript{1353} This would be a hypothetical world where persons do not commit wrong actions.\textsuperscript{1354} The authors do not present transworld sanctity as their held view,\textsuperscript{1355} as they are incompatibilists as is Plantinga,\textsuperscript{1356} but reason that Plantinga’s view on transworld depravity intellectually fails and is false.\textsuperscript{1357} It is not obviously necessary that some persons in a given world are blessed with transworld sanctity, they argue.\textsuperscript{1358} It is also not necessary that some persons in a world have transworld depravity.\textsuperscript{1359} Plantinga does not demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt that all persons suffer with transworld depravity.\textsuperscript{1360} The authors therefore strongly doubt Plantinga’s free will defence.\textsuperscript{1361} They do acknowledge that other philosophers will counter that Plantinga is only presenting the possibility of transworld depravity,\textsuperscript{1362} and that is a reasonable point.

9. Natural Evils

Plantinga’s Perspective

Plantinga, although a modern philosopher, postulated the existence of satanic beings that were involved in causing the problem of evil.\textsuperscript{1363} He emphasized cautiously that significantly

\textsuperscript{1353} Howard-Snyder and O’Leary-Hawthorne (1998: 5).
\textsuperscript{1354} Howard-Snyder and O’Leary-Hawthorne (1998: 5).
\textsuperscript{1355} Howard-Snyder and O’Leary-Hawthorne (1998: 5).
\textsuperscript{1356} Howard-Snyder and O’Leary-Hawthorne (1998: 3).
\textsuperscript{1357} Howard-Snyder and O’Leary-Hawthorne (1998: 1).  Aleksander S. Santrac also suggests that Plantinga overlooks the horrendous human sufferings that occur and the possibility of God’s love to counter.  Santrac (2008: 1-132).  Could not, in certain circumstances, God’s love assist one in avoiding wrong actions within transworld depravity?
\textsuperscript{1358} Howard-Snyder and O’Leary-Hawthorne (1998: 9).
\textsuperscript{1359} Howard-Snyder and O’Leary-Hawthorne (1998: 9).
\textsuperscript{1360} LaFollette (1980: 8).
\textsuperscript{1361} Howard-Snyder and O’Leary-Hawthorne (1998: 1).  Plantinga does not know that his defence is true, and LaFollette reasons it is false.  LaFollette (1980: 9).  As noted, Plantinga claims to write a defence that is logically possible only.  He does not claim it is true.  Plantinga (1977)(2002: 27-29).
free actions of non-human persons/devils were quite possibly responsible for natural evils,\textsuperscript{1364} so his theory would be in line with basic assumptions of Augustine, and were likely influenced by Augustine.\textsuperscript{1365} Certainly such beings as devils would be difficult, if not impossible, to prove empirically.\textsuperscript{1366} However, it seems Augustine’s and Plantinga’s beliefs that demonic beings could be involved in natural evils are plausible for at least the following reasons: (1) If material human beings were made significantly free\textsuperscript{1367} and rebelled against an immaterial God\textsuperscript{1368} then it is logical and reasonable God could create significantly free immaterial beings\textsuperscript{1369} that could rebel against him. (2) A traditional approach to Biblical interpretation tends to lead to an acceptance of the existence of satanic beings.\textsuperscript{1370} Erickson explains these beings are understood as Biblical, literal, and historical.\textsuperscript{1371} Roman Catholic scholar Peter Kreeft, working with Ronald K. Tacelli, states Satan is a deceiver of humanity,\textsuperscript{1372} and this implies the assumption that Satan has personality.\textsuperscript{1373} There is of course a debate between those of traditional conservative perspectives and those of liberal, progressive, mainline perspectives on the existence of satanic beings.\textsuperscript{1374} It would be far beyond the scope of this thesis to exhaustively debate the strengths and weaknesses of arguments of both sides.\textsuperscript{1375} The conservative, traditional position claims that the context of the Scripture allows for Satan and his demons to be understood as literal, historical beings, and

\textsuperscript{1364} Plantinga (1977)(2002: 58).
\textsuperscript{1366} Phillips documents the idea that Plantinga does at times demonstrate a desire to deal with the problem of evil practically and not just with abstract philosophy. Phillips (2005: 56). Plantinga’s comments on natural evils may be an indicator that he at least intellectually can admit that empirical natural evils are a serious concrete problem.
\textsuperscript{1367} As within both theistic compatibilism and incompatibilism.
\textsuperscript{1368} God is spirit, as noted in John 4: 24. Erickson (1994: 267).
\textsuperscript{1369} Sharing God’s immaterial nature.
\textsuperscript{1370} Within that Biblical worldview which accepts the possibility of fallen angels, for Plantinga natural evils are as compatible with the existence of God as are moral evils. Geivett (1993: 186).
\textsuperscript{1372} Kreeft and Tacelli (1994: 294).
\textsuperscript{1373} Kreeft and Tacelli (1994: 294).
referencing Greek scholars such as Strong,\textsuperscript{1376} which was done previously, allows this as an academic and intellectual possibility.\textsuperscript{1377} Greek scholar, Walter Bauer (1979) in agreement with Strong,\textsuperscript{1378} describes ‘Satan’ or ‘Satanas’ as the Adversary, enemy of God and those who belong to God.\textsuperscript{1379} Bauer goes on to note that Revelation, Chapter 2, verse 13, is describing Satan as persecuting the Church.\textsuperscript{1380} It appears by studying the Greek copies of the New Testament and assuming a type of contextual, literal hermeneutical method of examining Scripture, it is possible to view satanic beings as literal and historical beings,\textsuperscript{1381} and this makes Augustine’s and Plantinga’s deduction that satanic beings may be involved in natural evils as at least an intellectual possibility to consider academically.\textsuperscript{1382} The liberal, progressive, mainline perspectives can point out that there is no empirical evidence for such satanic beings,\textsuperscript{1383} and that it is not a satisfactory explanation for evil.\textsuperscript{1384} I can also understand how some within a mainline tradition in the post Enlightenment era,\textsuperscript{1385} would view it as more beneficial to deal with the empirical human problem of evil,\textsuperscript{1386} as opposed to a hypothetical satanic one.\textsuperscript{1387} Erickson writes that it would be wrong to too quickly credit physical and psychological phenomena with satanic beings.\textsuperscript{1388} I agree with this assertion and the human problem of evil should be the main focus of Christian churches and ministries as opposed to a possible satanic problem.\textsuperscript{1389}

\textsuperscript{1376} Strong (1890)(1986: 152).
\textsuperscript{1377} Strong (1890)(1986: 152).
\textsuperscript{1378} Strong (1890)(1986: 152).
\textsuperscript{1379} Bauer (1979: 744).
\textsuperscript{1380} Bauer (1979: 745).
\textsuperscript{1383} Richardson (1999: 521-522).
\textsuperscript{1384} Richardson (1999: 521-522).
\textsuperscript{1385} Richardson (1999: 521-522).
\textsuperscript{1386} And to deal with everyday human problems based in science and psychology, along with Scripture.
\textsuperscript{1387} Richardson suggests demonic beings provide a pictorial description of evil in the universe. Richardson (1999: 521-522). Demonic beings would serve as metaphor.
\textsuperscript{1388} Erickson (1994: 450).
\textsuperscript{1389} I therefore do not hold to a fundamentalistic position on demonology. In other words, I am not ‘looking for Satan around every corner.’
10. Summary and Practical Theology

Three practical theological ramifications of an acceptance of free will theodicy will be briefly discussed. This will of course be done prior to the gathering of empirical data, but some practical reflections would be valuable.

First, Plantinga states that practical theological issues need to be dealt with practically and not philosophically.\textsuperscript{1390} I accept this point; however, I would deduce that for someone who accepts either incompatibilism or compatibilism there could be different ways of examining personal suffering.\textsuperscript{1391} The incompatibilist believes that God cannot simultaneously influence human actions or force or coerce human beings to commit free actions.\textsuperscript{1392} A person who holds to this type of view\textsuperscript{1393} may place more emphasis on human free will decisions in regard to their own human suffering than would a compatibilist. The compatibilist or soft-determinist states although God causes actions,\textsuperscript{1394} created beings are responsible where they act voluntarily.\textsuperscript{1395} The incompatibilist may deny that God is causing particular suffering\textsuperscript{1396} and would instead understand God as merely allowing it to occur. The compatibilist, on the other hand, may view God as directly willing evil and suffering for the greater good\textsuperscript{1397} and not merely allowing it to occur.\textsuperscript{1398} Leibniz explains that God permits and promotes evil without distracting from divine holiness and supreme goodness.\textsuperscript{1399} Incompatibilists may tend to place more blame on human decisions for the existence of evil without denying God’s allowance of such evil,\textsuperscript{1400} and compatibilists may admit God is the primary cause of evil actions while human beings are a

\textsuperscript{1390}Plantinga (1982: 195).
\textsuperscript{1391}There are different emphases.
\textsuperscript{1392}Feinberg (1994: 64).
\textsuperscript{1393}Feinberg (1994: 64).
\textsuperscript{1394}Pojman (1996: 596).
\textsuperscript{1395}Pojman (1996: 596).
\textsuperscript{1396}Feinberg (1994: 64).
\textsuperscript{1399}Leibniz (1710)(1998: 61).
\textsuperscript{1400}Augustine (398-399)(1992).
secondary cause.\textsuperscript{1401} A potential danger of incompatibilism is denying God’s ultimate plans in all things\textsuperscript{1402} while a danger in compatibilism is overlooking human decision to sin within God’s ultimate plans.\textsuperscript{1403}

Second, Augustine’s view of privation places emphasis on evil being the absence of good.\textsuperscript{1404} Greer alludes to the danger which he reasons Augustine overlooked, that being the idea evil is actually a thing in itself.\textsuperscript{1405} Although, as stated, I am not sure that Augustine was this naïve, Greer has a good point to consider.\textsuperscript{1406} Evil does exist, and even if privation theory is correct and every evil thing has to posses good to exist,\textsuperscript{1407} evil is still very real and dangerous.\textsuperscript{1408} Human and natural evils in our world are not made any more intellectually palatable because, technically speaking, with privation theory\textsuperscript{1409} there still must be some good in all evil things. Evil and suffering are real and terrible things\textsuperscript{1410} despite any related ontological goodness attached.

Third, although I do not hold to incompatibilism and free will theodicy, it is logically consistent as compatibilist John Feinberg admits.\textsuperscript{1411} Free will theodicy holds to a form of modified rationalism that states God did not have to create any world at all, nor did he have to create a best possible world.\textsuperscript{1412} Free will theodicy logically and reasonably presents the theory that God, out of his own free will, created a world that was not the best possible, but simply

\textsuperscript{1401} Pojman (1996: 596).
\textsuperscript{1402} There is also a danger of at times putting too much emphasis on human actions in a particular situation.
\textsuperscript{1403} There is the danger of assuming that God’s allowance of sin means a person that sins in a situation is not as guilty as perhaps they are in reality. The idea that ‘God made me do it’, or for that matter, ‘The devil made me do it’ is an intellectual cop-out.
\textsuperscript{1404} Augustine (388-395)(1964: 116-117).
\textsuperscript{1405} Greer (1996: 482).
\textsuperscript{1406} Greer (1996: 482).
\textsuperscript{1407} Augustine (421)(1998: Chapter 13: 8).
\textsuperscript{1408} Greer (1996: 482).
\textsuperscript{1410} Greer (1996: 482).
\textsuperscript{1411} Feinberg (1994: 97).
\textsuperscript{1412} Feinberg (1994: 36).
good\textsuperscript{1413} even though it became corrupted by significantly free human acts.\textsuperscript{1414} Those that hold to free will theodicy can minimally claim to hold to a reasonable explanation for the problem of evil, and can find comfort in this pastorally.\textsuperscript{1415}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[\textsuperscript{1413}] Feinberg (1994: 36).
\item[\textsuperscript{1414}] Plantinga (1982: 167-184).
\item[\textsuperscript{1415}] Although Augustine and especially Plantinga’s approaches are not primarily pastoral.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
CHAPTER THREE

SOVEREIGNTY THEODICY

1. Introduction

Reformed Theology and Methodology

The Bible

John R. Franke (2005)\textsuperscript{1416} provides, within The Character of Theology, a recent academic method of examining and explaining Christian and Reformed theology\textsuperscript{1417} which are reasoned to exist, in part through Biblical revelation.\textsuperscript{1418} This approach by Franke and others is an appropriate precursor to a discussion of Feinberg’s Reformed sovereignty approach.\textsuperscript{1419} Franke mentions that some evangelicals\textsuperscript{1420} will have difficulties with his approach that takes a non-traditional look at theology and not only a traditional Biblical approach.\textsuperscript{1421} He reasons that what

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{1416} Franke is of Biblical Theological Seminary in Hatfield, Pennsylvania.  \\
\textsuperscript{1417} Relevant to this thesis, in particular which is attempting to examine Reformed concepts within a questionnaire.  \\
\textsuperscript{1418} Franke desires to explain the nature, task and purpose of theology from a Reformed perspective in particular. Franke (2005: 9). Cornelius Van Til explains that Reformed theology presupposes the God that reveals himself. Van Til (1969: 18).  \\
\textsuperscript{1419} It provides a Reformed methodology.  \\
\textsuperscript{1420} Franke (2005: 8). I consider myself primarily Reformed as opposed to primarily evangelical. Many evangelicals will struggle with the compatibilism accepted within this thesis. This is an intellectual divider, and shall be demonstrated by questionnaire results.  \\
\textsuperscript{1421} Franke (2005: 8). Theology must always be contemporary. Erickson (1994: 21). I agree. Harold Lindsell analyses the issue of Scripture philosophically and acknowledges that within the Christian community there have been other non-traditional ways to look at the Bible. There have been debates within the Church over inerrancy, as in the Bible being without error. He states that the term infallible can be considered a synonym of the word inerrant in the context of the Bible. Lindsell (1976: 27). This section of my thesis is discussing the Reformed approach to Scripture, but certainly there are confessing Christian groups that can perhaps be considered liberal and progressive that do claim the Bible as the word of God but still reason that it is not necessarily inerrant or infallible.
\end{flushleft}
is Biblical should not just be assumed and should be a subject of intellectual scrutiny,\textsuperscript{1422} and on this point I fully agree.\textsuperscript{1423} Otto Weber (1955)(1981) mentions the problem of ‘Biblicism’\textsuperscript{1424} that as an approach within some evangelical churches reviews the Bible out of context at times with rigid literalness of interpretation.\textsuperscript{1425} This approach often negates theology as irrelevant.\textsuperscript{1426} Franke desires an approach that has one ‘truly disciplined by the Word of God.’\textsuperscript{1427} He maintains a commitment to truth,\textsuperscript{1428} Scripture \textsuperscript{1429} and ‘ecumenical Christian orthodoxy.’\textsuperscript{1430} Edward E. Hindson, as a Professor of Religion, wrote the ‘Introduction’ to Presbyterian theologian William G.T. Shedd’s (1874-1890)(1980) text Dogmatic Theology and charges that Shedd’s ‘profound insight into theological truth was no mere matter of casual intellectual reflection.’\textsuperscript{1431} This is a correct and reasonable approach to the difficult academic field of theology and Reformed theology. Careful and thorough scholarship is required.\textsuperscript{1432} Theology is not to be done at the expense of the Scripture,\textsuperscript{1433} but within a correct study of that Scripture.\textsuperscript{1434}

\textsuperscript{1422} Franke (2005: 8). Erickson explains theology is to use the tools and methods of Biblical research. Erickson (1994: 21).
\textsuperscript{1423} The questionnaire serves as one way to scrutinize theological approaches to theodicy.
\textsuperscript{1425} John Frame recognizes in light of Biblicism that there is still value in traditions, confessions and church history, although he believes in the sufficiency of the Scripture. Frame (2002: 10). Biblicism is a wrong extreme but Frame desires that Scripture be correctly understood.
\textsuperscript{1426} Weber (1955)(1981: 17). Weber makes an excellent point as through academic theological blogging, for example, I have found that some evangelical fundamentalists downplay the use of theology and any scholarship. They prefer a plain literal read of the Bible and are sceptical of any scholarship that may challenge their views.
\textsuperscript{1427} Franke (2005: 8).
\textsuperscript{1428} Franke (2005: 9).
\textsuperscript{1429} Franke (2005: 9). Franke reasons that, with his approach, existing theological models will not be forced upon the Scripture.
\textsuperscript{1430} Franke (2005: 9). Although Christian orthodoxy is important Robert H. Gundry points out that the New Testament covers a time period of less than a century, while the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) covers thousands of years of history. Gundry (1981: iii). Christian doctrine and orthodoxy needs to correctly understand the Hebrew Bible in context and not ‘read’ the New Testament into the original text.
\textsuperscript{1431} Hindson (1874-1890)(1980: iv).
\textsuperscript{1432} Hindson (1874-1890)(1980: iv). This is the case in all theological writing and especially in academic writing and research.
\textsuperscript{1434} Scripture is also not to be evaluated in isolation as various Scripture needs to be compared. Erickson (1994: 21).
Shedd reasons that ‘methods of investigation are continually undergoing correction and modification’ and this can lead to better organization of the subject. Methodologically, ‘theology is disciplined consideration and exploration of the content of divine revelation.’ Franke cautions that although there is truth in this definition, human knowledge of God is not sufficient without a proper knowledge of humanity while this theology is being considered. Theology is always considered in the light of cultural and historical setting of the day, the implication being that a culture will influence theology and therefore theology needs to be scrutinized with this concept always in mind.

The doctrine of sola scriptura is the Reformed and Protestant counter to the traditionalism of the Roman Catholic Church. This concept was originally applied by Reformers to particular Roman Catholic doctrines assumed to be over influenced by tradition. Franke with a strong statement indicates the Reformers reasoned that Christian theology must be subject only to the direct authority of God through the Scripture, and not by any human authority or creeds. Their hope was to minimize human interpretation of Scripture. Weber reasons the Reformation standard of sola scriptura firmly upheld Reformed views against counter propositions. The Scripture is authoritative because it is the vehicle by which the Holy Spirit

\[1435\] Shedd (1874-1890)(1980: 4 Volume 1).
\[1436\] Shedd (1874-1890)(1980: 4 Volume 1).
\[1437\] Franke (2005: 13).
\[1438\] Franke (2005: 14).
\[1439\] Franke (2005: 14).
\[1444\] Franke (2005: 149). This is somewhat overstated, although true in general terms. For example, Calvin appeals to Augustine and tradition in his defence against free will theory and Albert Pighius. Tradition has a function in Reformed theology but is to be tested by Scripture at all times. Calvin (1543)(1996: 64).
speaks, and therefore has divine authority.\(^{1447}\) The Bible is the product of the Christian community that produced it under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.\(^{1448}\) As Anglican Rowan Williams states, ‘Revelation is the statement of God’s autonomy.’\(^{1449}\) God explains who he is and becomes his own ‘alter ego’ as Christ.\(^{1450}\) Roman Catholic theologian Alan Schreck states his Church agrees that the Bible is the inspired word of God,\(^{1451}\) but does not believe that the Bible is the only source of Revelation and spiritual guidance for Christians.\(^{1452}\) A dividing point between Protestants and Catholics comes with Schreck’s idea that God within Catholic thought continues to select certain individuals that teach with God’s authority through the Holy Spirit.\(^{1453}\) Protestant and those within the Reformed camp have, at times throughout history disagreed, with the Biblical and theological interpretations of certain Roman Catholic leaders, in particular the Pope,\(^{1454}\) believed to be inspired by the Holy Spirit.\(^{1455}\)

The Trinity

The central concern with Christian theology is the ‘nature, character and actions of God.’\(^{1456}\) Within the Christian worldview, theology of God is revealed through Jesus Christ\(^{1457}\)

\(^{1449}\) Williams (2007: 116).
\(^{1450}\) Williams (2007: 116).
\(^{1452}\) Schreck (1984: 42). Strictly speaking as noted, those in Reformed theology do trust in non-Biblical truths for spiritual guidance. Calvin admitted this in the context of Scripture and tradition. Calvin (1543)(1996: 64). I should also add that any reliance on philosophy and philosophy of religion is not strictly Biblical and I and many Reformed scholars look to philosophy for truth.
\(^{1453}\) Schreck (1984: 42).
\(^{1454}\) Calvin explains, within The Bondage and Liberation of the Will, his opinion that at that point in history the Papacy was beyond Reform. Calvin (1543)(1996: 17).
\(^{1455}\) Schreck (1984: 42).
\(^{1456}\) Franke (2005: 45).
\(^{1457}\) We are only able to understand the knowledge of God through Jesus Christ that worked through the Holy Spirit. Weber (1955)(1981: 349).
and the Trinity as in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Roman Catholic theologian Alan Schreck demonstrates the Catholic view is quite similar to Reformed on this issue as he explains it is a central belief of his Church, and the early Church comprised the word Trinity from the Biblical idea for the one God consisting of three equal and distinct divine persons. The word ‘Trinity’ is not found in Scripture, and neither is it fully developed in the Biblical text. Apologist Robert M. Bowman (1990) admits to those that claim Christian belief, but deny the Trinity, that the word is not in the Bible. Instead, the trinitarian doctrine was formulated in the patristic era. Bowman explains that the teaching of the Church Fathers was generally trinitarian. By the fourth century the Trinity had become a ‘nonnegotiable aspect of the gospel’ as it properly contained the Biblical concept of God. The Trinity was a formulation of the theological concept of the lordship of Jesus, an experience with the Holy Spirit and a commitment to the one God of the Hebrew Bible.

Admittedly the Trinity is a difficult concept, and Franke acknowledges that some, such as Friedrich Schleiermacher, view the Trinity as not a primary but secondary Christian

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1461 Franke (2005: 46).
1462 Bowman (1990: 22). In Bowman’s case this would be groups such as the Jehovah’s Witnesses also known as the Watchtower Society, and as well the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Theologian Gregory A. Boyd deals with similar objections concerning the Trinity and ‘unbiblical terminology’ in regard to Oneness Pentecostals. He correctly points out that all kinds of new unbiblical terminology is created in order that one does not have to preach and teach from the original Biblical Hebrew and Greek texts. Boyd (1992: 59-60).
1463 Franke (2005: 46).
1464 Bowman lists major Church fathers Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria of the second-century, and Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Origen in the third century as trinitarian thinkers. There was not, however, complete agreement among Church Fathers on exact terminology. Bowman (1990: 27-34).
1465 Franke (2005: 46).
1466 Franke (2005: 51).
1467 The Trinity is quite difficult to understand, in part because as Barth states in The Doctrine of Creation, God is non-temporal, non-historical, eternal and yet triune. Barth (1932-1968: 68). God and his triune nature cannot be
doctrine.\textsuperscript{1468} The doctrine is a systemized one and not a primary witness of the Christian faith.\textsuperscript{1469}

Although I would not negate the Trinity to a secondary doctrine,\textsuperscript{1470} I agree with Bowman that the finite human being can only potentially apprehend and not comprehend the doctrine.\textsuperscript{1471} Franke reasons the Trinity is a method of self-disclosure of God to and within creation.\textsuperscript{1472} It is centrally concerned with the coming of Christ and his work, and the work of the Holy Spirit and the concept of everlasting life for believers.\textsuperscript{1473} Jesus Christ in his atoning work was not only a man,\textsuperscript{1474} although he did take upon himself full humanity.\textsuperscript{1475} His atoning death was that of a God-man\textsuperscript{1476} that can save those that a mere man or creature could not.\textsuperscript{1477} The Trinity therefore takes on philosophical importance within human salvation.\textsuperscript{1478} Both Christ’s humanity and deity played central roles in his atoning work\textsuperscript{1479} and resurrection.\textsuperscript{1480}

Christology

A Biblical and orthodox explanation concerning Jesus Christ demonstrates that his person and work are tied together.\textsuperscript{1481} In the person and work of Christ, God discloses and reveals

\footnotesize{empirically studied or known by history. God and the triune divine nature accepted by Christianity is primarily understood through Biblical Studies and theology.}{1468} Franke (2005: 59). Schleiermacher (1821)(1928)(1976: 751).


\footnotesize{Bowman (1990: 22).}{1471} Bowman (1990: 22).


\footnotesize{Christ was incarnate and not a creature created by God. Bowman (1990: 19).}{1474} Bowman (1990: 19).


\footnotesize{Bowman (1990: 19). Christ remained an incarnated true man even as he was resurrected immortal. Hughes (1990: 55).}{1476} Bowman (1990: 19). Christ remained an incarnated true man even as he was resurrected immortal. Hughes (1990: 55).


\footnotesize{Bowman (1990: 19-20).}{1478} Bowman (1990: 19-20).

\footnotesize{Bowman (1990: 19-20).}{1479} Bowman (1990: 19-20).


\footnotesize{Franke (2005: 72). Christ was by nature an incessant worker with what his Father required. Thiessen (1956: 311).}{1481} Franke (2005: 72). Christ was by nature an incessant worker with what his Father required. Thiessen (1956: 311).}
himself to his creation, and this includes reconciliation and redemption.\textsuperscript{1482} The work of Christ in ministry and, in particular his death, are essential for Christianity.\textsuperscript{1483} Christ’s human life and death must, for historical accuracy, be connected to his salvific act.\textsuperscript{1484} He conquered\textsuperscript{1485} through his suffering and death, and revealed ‘the bankruptcy of the world’s values.’\textsuperscript{1486} Jesus Christ the person is held in extremely high regard as is his ministry, atoning work and resurrection, and his person and work cannot be separated in importance.\textsuperscript{1487} He is understood as one person with two natures, meaning that both his deity and humanity are aspects of his person.\textsuperscript{1488} He was and is fully God and fully human.\textsuperscript{1489} He is not simply a man blessed with a very special relationship with God, nor is he a divine being that appears to be human but really is not.\textsuperscript{1490} Weber explains that only God could bring peace to God and humanity, and this takes place through Christ.\textsuperscript{1491} Christ stood completely with human beings and yet was God.\textsuperscript{1492} Thiessen suggests that ‘no exact psychological analysis of the unique personality of Christ is possible.’\textsuperscript{1493} Jürgen Moltmann (1993) admits there is a mystery in regard to Christ and his incarnation.\textsuperscript{1494} There is a mysterious incarnation of God into a reality that is ‘temporal, decaying, transitory existence in which men live and die.’\textsuperscript{1495} The eternal presence of God somehow in the incarnation exists among persons as God takes on ‘transitory, mortal being’ in order to become and cause humanity

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\item Thiessen (1956: 314).
\item Williams (2007: 129).
\item Sin and death.
\item Bloesch (1987: 16). The world system was shown to have a futile set of values that could not save humanity.
\item Franke (2005: 72). The New Testament not only demonstrates the witness of the redeeming act of God in Christ, but is also the summation of the man that is the word of God. Hughes (1990: 38).
\item Schreck (1984: 16).
\item Franke (2005: 72). With his two natures, there is no other person like Christ. Thiessen (1956: 33-34).
\item Thiessen (1956: 305). J.S. Whale explains that Christ is unique and to explain him leaves one in paradoxes. Whale (1958: 106).
\item Moltmann (1993: 88). Christ has two natures in one person and there is an attempt to correlate the human and divine in Christ, but it remains a mystery. Whale (1958: 105).
\item Moltmann (1993: 88).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
to become ‘intransitory’ and immortal, never facing death once again. The New Testament depicts Christ as full deity with full divine power, and at the same time presents him as having the results of human finitude and mortality. His deity should not be asserted in a way that negates his humanity and vice-versa. Christ is equal to the Father in essence and nature as God, and yet as human being he submitted to the Father in order to accomplish his earthly mission. Jesus Christ has a determination to be God, our God, and to be the reconciler of the world.

Pneumatology

Franke suggests that at the heart of traditional Christian and Reformed theology is the idea of the Holy Spirit guiding the community of faith into the truth of the gospel and God’s plan for the Church and the world. The Holy Spirit is therefore very important within Reformed theology. Pneumatology is the aspect of Christian doctrine dealing with the Holy Spirit. The word comes from the Greek words pneuma and logos and pneumatology discusses the divine person and work of the Holy Spirit, including its work in human salvation. Pneumatology can only be ventured into and understood properly under the umbrella of

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1499 Franke (2005: 72).  
1501 Williams (2007: 130).  
Christian theology. The doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit is important as it answers questions concerning how persons can believe in God as Lord, prior to thoughts of Christ. The Holy Spirit, provides persons with the ability to know Christ, that was previously unknown. The Spirit speaks as the authority concerning Christ, and this is done freely by human beings through a gift of the Spirit.

Franke writes that in the era of the Church Fathers there was a theological debate concerning the Holy Spirit as Arian thought was that the Holy Spirit was the first creature preceding from God the Son. This view was countered by the Church Fathers by taking the position that the Holy Spirit was fully God, like the Son and Father. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit possess one divine essence and nature. The Holy Spirit played a key part in the transformation of persons into Christian believers. It is in fact an aspect of God’s participating in his creation and human salvation. It proceeds from the Father and the Son, and is the supreme agent of grace. Calvin suggests outward human preaching ‘strikes only the ears’ while the inward instruction of the Holy Spirit is how a person is enlightened in Christ. Human preaching is valuable in that it works at times in conjunction with the Holy Spirit

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1508 Franke (2005: 65). It can also be studied within Reformed theology.
1509 Williams (2007: 120). William writes from a very reasonable and yet Anglican perspective which is with this point in line with Reformed thought.
1510 Williams (2007: 120).
1511 Williams (2007: 120).
1512 Franke (2005: 52). Arianism was primarily founded on the teaching of Arius who died within 335-336. Thiessen suggests Arius may have been born in 280. Thiessen (1956: 284). Christ was viewed as the highest created being of the Father, and so was not Almighty God. These views on Christ were condemned at the Council of Nicaea in 325. Grenz, Guretzki and Nordling (1999: 15). Arian views that the Holy Spirit was a creature subordinated to God the Son, were condemned at the Council of Constantinople in 381. Thiessen (1956: 145). Jehovah’s Witnesses have similar views on the Son and Holy Spirit and their views are likely influenced by Arian thought. Martin (1965)(1997: 116).
1513 Franke (2005: 52).
1514 Franke (2005: 53). The Holy Spirit, Biblically, by basis of association is considered as deity as are the Father and Son. The baptism formula of Matthew 28: 19 is a prime Biblical example. Erickson (1994: 859).
1518 Whale (1958: 124). In the context of salvation.
transforming individuals. There is a traditional Christian and Reformed concept and theology
that the Holy Spirit is God and does the work that only God can do. The Holy Spirit works
directly upon a human mind, in a sense remaking a person and creating a person after the image
of Christ. Lutheran Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1937)(1963) explains the Holy Spirit brings Christ
to each and every member of the Church and Christ has a presence in the Church through the
Holy Spirit. The Spirit creates fellowship, and God lives through his people. This
would be in agreement with traditional Christian and Reformed views.

The Holy Spirit as an aspect of God works within Scripture and as well individual
regenerated Christians which I shall discuss later in this section. Within Reformed thought the
Holy Spirit definitively relates to the Biblical, Scriptural witness. The presentation of Biblical
witnesses is considered to exist by the virtue of the work of the Spirit and this legitimates the
Scripture as God’s word. This is a doctrine of Biblical inspiration as the Holy Spirit
testifies through the witness of Biblical writers. Inspiration is supernatural divine influence
from the Holy Spirit upon the writers of Scripture. Based on Scriptural analysis, many
theologians of the early Christian Church viewed Scripture as the manifested revelation of
God. The Biblical writers were reasoned to somehow be part of a miraculous procedure.

Thiessen dismisses the idea of a dictation theory of Scriptural inspiration, as the writers of Scripture were not persons that merely had divine information dictated to them.\textsuperscript{1533} The writers of Scripture were not ‘mere secretaries’ that wrote words dictated to them by the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{1534} It can therefore be reasoned it is not the Holy Spirit’s grammar being used.\textsuperscript{1535} The distinctive style of Biblical writers based on the study of original languages makes the dictation theory quite unlikely.\textsuperscript{1536} The concept of Biblical inspiration, with the Holy Spirit serving as guidance for the Biblical writer, seems both orthodox and reasonable.\textsuperscript{1537} The Biblical authors had full use of their intellect and used their own grammar, but were guided to write God’s word without error and omission.\textsuperscript{1538} The Holy Spirit guided the thoughts of Biblical writers.\textsuperscript{1539} Shedd names this basic theory of Biblical inspiration as ‘plenary inspiration’ meaning writers were moved by the Holy Spirit in respect to thought and language and were kept from error.\textsuperscript{1540} Modern theology needs to correctly discern what the Spirit is stating through the Bible and this needs to be done through proper research techniques.\textsuperscript{1541}

\textsuperscript{1533} Thiessen (1956: 106).
\textsuperscript{1534} Lindsell (1976: 32).
\textsuperscript{1535} Thiessen (1956: 106). People were not robotically inspired to write Scripture.
\textsuperscript{1536} Erickson (1994: 207).
\textsuperscript{1539} Erickson (1994: 215).
\textsuperscript{1540} Shedd (1874-1890)(1980: 72 Volume 1).
\textsuperscript{1541} Franke (2005: 133). A student of Scripture must attempt to be more true to what the Scripture actually states than to prior theological positions. As noted previously, many within the Christian community from a liberal and progressive position claim a trust in the Bible but do not view it as without error as in infallible and inerrant. Since the original Scriptural autographs are all missing, even with many largely accurate copies and parts of copies, there is room for legitimate debate and serious study of Scripture in the original languages and as translated. Lindsell admits that only the original autographs are free from all error, and I agree. Lindsell (1976: 30). A fundamentalist and naïve approach to Scripture through the eyes of a Western reader devoid of serious study of contexts and background has always been strongly rejected by this writer. This type of fundamentalist approach is also not an aspect of legitimate Reformed scholarship, even as I admit this thesis in not in the field of Biblical Studies but rather Theology and Philosophy of Religion.
Although this section concerns the Reformed methodology in regard to how the Holy Spirit inspires Scripture, ‘intuition theory’ is another approach to the Bible that is separate from traditional theory and dictation theory mentioned. I shall discuss it briefly. James Martineau (1889) presents the intuition view which is popular among some within the liberal progressive segment of the Church, the view being that some are spiritually gifted with intuition and able to write religious literature as were some within the Hebrew people. There would be persons of various religious backgrounds also having this gifting. This idea would mean the Hebrew Bible and New Testament are not necessarily the only legitimate divine Scripture. Many persons of different religious viewpoints could have superior insights into morality and religious truth, and they would possess a spiritual genius of higher order. Schleiermacher and his related view on Biblical inspiration reasons that the Holy Spirit would not be providing within Scripture a set of perfectly inspired doctrines, but would rather have God interact spiritually with persons open to this divine religious experience. This approach allows for the possible revision of Biblical doctrines over time as needed via human experience with God and his Spirit.

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1543 Martineau (1889: 168-171).
1545 Martineau (1889: 168-171).
1547 The Bible would not so much be the word of God, but a word of God, or more precisely a word from those that intuitively and naturally understand God to some extent. Browning suggests there are contradictions and inconsistencies within the Bible that threaten any traditional view of inspiration. Browning (1997: 186). Kreef and Tacelli reason that modernist reviewers of the Scripture take a sceptical attitude toward it, especially in regard to the supernatural. Kreef and Tacelli (1994: 205). A disbelief in a supernaturally inspired Scripture free from spiritual error would in my mind logically fit within some modern approaches. But, I do not reason this means these types of modern thinkers would therefore necessarily all completely abandon the Bible as a divine book in any sense.
1548 Thiessen (1956: 105).
1549 Lindsell (1976: 33).
1550 Thiessen (1956: 106).
John Murray (1937-1966)(1977) explains that the Holy Spirit ‘summons men into union and fellowship with his Son so that, united to him in whom all spiritual blessings are treasured, they come to posses Christ and all that belongs to him in his capacity as Saviour and Redeemer.’ Regeneration takes place which is a powerful change in the human being via the Holy Spirit, which transforms one corrupt and in sin in opposition to God, to one pleasing to God and trusting in God. It is a new ‘vital principle, a new habit, the law of God, and a divine nature’ are framed in a human heart. Herman Bavinck (1918)(2006) equates the term regeneration with rebirth. In John 3, Jesus does not literally speak of one being born a second time, but literally insists one be born from above. Regeneration consists of a person being converted from a life of giving in to temptation to one living in relationship with God. It is the communication of divine life to a soul. At the instance of regeneration the Holy Spirit begins a new inclination within the fallen human will. The human being is given a divine inclination, not of self, as it is contrary to the his or her fallen inclination, by the Holy Spirit. Within Reformed theology, regeneration is viewed as an initial one time act of the Holy Spirit in a person, and a person is therefore understood to be converted and therefore able to freely believe. My view is that it is indeed God’s choice alone to regenerate and therefore he alone

1558 Bavinck (1918)(2006: 46).
1559 Bavinck (1918)(2006: 46).
1560 Erickson (1994: 600).
1561 Thieszen (1956: 367). Although this does not make a person divine, but rather one guided by God.
1563 Shedd (1874-1890)(1980: 136 Volume 2). Packer views regeneration as the new birth and an inner re-creating of the fallen human nature through and by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Packer (1996: 924). I would not use the term re-create, but instead view regeneration as a process by which God begins to transform an individual to be Christ-like, as in ultimately being a sinless human being. This culminates in the resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15.
is active in regeneration, but simultaneously as a person is regenerated they believe in Christ. Therefore although I view God as the initiator of regeneration I reason that logically, in order to avoid any suggestion of force or coercion, as God regenerates the saved person, he or she simultaneously believes. There is ‘no compulsion of the will in regeneration.’ states Shedd. Calvin reasons that a person is not forced or coerced to believe in the gospel. I would view conversion as taking place simultaneously with regeneration in a person, although again I state that God alone via the Holy Spirit causes the regeneration process. This means as God chooses to regenerate a person he simultaneously persuades one to freely believe. Murray states that regeneration is logically antecedent to any conscious response, and I reason that God’s choice to commit the act of regeneration must be antecedent due to the corrupt and sinful nature of persons. The work of salvation was confined to God’s part in the calling. This does not prohibit God from causing a compatibilistic human choice within conversion at the moment that God’s initial eternal choice to regenerate becomes a divine act of regeneration. As persons were regenerated they would hear the call of salvation, repent and believe in

1567 Compatibilism allows for limited but significant human freedom. Kierkegaard suggests that Christianity is a religion of freedom and Christians are convinced to voluntarily give up all contrary to Christ. Kierkegaard (1847-1848)(1955)(1966: 186). The term convinced is a good one and I reason this is a work of the Holy Spirit.
1568 This is my compatibilist theory which is in line with that of Feinberg and which will be discussed later in this Chapter.
1572 This allows for a limited but significant human freedom within the salvation process that is not incompatibilism. Salvation remains alone a work of God. Weber writes that God with his freedom effects both human freedom and human bondage as he reaches out to a saved person through the Word of God. Weber (1955)(1981: 245). This would be a work of the Spirit.
1576 As God is eternal this choice could be viewed as such. Humans of course are not eternal.
1577 Persons have via the Holy Spirit been molded and transformed in order to freely believe. Thiesse, an incompatibilist, states that in regeneration the human is passive and is active in conversion. Thiesse (1956: 367). I agree concerning regeneration, and I can agree in regard to conversion, only if by active the human being is convinced freely via the Holy Spirit and is not assumed to have incompatibilist free will.
I would view conversion as an aspect of regeneration, which is the beginning of the Christian experience. Regeneration was to encompass the entire divine plan of recreation from the initial change in persons to the ultimate culmination of a new heaven and new earth.

For balance, I will briefly discuss two other important views of regeneration within the Christian Church, admitting from my review of Reform approaches that there is not complete agreement on the issue. Schleiermacher views regeneration as the turning point where the earlier life breaks and a new life begins. Regeneration requires a change of consciousness of the individual, and as this occurs a person no longer faces God with any type of enmity as a holy and righteous God, but instead experiences God’s love. A new life is introduced to the Christian, and through the ‘impartation of God in Christ and the Holy Spirit,’ the human ‘God-consciousness is renewed and made perfect.’ Bavinck states the major difference between a Reformed view on regeneration and Schleiermacher’s view is that with the latter approach the need for a legal justification is eliminated as persons would lose any guilt toward God and would, as stated previously, no longer have any enmity toward the Almighty.

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1579Franke notes that the Scripture explains that the Holy Spirit continued to guide the earliest Christians. Franke (2005: 132). The Spirit continues to work in regenerated/converted believers that embrace the gospel.
1581My review and comments demonstrates that my understanding of compatibilism and regeneration, although generally Reformed, would certainly not be in agreement with Reformed exemplars cited on every point. How regeneration works exactly is still a subject for open-minded metaphysical debate. As well, certainly Christian incompatibilists could provide me with different viewpoints.
1585Bavinck (1918)(2006: 61).
1588Erickson provides a Reformed position that justification is God’s actions through Christ in legally pronouncing sinners righteous. Erickson (1994: 954). Schreck discusses the Roman Catholic concept and states that justification and salvation are free gifts of God not earned by any work or even faith. Those who are justified, however, should keep the commandments. Roman Catholics are to persevere in faith and good works, even though works do not save a person. Works are a fruit of true faith. Schreck (1984: 26-27).
Concerning the idea of baptismal regeneration, Schreck explains that Roman Catholics view infant baptism ‘as normally the first step in accepting God’s salvation.’ He admits that the New Testament does not explicitly state whether or not infants or children were baptized, but it is possible they were as ‘whole households’ are mentioned in the New Testament as receiving baptism. He reasons that there is no solid evidence that before the third century infants and children were baptized in the Church, but by the fifth century this practice was universal in the Church. The theological hope with the practice of infant baptism is that the initial stages of regeneration have taken place through the faith of the parents, as Schreck notes ‘Jesus does respond in this way when infants and children are baptized.’ In the baptism process it is Christ that saves, and therefore salvation is not merited. Whale reasons infant baptism demonstrates that Christ did something for a person, without waiting for human approval. Rebaptism would never be needed as although baptized Roman Catholics can turn from the faith, if they do turn back to Christ the initial baptism is sufficient. The sacrament of infant baptism is one of the ‘foundational stones of Church.’ Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard reason it is not Biblically clear what type of baptism should be practiced.
baptism is not taught in Scripture directly, and therefore it can be deduced the same could be stated for the associated concepts of baptismal regeneration with Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Churches. However, legitimate theological inference leads to concepts of infant baptism, and so there are also historical arguments for baptismal regeneration within the Christian community which includes Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and even in some cases Presbyterian, Lutheran and Episcopal.

Sovereignty Approach Definition

John Calvin (1539)(1998) writes humanity has nothing on its own, but depends totally on God. God bestows on humanity what he wills. Arthur Pink (1968) defines God’s sovereignty as meaning that God is the almighty, the possessor of all power in heaven and earth, and no one can defeat his counsels. Norman Geisler explains the Bible teaches that God is in control of the entire universe, including human events. According to Jay Green (1971), in the ‘Forward’ of his book *Five Points of Calvinism*, many scholars within Christian theism, in particular those from Reformed and Calvinist positions, reason that God has sovereign

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1603 Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard (1993: 140).
1606 Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard (1993: 140).
1608 Kavanagh (1999: 300).
1609 John Calvin raised the possibility that in some cases baptismal regeneration could take place in infants. Calvin (1539)(1998: Book IV, Chapter 14, 17-20). There are some Presbyterians that take this view. However, I am a member of a Presbyterian Church in America that believes in infant baptism, but not in baptismal regeneration.
1610 Kavanagh (1999: 300). In Lutheran theology infant baptism and baptismal regeneration must be accompanied by the faith of the parents or future faith of the infant at a more mature age. Some Lutherans and Presbyterians would reject any concept of baptismal regeneration. Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling (1999: 19).
1613 Pink (1968: 20).
1615 Jay Green explains that Reformed theology was not attempting to replace previous Christian theology, but instead was clarifying the Biblical doctrines of the Church Fathers and the Scriptures. Green (1971: 7). The Reformed theological movement went from the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries and was a break from Roman
control over his creation, and God’s ultimate plan is being accomplished throughout.\textsuperscript{1617} Green explains that Calvinists do not necessarily see themselves as followers of John Calvin.\textsuperscript{1618} They do recognize Calvin as a great exegete and one who systemized Scripture, and a vast number of the doctrines that came from Calvin’s work are within the system known as Calvinism.\textsuperscript{1619} Calvinist Millard J. Erickson writes that sovereignty is a major tenent within Calvinism as God is considered the Lord of all things, and is free to do as he wills.\textsuperscript{1620} Jonathan Edwards (1729)(2006) writes that God has the power to bestow upon anyone of his creatures good, evil, or indifference for the greater good.\textsuperscript{1621} This sovereign control is accepted despite the obvious problem of evil occurring in God’s creation.\textsuperscript{1622} Attempts to harmonize strong concepts of God’s divine control over his creation, with the apparent corrupt nature of what he has made in regard to the problem of evil, will be described within this thesis as sovereignty theodicy.\textsuperscript{1623}

David Ray Griffin vigorously challenges Calvinistic notions of sovereignty in regard to theodicy.\textsuperscript{1624} Griffin claims that God cannot be shown to be perfectly moral for three reasons.\textsuperscript{1625} One, God cannot be understood to be morally perfect because God is an alleged deity and his morality cannot be demonstrated.\textsuperscript{1626} Two, since with a Calvinistic view God wills all things, including evil acts, God must be immoral.\textsuperscript{1627} Three, since Calvinists believe that God bases all

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Catholic leadership and teaching. Divine sovereignty was an important emphasis of this movement. Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling (1999: 101).
\textsuperscript{1616} Calvinism is a system which attempts to use Scripture to understand God’s divine theological plan for the ages. Green (1971: 7). This system stems from the work of John Calvin (1509-1564). Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling (1999: 23).
\textsuperscript{1617} Green (1971: 7).
\textsuperscript{1618} Green (1971: ii).
\textsuperscript{1619} Green (1971: ii).
\textsuperscript{1620} Erickson (1994: 915).
\textsuperscript{1621} Edwards (1729)(2006: 414).
\textsuperscript{1622} Edwards (1729)(2006: 414).
\textsuperscript{1623} Feinberg (1994: 124-143).
\textsuperscript{1624} Griffin (1976: 116-130).
\textsuperscript{1625} Griffin (1976: 130).
\textsuperscript{1626} Griffin (1976: 130).
\textsuperscript{1627} Griffin (1976: 130).
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things on eternal decisions, God is not truly free and is therefore amoral. The Calvinist could reply to Griffin with the words of Calvin himself in *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, that God is moral and as evil human actions occur God is willing a good thing and the sinner another. This type of explanation needs to be presented in a logical and reasonable way, and a central goal of this Chapter is to present a sovereignty theodicy that is philosophically reasonable.

Pinnock explains that there is a tension in the Biblical text between God determining things and human freedom. Contrary to strongly Calvinistic or sovereignty orientated approaches, there is within the Bible the idea that God has the power to create any possible universe, including ones with significantly free creatures. Such a universe would ultimately be under the sovereign control of God, but this does not mean that everything occurring is according to God’s intentions. Pinnock states that God did not create a world where he determines every detail, and therefore the Biblical idea of God’s sovereignty is not as deterministic as the Calvinistic concept. Pinnock’s idea is similar to Plantinga’s free will philosophy discussed in the previous Chapter, the conclusion being that if God creates a world with significantly free creatures, the creatures will eventually commit wrong actions.

John Sanders explains that general sovereignty is a concept in contrast to a Calvinistic specific sovereignty that has God allowing general structures to be set up by which human

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1628 Griffin (1976: 130).
1630 While at the same time seriously examining criticisms of the view.
1631 And to also test this approach empirically.
1632 Pinnock (1986: 143).
1633 Pinnock (1986: 143).
significant freedom and resulting choices allows persons to input on how things turn out.\textsuperscript{1640}

With general sovereignty, God takes risks in governing the world,\textsuperscript{1641} but he does not take risks with the concept of specific sovereignty.\textsuperscript{1642} Sanders deduces here that when God wants to bring about human acts within the general sovereignty framework he persuades people, whereas Sanders views specific sovereignty as using hard determinism to force people to commit acts.\textsuperscript{1643} Bruce Reichenbach (1986) explains that the sovereign cannot compel his subjects to freely follow him.\textsuperscript{1644} This understanding would be held by Feinberg,\textsuperscript{1645} and in general terms, accepted by most scholars that hold to theistic compatibilism within a Reformed tradition.\textsuperscript{1646}

Providence

Oliver Boulnois (2002) defines providence as the manner by which God governs the world.\textsuperscript{1647} In other words, providence would be the method that God uses to rule his creation in his sovereignty.\textsuperscript{1648} It could be understood that providence would be the method by which God has sovereign control over his creation,\textsuperscript{1649} and as Calvin notes, God’s providence has him work through persons.\textsuperscript{1650} Philip Edgcumbe Hughes (1990) explains that through God’s providence the world is dependent,\textsuperscript{1651} for if God did not maintain it, it would cease to exist.\textsuperscript{1652} In \textit{Law of Nature}, Edwards (1731-1733)(2006) explains that providence is the means by which God

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\textsuperscript{1640} Sanders (1998: 213).
\textsuperscript{1641} Sanders (1998: 213-214).
\textsuperscript{1643} Sanders (1998: 214).
\textsuperscript{1644} Reichenbach (1986: 105).
\textsuperscript{1645} Feinberg, would deny that God would force persons to commit acts, instead it is God’s sovereign plan that certain unconstrained actions should occur. Feinberg (2001: 637).
\textsuperscript{1647} Boulnois (2002: 444).
\textsuperscript{1649} Boulnois (2002: 444).
\textsuperscript{1650} Calvin (1543)(1996: 36).
\textsuperscript{1651} Hughes (1990: 45).
\textsuperscript{1652} Hughes (1990: 45).
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governs the world as the supreme judge of the universe.\textsuperscript{1653} Reichenbach notes that providence is how God guides and cares for his creation.\textsuperscript{1654} He further reasons that God on one hand possesses wisdom in order to direct his creation within his plans, and on the other hand has the power by which he attempts to implement his plans.\textsuperscript{1655} Reichenbach deduces that God’s providential plans allow for significant human freedom and choices to occur.\textsuperscript{1656}

Within ‘The Doctrine of Creation’ in \textit{Church Dogmatics}, Volume III, Karl Barth defines God’s providence as dealing with the history of created beings, in the sense that in every way through this entire span of time, this providence takes place under the care of God the creator.\textsuperscript{1657} This includes those that are in Christ in the covenant between God and humanity.\textsuperscript{1658} It is God’s fatherly Lordship over the entire world.\textsuperscript{1659} Natural events that take place are very personal for God.\textsuperscript{1660} God’s providence includes the ‘superior dealings of the Creator with his creation, the wisdom, omnipotence and goodness with which He maintains and governs in time this distinct reality according to the council of his own will.’\textsuperscript{1661} God knows all things appropriately and therefore acts in a proper way in relation to each and every creature.\textsuperscript{1662} In the act of creation, God associates himself with his creature as the ‘Lord of its history’\textsuperscript{1663} and acts in the appropriate manner.\textsuperscript{1664} Both the creator and creation possess types of freedom,\textsuperscript{1665} and this does
not simply leave God’s creatures with a type of freedom but causes the creature to share in the divine glory and the opportunity to serve God. God can provide his human creation with protection and guardianship along with human purpose and joy. Schelling, although not noted as a Christian theologian, within Of Human Freedom states that all earthly creatures are dependent on God. If God ‘withdrew his power for an instant, man would cease to be.’ There exists ‘nothing before or outside of God.’ Shedd explains that God’s work of providence demonstrates he is the ‘most holy,’ ‘wise’ and ‘powerful’ as he governs his creatures and their actions. God works in the material universe with its nature and laws. Phillips explains that a Reformed view is that God has the freedom to act as he wants. This would be God’s sovereign providence, but Hume is skeptical of this concept. People throughout the world view certain evils, which may be rectified in other regions of the world or in the future, and understand these good events as being connected to general laws and the existence of a good deity. Hume suggests that these are superstitions, and questions whether in many cases a ‘cause can be known but from its known effects?’ The idea is then presented that if God is benevolent his providence should lead to a world without suffering and wickedness.

1666 God governs and maintains the creation, in order that it exists by means of its own ‘inherent properties and laws.’ Shedd (1874-1890)(1980: 528 Volume 1).
1667 Barth (1932-1968: 12).
1668 Barth (1932-1968: 13).
1669 Schelling (1845)(1936: 11). Schelling is noted within the ‘Introduction’ to believe in a divine personality and denied that God’s personality was incomprehensible. Schelling did reason wisdom could be found in God. Gutmann (1845)(1936: xxv).
1670 Schelling (1845)(1936: 11).
1671 Schelling (1845)(1936: 32).
1673 Shedd (1874-1890)(1980: 528 Volume 1).
Sanders writes that the Calvinist view on providence is meticulous providence that assumes nothing can stymie God’s will, and that God is in control of every detail.\footnote{Sanders (1998: 212).} Compatibilists deny meticulous providence prohibits significant human free will,\footnote{Frame would agree as God is thought to ‘direct the entire universe.’ Frame (2002: 274).} but Sanders, as an incompatibilist, rejects the compatibilist argument concerning providence.\footnote{Frame explains that the freedom is not libertarian, but persons make significantly free choices within divine causation. Frame (2002: 153).} He instead suggests that a risk model of providence is a better idea.\footnote{Sanders (1998: 212).} Within the risk model, God does not control everything that happens, but controls many things.\footnote{Sanders (1998: 215).} God alone is responsible for completing his divine plans and these will be completed in a general sense, but that does not mean every specific event is within his plans.\footnote{Sanders (1998: 215).} Sander’s risk model is logical and well worth considering, but I question if there is a difficulty with the fact that he states God controls some things and not others.\footnote{Sanders (1998: 215).} If God’s control of all things in a Calvinistic/Reformed model is rejected because it would force people to do things, according to Sanders,\footnote{Sanders (1998: 215).} then how can God control some things?\footnote{Sanders (1998: 212).} Does God not influence significant human freedom at some specific points in time in order to bring about his ultimate plans, such as saving rebellious persons? If God influences significant human freedom at some points in time in order to guarantee that his ultimate plans occur, such as a culminated Kingdom, is this not in the end a form of compatibilism?\footnote{God can interject in human affairs and influence human decisions.}
Author’s Viewpoints

A sovereignty theodicy with its use of compatibilism is a logical and reasonable approach to the problem of evil.\textsuperscript{1690} Calvinist theologian John S. Feinberg will be my main exemplar in this Chapter as he has produced a modern defence within the \textit{Many Faces of Evil} from 1994, which appears to be a standard within compatibilism at this time.\textsuperscript{1691} I agree with Feinberg that God can accomplish his ultimate purposes without canceling out a modified, yet significant human freedom.\textsuperscript{1692} Compatibilism can hold reasonably and without contradiction that God can fulfill his purposes in all situations and still allow that human beings freely choose to commit or refrain from committing actions.\textsuperscript{1693}

In \textit{No One Like Him} from 2001, Feinberg echoing his work in \textit{The Many Faces of Evil}, equates his compatibilism with soft determinism,\textsuperscript{1694} meaning that God will at times bring about states of affairs where the human being freely commits or refrains from committing actions,\textsuperscript{1695} and in a sense could not do otherwise because of God’s personal influence on the person, and other circumstantial influences.\textsuperscript{1696} I do not disagree that a human being, in a sense, could not do otherwise\textsuperscript{1697} as long as it is understood that God does not coerce or force an individual to commit or refrain from committing an action.\textsuperscript{1698} Seemingly it is possible the infinite, omnipotent God could persuade an individual and change the human nature\textsuperscript{1699} in such a way that Feinberg’s

\textsuperscript{1690} Feinberg (1994: 124-143).
\textsuperscript{1691} Feinberg (1994: 124-143).
\textsuperscript{1692} Feinberg (1986: 24-25).
\textsuperscript{1693} Feinberg (1994: 76).
\textsuperscript{1694} Feinberg (2001: 636-638).
\textsuperscript{1695} Feinberg (2001: 636-638).
\textsuperscript{1696} Feinberg (2001: 636-638).
\textsuperscript{1697} Feinberg (2001: 636-638).
\textsuperscript{1698} Feinberg (1986: 24-25). Or else hard determinism takes place. A human being must not simply be passive via the causal power of God. Schelling (1845)(1936: 11).
compatibilism would be true. Once God would change a person’s very being and circumstances, it may become virtually impossible for that individual to commit certain actions in given situations. God would know how to influence particular situations to meet his ends through the use of divine foreknowledge and a perfect understanding of each individual person.

My view, like Feinberg’s, assumes that God could persuade and change an individual in such a way that they would commit desired actions in a certain circumstance. It is reasonable God can influence and mould an individual in such a way that, in a given circumstance, a person can reasonably deduce that choice A which is God’s desire for them is far better than choice B or C, etcetera, which is not God’s desire for them. If God, in his infinite power through the use of persuasion and the changing of the individual, demonstrates that one choice in a circumstance is far superior to others, it is possible this person would freely make this choice while under the divine influence and moulding of God, as God determines and influences the very nature and desires of the person. Kreeft and Tacelli note that some, but not all, forms of Calvinism subscribe to a view of hard determinism that denies any human free will. I would reason that in light of their statement that most Calvinists are not hard determinists.

Norman Geisler denies that Feinberg is a moderate Calvinist, but instead explains that he is

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1700 Feinberg (1986: 24-25).
1705 Feinberg (1986: 24-25).
1710 My research demonstrates that hard determinism is problematic for the majority of Calvinists and those within Reformed theology because Scripture (Romans 1-3, for example) condemns persons for sin and holds them morally accountable. Therefore, persons must at least freely embrace their own actions within soft determinism in order for punishment to be just.
presenting strong Calvinistic determinism. However, the fact remains that whether or not Feinberg’s view is correct, within his own writings he does allow for significant human freedom within his understanding and does not view God as using compulsion on persons to achieve his divine ends. As a moderate Calvinist, I subscribe to a sovereignty view that uses compatibilism without hard determinism. My tentative position is a form of compatibilism and is not incompatibilism because, like Feinberg’s approach, I view God as simultaneously willing significantly free human actions and this is rejected by incompatibilist theory.

Feinberg’s Background

Glenn R. Kreider (2003) writes that John S. Feinberg is chairman and professor of Biblical and systematic theology at Trinity Divinity School in Illinois. Feinberg is well respected as one within evangelical and Reformed theology who is familiar with historical, philosophical, theological, and Biblical literature. In particular, Feinberg is known for his research on God’s nature and the problem of evil from a sovereignty perspective. He has written *The Many Faces of Evil* (1994), which explains his sovereignty theodicy, and *No One Like Him* (2001), which deals with some of his ideas in regard to theodicy and the problem of evil.

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1715 God does not force or coerce human actions and then hold persons morally accountable for committing them.
1717 Kreider (2003: 1).
1718 Kreider (2003: 1).
1720 The key text for his sovereignty perspective for this thesis.
Feinberg’s Influences

Calvinism

Kreider in his review of Feinberg’s text *No One Like Him* in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, explains that Feinberg is writing from a Protestant Reformed tradition and deals with moral and natural evils within a Calvinistic system. As shall be seen in this Chapter, a few of Feinberg’s important views are in line with those of John Calvin (1509-1564) and his writings on the following points: humanity was created with a perfectly good nature; human rebellion against God caused evil; human beings presently exist in a fallen corrupt state; and that human nature can only be restored and perfected by God. Although Feinberg and Calvin do share some basic theological ideas, Calvin did not write a defence or theodicy in regard to the problem of evil, and therefore his writings were not necessarily as influential on Feinberg’s presentation as was historical Calvinistic theology, which has developed over the centuries. As well, Calvin without a written theodicy does not support and influence the theodicy of Feinberg in a similar way that Augustine’s free will theodicy supports and influences Plantinga’s free will defence. Calvin is not an expert on theodicy, but is rather a major overall theological influence on Feinberg, as Feinberg admits he uses a Calvinistic model for synthesizing divine sovereignty and human freedom. I therefore shall not review Calvin and Feinberg separately.

Jay Green in his ‘Forward’ in the text *Five Points of Calvinism*, explains that Calvinism in

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1727 Calvin is a theologian and Biblical scholar and not a philosopher of religion, in my mind. Calvin was not familiar with the modern academic concept of the problem of evil within secular philosophy or religion.
1730 Feinberg (1986: 19).
desiring to treat Scriptures fairly\textsuperscript{1731} has clearly emphasized the sovereignty of God and his unlimited power in dealing with humanity.\textsuperscript{1732} This Calvinistic Reformed view on God’s sovereignty is apparent throughout Feinberg’s presentation\textsuperscript{1733} as he seeks to logically work this view out with a modified concept of human freedom.\textsuperscript{1734} To Feinberg, this freedom and all human attributes had been tainted by the corruption of humanity in the fall.\textsuperscript{1735}

Martin Luther

Martin Luther (1483-1546)\textsuperscript{1736} is known as the father of the German Reformation\textsuperscript{1737} and preceded Calvin in the Reformation movement.\textsuperscript{1738} After reading Romans 1:17 he was convinced that only faith in Christ could make one just before God.\textsuperscript{1739} His core theology became that believers were justified by faith in Christ alone\textsuperscript{1740} and that Scripture was the only authority for people seeking salvation.\textsuperscript{1741} Luther (1516)(1968) writes concerning Romans 1:17 that only the gospel reveals the righteousness of God and that a person becomes righteous by trusting in the Word of God, Jesus.\textsuperscript{1742} Luther believed that the righteousness of God was the cause of human salvation,\textsuperscript{1743} not primarily since God was righteous, but because the believer is justified by God through faith in the gospel of the righteous Christ.\textsuperscript{1744} He reasoned that the righteousness of God

\textsuperscript{1731} Green (1971: ii).
\textsuperscript{1732} Green (1971: ii).
\textsuperscript{1733} Feinberg (1986: 19).
\textsuperscript{1734} Feinberg (1986: 19-43).
\textsuperscript{1735} Feinberg (1994: 126-127).
\textsuperscript{1736} Cairns (1981: 288-296).
\textsuperscript{1737} Cairns (1981: 288-296).
\textsuperscript{1738} Cairns (1981: 288-296).
\textsuperscript{1739} Cairns (1981: 289).
\textsuperscript{1740} Cairns (1981: 289-290).
\textsuperscript{1741} Cairns (1981: 289-290).
\textsuperscript{1742} Luther (1516)(1968: 25).
\textsuperscript{1743} Luther (1516)(1968: 25).
\textsuperscript{1744} Luther (1516)(1968: 25).
was contrary to the human righteousness of works, instead when a human being received justification by God the person could then commit truly good works.

In 1525 Luther wrote *The Bondage of the Will*, which was a debate with a Catholic scholar named Desiderius Erasmus (ca.1466-1536) who was an advocate of the free will theory. Luther reasons that since human beings were fallen and abandoned God, they could not *will good* but only turned in the direction of their own desires. He comments that human beings were perverted and evil, but this can be used by God for his purposes, although people can do nothing but oppose God by the use of their own will. He dogmatically assumes that there is no middle way between God’s grace and human free will, and postulates that human free will should be theologically denied and everything should be ascribed to God. Luther’s sovereignty perspective may place less emphasis on the human will than the later writings of Calvin and Feinberg. However, even the title of Luther’s book *The Bondage of the Will* shows that he likely influenced Calvin somewhat in *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*. Jay Green writes that Luther can be viewed as an early and continual influence on Calvinism, and it is reasonable to deduce that Luther is perhaps a minor historical influence on Feinberg’s sovereignty theology. Green points out that Luther’s views on theistic determinism are only accepted by a minority of Calvinists today.
Defence Versus Theodicy

Feinberg (1994) described his sovereignty approach as a defence and not a theodicy.\textsuperscript{1758} Like Plantinga and the free will defence,\textsuperscript{1759} Feinberg with his sovereignty approach prefers the term \textit{defence} to describe his undertaking because it is a less dogmatic term than is theodicy.\textsuperscript{1760} However, Feinberg’s defence, in my mind, would be no more speculative if he wrote a theodicy and it seems fair and scholarly to review this defence under the umbrella of sovereignty theodicy.\textsuperscript{1761} As discussed in Chapter Two, a defence may be a more cautious approach to the problem of evil,\textsuperscript{1762} but it is still hopefully offering possible,\textsuperscript{1763} reasonable and logical solutions to the problem of evil.\textsuperscript{1764} No scholar alive, that we know of, has been directly informed by God of his reasons for allowing the problem of evil,\textsuperscript{1765} so a defence or theodicy would basically be equally speculative, even though a theodicy may be more assertive with its argumentation.\textsuperscript{1766}

2. God’s Sovereignty and Human Nature

Feinberg on God’s Intent in Creating Humanity

Feinberg thought God originally wanted to create human beings with the ability to reason which possessed emotions, compatibilistic freedom, desires, intentions,\textsuperscript{1767} and the ability to commit actions via bodily movements.\textsuperscript{1768} The world created by God would be suitable for

\textsuperscript{1758} Feinberg (1994: 124).
\textsuperscript{1759} Plantinga (1977)(2002: 28).
\textsuperscript{1760} Feinberg (1994: 124).
\textsuperscript{1761} Feinberg (1994: 124).
\textsuperscript{1764} In the context of Alvin C. Plantinga’s ‘Free Will Defense’.
\textsuperscript{1765} I do not doubt that there have been some religious persons that claim special knowledge from God and this could include theodicy issues. However, the validity of these would be questioned as the era of the New Testament canon has closed.
\textsuperscript{1767} Feinberg (2001: 788).
\textsuperscript{1768} Feinberg (2001: 788).
humanity to live within their limitations.\textsuperscript{1769} Millard J. Erickson comments that human finiteness is not an evil in itself,\textsuperscript{1770} but from a Calvinistic perspective it can lead to sin within human beings if they do not accept their limitations and follow God.\textsuperscript{1771} Alfred North Whitehead (1967)(1986) explains in \textit{Adventures of Ideas}, that human finiteness does not take away from human perfection.\textsuperscript{1772} The finite human nature is not imperfect or immoral in itself as Forest Wood, Jr. (1986) notes within \textit{Whiteheadian Thought as a Basis for a Philosophy of Religion}.\textsuperscript{1773} Feinberg states that human beings are intended to always be finite and would not have the potential to become gods, superhuman, or subhuman.\textsuperscript{1774} To Feinberg, God would not eliminate the problem of evil by contradicting any of his plans just described\textsuperscript{1775} because it was a greater good for God to follow through with his original intent for humanity.\textsuperscript{1776} Feinberg’s approach adopts the idea that God could not remove evil and solve the problem of evil without (1) contradicting other plans God had in place,\textsuperscript{1777} (2) negating and contradicting claims God made in Scripture,\textsuperscript{1778} (3) performing actions that human beings would neither desire nor require God to do.\textsuperscript{1779} His defence is tied into these three assumptions.\textsuperscript{1780}

Feinberg holds to modified rationalism which was explained in Chapter Two as the idea that God was not obligated to create anything, including a world, but chose to create purely from his own desires.\textsuperscript{1781} Within modified rationalism, the concept of a best possible world is denied

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{1769} Feinberg (2001: 788).
\textsuperscript{1770} Erickson (1994: 491-492).
\textsuperscript{1771} Erickson (1994: 491-492).
\textsuperscript{1773} Wood (1986: 5).
\textsuperscript{1774} Feinberg (2001: 788).
\textsuperscript{1776} Feinberg (1994: 126).
\textsuperscript{1777} Feinberg (1994: 126).
\textsuperscript{1778} Feinberg (1994: 126).
\textsuperscript{1779} Feinberg (1994: 126).
\textsuperscript{1780} Feinberg (1994: 126).
\textsuperscript{1781} Feinberg (1994: 36).
\end{footnotes}
in favour of the view that God chose to create the present world which was initially perfectly
good.\textsuperscript{1782} The fact that the problem of evil exists would be seen within modified rationalism as a
result of the free choice of human beings to rebel against God in both free will and sovereignty
theodicy which both deny the notion of best possible world.\textsuperscript{1783} Modified rationalism would
oppose the best possible world concepts of Leibniz from the Enlightenment era, and Mackie
from the modern era.\textsuperscript{1784}

Feinberg Appeals to Desires Over Freewill

Feinberg’s next point in his sovereignty approach is an explanation of how human sin
occurs.\textsuperscript{1785} He thinks that it is not primarily from the use of human free will as with free will
approaches,\textsuperscript{1786} although he notes that the human will is instrumental in causing moral evil.\textsuperscript{1787}
Feinberg makes it clear that he does not want to appeal to free will for fear that his sovereignty
approach would be confused with the free will approach which he attempts to counter in his
presentation.\textsuperscript{1788} To avoid an apparent contradiction, by his own estimation,\textsuperscript{1789} Feinberg wants to
instead postulate on a prior cause behind the will that would explain why human beings

\textsuperscript{1785} Feinberg (1994: 128). Sin defined as in traditional orthodox and Reformed concepts, such as unacceptable
human actions to God, missing the mark, lawlessness, and moral depravity. Browning (1997: 345-346). Feinberg
does not primarily accept modern, progressive concepts of sin mentioned by J.C. O’Neill such as the idea that
people are not corrupted but only deceived. O’Neill (1999: 540). John Ankerberg and John Weldon in their work
on world religions note that in Buddhism sin is primarily looked at as ignorance. Ankerberg and Weldon (1999: 46).
The same can be noted within Religious Science/Science of mind movements. Ankerberg and Weldon (1999: 391).
\textsuperscript{1786} This is consistent with a compatibilistic/soft determinism position. S.I. Benn and R.S. Peters call soft
determinism a reconciling position between free will and hard determinism. Benn and Peters: (1959: 100). This
position is likely an objective of Feinberg.
\textsuperscript{1787} The human will would be the secondary cause in human decisions. Persons would still therefore be morally
\textsuperscript{1788} Feinberg (1994: 128). Erickson (1994: 424). Feinberg in particular does not want to have his sovereignty
approach confused with Plantinga’s free will defence.
eventually, with the use of their wills, disobeyed God. Feinberg theorizes that human beings have natural God given desires that are not evil in themselves. For example, if at a certain point in time a desirable object comes to the attention of a person, and if it is prohibited by God’s moral laws, then the person is left with the choice of following their desires or obeying God. Feinberg notes that once the bodily movement to carry out the desired action against God’s will occurs, so would the problem of evil as God would have been disobeyed.

Feinberg is basically presenting a very speculative view on human desires which in reality involves the larger issue of consciousness. Millard J. Erickson notes that Feinberg rejects the incompatibilism and free will approaches to human freedom, and then virtually reinstates them in a mild form with his concept of human desires. This is a reasonable criticism from one Reformed theologian, Erickson, of Feinberg’s approach.

Luther reasons that since human beings were fallen and distanced from God, they therefore turned in the direction of their own corrupted desires. Luther (1525)(1972: 130).
Feinberg’s view is limited, and is theological, philosophical and non-scientific. S.A. Nigosian provides the idea that from an Eastern religious perspective, individuals have ‘fixed and besetting images’ that are ascribed to an internal source known as insight, awareness, or consciousness. Nigosian (1994: 4). Walter Martin writes that there is also the idea of cosmic consciousness which is a spiritual and mystical concept that all in the universe is one. Martin (1989: 126). This is similar to monism that views reality as unified and whole. Martin (1989: 130). These Eastern views too are religious, unscientific approaches.
Although I think Feinberg does point out some crucial and major differences between his overall view and Plantinga’s which are discussed particularly in Chapters Two and Three within this thesis.
Consciousness

Sir John Houghton (1995) defines consciousness as ‘a quality possessed by human beings’ and the extent that it may be possessed by higher animals is the subject of debate. Although the human brain is sometimes compared to a computer, the human brain seems different as it thinks, feels, and demonstrates the property of self-awareness and consciousness. Rocco J. Gennaro (2006) of Indiana State University documents grammatically that the main term under review, consciousness is derived from the Latin con (with) and scire (know). Michael Winkelman (2004) of the American Anthropological Association writes that common understanding of a model of consciousness includes attention-awareness, phenomenal experiences, self-referencing, learning and the use of information, interpreting meanings, having goals, and systems of social reference. It is suggested that consciousness manifests itself through the physical properties of the brain. John Perry (1998) within ‘Circumstantial Attitudes and Benevolent Cognition’ suggests desires, beliefs and other cognitive aspects of persons are associated with mental states. These mental states relate by implication to human consciousness. There are strands of thought that desires and related functions may be found within human consciousness. David M. Rosenthal (2007) in ‘Philosophy, and the Study of Consciousness’ states that a person or creature is conscious when

1804 Gennaro (2006: 1).
1805 Gennaro (2006: 1).
1806 Winkelman (2004: 1).
1807 Winkelman (2004: 1).
1810 Biologist Alfred Gierer from Tubingen suggests that consciousness appears as ‘a system’s feature of our brain with neural processes strictly following the laws of physics’. Gierer (2003: 1). Gierer explains that there is not however, a general and exhaustive theory of human consciousness. Gierer (2003: 1). E. Ordunez, I. Badillo, and E Peon state the basic conjecture is that matter, energy and related information within the universe activates brain function and the nervous system and the human experiences of ‘memory, logic, sentiments, awareness, perception, cognition’, and other processes. Ordunez, Badillo, and Peon (2008: 1).
it can be awake and respond to ‘sensory stimulation.’ Being conscious also relates to a creature that senses and perceives about a thing or has a thought about that thing being present. It is also defined as the state of being aware in contrast to being unaware. Wade Novin (2004) in his journal article on quantum physics and consciousness explains consciousness is a ‘unique problem for the sciences’. Cognitive science has recently made advances in understanding the structures and process of sensory input leading to bodily functions, but still little is known about consciousness. It is noted that presently it is difficult to explain the need for consciousness within physical organisms within a physical, natural world. Consciousness is considered as part of natural phenomenon because it is reasoned to exist, but not because any scientific theory can predict or explain its emergence. Peter Carruthers (2001)(2007) documents that modern higher-order theories concerning consciousness attempts to reason out the distinctive properties of consciousness in regard to higher-order representation of sorts as in the ‘subjective dimensions’ of feelings. Within the International Journal of Philosophy, Isabel Gois (2001) suggests that in written work consciousness is often viewed as a mystery. She seeks to make consciousness less mysterious through the use of scientific inquiry. Some philosophers and many scientists are skeptical concerning human ability to explain how the brain works in regard to the shape of events.

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1812 Rosenthal (2007: 1). This would include an imagination of something possible.
1814 Novin (2004: 1).
1816 Novin (2004: 2).
1817 Novin (2004: 2). Neil C. Manson writes that there is unlikely to be a simple, direct way to connect mental discourse to ultimate conclusions concerning the nature of consciousness. Manson (2002: 1).
1820 Gois (2001: 3). However, Gierer notes that most scientists reason mental states are clearly linked to the empirical physical states of the human brain. Gierer (2003: 6).
1821 Gois (2001: 3-4).
thoughts and feelings.\textsuperscript{1822} There is a common view that no matter how detailed and complete a scientific theory of consciousness may be it will not be able to explain why the human ‘conscious experiences alone have an apparent quality to their occurrences’ while unconscious processes do not.\textsuperscript{1823} Gois thinks this is a mistaken perspective\textsuperscript{1824} and instead reasons that science should ‘either provide physical evidence for the truth of those introspective impressions, or bow to the conclusion that it can never know our minds as well as they know themselves’.\textsuperscript{1825} She suggests that most reason that the second option is the more likely one, although she disagrees and reasons science can one day empirically understand consciousness.\textsuperscript{1826} Sir John Houghton writes that we should not expect to find extra material as part of the brain called ‘consciousness or self-awareness’ which ‘pervades the brain without being a part of it’,\textsuperscript{1827} and I accept this as a sound statement.

Consciousness is not a new intellectual subject, as David Hume (1711-1776)\textsuperscript{1828} writes in the article ‘A Treatise of Human Nature’ that most philosophers think personal identity begins with consciousness, which is reflected thought or perception.\textsuperscript{1829} Although the exact nature of

\textsuperscript{1822} Gois (2001: 4). Many philosophers and scientists are sceptical that human consciousness can be properly explained. Houghton admits it is difficult for many observers to accept that consciousness can be defined in a meaningful way or to describe it in terms of other things. Houghton (1995: 92-93).
\textsuperscript{1823} Gois (2001: 4).
\textsuperscript{1824} Gois (2001: 4).
\textsuperscript{1825} Gois (2001: 4). Gierer reasons one of the difficulties with the problem of understanding human consciousness and understanding humanity is the question of human free will. Gierer (2003: 13). Consciousness allows a person to have knowledge and understanding of self and environment and, therefore to have a perception of both good and evil. Ordunez, Badillo, and Peon (2008: 2).
\textsuperscript{1827} Houghton (1995: 70).
\textsuperscript{1829} Hume (1739-1740)(1973: 193).
human consciousness is not known, it does work with human thought and perception. Hume found no theory of consciousness provided him with intellectual satisfaction. Rene Descartes (1596-1650) in *Conversation with Burman*, defined consciousness as the possible internal source of knowledge concerning a person’s own thoughts or mental occurrences. To have consciousness was to be able to understand one’s own thoughts. Descartes, previous to Hume, was also speculative concerning the nature of human consciousness, but it was perceived to have an influence on the human thought process. Biologist Alfred Gierer (2003) writes that consciousness is primarily accessed through human self-awareness and human to human communication. He doubts formal and complete objective definitions of consciousness can be made and therefore cannot be fully explained scientifically.

With Feinberg’s terminology concerning desires and will, consciousness could possibly and hypothetically be located behind desires, but in light of scientific ambiguity, Feinberg’s theory remains very speculative. E. Ordunez, I. Badillo, and E. Peon (2008) reason that no one for certain understands what consciousness is, as within it exists sensations which include desires, emotions, ideas, thoughts, beliefs and intentions. There is no clear understanding despite the fact consciousness, desires and related are studied within philosophy.

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1836 Gierer (2003: 9).
1837 Gierer (2003: 9).
1841 Ordunez, Badillo, and Peon (2008: 2).
religion, psychology and psychiatry. The term and concept of consciousness has not been
developed with enough clarity from scientists and others with related expertise. It can be
reasoned that possibly consciousness is the starting point where the human being has self-
awareness and an understanding that they are an individual apart from any other entity.

Consciousness is a difficult subject, but psychologist and philosopher William James (1904)
states that if the idea of consciousness in understanding human thought is eliminated there is not
an explanation for brain function. If human consciousness is rejected because it is not
completely understood, then other ideas need to be invented which probably are not as
intellectually satisfying. I view the idea of a human consciousness occurring within a human
nature as a reasonable proposition, although in light of modern views within philosophy and
science speculative views such as Feinberg’s should definitely not be accepted
dogmatically.

3. God’s Sovereignty and Eliminating Evil

Feinberg’s Eight Ways God Could Eliminate Evil

Feinberg lists eight ways that God could possibly eliminate the problem of evil from his creation, but he states they would all create greater problems for God and humanity, and
contradict the three basic claims of his sovereignty approach,\textsuperscript{1855} which are (1) contradicting other plans God had in place,\textsuperscript{1856} (2) negating and contradicting claims God made in Scripture,\textsuperscript{1857} (3) performing actions that human beings would neither desire nor require God to do.\textsuperscript{1858} I should point out that although his ideas and explanations are reasonable there is similarity between his points and explanations for them.\textsuperscript{1859} His approach can be criticized as being too repetitive.\textsuperscript{1860} In my view, the work should have been shortened.

First, God could eliminate the problem of evil by annihilating humankind.\textsuperscript{1861} Feinberg points out that this would contradict God’s intention to create humanity.\textsuperscript{1862} It seems if God did possess foreknowledge to know that humanity would fall, it would make more sense for him to plan to restore at least some of humanity rather than destroy it, since he had bothered to create human beings in the first place.\textsuperscript{1863} Pinnock points that God created the world with significant free creatures, and sustains the world in a way not to negate its character and structure.\textsuperscript{1864} From this idea God would not now destroy what he already made within his plans.\textsuperscript{1865} Erickson writes that God plans to eventually eliminate evil from the culminated Kingdom of God which will not contain sin or evil of any kind.\textsuperscript{1866} From a Reformed, Calvinistic perspective for this Kingdom to be inhabited by human beings as God created them there is first a period of time, the duration only known by God, for which the problem of evil exists. To destroy humanity would also end

\textsuperscript{1855} Feinberg (1994: 130).
\textsuperscript{1856} Feinberg (1994: 130).
\textsuperscript{1857} Feinberg (1994: 130).
\textsuperscript{1858} Feinberg (1994: 130).
\textsuperscript{1859} Feinberg (1994: 130-136).
\textsuperscript{1860} Feinberg (1994: 130).
\textsuperscript{1861} Feinberg (1994: 130).
\textsuperscript{1862} Feinberg (1994: 131). In light of the criticisms of Flew and Mackie, the critic could suggest that God need not annihilate humanity but could have simply created it differently or even now caused persons to act differently as in a far more moral fashion, more of the time.
\textsuperscript{1863} Feinberg (1994: 131).
\textsuperscript{1864} Pinnock (1986: 144).
\textsuperscript{1865} Pinnock (1986: 144).
\textsuperscript{1866} Mounce (1990: 368-397). Erickson (1994: 1228). Phillips rejects this idea noting that ‘Those who are crushed by life’s afflictions are not going to enter a state where all this is to be put right.’ Phillips (2005: 273).
all of God’s plans for a completed Kingdom of God.\textsuperscript{1867} Norman Geisler (1999) writes in his article on ‘The problem of evil’ that some critics have suggested it would have been better for God not to create a world or humanity at all.\textsuperscript{1868} A non-existent world without humanity would not have a human problem of evil,\textsuperscript{1869} and neither would a world where humanity was destroyed.\textsuperscript{1870} Geisler writes that one cannot compare something to nothing or a world to a non-world.\textsuperscript{1871} Therefore with Geisler’s idea, if God annihilated humanity it would not be possible to know whether or not things would be better because although there would not be a problem of evil, there also would not be a potential for human good.\textsuperscript{1872} Jürgen Moltmann reasons that metaphysical atheism sees an unjust and absurd world where the problem of evil is triumphant.\textsuperscript{1873} The atheist does not view God as showing favour to the world,\textsuperscript{1874} but views reality as one of nothingness.\textsuperscript{1875} Moltmann explains that philosophical arguments for the existence of God will not convince these atheists because the devil is a more plausible cause of this evil world than is God.\textsuperscript{1876} Moltmann’s explanation of metaphysical atheism could challenge Feinberg’s claim that God would not annihilate the world because God has good ultimate purposes to fulfill.\textsuperscript{1877} These complaints tie in with Griffin’s idea that the Calvinist God would be immoral or amoral if he existed because of the evil within creation.\textsuperscript{1878} The atheistic critic may claim there is no evidence that God, contrary to Feinberg’s notion, has eventual good plans.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Feinberg (1994: 131).
\item Geisler (1999: 2).
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\item Geisler (1999: 2).
\item Geisler (1999: 2).
\item Moltmann (1993: 219-220).
\item Feinberg (1994: 131).
\item Griffin (1976: 116-130).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
for his creation,\textsuperscript{1879} but Moltmann writes Christ in his work on the cross shows that God’s being is in suffering and suffering is in God’s being.\textsuperscript{1880} The idea that God is love is demonstrated through Christ’s work on the cross.\textsuperscript{1881} Moltmann makes a fine point as ultimately if Feinberg’s claim concerning God’s future good plans make any sense, God must be shown within his creation to have acted in a positive loving way\textsuperscript{1882} to rid the creation of the problem of evil and the atoning work of Christ, and the resurrection is reasonable explanation of God’s plans.

Second, Feinberg postulates that God could eliminate all objects of desire.\textsuperscript{1883} This would pertain to all physical things, including the human body and perhaps the mind,\textsuperscript{1884} because Feinberg views these as things that people could desire.\textsuperscript{1885} He concludes this could only be done by destroying all of creation.\textsuperscript{1886} It is unlikely human beings that possess free will and do not have desires, could please God.\textsuperscript{1887} These persons would have a self-realization that they were individual entities, and without any desire to follow God they could only obey him in a mechanical instinctive way, which would not consist of sincere love or a sense of wanting to follow and be like God. Alfred R. Mele (1996) in ‘Extrinsic Desire’ explains that there are two types of human desire, and these seem applicable here.\textsuperscript{1888} The first would be extrinsic desire, which is a desire for something conducive for obtaining something else a person desires.\textsuperscript{1889} An example would be to desire to own personal possessions that would lead to happiness.\textsuperscript{1890}

\textsuperscript{1880} Moltmann (1993: 227).
\textsuperscript{1881} Moltmann (1993: 227).
\textsuperscript{1882} Moltmann (1993: 227).
\textsuperscript{1883} Feinberg (1994: 131).
\textsuperscript{1884} Feinberg (1994: 131).
\textsuperscript{1885} Feinberg (1994: 131).
\textsuperscript{1886} Feinberg (1994: 131).
\textsuperscript{1887} The assumption being that God desires a passionate love from his creation.
\textsuperscript{1888} Mele (1996: 259).
\textsuperscript{1889} Mele (1996: 259).
\textsuperscript{1890} Mele (1996: 259).
Possessions would be desired in order that the greater desire of happiness could be fulfilled.\textsuperscript{1891} The second would be intrinsic desires which were the ultimate desires that the fulfillment of extrinsic desires accomplished.\textsuperscript{1892} For example, the ultimate goal of happiness achieved by owning some nice possessions would be intrinsic desire.\textsuperscript{1893} Kreeft and Tacelli approach desires in a similar way as they state that human beings have innate desire for natural things such as food and drink,\textsuperscript{1894} and external desires such as sports cars and political office.\textsuperscript{1895} Kreeft and Tacelli’s innate desires concept would somewhat correspond to Mele’s intrinsic ones as these would be the inner most human desires.\textsuperscript{1896} Kreeft and Tacelli’s external desires would be similar to Mele’s extrinsic desires,\textsuperscript{1897} which would be secondary desires fulfilled in order to fulfill the deepest human desires.\textsuperscript{1898}

In regard to the Kingdom of God, both types of desires\textsuperscript{1899} may be needed in order for a person to please God. For example, if the intrinsic desire\textsuperscript{1900} of followers of God was to glorify God and have ultimate happiness, then an extrinsic desire,\textsuperscript{1901} such as wanting to study Scripture and learn more about God, would be required to take place. The most inner desires of human beings would not occur unless secondary desires, the objects of desire, also occurred.\textsuperscript{1902} Feinberg’s point that eliminating desires would contradict God’s plan for creating human

\textsuperscript{1891} Mele (1996: 259).
\textsuperscript{1892} Mele (1996: 259).
\textsuperscript{1893} Mele (1996: 259).
\textsuperscript{1894} Kreeft and Tacelli (1994: 78).
\textsuperscript{1895} Kreeft and Tacelli (1994: 78).
\textsuperscript{1896} Kreeft and Tacelli (1994: 78).
\textsuperscript{1897} Mele (1996: 259).
\textsuperscript{1898} Kreeft and Tacelli (1994: 78).
\textsuperscript{1899} Mele (1996: 259).
\textsuperscript{1900} Mele (1996: 259).
\textsuperscript{1901} Mele (1996: 259).
seemingly is reasonable as people would need to desire to please, follow and learn more about their creator to make their existence useful to him in a relationship context.

Third, Feinberg’s next option for having God eliminate moral evil would be to eliminate desires. Since Feinberg assumes desires lead to choice, he believes that if God prevented human desires, no moral evil could exist. Additionally, Feinberg notes that without desires human beings would not have the will to acquire things essential for life, and the human race would eventually cease to exist. This, of course, would have contradicted God’s plans. If human desire was eliminated completely an important aspect of human freedom would vanish, that being the potential human desire to freely follow God. It seems reasonable that humanity would have to desire to freely return love to their creator, as it would be questionable whether or not true love could exist merely instinctively and without desire. C.A. Campbell (1951)(1973) notes there is no good reason to contemplate that a human being would choose any other course than their strongest desire. The strongest desire notion is simply a reflection of the person’s character. If human beings did not have desires then it would be impossible within a Calvinist Reformed model for God, with the use of compatibilism, to mould and persuade a person in character in such a way that God would be the strongest desire. Alexandre Kojeve (1969) provides his personal concepts within his work on consciousness and desire as he explains that

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1913 Without desire a human being could be determined with hard determinism to have certain thoughts and commit certain actions.
1914 Kojeve (1969: 1).
the very being of a person, the self-consciousness, implies and presumes desire.\textsuperscript{1915} From this perspective a human being without desire would be unable to understand self\textsuperscript{1916} or God\textsuperscript{1917} and would, therefore, not fit within God’s plans to create rational loving creatures. A human being must be able to understand the concept of \textit{I} in order to have an understanding of reality.\textsuperscript{1918} Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831)\textsuperscript{1919} states within \textit{Philosophy of the Mind} (1807)(2006) that a self-possessed and healthy person has a consciousness of the surrounding world which includes the ability to desire.\textsuperscript{1920} Without a conscious understanding of reality,\textsuperscript{1921} and the ability to desire anything including God, I cannot see how a human being can be open to following God. Feinberg is likely correct that it would contradict God’s plans to create a loving humanity by eliminating desire.\textsuperscript{1922}

Fourth, Feinberg postulates God could have made human beings in such a way that they had desires, but never immoral ones.\textsuperscript{1923} He thought that for God to minimize human desires in this way would be damaging human individuality\textsuperscript{1924} and creating people that were stereotypical of each other.\textsuperscript{1925} Pinnock explains that God has backed off from dominating his human creatures and has given them the ability to live as they choose.\textsuperscript{1926} God’s lack of dominance over humanity

\textsuperscript{1915} Kojeve (1969: 1).
\textsuperscript{1916} Kojeve (1969: 1).
\textsuperscript{1917} Kojeve (1969: 1).
\textsuperscript{1918} Kojeve (1969: 1).
\textsuperscript{1919} Blackburn (1996: 168).
\textsuperscript{1920} Hegel (1807)(2006: 408).
\textsuperscript{1921} Hegel (1807)(2006: 408).
\textsuperscript{1922} Feinberg (1994: 132). Although God cannot reasonably eliminate significant desires and maintain significantly free creatures, it is still a reasonable question why at times does not God alter a human desire to prevent a particular evil from taking place. Phillips suggests that God could curtail certain human freedoms at times when it is obviously needed. Phillips (2005: 106). I reason that God does do as Phillip’s suggests through circumstances often, but this does not fully explain situations where human evil is allowed to greatly flourish.
\textsuperscript{1923} Feinberg (1994; 132).
\textsuperscript{1924} Feinberg (1994; 132).
\textsuperscript{1925} Feinberg (1994: 132).
\textsuperscript{1926} Pinnock (1986: 151).
would seemingly allow for human individual thought. Feinberg theorized that for God to create human beings with no possibility of moral evil due to desires, they would have to quite likely be superhuman possessing great moral and intellectual ability to limit themselves to desires within God’s will, or God would have to supernaturally prevent immoral desires from taking place. Feinberg states that if God created superhumans they would not be the same human beings in existence and it would contradict God’s plans. It seems apparent that if God would somehow create superhuman beings with greater intellectual and moral ability, one would think they would need at least the degree of freedom that human beings currently have, and it appears, with Feinberg’s scenario to prohibit the problem of evil, they would need to be limited by God and would have less freedom than human beings as we know them. Also, if these superhuman beings were given significant freedom, and they did rebel against God, perhaps their potential for evil could be even more severe than the potential for evil in our current situation because of the greater intellect.

J.L. Mackie (1955)(1996) was discussed primarily in Chapter Two as a counter to free will theodicy, but his comments can be applied here. Mackie writes that God being omnipotent could surely make persons in a way that they always did what was good. Plantinga as an incompatibilist disagrees with this idea. Feinberg as a compatibilist does not

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1936 Mackie (1955)(1996: 250-251). Or as noted significantly free human beings as exist presently can be prohibited from committing certain evil acts. Phillips (2005: 106). Human desires can fully exist but be stymied by God and evil acts not allowed to occur.
think Plantinga defeats Mackie on this point, but rather Plantinga merely points out the differences between incompatibilism and compatibilism. If Feinberg sees it reasonable God could have made human beings in a way that they were significantly free and yet always committed right actions, could not God have created human beings that were significantly free but always had right desires and not immoral ones? Feinberg would appear to somewhat concede this point as a possibility and remains theologically consistent, but he reasons that God would have to constantly interrupt human lives to prevent wrong desires. He seems to overlook the possibility God could simply make free creatures that would never desire to do wrong things. Feinberg deduces that if wrong moral desires were prohibited by God the human life would consist of a constant changing in direction and course ad infinitum, because God would have to be constantly preventing persons from having wrong desires and these people would not progress as creatures. My deduction would be that God could have made human beings that had significant freedom and would not have wrong desires. It could be reasoned though that hypothetical human beings in that scenario are not within God’s plans.

Calvin writes that God bends and directs the soul, and therefore by implication the desires of some towards God. Rather than eliminating wrong desires completely in all of humanity, perhaps God prefers with the use of soft determinism to mould and persuade

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1944 This would be consistent with compatibilism.
1945 This term is from the Latin, meaning to infinity. Blackburn (1996: 7).
1947 They could be determined through nature and God’s Holy Spirit not to ever sin and become corrupted in nature.
persons via the Holy Spirit. Erwin W. Lutzer (2000) writes that God being omnipotent could have created perfect human beings that did not have the desire to sin. He then goes on to state that clearly God with all his power certainly would not create a universe in which something might happen contrary to his plans. It appears that God from a Reformed, Calvinistic model created human beings, even though he knew they would at times have wrong desires that would lead to wrong actions.

Fifth, for this point Feinberg attempts to separate desires from intentions, noting that intentions are actions fueled by those desires. Feinberg states that God could eliminate human intentions; however, eliminating the intentions, or restricting them, would be just as problematic as God eliminating desires. However, the objection could be raised once again that within a compatibilistic system significantly free beings could be made in order not to have wrong intentions. Feinberg reasons that prohibiting human intentions would greatly limit human freedom and a race that had no intentions would not commit significantly free actions of value to God. Reichenbach explains that God cannot control human behaviour without taking away the human freedom he has originally provided. For God to control human intentions would perhaps stymie the ability of human beings to function as God would like.

1958 In light of Flew and Mackie’s compatibilistic criticisms discussed Flew (1955: 150-153) Mackie (1971) in Plantinga (1977)(2002: 32-33). Mackie (1955)(1996: 250-253). I would reason that God could create significantly free human beings with only good intentions, in the same way persons could be formed to only have good desires and do good actions. God knowingly created beings that he knew would freely fall and planned to save some through the atoning and resurrection work of Christ. Feinberg’s lack of clarity concerning the issues of desire and intentions are a weakness with his theodicy, although not devastating to his primary concepts in regard to presenting a logical and reasonable sovereignty theodicy.
of intentions is similar to what Calvin described as human impulse.\textsuperscript{1963} Human impulses to Calvin appeared to be fueled by desires and led to human actions.\textsuperscript{1964} Calvin noted God had to reform the impulses of those outside of Christ in order that they could begin to be compliant with the impulses of the spirit of God.\textsuperscript{1965} A reformation of human impulses and resulting actions would, to Calvin,\textsuperscript{1966} be an aspect of God’s solution to human evil. Calvin did not believe that God would eliminate human impulse, but rather God would have the impulse of a person he desired subject to the spirit of God.\textsuperscript{1967}

Sixth, Feinberg notes that God could only allow people to will good things and not bad things.\textsuperscript{1968} Feinberg then points out that the restrictions on human freedom would, once again, work against God’s plan.\textsuperscript{1969} Some may question God’s goodness by not creating human beings with less freedom,\textsuperscript{1970} as according to Mackie, God could have formed some type of beings that obeyed him without committing any wrong actions.\textsuperscript{1971} These types of beings would possibly be more preferable than human beings as we know them, which cause the problem of evil.\textsuperscript{1972} Griffin explains the Calvinistic God, being omnipotent could have simply prevented human wickedness and evil in the first place.\textsuperscript{1973} I do not doubt that both Mackie and Griffin are correct that God could have created a world where some type of human beings were not evil,\textsuperscript{1974} but I doubt it was God’s will to create such beings.
In contrast, Thiessen from an incompatibilist position writes that God does not want to create automaton type beings with no choice in whether or not they would glorify God.\textsuperscript{1975} For Thiessen, humanity can only truly glorify God by choosing to do so while still having the opportunity to choose not to glorify God in disobedience.\textsuperscript{1976} This concept appears on the surface to be primarily in line with noted incompatibilism and free will approaches almost verbatim.\textsuperscript{1977} However, within a compatibilistic, type sovereignty approach, God cannot truly be glorified by the devotion of his creatures unless it is significantly and freely willed as a secondary cause by these persons.\textsuperscript{1978} For the compatibilist and those like-minded before the modern term was used,\textsuperscript{1979} true human devotion to God does not come through compulsion as Calvin admits,\textsuperscript{1980} stating that although he does not use the term free will in order to avoid confusion, he maintains that choice is free if opposed to coercion.\textsuperscript{1981}

Compatibilist approaches would not view a human automaton\textsuperscript{1982} as being able to bring acceptable glory to God.\textsuperscript{1983} Christopher Miles Coope (2001) speculates that the Bible teaches the trustworthiness of God,\textsuperscript{1984} and human ideas of what goodness is could be faulty,\textsuperscript{1985} and thus God may be correct in how he is dealing with the problem of evil.\textsuperscript{1986} God as infinite, omnipotent and omniscient, could reasonably know how to properly deal with the problem of evil caused by

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1975} Thiessen (1956: 248).
  \item \textsuperscript{1976} Thiessen (1956: 248).
  \item \textsuperscript{1977} Geisler (1986: 76-77).
  \item \textsuperscript{1978} Calvin (1543)(1996: 68).
  \item \textsuperscript{1979} Such as John Calvin and many within the Reformed camp.
  \item \textsuperscript{1980} Calvin (1543)(1996: 68).
  \item \textsuperscript{1981} Calvin (1543)(1996: 68).
  \item \textsuperscript{1983} Although views that espouse hard determinism may see the good actions of non-significantly free human creatures as pleasing to God. I disagree reasoning God made human beings and likely angelic beings to have significant freedom in order to glorify God. Animals, for example, may still to a lesser degree glorify God even without the use of significant freedom within God’s plans for these creatures.
  \item \textsuperscript{1984} Coope (2001: 385).
  \item \textsuperscript{1985} Coope (2001: 385).
  \item \textsuperscript{1986} Coope (2001: 385).
\end{itemize}
his finite creations. It is possible God understands the imperfect human beings that presently exist are more valuable creations than the hypothetical ones that would have never rebelled against him. The development and ultimate restoration of a number of these imperfect human beings may be worth the problem of evil in God’s estimation.

Seventh, God could prohibit bodily movements that lead to immoral actions being committed. This could be done by natural or supernatural means. In other words, human beings would have built within their bodies the inability to do actions that lead to immorality, or God could simply intervene supernaturally and prevent wrong actions from occurring. Martin Luther writes, in his commentary on Romans, that the body through corruption has been changed from its original use so that it now dishonoured God. He states that each human being is either under the control of a corrupt nature or God’s spirit. Clearly to Luther, bodily movements that lead to immoral actions could only begin to be halted through God’s grace, but Luther did not claim that this would be done immediately by God, and noted that a person needed to flee from sinful bodily movements through devout prayer.

The notions of Feinberg and Luther take a spiritual approach that strongly connects the mind and body in unity; however, there are secular approaches with different perspectives from Reformed, Calvinistic thinking. According to John R. Burr and Milton Goldinger (1976)

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1999 As can be seen with the review of consciousness within scientific and philosophical literature there is a question concerning whether a non-physical human consciousness is required. Novin (2004: 1-2).
there is a debate within the scientific community whether or not human beings are wholly physical.\textsuperscript{2000} I readily admit that the existence of the human spirit is not empirically verifiable,\textsuperscript{2001} and its existence from a Christian perspective would primarily rely on Scripture.\textsuperscript{2002} Burr and Goldinger correctly point out if it can be scientifically demonstrated that human beings are nothing more than machines, then a view of persons having immaterial souls must be given up.\textsuperscript{2003} With this secular approach,\textsuperscript{2004} contrary to Reformed and Calvinistic thought,\textsuperscript{2005} there would be no spiritual way to overcome the body’s movements that lead to wrong actions. Richard Taylor (1969)(1976) writes that the idea of an immortal soul cannot be seen as necessarily false.\textsuperscript{2006} However, he reasons that if there is difficulty explaining how the body can do certain things,\textsuperscript{2007} it would be no less difficult explaining how a soul could do certain things.\textsuperscript{2008} This idea has merit since even if the idea of a human soul/spirit unity with a body is granted, bodily actions leading to wrong actions cannot be separated from the spiritual condition\textsuperscript{2009} that leads to these actions. Even if Feinberg is correct and God could prohibit wrong bodily actions and does not,\textsuperscript{2010} the mere prevention of bodily movement would be an indicator of deeper spiritual problems indicated.\textsuperscript{2011} Taylor is correct that the physical body is perhaps easier to understand than a hypothetical soul/spirit, and is certainly empirically easier to comprehend.\textsuperscript{2012} I

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{2000} Burr and Goldinger (1976: 319).
\item \textsuperscript{2002} Thiessen (1956: 227).
\item \textsuperscript{2003} Burr and Goldinger (1976: 319).
\item \textsuperscript{2004} Burr and Goldinger (1976: 319).
\item \textsuperscript{2010} Feinberg (1994: 133).
\item \textsuperscript{2012} Taylor (1969)(1976: 336).
\end{itemize}
do not deny that science and philosophy should look at solving the problem of evil on physical levels as well, with issues such as the cures for diseases.

Eighth, Feinberg notes that God could supernaturally prohibit wrong human actions. This would greatly change life as it is known. This could cause fear in people not knowing if the acts they were about to commit or not, would be prohibited by God. Feinberg thought this could leave the world non-functional, and not a better world than the one in existence, and he deduces that if God did have to miraculously intervene to prohibit all human immorality, God would seem unwise. It would seem unwise God would create people that he had to constantly supernaturally forcefully determine to commit right actions, and the value of these types of beings to God would be questionable. Kreeft and Tacelli note if God did not allow human beings the option to misuse their freedom, they would not be human but animal or machine having less value than creatures that had the potential to be persuaded by God to follow him, and turn from wrong doing. Again Griffin’s objection is reasonable, as it must be considered why within the Reformed, Calvinistic system God did not create people in such a way that supernatural intervention would not be needed to prevent evil. If God is omnipotent it remains within the realm of possibility that he could create human beings who were not like animals or machine, but still did not commit evil actions. Feinberg’s redundant stock answer

\[2021\] Kreeft and Tacelli (1994: 138). This assumes incompatibilism but it is true that human beings would be vastly different with significantly less freedom due to divine determining factors.
\[2022\] Griffin (1976: 122).
\[2023\] Griffin (1976: 122).
for this objection is that it would contradict God’s plans. Feinberg explains that God could remove evil, but further problems would arise.

Feinberg concludes that God could not both create a utopia and, at the same time, human beings as they are presently in a good world without constraining persons. However, some critics such as Bertrand Russell, would deny that God will ever bring about a utopia, and would deny that the world is a just place presently. Bertrand Russell (1957)(1976) states that since the universe often lacks justice presently there is no good scientific reason to believe that God would eventually bring about justice. To Feinberg, if God had used any of the eight methods described, the world would not be as good as it is presently. God in his sovereignty has dealt with his creation in the correct manner, including with the problem of evil. There is within Feinberg’s theodicy the assumption that God has brought about a good, worthwhile world despite the problem of evil. Feinberg, unlike Russell, assumes that the world contains a level of goodness and justice that makes the idea of the Christian God as creator reasonable.
4. Restoration

Why Later?

Sovereignty approaches such as those of Feinberg, state that God was just and perfect in how he dealt with creation. These claim that a good God created a good world and that human rebellion and the problem of evil existed for a good reason. Yet sovereignty approaches believe that God would ultimately culminate his Kingdom of God and eliminate the problem of evil. As Phillips notes, ‘Theodiscists want happy endings.’ Feinberg admits the difficulty with his approach because it defends God allowing the problem of evil in his creation for a time period that is unknown to human beings, and at the same time claims that God would eventually restore his creation. He notes that free will and evolutionary theistic approaches to the problem of evil also assume that God would restore his creation, and so this was a common theistic assumption. The fact that his sovereignty approach accepts restoration of the creation within it in no way makes his presentation internally inconsistent. Phillips explains that this general type of approach views God as compensating persons for the sufferings in life. Evil and suffering is therefore redeemed in some way. Evil and suffering would be worthwhile within a Christian world view where Christ prevails. Phillips warns that at its worst Christianity can push one to back the right supernatural force, as in not backing Satan.

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2037 Feinberg (1994: 136). Phillips questions this type of reasoning as there is often a lack of correlation between suffering and virtue. Phillips (2005: 81-82). Humanly speaking this can be granted, but God, traditionally understood at least, could make these correlations.
2038 Mounce (1990: 368-397).
Phillips suggests that no one wants to back a loser and so Christians should logically, within their worldview, back God and not Satan.\textsuperscript{2049} God becomes a means and not an end within this type of Christian approach.\textsuperscript{2050} It should be interjected that Christianity should not be primarily about being on the winning side, rather it should be concerned, for the most part, with doing God’s will obediently in love.\textsuperscript{2051} Phillips views it as problematic that Jesus stated his Kingdom was not of this world and yet in the Second Coming establishes his Kingdom on this earth.\textsuperscript{2052}

Feinberg thought it was not his objective to answer why God allowed the problem of evil and would eventually bring restoration, and I view this as a weakness.\textsuperscript{2053} Rather, Feinberg believes he was successful in presenting an approach that showed God was good,\textsuperscript{2054} as was his creation.\textsuperscript{2055} Calvin writes that God would begin anew in humanity by abolishing the fallen will, leaving the human will in its original state.\textsuperscript{2056} God would turn evil to good, according to Calvin,\textsuperscript{2057} thus bringing a new humanity which was a new creation.\textsuperscript{2058} This human restoration and rebirth, Calvin (1552)(1995) notes,\textsuperscript{2059} would lead to the culmination of the Kingdom of God, and the ultimate blessing of immortality.\textsuperscript{2060}

\textsuperscript{2048} Phillips (2005: 247).
\textsuperscript{2049} Phillips (2005: 247). A decent point is made, however, in light of Reformed views on compatibilism, Christians are not going to primarily choose God, but are chosen by God.
\textsuperscript{2050} Phillips (2005: 247).
\textsuperscript{2051} For example, Matthew 22 and Mark 12 has Christ instructing the reader to love God first and foremost, and others as much as self. Jesus in John 15 tells his disciples to love one another just as he loved them.
\textsuperscript{2052} Phillips (2005: 247). Jesus’ Kingdom is not of this temporal world, not of this present realm. The world shall be changed and restored. Mounce (1990: 368-397).
\textsuperscript{2053} Feinberg (1994: 141).
\textsuperscript{2054} Feinberg (1994: 141).
\textsuperscript{2055} Feinberg (1994: 141).
\textsuperscript{2056} Calvin (1539)(1998: Book II, Chapter 3, 6).
\textsuperscript{2057} Calvin (1539)(1998: Book II, Chapter 3, 6).
\textsuperscript{2058} Calvin (1539)(1998: Book II, Chapter 3, 6).
\textsuperscript{2059} Calvin (1539)(1998: Book II, Chapter 3, 6).
\textsuperscript{2060} Calvin (1552)(1995: 13).
Within a sovereignty approach, I deduce a theoretical, possible and suitable reason why God created a good world and allowed human beings to rebel against him.\textsuperscript{2061} My theory is that human beings that are saved through Christ with the use of compatibilism will eventually have greater spiritual maturity than Adam and Eve did prior to a fall from God. If the idea of a literal Adam and Eve is rejected, as was mentioned by Jackson and Fretheim\textsuperscript{2062} it can be reasoned that those within the culminated Kingdom of God will surpass those first persons in spiritual maturity as well. This would be so because those God saves will have experienced their own sin, death, and the atoning work of Christ and his resurrection applied to them. These would be citizens of the culminated Kingdom of God.\textsuperscript{2063} Persons cannot be created with experience, even if made with a level of initial maturity.\textsuperscript{2064} Those within the culminated Kingdom of God would not possess the initial inexperience and immaturity of the first persons. It is reasonable to deduce that the problem of evil is possibly God’s means of developing certain individuals to eventual Christ-like stature,\textsuperscript{2065} not sharing Christ’s divinity in nature\textsuperscript{2066} but becoming like Christ in a mature and moral manner, combined with an unbreakable devotion to God.\textsuperscript{2067} It is believed that Christ will be God’s lieutenant in this godless world\textsuperscript{2068} and bring about, through his crucifixion and resurrection, the promise of a better future, which includes hope.\textsuperscript{2069} The Kingdom of God was present in Christ and this has been defined in history.\textsuperscript{2070}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{2061} This is logical and reasonable and also open to refinement in the future. But I reason this explanation is a superior approach to Feinberg’s non-explanation.
\item \textsuperscript{2062} Jackson (1941)(2006: 1). Fretheim (1994: 152).
\item \textsuperscript{2064} God can create a perfect person, but God cannot logically create a perfect person with experience as such. The act of creating implies newness and inexperience. Admittedly, God could hypothetically create a being with false memories of a perfect life, but this would not be the same as having experience. I deduce the results would not be the same.
\item \textsuperscript{2065} Finite moral perfection and goodness but not infinite, God-like moral perfection and goodness.
\item \textsuperscript{2066} Isaiah 43 makes it clear there was no God formed before God and there will be no God formed after. Isaiah 44-46 make similar statements. The New American Standard Version Bible (1984: 816-821).
\item \textsuperscript{2067} By the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
\item \textsuperscript{2068} Moltmann (1993: 256).
\item \textsuperscript{2069} Moltmann (1993: 256).
\item \textsuperscript{2070} Moltmann (1993: 263).
\end{itemize}
The Resurrection

The resurrection is a complex subject that is far beyond the scope of this thesis and could easily be a topic of a large work. However, the traditional Reformed, Calvinistic perspective accepts the concept of an actual physical resurrection of Christ, and the eventual physical resurrection of humanity. Erickson writes that Scripture teaches the resurrection of those who believe in Christ. He also reasons it is likely that unbelievers too will be raised, although this concept is not as clearly explained as is the idea of the raising of those who trust in Christ. Thiessen bases the traditional Christian belief in physical resurrection in the texts from both Testaments and describes the resurrection bodies as both physical and spiritual in nature. Whale writes that the resurrection is not to be considered an addition to the Christian faith, but is the Christian faith. Theologian Robert B. Sloan (1991) reasons that for early Christians the resurrection vindicated Christ in regard to his detractors and gave his message authority. Jürgen Moltmann writes that as the crucified one, the risen Christ is available for humanity. Moltmann explains to some the resurrection of Christ is a counter to the abandonment of humanity of God while Christ was on the cross. For certain observers Christ’s resurrection for all turns them from atheism. This may be because the historical resurrection of Christ would

2071 The resurrection can be debated, and as shall be discussed there are progressive liberal views within Christian society, such as Gebara that will question traditional doctrines. Gebara (2002: 121). It can also be denied outright by critics. Darrow (1928)(1973: 266-267). Phillips provides a negative atheistic critique of eschatological Christian concepts in his Chapter, ‘Last things.’ Phillips (2005: 247-275).
2077 Thiessen (1956: 491).
2078 Thiessen (1956: 491).
2079 Whale (1958: 69).
be viewed as God actually participating in the world to remedy the problem of evil.\textsuperscript{2084} God would not only be judging the world as he did on the cross,\textsuperscript{2085} but actually bringing about resolution to the problem of evil through Christ\textsuperscript{2086} and from a human perspective this makes a belief and trust in the Biblical God reasonable and worthwhile.

Roman Catholic, Ivone Gebara in \textit{Out of the Depths} within the section entitled ‘The cross mixed with resurrection’ writes that for those within modern feminist thought it is tempting to give up the cross, which includes the idea of resurrection as the supreme symbol of Christian faith.\textsuperscript{2087} Instead of a complete abandonment of traditional resurrection, reinterpretation takes place.\textsuperscript{2088} Resurrection becomes more than historical theology\textsuperscript{2089} but is the actual lived and grasped experience within the lives of women and persons.\textsuperscript{2090} Gebara notes that one can philosophically go beyond the idea of resurrection as the event following the death of a body, which is ancient idealistic theory.\textsuperscript{2091} She deduces that the metaphorical resurrection of actual persons today in physical bodies is a more valuable concept than the traditional one of resurrection.\textsuperscript{2092} C.F. Evans (1970) explains in a similar way that the use of symbolic language to describe historical figures in the context of resurrection complicates the issue of accepting the doctrine of physical resurrection.\textsuperscript{2093} Evans’ article supports the conclusion that the traditional doctrine largely rests upon an acceptance of the New Testament data,\textsuperscript{2094} and I agree. Although I

\textsuperscript{2084} Others such as Darrow, Phillips, and Flew would be very skeptical of this concept. Phillips (2005: 247-275). Darrow (1928)(1973: 266-267). Flew (1983)(1996: 92). If one does not believe in the resurrection of Christ, God’s key witness to the world that he wishes to save it from the problem of evil is gone. The remedy to sin and death would be non-existent and therefore concepts of a perfected world far-fetched.

\textsuperscript{2085} Moltmann (1993: 195).

\textsuperscript{2086} Moltmann (1993: 195).

\textsuperscript{2087} Gebara (2002: 120).

\textsuperscript{2088} Gebara (2002: 121).

\textsuperscript{2089} Gebara (2002: 121).

\textsuperscript{2090} Gebara (2002: 122).

\textsuperscript{2091} Gebara (2002: 122).

\textsuperscript{2092} Gebara (2002: 122).

\textsuperscript{2093} Evans (1999: 501-503).

\textsuperscript{2094} Evans (1999: 501-503).
disagree with Gebara’s reinterpretation of the doctrine of resurrection, since this thesis involves practical theology. I can readily admit that it is important to deal with the problem of evil in actual physical bodies within today’s world. The social redemption discussed by Gebara desires a move towards dealing with the problem of evil in the midst of the trials of life, and I can intellectually support this concept even while maintaining a doctrinal acceptance of the actual physical resurrection of Christ and the eventual resurrection of humanity.

Clarence Darrow (1928)(1973) writes that resurrection of the body is purely a religious doctrine. He reasons that few intelligent persons when faced with evidence would hold to a doctrine of resurrection. He deduces that those within the New Testament era had little scientific knowledge, and therefore resurrection doctrine is a product of those with blind faith, wild dreams, hopeless hopes, and cowardly fears. Darrow’s assumption would more likely be correct if the Hebrew Bible and New Testament were written by persons that were clearly writing mythological literature with the primary use of metaphorical language. However, as noted there are those within both conservative and liberal Christian traditions that would reason the historical writers of Scripture wrote what they saw and experienced, and therefore many of these modern scholars accept a doctrine of physical resurrection. Moltmann writes that after

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2096 Primarily with Chapters Five and Six.
2101 Mounce (1990: 360).
2106 This as opposed to writing historical based religious history with the use of plain literal and figurative literal language.
the resurrection the risen Christ appeared to his followers in order to guarantee that the glory of God and his creation would occur in the not too distance future.\textsuperscript{2108} This is an ultimate of hope of a sovereignty theodicy.

5. Why do I Favour Feinberg’s Approach in regard to Logical and Gratuitous Evil?

One, this first point is due to study within secular philosophy of religion and Reformed philosophical theology.\textsuperscript{2109} Without becoming repetitive, as discussed I favour theistic compatibilism\textsuperscript{2110} over incompatibilism.\textsuperscript{2111} I support an approach similar, but not identical to that of Feinberg.\textsuperscript{2112} I reason that through my studies within philosophy of religion that there is a first cause.\textsuperscript{2113} A first cause concept avoids the great philosophical difficulty of vicious regress,\textsuperscript{2114} which is an infinite regression of causes that never reaches the first cause.\textsuperscript{2115}

Philosophical theology\textsuperscript{2116} also points toward a first cause.\textsuperscript{2117} Jonathan Edwards thinks there is a major difficulty within libertarian concepts concerning free will.\textsuperscript{2118} If the human will determines the will and resulting choices,\textsuperscript{2119} since every choice must have a cause, then a chain is established where a will and choice is determined by a preceding will and choice.\textsuperscript{2120} Therefore, if the will determines its own free acts, then every free act of will and choice is

\textsuperscript{2108} Moltmann (1993: 178).
\textsuperscript{2109} I have found that secular philosophy, and in particular philosophy of religion, can be helpful explaining some philosophical terms and concepts sometimes not adequately dealt with by Christian theologians.
\textsuperscript{2112} Feinberg (1994: 60).
\textsuperscript{2114} Blackburn (1996: 324).
\textsuperscript{2115} The problem that is attempting to be solved is never solved. Blackburn (1996: 324). Such would be the case if a cause comes from another cause ‘ad infinitum’ in a vicious regress. Many philosophers therefore postulate a need for a first cause, which may or may not be God.
\textsuperscript{2116} In particular from a Reformed perspective.
\textsuperscript{2117} Edwards (1754)(2006 2.1: 1-1-2).
\textsuperscript{2118} Which would correspond to modern concepts of libertarian free will and incompatibilism.
\textsuperscript{2119} Edwards (1754)(2006 2.1: 1-1-2).
\textsuperscript{2120} Edwards (1754)(2006 2.1: 1-1-2).
determined by a preceding act of will and choice.\textsuperscript{2121} If a preceding act of will also be of free
choice, then that too was self-determined.\textsuperscript{2122} What Edwards is stating is that in the act of causing
a free choice (choice1), the cause of that choice was also made freely (choice2), and the cause of
that choice was made freely (choice3) and so on.\textsuperscript{2123}

This theological concept of Edwards would tie into the philosophical concept of vicious regress\textsuperscript{2124} since with a regress it could not be determined what caused a human choice initially,
because every free choice was caused by a previous free choice.\textsuperscript{2125} Edwards instead reasoned
that human choices were a result of human nature originally created by and within God’s will.\textsuperscript{2126}
God therefore wills all things, and is the primary cause of all actions.\textsuperscript{2127} I reason human actions,
and any angelic or demonic actions would be accepted as a secondary cause\textsuperscript{2128} in order to avoid
concepts of hard determinism, where only God or the first cause would be morally responsible
for acts.\textsuperscript{2129} Blackburn counters that some form of metaphysical libertarianism\textsuperscript{2130} postulates that
free choice is not causally determined, but is also not random.\textsuperscript{2131} It is suggested that an agency
situated outside of human nature,\textsuperscript{2132} in regard to making human choice, is possible but likely
‘fantasy.’\textsuperscript{2133} It appears human choice should be traced back to human nature.\textsuperscript{2134}

\textsuperscript{2121} Edwards (1754)(2006 2.1: 1-1-2).
\textsuperscript{2122} Edwards (1754)(2006 2.1: 1-1-2).
\textsuperscript{2123} Edwards (1754)(2006 2.1: 1-1-2).
\textsuperscript{2124} Blackburn (1996: 324).
\textsuperscript{2125} Edwards (1754)(2006 2.1: 1-1-2).
\textsuperscript{2126} Edwards (1754)(2006 2.1: 1-1-2).
\textsuperscript{2127} Edwards (1754)(2006 2.1: 1-1-2).
\textsuperscript{2129} Pojman and Stace both state a secondary cause must freely commit acts in order to be significantly morally
\textsuperscript{2130} Blackburn (1996: 218).
\textsuperscript{2131} Blackburn (1996: 218).
\textsuperscript{2132} It appears Blackburn is discussing a human agency.
\textsuperscript{2133} Blackburn (1996: 218).
created this nature and simultaneously influences and wills all human choice.
A major disagreement I have with Plantinga’s incompatibilism is that it does not allow for God to be the antecedent cause of significantly free human actions. John Hick also sides with incompatibilism in regard to God and human beings which shall be discussed in the next Chapter. I instead favour the cause argument of Edwards and the compatibilism of Feinberg. I reason, based on the philosophical and theological presentation above, that the compatibilism of a Reformed theodicy better deals with problems associated with the logical problem of evil and gratuitous evil than do incompatibilist perspectives. God is explained in a reasonable logical manner as being in charge of creation and therefore through Christ is also able to restore creation.

Two, John Hick’s approach to Scripture is to look at much of it metaphorically. Although his theodicy does have some merit, I reason by not looking at Scripture contextually, and instead assuming that it is not to be taken literally as metaphor in many cases, his theodicy becomes hyper-speculative. I am not a fundamentalist, and do not reason Scripture should at every point be read plain literally, but where contexts suggests, Scripture should be read within the genre intended which could include figurative language.
reason that the Reformed approach to reading Scripture in context\textsuperscript{2150} is more beneficial to producing a realistic functional theodicy,\textsuperscript{2151} than is Hick’s approach.\textsuperscript{2152} This should not be interpreted as a complete dismissal of soul-making\textsuperscript{2153} or related soul-building concepts, as I view this as a reasonable concept within Hick’s approach.\textsuperscript{2154}

In my mind, the concept compatibilism, although the term is not used,\textsuperscript{2155} is implied in Scripture. The subject of predestination for salvation, for example, is a complex theological discussion and could be a topic for a Biblical Greek thesis.\textsuperscript{2156} However, within Ephesians 1,\textsuperscript{2157} ‘predestined’ which is \textit{προορίσας}\textsuperscript{2158} within Ephesians 1: 5,\textsuperscript{2159} and in the context is ‘predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ’\textsuperscript{2160} and \textit{προορισθέντες}\textsuperscript{2161} at Ephesians 1: 11, as in ‘we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to his purpose’\textsuperscript{2162} appear to support Reformed compatibilist notions. Strong defines \textit{προορισθέντες} which is the root word connected to the forms of the word in Ephesians 1, as to limit in advance in figurative terms,\textsuperscript{2164} and to predetermine, determine before, ordain, and predestinate.\textsuperscript{2165} Bauer defines the root word as meaning to decide before hand, predestine of God and applies this definition to Ephesians 1: 5 and 11.\textsuperscript{2166} Minimally, there appears reasonable textual support from this verse\textsuperscript{2167} that could

\textsuperscript{2151} The idea being to let God speak, since God is the one being questioned in the context of theodicy.
\textsuperscript{2152} Hick (1970: 172).
\textsuperscript{2153} Hick (1970: 292).
\textsuperscript{2154} Hick (1970: 292).
\textsuperscript{2155} The term being a modern philosophical one.
\textsuperscript{2156} This is not a Biblical Studies PhD and I was therefore advised to limit my Biblical work within this thesis, but I seek accuracy in my Biblical interpretations.
\textsuperscript{2157} A key Chapter for Reformed views on compatibilism.
\textsuperscript{2163} Strong (1890)(1986: 81).
\textsuperscript{2164} Strong (1890)(1986: 81).
\textsuperscript{2165} Strong (1890)(1986: 81).
\textsuperscript{2166} Bauer (1979: 709).
support a Reformed compatibilistic perspective on how God chooses persons for his ultimate culminated Kingdom.

There are incompatibilist, evangelical counters to the Reformed view. Ephesians scholar Francis Foulkes (1989) explains that predestination is not in opposition to human free will. The gospel of grace was offered to all persons, and those persons that accepted the message were elected. Foulkes insists that the human faith required rests totally on God and not in self. Foulkes then shifts the issue to the idea that election is not simply salvation, but also holiness of life. He defines predestined as ‘marked beforehand.’ It is understood as a divine, eternal plan. Foulkes presentation is commendable and reasonable and although his definition is similar to that of Strong and Bauer, he appears to downplay a deterministic aspect of the word. I do not agree, but inevitably, even with the use of linguistic sources there is room for debate and I lean toward a compatibilistic understanding based on Ephesians 1.

Browning, an Oxford New Testament scholar, also sides with a view similar to Foulkes noting that God has a plan of salvation for humanity and persons may freely accept or reject this plan on a personal basis. Within Reformed theology, election is based on God’s plan and initiative to

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2167 I realize many other verses could be examined concerning this subject. I provide Ephesians 1 as a prime Reformed example within a limited space allotted for this topic.
2172 Foulkes (1989: 55). Frankly, Foulkes does not explain how this works within his incompatibilistic system.
2173 Foulkes (1989: 56). I can agree that God does work out holiness in his people.
2177 Bauer (1979: 709).
2179 I can still consider incompatibilistic notions and other perspectives, when needed.
save the elect,\textsuperscript{2182} as opposed to primarily foreknowledge\textsuperscript{2183} of human acceptance of the gospel message within a Reformed, Calvinistic framework.

Schelling also presents a view on predestination\textsuperscript{2184} that human beings act today as they have always acted since ‘eternity’ and at the beginning of creation.\textsuperscript{2185} Persons continue to act wickedly because in eternity human beings took a stand in ‘egotism and selfishness.’\textsuperscript{2186} Within this view, passion and desire which can at times go wrong, represent freedom in the nature of human beings.\textsuperscript{2187} All persons are born with a ‘dark principle of evil attached to them.’\textsuperscript{2188} Persons can be good, even with this darkness through ‘divine transmutation.’\textsuperscript{2189} This non-traditional perspective would view human beings as predestined to commit evil\textsuperscript{2190} but allows for God to still work good within persons.\textsuperscript{2191}

I reason that the Bible when taken in proper context,\textsuperscript{2192} provides some important insights\textsuperscript{2193} into the logical and gratuitous problems of evil, and I favour the Reformed perspective strongly without negating the other views, including incompatibilism, in an unfair manner. Although I am a theist, I readily admit that atheists too have some good insights\textsuperscript{2194} at

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Calvin (1543)(1996: 200).
\item Thiessen (1956: 344).
\item Schelling (1845)(1936: 66).
\item Schelling (1845)(1936: 66). Creation is not passive and is dynamic and in constant activity. Gutmann (1845)(1936: xxiii). This non-passive activity included rebellion within Schelling’s view.
\item Schelling (1845)(1936: 66).
\item Gutmann (1845)(1936: xxv).
\item Gutmann (1845)(1936: xxv).
\item Schelling (1845)(1936: 66).
\item Schelling (1845)(1936: 66).
\item Schelling (1845)(1936: 66).
\item Schelling (1845)(1936: 66).
\item Admittedly they are non-exhaustive. This is a major reason why we have discussions in regard to theodicy as God is not crystal clear concerning the issue in Scripture.
\item I personally relate to many of the objections raised against an all-powerful, good God in this world filled with evil. I simply reason God has perfect motives and a track record in Christ, whereas an atheist would have unbelief. This does not mean we do not share a mutual hatred of much evil and suffering.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
times, as for example Flew and Mackie make some reasonable criticisms of Plantinga’s work as discussed in Chapter Two.

My theological and philosophical explanations for the support of compatibilism and my Biblical exegesis demonstrates a teleological logical Reformed perspective within the theodicy. There is solid academic evidence of a teleological divine plan where the problem of evil is willingly allowed, dealt with via Christ, and a Kingdom ultimately established. These perspectives and the overall thesis presentation provide reasonable argumentation on why sovereignty perspectives support divine justice as opposed to refuting it. Now of course there are plenty of theistic and atheistic perspectives that attempt to refute it, and as noted they have their merits. I have not duplicated Feinberg’s presentation and the statistical analysis in Chapter Five will add an original aspect to this work.

6. The Problem of Evil in regard to Justice for Non-Believers

In the previous section I discussed some concepts on predestination and how God will save some of humanity within Reformed and non-Reformed concepts. I reason that my

\[^{2195}\text{Flew (1955: 150-153).}\]
\[^{2197}\text{Within the study of philosophy of religion.}\]
\[^{2198}\text{An important example of Biblical information and argumentation used within Reformed theology was provided without turning this work into a major presentation of Biblical studies.}\]
\[^{2199}\text{Bloesch defines teleological as a word coming from the Greek telos, or end, where the emphasis is on goals and consequences. Bloesch (1987: 19).}\]
\[^{2200}\text{Bloesch (1987: 19).}\]
\[^{2201}\text{Non-Reformed theistic and atheistic objections and been noted and dealt with. My Reformed theodicy has been influenced by these other views. The questionnaire results also impact my view, in particular in how theodicy is presented to the Church.}\]
\[^{2202}\text{In particular Plantinga and also Augustine to a lesser extent, as well as in future Chapters, Hick’s progressive theodicy and the empirical work of Dutch theologians.}\]
\[^{2203}\text{Notably Flew, Mackie and Phillips, as well as Hume.}\]
\[^{2204}\text{This theodicy is admittedly speculative within a Biblical framework influenced by philosophical theology and secular philosophy of religion. There is always room for reconsidering old concepts and considering new ones.}\]
\[^{2205}\text{This allows questionnaire respondents to agree or disagree with my Reformed theodicy.}\]
\[^{2207}\text{Influenced by Feinberg’s theodicy.}\]
work in theodicy is for both persons within the Christian Church and outside of it. I was not born into a moderate conservative tradition, or a Reformed Christian tradition and came to this position mainly through academic study, and in particular through my MPhil and PhD studies via the University of Wales. When I present my theodicy work from a Reformed perspective I see it as a learned perspective and not primarily or largely an assumed one, and so if non-believers read my work I reason that they may too be impacted in a similar way. John Calvin points out that preaching and teaching the word of God impacts a person to believe in Christ.

The Holy Spirit works through preaching to impact a person, that if saved does not eventually believe and work for Christ through primarily human ‘wisdom’, or by ‘chance.’ The gospel is only ‘granted to a few without human aid’ and most will believe through the assistance of some sort of human agency. I therefore see my thesis work as a human means by which the Christian message through a Reformed lens can be presented.

Since I reason a sovereignty perspective is the most workable and likely theodicy approach, I am presenting it to those outside of the Church in the hope that they will be impacted. This gospel associated theodicy view allows for the possibility of forgiveness of sins within the atonement for persons and for persons to experience the ultimate justice of God’s

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2209 I was born into the progressive tradition of the United Church of Canada. I am through academic study moderately conservative theologically and not fundamentalistic as noted.
2210 At Bangor and Lampeter respectively.
2218 I also present my views on the problem of evil at Church and with believers and non-believers alike on Blogger and Facebook.
2219 But not the only approach with some good and reasonable points, as there are valuable points from non-Reformed theists and atheists within this work.
culminated Kingdom.\textsuperscript{2221} Bloesch explains that in the context of atonement and justice\textsuperscript{2222} with God’s holiness he forgives and forbears and demonstrates his love.\textsuperscript{2221} There is within my theodicy concepts of ultimate justice\textsuperscript{2224} and deliverance from the problem of evil and its results,\textsuperscript{2225} but as a Christian scholar attempting to be as accurate in understanding as possible, I must include the concept that sin must first be atoned for in Christ\textsuperscript{2226} before a person can experience the benefits of a culminated Kingdom free from evil and suffering.\textsuperscript{2227} G.C. Berkouwer explains that ‘Man\textsuperscript{2228} is-even when alienated from God-not alone.’\textsuperscript{2229} God has still gifted fallen humanity\textsuperscript{2230} and there is a possible limitation to human corruption, that being the grace of Christ and his words and work.\textsuperscript{2231} God still has the power and opportunity to save persons,\textsuperscript{2232} and humanly speaking\textsuperscript{2233} persons have an opportunity to know Christ in conversion.\textsuperscript{2234}

Ivan Gebara\textsuperscript{2235} could raise some objections to a Reformed view of humanly attempting to convert persons through the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{2236} The cross of Christ as a universal for salvation is ‘denounced’ by feminists.\textsuperscript{2237} A concern being that women’s suffering are overlooked within a

\textsuperscript{2221} Mounce explains that the Great White Throne judgment of Revelation 20 is not an arbitrary judgment of God but is based on the works of each person. Mounce (1990: 365-366). It is sign of the ultimate justice of God for all persons.
\textsuperscript{2222} Bloesch (1987: 97).
\textsuperscript{2223} Bloesch (1987: 97).
\textsuperscript{2224} Mounce (1990: 365-366).
\textsuperscript{2226} Green (1971: iii). Whale (1958: 81). On this matter I do not see myself as a judge of those outside of Christ, but rather as one reporting within the best of my ability, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, what Scripture states about human sin and salvation.
\textsuperscript{2227} Sin, death and suffering will not exist in the culminated Kingdom. Mounce (1990: 372).
\textsuperscript{2228} I prefer the term humankind.
\textsuperscript{2229} Berkouwer (1962: 183).
\textsuperscript{2230} Berkouwer (1962: 186).
\textsuperscript{2231} Berkouwer (1962: 192).
\textsuperscript{2232} Berkouwer (1962: 192).
\textsuperscript{2233} Within a compatibilistic framework.
\textsuperscript{2234} Berkouwer (1962: 192-193).
\textsuperscript{2235} Gebara (2002: 118).
\textsuperscript{2236} Calvin (1543)(1996: 34).
\textsuperscript{2237} Gebara (2002: 118).
male dominated atonement.\textsuperscript{2238} In a somewhat similar way Brown raises issues about the suffering of the poor.\textsuperscript{2239} He desires liberation for those within third world\textsuperscript{2240} today from suffering and oppression.\textsuperscript{2241} A reasonable view of Reformed soteriology\textsuperscript{2242} and theodicy should be very concerned with the everyday lives of women and the poor,\textsuperscript{2243} and all persons. Even in light of concepts of ultimate salvation\textsuperscript{2244} there needs to be the Christian desire to save people daily from the results of evil.\textsuperscript{2245} The Christian Church should be involved with, in a non-Biblical sense, atoning and covering for sin,\textsuperscript{2246} within the context of this temporal world by helping those within society in need. Justice should be sought for all, and especially those in the world that have been abused and negated.\textsuperscript{2247}

7. Summary and Practical Theology

Three practical theological ramifications of an acceptance of sovereignty theodicy will be briefly discussed.

First, since within Reformed, Calvinist thought God is sovereign\textsuperscript{2248} and uses divine providence\textsuperscript{2249} God is ultimately responsible for the problem of evil. Calvin writes that God’s motives remain pure in the simultaneous willing of human actions that are sinful and evil.\textsuperscript{2250} Calvin believed that human beings and their actions were the secondary causes of primary causes

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{2238} Gebara (2002: 118).
\textsuperscript{2239} Brown (1984: 89-104).
\textsuperscript{2240} Or developing world.
\textsuperscript{2241} Brown (1984: 89-104).
\textsuperscript{2242} The study of concepts of salvation. In particular the work of Christ and the triune God in that regard. Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling (1999: 108).
\textsuperscript{2245} Brown (1984: 89-104).
\textsuperscript{2246} The atonement of Christ covers the sins of those in the everlasting Kingdom, but the present Christian Church needs to attempt to cover and alleviate sin and suffering in a fallen world through good works.
\textsuperscript{2247} Brown (1984: 89-104).
\textsuperscript{2250} Calvin (1543)(1996: 37-40).
\end{footnotes}
willed by God.\textsuperscript{2251} God’s motives in willing an action would work toward the greater good even while human beings freely sinned.\textsuperscript{2252} Practically speaking, does this mean that for most within the Reformed, Calvinist tradition God should be viewed as the primary cause of many hardships in life? I believe that the honest and consistent answer must be yes. Since God is believed to be infinite, omnipotent, and sovereign and willingly with the use of soft determinism causes things to occur,\textsuperscript{2253} the evil that befalls an individual from a Reformed, Calvinist perspective is in a sense from God.\textsuperscript{2254} Clark Pinnock would counter that God is not the primary cause of evil\textsuperscript{2255} as he limits himself within creation in order not to prohibit human freedom,\textsuperscript{2256} and this would lead to the human problem of evil.\textsuperscript{2257} This idea, however, would not be suitable for many Calvinists and those who are Reformed, as Jonathan Edwards writes that God controls all things.\textsuperscript{2258} The sovereignty approach can present the remedy for the problem of evil in a practical sense, not just primarily philosophically.\textsuperscript{2259} The approach needs to focus on the idea that the triune God consummates his Kingdom and gives things meaning.\textsuperscript{2260} It seems rather meaningless for a Christian to readily accept a notion of God willing all things for a greater good within a theological system when the greater good is not vividly practically explained within the system, at least in general ultimate terms.\textsuperscript{2261}

Second, God is showing love within this system by allowing significant human freedom and not using compulsion to counter it,\textsuperscript{2262} and is also showing love through the work of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{2251} Calvin (1543)(1996: 38).
  \item \textsuperscript{2252} Calvin (1543)(1996: 37-40).
  \item \textsuperscript{2253} Calvin (1543)(1996: 37-40).
  \item \textsuperscript{2255} Pinnock (1986: 108-109).
  \item \textsuperscript{2256} Pinnock (1986: 108-109).
  \item \textsuperscript{2257} Pinnock (1986: 108-109).
  \item \textsuperscript{2258} Edwards (1729)(2006: 414).
  \item \textsuperscript{2259} This is where empirical theology can be beneficial.
  \item \textsuperscript{2261} I can admit this can be a weakness within sometimes overly philosophical Reformed approaches.
  \item \textsuperscript{2262} Calvin (1543)(1996: 68).
\end{itemize}
Christ. This love of God needs to be presented within a Calvinistic sovereignty theodicy. God’s love may often be an overlooked idea within some Reformed, and Calvinist writings, and this may be because Calvinism is a largely philosophical system of theology. Pinnock replies to Feinberg within ‘God Ordains All Things’ in *Predestination and Freewill* that Calvinistic thinking on the issue of God’s will is often remote in regard to the experience of real people. This is a reasonable criticism of Calvinism based on its overall philosophical nature. This is not to imply that Calvinists do not discuss the love of God, as Calvinist Millard J. Erickson explains that God demonstrates his love through benevolence, grace, mercy, and persistence. The love of God and Christ needs to be demonstrated within a Calvinistic sovereignty theodicy in order to serve as an effective form of practical theology for those suffering.

Third, the logical and reasonable nature of the sovereignty theodicy offers one suffering with the problem of evil a viable answer to the problem. However, even as critics have made reasonable criticisms of Feinberg’s type of work, his theodicy is logical and reasonable. If a philosophical and theological point of view is not tenable then it cannot offer any possible legitimate practical theological support for one suffering. There is at least an intellectual possibility of building a helpful practical theology for those suffering with the problem of evil that hold to Reformed, Calvinistic theology. I hope to accomplish this through the evaluation of the empirical data.

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2264 Green (1971: 2).
2265 Pinnock (1986: 60).
2269 I have made several criticisms myself.
2271 Although admittedly it can be incorrectly understood by some to be tenable.
2272 To be further discussed in Chapter Five and the Appendix.
2273 Within Chapter Six and the Appendix.
CHAPTER FOUR

JOHN HICK: SOUL-MAKING THEODICY

1. Introduction

Soul-Making Theodicy Definition

In 1966 British philosopher of religion, John Hick, wrote his first edition of *Evil and The God of Love*. Hick sees soul-making\(^{2274}\) as the developmental process by which human beings become the perfected creatures that God intended.\(^{2275}\) This is an evolutionary process,\(^{2276}\) but not one that takes place naturalistically or scientifically.\(^{2277}\) Soul-making is a method by which human beings experience the problem of evil through hazardous disobedience to God and a willful desire to commit actions that are not always pleasing to the creator.\(^{2278}\) Phillips writes concerning this general type of approach, that without the existence of evil, character development would not place.\(^{2279}\) For Hick, the development that would take place in humanity was not one of gradual human improvement throughout generations,\(^{2280}\) but was instead an individual process in each and every person.\(^{2281}\) This type of approach allows God to mould human character.\(^{2282}\) Phillips views a moral development theory as incoherent,\(^{2283}\) as it creates an

\(^{2274}\) In my mind, soul-building would also be a reasonable term for this theory.


\(^{2276}\) It is not primarily a scientific presentation.


\(^{2279}\) Phillips (2005: 56).


\(^{2281}\) Hick (1970: 292).

\(^{2282}\) Phillips (2005: 56).
immoral indulgence of human beings to self,\textsuperscript{2284} as in their own personal development.\textsuperscript{2285} Persons should instead be more concerned with other persons reasons Phillips.\textsuperscript{2286}

Hick maintains the Irenean type of theodicy is a traditional perspective within the Christian faith that existed in its earliest days.\textsuperscript{2287} Meghan Ramsay (2004) explains that Hick attempts a theodicy within the Irenean approach, as opposed to the Augustinian one which he calls the majority report within Christian tradition.\textsuperscript{2288} Hick views the approach of Irenaeus (ca.130-ca.200)\textsuperscript{2289} as the minority report.\textsuperscript{2290} According to John C. McDowell (2005), Hick believes that an Irenean type theodicy distinguishes between the image of God and likeness of God.\textsuperscript{2291} Hick writes in \textit{Evil and the God of Love} that Irenaeus viewed the image of God, which resides in the human bodily form, as representing God’s nature allowing human beings to fellowship with their creator.\textsuperscript{2292} The likeness of God was humanity’s final perfection by the work of God’s Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{2293} Irenaeus within \textit{Against Heresies} (c 175-185)(2005) did draw a distinction between image and likeness.\textsuperscript{2294} The image is a fixed nature within human beings\textsuperscript{2295} while likeness varies depending on how close a person follows God.\textsuperscript{2296} Father Anthony Zimmerman (1999) notes that to Irenaeus, the image represented the spiritual essence of an

\textsuperscript{2283} Phillips (2005: 58).
\textsuperscript{2284} Phillips (2005: 58).
\textsuperscript{2285} Phillips (2005: 58).
\textsuperscript{2286} Phillips (2005: 58). In support of Hick and my own theories of human development, I reason that spiritual building need not be necessarily only self focused. For example, in Matthew 22 and Mark 12 Jesus tells the listener to love others as self. Within spiritual development one could and should seek to love and assist others.
\textsuperscript{2287} Hick (1970: 221).
\textsuperscript{2288} Ramsay (2004: 2).
\textsuperscript{2289} Ferguson (1996: 569).
\textsuperscript{2290} Ramsay (2004: 2).
\textsuperscript{2291} McDowell (2005: 1).
\textsuperscript{2292} Hick (1970: 217).
\textsuperscript{2293} Hick (1970: 217).
\textsuperscript{2294} Irenaeus (c 175-185)(2005: Book II: Chapter 34: 4). Irenaeus (c 175-185)(2005: Book II: Chapter 7: 2).
\textsuperscript{2295} Irenaeus (c 175-185)(2005: Book II: Chapter 34: 4).
\textsuperscript{2296} Irenaeus (c 175-185)(2005: Book II: Chapter 7: 2).
individual, while the likeness was the sanctifying presence in which a person became a son of God.\textsuperscript{2297}

Rejecting the Augustinian tradition that humanity was made perfect and then rebelled against God becoming corrupt,\textsuperscript{2298} Hick explains in his 2001 presentation found in *Encountering Evil* that the Irenean type of theodicy takes place in two phases.\textsuperscript{2299} In phase one God creates humanity imperfect and underdeveloped.\textsuperscript{2300} They develop over perhaps millions of years through biological evolution to possess the image of God.\textsuperscript{2301} Once humanity reaches a certain level of maturity they complete this stage and exist in the image of God.\textsuperscript{2302} When this image of God exists humanity has the potential for a relationship with their creator.\textsuperscript{2303}

According to Hick, within the second phase humanity becomes intelligent, ethical and religious.\textsuperscript{2304} It is evolving towards the likeness of God which includes achieving goodness and personal worth.\textsuperscript{2305} In the process of humanity becoming like God, soul-making can take place, but it must occur with human beings possessing significant freedom away from their creator’s direct influence.\textsuperscript{2306} Hick deduces that human beings must have an epistemic distance from their maker in order to develop an uncoerced consciousness of God.\textsuperscript{2307} According to R. Douglas Geivett in his 1993 book *Evil and the Evidence for God*, Hick contends that if persons lived in the immediate presence of God, significant freedom to make moral choices would be precluded

\textsuperscript{2297} Zimmerman (1999: 1).
\textsuperscript{2298} Hick in Davis (2001: 40-41).
\textsuperscript{2299} Hick in Davis (2001: 40-41).
\textsuperscript{2300} Hick in Davis (2001: 40-41).
\textsuperscript{2301} McDowell (2005: 1).
\textsuperscript{2302} Ramsay (2004: 2).
\textsuperscript{2303} McDowell (2005: 1).
\textsuperscript{2304} Hick in Davis (2001: 40-41).
\textsuperscript{2305} Ramsay (2004: 2).
\textsuperscript{2306} Hick in Davis (2001: 48).
\textsuperscript{2307} Epistemology is the theory of knowledge which includes origins of knowledge and the relationship between knowledge and reason. Blackburn (1996: 123).
\textsuperscript{2308} Hick in Davis (2001: 48). Phillips writes this is a distance that separates God from his created beings. Phillips (2005: 164).
and thus an epistemic distance, a distance between God and created persons, must exist between humanity and God. Hick’s concept of epistemic distance is an important aspect of his theodicy as human beings who possess the image of God, but an imperfect likeness, inevitably create moral evil. Epistemic distance results in moral evil as human beings struggle within a hostile environment apart from God’s direct rule and guidance. God is therefore not clearly and overwhelmingly evident to his creation with this view.

Hick (1978) deduces in ‘Present and Future Life’ that once a human being dies a conscious personality continues to exist. He concludes that for soul-making to succeed post-mortem existence must include the ability to make moral and spiritual choices. Robert Smid (1999) comments that Hick trusts all of humanity will complete their soul-making via the afterlife, as a loving God must desire the salvation of all people. Hick believes that since God has perfect knowledge of the human heart he, in patience, would eventually succeed in bringing all persons in devotion to him. Geivett reasons that for Hick, the eschatological fulfillment of God’s soul-making plan must include universal perfection of every human being made by God. Hick subscribes to universalism, which John Ankerberg and John Weldon (1999) write in Encyclopedia of Cults and New Religions, is the theological idea that salvation is

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2310 Geivett (1993: 36).
2313 Hick (1978: 12).
2314 After death is meant.
2315 Hick (1978: 13).
2316 Smid (1999: 12).
2318 Thiessen describes eschatology as the Biblical doctrine of the last things, which includes the Second Advent, the resurrection of humanity, final judgment from God, the millennium and the final state of God’s creation. Thiessen (1956: 440).
2321 The title of this text is a bit misleading as it offers more than encyclopedia type referencing for words and concepts but presents scholarly chapters on religious movements the authors view as cultic.
universal and therefore each person will eventually be redeemed in heaven. Kreeft and Tacelli explain that universalism is universal salvation and has been considered by some well known orthodox Christians over the centuries as a viable alternative to hell, although Kreeft and Tacelli reject this alternative.

Author’s Viewpoints

By Hick’s definition, my sovereignty theodicy position would fit within the Augustinian tradition and therefore outside of his Irenean approach. In agreement with Augustine and Feinberg, I would postulate that humanity from a traditional perspective was created in the image and likeness of God, spiritually in tune with their creator, perfectly moral and not sinful. However, I deduce that original humanity was spiritually and morally immature, and inexperienced. As discussed in Chapter Three, due to lack of experience with God, the initial persons were spiritually and morally immature in relation to their creator, in comparison to what later human beings who would experience the problem of evil, atonement, and restoration would become in regard to spiritual maturity. The idea of the fall from conservative and liberal views has been discussed in Chapters Two and Three, but I would

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2323 This would, of course, provide another opportunity for a PhD thesis.
2326 This would be a broad perspective from Hick’s view. I would rather define my theodicy as Reformed as opposed to Augustinian. This can be deduced through the reviews in Chapters Two and Three.
2328 That have shown within this thesis to not have identical or near identical perspectives.
2329 Genesis 1:26 states God created human beings in both his image and likeness. The New American Standard Version Bible (1984: 2). Victor P. Hamilton in Handbook on the Pentateuch notes three possible reasons for the writer of Genesis using these terms together: (1) The terms image and likeness may be interchangeable, in other words synonyms for each other. (2) The word likeness may modify the word image. This is done to avoid the idea that man is an exact copy of God. (3) The term likeness amplifies the term image as human beings are not simply representative of God, but representational. Hamilton (1988: 26-27).
2330 As can be understood within Chapters Two and Three within this thesis.
2331 Even if Adam and Eve or original persons were made as mature adults they could not logically be made with experience as noted within Chapter Three.
deduce that since Genesis 3 describes this event, it is plausible a literal Adam and Eve were initially morally perfect without sin and eventually fell in corruption. It is also possible that the somewhat metaphorical language of Genesis allows for the Adam and Eve story to be describing a fall from God’s plan for humanity in general, and not specifically two initial persons. I do agree with Hick that some type of soul-making is an important reason for God to willingly allow the problem of evil. However, there will be points of both agreement and disagreement on how this may be completed by God.

My concept of original human immaturity is not identical to Hick’s. I accept that when in Genesis 1:26, God is said to have created humanity in his image and likeness, that this was part of their original nature. H.L. Ellison (1986) explains that in the beginning human beings were made in God’s image and likeness in order that they could have dominion over animal creation and have communion with God. If a literal explanation of Genesis 1:26 is accepted then it seems plausible that both the image and likeness of God were given to humanity from the start, and I lean towards this understanding. As discussed in Chapter Two, scholars such as Fretheim, La Sor, Hubbard, and Bush explain that Genesis is written with the use of metaphorical language and so an interpretation such as Hick’s, that is not literal in regard to the image and likeness of God, is an intellectual possibility. Erickson thinks that Irenaeus views the image of God as being human resemblance to the creator with reason and will, and

2335 Hick in Davis (2001: 51).
2339 Ellison (1986: 115).
the likeness of God was the moral qualities of their maker.\textsuperscript{2344} This is a reasonable understanding of Irenaeus’ view,\textsuperscript{2345} but even if this separation between image and likeness is accepted, it is plausible that the image and likeness occur in persons simultaneously.\textsuperscript{2346} I would therefore theorize that original human spiritual immaturity was not due to humanity lacking a likeness to God.\textsuperscript{2347} Rather, original people could have been created morally perfect within what Hick calls an Augustinian model.\textsuperscript{2348} I subscribe to a Reformed, Calvinistic sovereignty model, and I have explained throughout this thesis that Augustinian and Calvinistic models and traditions are similar but not identical. These persons lacked the experience to properly understand and comprehend the results of disobeying God and the sort of life that would occur because of that rebellion. The first human beings may have had little understanding of the idea that their very nature would change if they disobeyed God. Within an Augustinian or Calvinistic perspective it seems plausible humanity’s likeness to God was insufficient after, but not before, the fall as they were no longer in perfect moral communion with their God.\textsuperscript{2349}

Hick’s Background

‘Eminent philosopher of religion’\textsuperscript{2350} John Harwood Hick was born in Scarborough, England in 1922.\textsuperscript{2351} Professor Paul Badham (2003) explains that Hick, as a young adult, became a Christian through an evangelical University Christian Union.\textsuperscript{2352} Initially Hick accepted traditional Christian doctrines concerning the authority of Scripture, and salvation being solely

\textsuperscript{2344} Erickson (1994: 500-501).
\textsuperscript{2346} Erickson (1994: 500-501).
\textsuperscript{2348} Hick (1970: 121-131).
\textsuperscript{2352} Badham (2003: 25).
dependent on accepting Christ as one’s personal saviour. However, over the years Hick has rejected much of traditional Christian belief, for example he does not necessarily hold to the literal physical resurrection of Christ, but instead deduces there are a number of plausible New Testament meanings for the term resurrection, and that not one meaning is certain. Hick suggests that Christ could have appeared in a series of visions to his followers. Despite these theological differences with much of traditional Christian thought, Hick in no way denies the authenticity of the initial and continual spiritual encounter with the transcendent Reality which is the key to Hick’s religious experience. Hick (1970) notes he writes much of this work so that Christian voices can be heard. To Hick, a sincere religious experience makes it reasonable and rational to trust in a divine Reality, but this Reality cannot be determined through a process of doctrine.

Hick believes that rational arguments for God’s existence have been shown over the centuries to be largely defective. He rejects the various rational, deductive arguments for God’s existence. Hick instead desires that different epistemic approaches to understanding God be developed that are far more enduring over time. These arguments are also known as natural theology. Natural theology states that human beings can obtain particular knowledge

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2357 This Reality for Hick is conceived by different religious traditions throughout the world. Geivett (1993: 38).
2366 Natural theology is also sometimes referred to as natural revelation. Phillips reasons various theodicy approaches have tended to fail to do justice to the actual natural world. Phillips (2005: 141). Any natural theology must be constructed very carefully in my estimation.
about God through the use of reason, and by observing the created order.²³⁶⁷ This order is seen as
a naturalistic way of God partially revealing himself.²³⁶⁸ Geivett describes natural theology as
systematic reasoning on why God exists, and has a certain nature relating to the world in a
particular way.²³⁶⁹ This is done without the use of any Scripture or revelation.²³⁷⁰ Mounce
explains the Bible never argues for the existence of God.²³⁷¹ He reasons rational observation of
our universe provides the necessary evidence of a power great enough to bring the universe into
existence.²³⁷² He deduces that natural revelation was minimal, and therefore God eventually
revealed himself through Christ.²³⁷³

Hick’s Influences

Immanuel Kant

Hick (1995) makes it clear in ‘Afterword’ from Geivett’s book, that Immanuel Kant was
one of the leading philosophers that demolished arguments for natural theology.²³⁷⁴ He is known
as a founder of critical philosophy.²³⁷⁵ Peters (2005) assumes that Hick’s theory of religion
begins with the Kantian concept of how human beings relate to the world, and this seems a
reasonable conclusion.²³⁷⁶ Kantian philosophy originates from philosopher Immanuel Kant
(1724-1804).²³⁷⁷ Kant like other prominent philosophers of the Enlightenment era,²³⁷⁸ such as

²³⁷⁰ Geivett (1993: 90). Alan Richardson and John Macquarrie state natural theology is knowledge about God
without the use of divine revelation. Richardson and Macquarrie (1999: 393).
²³⁷⁵ Blackburn (1996: 205). John R. Franke notes Kant represented the ending and destruction of the rationalist
²³⁷⁶ Peters (2005: 2).
Jonathan Edwards who has been cited previously in this work, is a sophisticated writer. It would take years of research to become a scholar of Kant, and it should be noted he is not a major player within theodicy discussion, but his writing is an influence on Hick.

In his *Inaugural Dissertation* of 1770, Kant provides the idea that persons can only have *a priori* knowledge of space and time by the use of forms of the mind, which are imposed by human experience. Kantian scholars Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (1999) with the Introduction to Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, note that *a priori* knowledge originates independently of senses and experience. According to Pojman the word *a priori* is the Latin for *preceding* and is considered knowledge that is not based on empirical experience, but is known by the meaning of words or definitions. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* of 1781 and revised in 1787, Kant explains that the forms of appearance from which sensations can be understood are not themselves the empirical sensations. Human experience will determine the

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2379 Blackburn rightly suggests there is a ‘notorious difficulty of reading Kant, made worse by his penchant for scholastic systemization and obscure terminology.’ Blackburn (1996: 206). I would suggest this difficulty will lead to inevitable differences in interpreting Kant.

2380 However, Kant is a major influence within Philosophy and Philosophy of Religion and did write an article in regard to theodicy: Kant, Immanuel (1791)(2001) ‘On The Miscarriage of All Philosophical Trials in Theodicy’, in *Religion and Rational Theology*. Kant defined theodicy as the ‘defence of the highest wisdom of the creator against the charge which reason brings against it for counterpurposive in the world.’ Kant (1791)(2001: 24). In his conclusion, Kant explains that theodicy has more to do with faith than science. Authentic theodicy must take on a sincere notice of the impotence of human reason and an avoidance of dishonesty must take place. Kant (1791)(2001: 24). One should glimpse within self while making religious professions of belief, in order to avoid holding as true in public, what one is not consciously holding as truth. Kant (1791)(2001: 24-25). The translators explain that Kant viewed obligatory professions of faith as being counterproductive as they came from human self-deception and falsehood. Di Giovanni and Wood in Kant (1791)(2001: 22). However, Kant reasoned some faith professions within a theodicy could be justified. Di Giovanni and Wood in Kant (1791)(2001: 22). Kant only supported such professions when grounded in history, tradition and authority. Di Giovanni and Wood in Kant (1791)(2001: 22). I can agree with Kant that theodicy should be based in history, tradition and authority, and that it should honestly look at the problems within it. I attempt to do such within this thesis and therefore do not present sovereignty theodicy and Reformed theology without honestly looking at possible negatives. Kant’s essay although not cited often in theodicy work, is one I can state is worthy of consideration.


method and forms by which particular things are understood by what Kant calls *pure intuition*.\textsuperscript{2387} Concerning human experience, Kant reasoned categories are applied to objects not because the objects make the categories possible, but rather because categories themselves provide and constitute necessary conditions for the representation for all possible objects of experience.\textsuperscript{2388} Therefore any human understanding of metaphysical reality would not be comprehended by empirical knowledge in *a posteriori* sense.\textsuperscript{2389} Guyer and Wood point out that Kant was not an empiricist,\textsuperscript{2390} as while Kant criticized and limited the scope of traditional metaphysical thought,\textsuperscript{2391} he also sought to defend against empiricism’s claim of the possibility of universal and necessary knowledge which he called *a priori* knowledge;\textsuperscript{2392} because no knowledge derived from experience, *a posteriori* knowledge, could justify a claim to universal and necessary validity.\textsuperscript{2393} Guyer and Wood explain that Kant sought to defend the scientific

\textsuperscript{2387} Kant (1781)(1787)(1929)(2006: 66).
\textsuperscript{2388} Guyer and Wood in Kant (1781)(1787)(1998: 3).
\textsuperscript{2389} Kant (1781)(1787)(1929)(2006: 66).
\textsuperscript{2390} Guyer and Wood in Kant (1781)(1787)(1998: 2). Norman Kemp Smith within *A Commentary to Kant’s ‘Critique of Pure Reason’* writes that empiricists eliminate *a priori* principles, appealing to sense experience only, therefore eliminating distinctions between inductive inference and expectation. Smith (1930: xxvii). Blackburn suggests Kant made a strong break from eighteenth century empiricism. Blackburn (1996: 206). Kant was not an empiricist as was David Hume that within (1779)(2004) *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, notes that for ‘ignorant ages’ persons including geniuses have ambitiously tried to produce new proofs and arguments for natural theology and God. Hume (1779)(2004: 2). Hume also reasoned that the supposed Supreme Being’s infinite divine attributes would be ‘totally incomprehensible’ and that human nature would not have ideas that would correspond to the attributes of this divine being. Hume (1779)(2004: 21). Hume’s degree of scepticism of God and natural theology and dependence on empiricism alone was not the same view as Kant. Kant (1788)(1997: 11). Guyer and Wood in Kant (1781)(1787)(1998: 3).
\textsuperscript{2391} Kant was opposed to speculative views of indefensible rationalism. Blackburn (1996: 206). Cornelius Van Til suggests Kant reasons God is not a law giver to humanity, God cannot reveal himself through nature or human constitution with the image of God. The intellect of human beings makes no positive assertions concerning God. Kant rejects notions of theoretical knowledge of God and, instead, appeals to practical reason and faith. Van Til (1977: 246-247). Plantinga writes that it is suggested by many commentators Kant demonstrated there are insurmountable problems with the idea that the traditional Christian God exists. Plantinga (2000: 7).
\textsuperscript{2392} Kant called cognitions independent of all experience and the impressions of the senses *a priori*. Kant (1781)(1787)(1998: 136).
\textsuperscript{2393} Guyer and Wood in Kant (1781)(1787)(1998: 2).
\textsuperscript{2394} Empirical experiences are called *a posteriori*. *A posteriori* knowledge is empirical knowledge through experience. Kant (1781)(1787)(1998: 136).
\textsuperscript{2395} Kant argued that inductive inference from data and experience was only possible based upon prior acceptance of views of rational principles established independently. Therefore experience does not validate these principles. Smith (1930: xxvii). Ameriks suggests Kant rejected unjustifiable metaphysical claims in place of principles of theory which are the conditions by which persons orientate themselves within experience. These principles are
approach to the acquisition of knowledge against skeptics that dismissed rigorous arguments in favor of ‘common sense.’ Kant critiqued the dogmatism of certain metaphysicians negatively, and he also negatively noted as dogmatists those that would be intellectually indifferent to metaphysical inquiry. Kant wished to limit the pretensions of dogmatic empiricists while defending metaphysical theories as a science and necessary in terms of practical reason.Basically, Kant defended metaphysics as important and necessary, but was sympathetic to the empiricists view that certain metaphysical questions were insoluble.

Kant noted that *a priori* is relational without its own inherent content. It is synthetic and incapable of serving as metaphysical proof. *A priori* is relative to an experience only capable of producing appearances, and so *a priori* is factual as experience which it conditions.

W.H. Walsh explains if human beings had no experience whatsoever, they would have no concept of knowledge, not even *a priori* knowledge. No ideas or items concerning knowledge are literally to be considered innate.

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`necessary and discoverable’ therefore defeating empiricism and scepticism concerning reasonable metaphysical claims, and contrasting traditional rationalism and dogmatism. Ameriks (1996: 399).


Plantinga reasons that for Kant the intellectual problem is not that persons cannot think about God but that persons cannot come to speculative metaphysical knowledge of God. Plantinga (2000: 9).

John R. Franke suggests that ‘scientific’ knowledge within Kantian thought is limited to the realm of experience shaped by rational structures of the mind. This means knowledge of God through pure reason is impossible. Franke (2005: 58-59).

Guyer and Wood in Kant (1781)(1787)(1998: 3). Ameriks writes, for Kant practical reason is that which determines rules for the faculty of desire and will as opposed to the faculty of cognition and feeling. Ameriks (1996: 399).


Walsh (1976: 6).

Walsh (1976: 6).
Kant reasons objects that were present in empirical human experience were in the phenomena realm, while objects outside were the noumena realm. He writes that the contingent things experienced by persons are phenomena. These are things that could be experienced empirically and would be reasonably accepted as reality. The noumena realm was not available to empirical senses. Therefore, according to Mario Derksen (2006) who wrote ‘Kant and the Question of Noumenal Ontology’ claims of metaphysical knowledge would not be certain as would be any resulting doctrines. Kant explains in a follow up work entitled *The Critique of Practical Reason* from 1788, that the noumena is the theoretical department of knowledge denied, while the phenomena is one’s own empirical consciousness. All positive speculative knowledge should be disclaimed for the noumena realm according to Kantian thought. Kant concludes *The Critique of Practical Reason* by noting that the phenomena realm is the external realm where consciousness has existence. The noumena realm is invisible and has true infinity where Kant believes one can reason that contingent personality is dependent on the universal and necessary connection to the invisible world.

Importantly Kant thought it legitimate for one to postulate the noumena realm in a ‘negative sense’ meaning things as they may be independently or how they are represented,

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2409 Kant (1781)(1787)(1929)(2006: 482). Guyer and Wood note that the phenomena realm is the category applied to appearances whereas things in themselves are the noumena realm, which might be thought of but not known. Guyer and Wood in Kant (1781)(1787)(1998: 10). The phenomena realm is that which appears and is therefore empirical.  
2413 John M. Frame suggests that within Kantian philosophy humanity replaces God as the ultimate source and interpreter of reality. Frame deduces this based on the idea that the noumena realm is beyond human experience and is unknowable. Frame (2002: 112).  
2414 Derksen (2006: 9). From Kant’s perspective I would reason that metaphysical doctrines could be questioned and not considered dogmatic truth, but would not necessarily be considered meaningless. Guyer and Wood in Kant (1781)(1787)(1998: 3).  
2415 Kant (1788)(1898)(2006: 3).  
2416 Kant (1788)(1898)(2006: 26).  
2417 Kant (1788)(1898)(2006: 100).  
2418 Kant (1788)(1898)(2006: 100).
but not noumena in the ‘positive sense’ which would be things based on pure reason alone. Instead, noumena categories were only useful by applying them to empirical data structured in forms of intuition. The concept of noumena, according to Kant, was bound to the limit of pretension of sensibility and reason, and therefore only negative noumenon was of intellectual use. Noumena in its negative sense are that which is not an object of sense intuition. Kant rejects concepts of positive noumena based on pure reason because, according to T.C. Williams (1987), noumenal concepts are not determinate knowledge of anything and must be based on a sense of sensible intuition. Kant rejects the positive use of the term as it postulates objective knowledge of a metaphysical realm. The positive sense of the term noumena is therefore fully rejected by Kant. He explains that the noumenal in the negative sense is equivalent to the thing itself and alone is involved in the concept. Kant’s view leads to a moral theology which has a doctrine of God and immortality postulated, along with theories of human free will and morality. His moral theology is postulated and is not dogmatic, rational metaphysics.

2428 Smith (1930: 413).
2429 Kant notes free submission of the human will to law combined with the restraints of law upon human inclination by human reason, is respect for the law. This law demands respect and inspires, it is moral law. Kant (1788)(1997: 68-69). Lewis White Beck explains Kant theorized that human actions were both free and predictable. He reasons, law can only obligate a really free being to act. Human beings demonstrate free will through choice to obey or disobey law. Beck (1963: 31-32).
The nature of the noumenal realm described by Kant would, to Hick, cause those who profess natural theology to lower their expectations from proving God’s existence to merely making it probable at best.\textsuperscript{2432} Hick thinks that these probabilities are based on personal estimates of likelihood and are arbitrary.\textsuperscript{2433} Kantian philosophy postulates that any reality which existed beyond what can be empirically experienced is not knowable, and therefore God is placed beyond the realm of science based experience.\textsuperscript{2434} God and morality could not be affirmed as actual or possible concepts, although Kant states that they can be assumed as possibilities.\textsuperscript{2435} Hick takes this idea of Kant’s and deduces that when it comes to religious doctrine, the noumenal realm that stands behind the phenomena realm may have little in common with corresponding phenomena.\textsuperscript{2436} Hick’s theological assumption, influenced by Kantian thought, becomes clear as he reasons the doctrinal assumptions of traditional Christianity and Christian dogma (phenomena) may not actually be the true witness of God’s ambiguous nature (noumena).\textsuperscript{2437} Hick (1993) writes in \textit{The Myth of God Incarnate} that much of Christian theology has been mistakenly taken literally when it should have been taken metaphorically.\textsuperscript{2438} For Hick, the doctrine of the atonement of Christ is one theological view that has resulted from misunderstanding the metaphorical nature of the Bible’s message concerning Christ and his work.\textsuperscript{2439} Smid writes that for Hick the Kantian noumena realm makes the nature of God unclear and a direct knowable experience with the creator impossible, and therefore human beings must

\textsuperscript{2432} Hick in Geivett (1993: 230-231).
\textsuperscript{2433} Hick in Geivett (1993: 230). In contrast I deduce Scriptural revelation would not necessarily be arbitrary estimates of God, but God and any revealed doctrines would be understood by a serious contextual evaluation of the Scripture.
\textsuperscript{2434} Kant (1788)(1898)(2006: 1).
\textsuperscript{2436} Peters (2005: 4).
\textsuperscript{2438} Hick (1993: 114).
\textsuperscript{2439} Hick (1993: 126).
base their religious understanding on interpretation of experiences. Religion is therefore largely an ambiguous reality and could be interpreted in a variety of ways, and in fact religion could be abandoned in favour of naturalism by Hick’s own standard. As a result of this Kantian influenced position, Hick argues that the propositional truth claims of traditional Christianity such as claiming the uniqueness of Jesus Christ in regard to salvation, are indefensible. I do not disagree with the Kantian view that the noumena realm is not empirically knowable, and I readily admit that God as spirit is not empirically or scientifically provable. Jesus stated that God is spirit in John 4:24 and therefore God is not of a material nature and cannot be proven by the use of matter or scientific experiment.

Hick states that natural theology can only at best demonstrate that God is probable, however, I hold that Peter D. Klein’s definition of certainty could possibly be applied to natural theology. Klein (1996) in ‘Certainty’ describes the idea as being that a proposition is true if there are no legitimate grounds whatsoever for doubting it. This is a reasonable concept, and I support the similar idea that a proposition is certain if there are no counter propositions that are superior. Natural theology therefore would never be 100% certain, but

2440 Smid (1999: 10). This idea is supported in Guyer and Wood in Kant (1781)(1787)(1998: 13), and in Kant (1788)(1898)(2006: 846).
2441 And ‘Reality’ as Hick would describe it, would also be ambiguous to discern. Geivett (1993: 38).
2442 Geivett (1993: 77-78).
2449 God is immaterial. Thiessen (1956: 120).
2450 Thiessen (1956: 120).
2453 And Biblical theology as well.
2455 This would also accomplish the standard of a proposition being true as it is beyond (reasonable) doubt.
could hypothetically at least be philosophically certain as long as arguments that supported natural theology were true beyond any reasonable doubt, or the arguments for natural theology were superior to those opposing them.

Ludwig Wittgenstein wrote *On Certainty* which is a classic philosophical work on the subject from the twentieth century. Wittgenstein (1889-1951) is an Austrian philosopher. *On Certainty* deals with philosophical skepticism by postulating that knowledge exists, in a sense, but that this knowledge is dispersed and not completely dependable. He notes that ‘I make assertions about reality, assertions which have different degrees of assurance.’ It is often general knowledge that is not generally doubted. Skepticism cannot be refuted by claiming certain propositions are certain. Argumentation cannot completely express metaphysical truths in particular. He uses the example of a child taught either to be a theist or atheist, and the child will be able to produce evidence for either position depending on which one he or she is instructed to believe. For every reasonable religious point, for Wittgenstein, there is a counterpoint. He does admit that there is in a sense objective truth, but something would be objectively true only within a system of reason and knowledge through the understanding of reasonable persons. His view allows for the logical possibility that

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2456 In my view 100% certainty is impossible to grasp for a finite being that cannot have 100% knowledge. Absolute certainty could only belong to an infinite, omniscient being.


2466 Wittgenstein (1951)(1979: 108). I agree. Regardless of the truthfulness of either position, a child can be guided to have arguments for a taught philosophical viewpoint.

2467 Phillips (2005: 50). This does not guarantee the superiority of counterpoints, however.


2469 Wittgenstein (1951)(1979: 108). This also relates to the use of language. Wittgenstein explains that when he states he knows something, another person can validate that knowledge if he/she is familiar with the ‘language-
something considered objective truth in one system, is not objective truth in another. Wittgenstein explains that what a child is taught, he or she believes, but doubt comes after belief. The implication being that greater knowledge leads to greater doubt. Therefore, caution in claiming certainty on any issue is required. Philosophically, caution should always be taken with truth claims. But, I do not reason that a lack of absolute 100% certainty concerning metaphysical claims means that some cannot be considered true and others false, in a limited sense admitted. Wittgenstein does act with certainty, but it is his own. This does not in his mind justify his view as objective truth to others, it is simply belief. He reasons that ‘knowledge and certainty belong in different categories.’ Obtaining knowledge is very important, and more vital than having certitude. Knowledge and certainty are two different mental states. This approach to an idea of certainty would be less optimistic in asserting philosophical truths, in comparison to the view Klein presents.

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2474 Heeding to the words of Kant, Klein and Wittgenstein, and in my view a recognition of finite human reasoning.
2479 Wittgenstein (1951)(1979: 308). Knowledge and certainty are not the same thing for Wittgenstein.
2481 Klein (1996: 113). Williams describes a view, not distinctly his own, with the assistance of various writings of Simone Weil, where it is reasoned that God is absolutely certain, as is human existence. A human desire for God is evidence for the absolute certainty of God. Williams (2007: 206-277). I prefer the term ‘reasonably certain’ over absolutely certain. I also would completely avoid using any argumentation that God exists because I desire him. A critic could state that God does not exist because he or she does not desire him. It is wiser in my view to rely on Biblical Studies, Theology and Philosophy of Religion over subjective argumentation within Christian apologetics.
In regard to the noumenal realm making Christian doctrine clearly metaphorical and indefensible, I respectfully disagree with Hick.\textsuperscript{2482} Christian doctrine is not primarily established through the use of natural theology, but by what many conservatives and some liberals view as the revelation of God through Hebrew Bible writers and Christ and his New Testament writers.\textsuperscript{2483} For Hick to demonstrate that Biblical revelation should be interpreted in a way that denies traditional conservative doctrines, or liberal ones for that matter, would be difficult since by Hick’s own standard\textsuperscript{2484} his denial of any possible reasonable understanding of the noumenal realm\textsuperscript{2485} makes his evaluation of Scripture subject to the same negative critique by which he judges traditional theology. Christian scholars therefore, whether conservative or liberal, are left with looking at contextual, historical and methodological issues relating to Biblical interpretation, and attempting to reason out what Scripture is stating and related issues.\textsuperscript{2486} This despite the fact that the noumenal realm cannot be empirically known.\textsuperscript{2487}

As for Kant, his view allows for the concept of negative noumena.\textsuperscript{2488} The idea of noumena, according to Kant, was bound to the limit of pretension of sensibility and reason, and therefore only negative noumena was of intellectual use.\textsuperscript{2489} The use of positive noumena which trusts in pure reason is rejected.\textsuperscript{2490} Christian scholarship does not rely primarily on natural theology,\textsuperscript{2491} which would be considered by certain scholars to simply use pure reason which

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item 2482 Hick (1993: 126). Geivett points out Kant postulates the existence of God out of practical necessity within a system of morality. Geivett (1993: 87). I would deduce Christian doctrine could be considered in a similar sense, even from a critical perspective.
\item 2484 Hick (1993: 126). Geivett explains that there is no way of knowing whether or not Hick’s theodicy is true. Geivett (1993: 88).
\item 2488 Kant (1781)(1787)(1998: 350).
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some also think Kant had demolished.\textsuperscript{2492} Scriptural Revelation in my view, is not to be considered a source of the concept of pure reason as discussed by Kant and reviewers,\textsuperscript{2493} but rather I see it as similar to how Kant approached theodicy within his brief article.\textsuperscript{2494} Scripture, like theodicy approaches can be used as an historical, traditional and authoritative source.\textsuperscript{2495} Revelation from God in Scripture and resulting claims made within could perhaps be tied to Kantian concepts and intuition arising from empirical sensations.\textsuperscript{2496} This is not a difficulty for a Reformed and some other approaches to Christianity, which do not rely primarily on philosophical deductions, but in supernatural revelation of God through empirical sensations, such as prophets, Christ, the apostles and scribes.\textsuperscript{2497} As cited, Plantinga reasons that for Kant the intellectual problem is not that persons cannot think about God but that persons cannot come to speculative metaphysical knowledge of God.\textsuperscript{2498} My conclusion here, which I realize some will debate, is that Scripture is not primarily metaphysical speculation about God as discussed,\textsuperscript{2499} but is rather coming through the authors and players within his Bible, which are reasoned to be divinely guided by God.\textsuperscript{2500}

\textsuperscript{2492} Hick in Geivett (1993: 230). Weber (1955)(1981: 203). Geivett would not agree and considers it dangerous to completely dismiss natural theology. Geivett (1993: 69-89). Even after accepting Kant’s critique as reasonable and somewhat valuable, I still reason that philosophical truths about God can possibly be deduced \textit{without} the use of direct divine revelation and a supernatural event and/or Scripture. Deductions and knowledge concerning a first cause and/or God, do not however qualify as equivalent to the knowledge of knowing God as a result of Scripture and the influence of the Holy Spirit. Philosophical deductions concerning God would not necessarily be of pure reason, and I can agree with Kant that any reasonable deduction and intuition must be tied back to empirical experience by which to make sense of these deductions. Kant (1781)(1787)(1929)(2006: 66). Blackburn (1996: 205).


\textsuperscript{2494} Kant, Immanuel (1791)(2001) ‘On The Miscarriage of All Philosophical Trials in Theodicy’ in \textit{Religion and Rational Theology}.


\textsuperscript{2497} Weber (1955)(1981: 169-331). William G.T. Shedd provides the view that general, natural revelation is not infallible. He differentiates this from Scriptural Revelation. Shedd (1874-1890)(1980: 66 Volume 1). Van Til writes that the Reformers reasoned they were listening to Christ directly through the Scriptures as God revealed himself to humanity. Van Til (1977: 246).

\textsuperscript{2498} Plantinga (2000: 9).

\textsuperscript{2499} Plantinga (2000: 9).

Irenaeus

As previously noted, it is widely accepted that Hick is writing a theodicy within the Irenaean tradition.\textsuperscript{2501} To Hick, Irenaeus believed God’s creation of humanity was the initial stage in a process that would lead to persons ultimately possessing the likeness of God.\textsuperscript{2502} Hick quotes Irenaeus in \textit{Against Heresies} where humanity, in its original state is called immature.\textsuperscript{2503} Irenaeus (c 175-185)(2005) in \textit{Against Heresies} deduces that God could have made humanity originally perfect, but the newness and immaturity of his actual creation made it impossible to grant.\textsuperscript{2504}

In \textit{Proof of Apostolic Preaching} (c185)(2005), Irenaeus notes that human beings were as children in the beginning and were easily led astray by the deceiver.\textsuperscript{2505} A child as such is immature and needs to grow towards perfection.\textsuperscript{2506} Hick agrees with these concepts and suggests that the approach of Irenaeus is a rejection of the Augustinian idea of a fall in which human beings are viewed as morally perfect beings who rebelled against God.\textsuperscript{2507} Instead, humanity in a child-like way wandered away from the rule of their creator in a rather innocent fashion.\textsuperscript{2508} According to Hick, for Irenaeus the breaking away of God’s children from their creator was not so much a crime, but a youthful error,\textsuperscript{2509} and Hick views this process as a divinely appointed situation for human beings to develop towards the ultimate likeness of God.\textsuperscript{2510}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{2501} Badham (2003: 27).
\footnotetext{2503} Irenaeus (c 175-185)(2005: Book IV: Chapter 39: 2).
\footnotetext{2504} Irenaeus (c 175-185)(2005: Book IV: Chapter 39: 2).
\footnotetext{2505} Irenaeus (c 185)(2005: 14).
\footnotetext{2506} Irenaeus (c 185)(2005: 14).
\footnotetext{2507} Hick in Davis (2001: 40).
\footnotetext{2508} Hick (1970: 220-221).
\footnotetext{2509} Hick (1970: 220-221).
\footnotetext{2510} Hick in Davis (2001: 41).
\end{footnotes}
It seems clear that Hick and Irenaeus are in agreement that original humanity was spiritually and morally immature.\textsuperscript{2511} There does, however, appear in Irenaeus’ writings the idea of a loss of moral right standing with God due to an initial disobedience. Irenaeus (c.175-185)(1998) writes, that the disobedience of one man caused many to become sinners and forfeit life, so it was needed for one man to justify and provide salvation to all.\textsuperscript{2512} This seems to support the possibility Irenaeus believed in original sin that occurred as human beings disobeyed God for the first time.\textsuperscript{2513} Original sin historically views persons as being born alienated from God,\textsuperscript{2514} assuming that the sin nature of the literal and historical Adam and Eve has spread to all descendents.\textsuperscript{2515} Calvin reasonably claims solidarity with Augustine’s view,\textsuperscript{2516} and indicates that the consequences of original sin means persons do not have the power to resist, as the will is in bondage until set free.\textsuperscript{2517} Augustine writes there is a ‘chain of original sin’ by which persons die in Adam.\textsuperscript{2518} He adds that in this condition, persons were born into misery.\textsuperscript{2519} Erickson suggests that due to Adam’s sin, all human beings received a corrupted nature,\textsuperscript{2520} and this is viewed as the imputation of original sin to persons.\textsuperscript{2521} All persons are not personally responsible for Adam’s sin, but all have inherited a corrupt nature.\textsuperscript{2522}

The doctrine of original sin is related to the fall concept and is viewed by many traditionalists as being a result of the fall.\textsuperscript{2523} The fall has already been discussed within Chapters Two and Three and therefore an extended discussion of the subject would be redundant. Gebara

\textsuperscript{2512} Irenaeus (c.175-185)(1998: Book III, Chapter 18: 7).
\textsuperscript{2513} Irenaeus (c.175-185)(1998: Book III, Chapter 18: 7).
\textsuperscript{2514} Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling (1999: 87).
\textsuperscript{2515} Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling (1999: 87).
\textsuperscript{2516} Calvin (1543)(1996: 105).
\textsuperscript{2517} Calvin (1543)(1996: 105).
\textsuperscript{2518} Augustine (398-399)(1992: 82).
\textsuperscript{2519} Augustine (398-399)(1992: 197).
\textsuperscript{2520} Erickson (1994: 638).
\textsuperscript{2521} Erickson (1994: 638).
\textsuperscript{2522} Erickson (1994: 638).
has a non-traditional perspective and cautiously suggests that original sin could be the somber experience of the transcendence and immanence of evil permeating through existence.\footcite{2524} With this view evil could be the sin that engulfs all of God’s creation.\footcite{2525} F.R. Tennant (1906) rejects a traditional doctrine of original sin\footcite{2526} as he writes that the doctrine is self-condemned as the idea involves original guilt.\footcite{2527} He reasons that guilt is only applicable to someone who has willingly committed an act,\footcite{2528} and I would agree. I do not think that all human beings are guilty of the sin of Adam and Eve, or if one prefers, the first persons that disobeyed God.\footcite{2529} I accept the doctrine of original sin in that the corrupted nature of humanity will inevitably lead to the human choice to commit wrong actions.\footcite{2530} Tennant’s concept is to reject hypothetical prior causes of sin\footcite{2531} and instead views human evil as the normal process of development that takes place in the human race.\footcite{2532} Moral law would need to be established as humanity gradually develops over centuries.\footcite{2533}

If Adam and Eve, or the first human beings, disobeyed God and humanity became sinful in Irenaeus’ theology,\footcite{2534} this means previously persons were not sinful and had been acceptable in the presence of God.\footcite{2535} In *Proof of Apostolic Preaching* as previously noted, humanity is described in terms of children that were led astray by the deceiver.\footcite{2536} They were influenced and transformed from a position of being right with God morally, to a position of being at a wrong

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{2526} Tennant (1906: 20).
\bibitem{2527} Tennant (1906: 20).
\bibitem{2528} Tennant (1906: 20).
\bibitem{2529} Tennant (1906: 20).
\bibitem{2530} Tennant (1906: 20).
\bibitem{2532} Tennant (1906: 20).
\bibitem{2533} Tennant (1906: 81).
\bibitem{2534} Irenaeus (c.175-185)(1998: Book III, Chapter 18: 7).
\bibitem{2535} Irenaeus (c.175-185)(1998: Book III, Chapter 18: 7).
\bibitem{2536} Irenaeus (c.185-2005: 14).
\end{thebibliography}
place morally with God.\textsuperscript{2537} This indicates that Irenaeus believed human beings lost their original glorious place of stature and fellowship with God, although not a fall from a perfect, mature righteousness, but rather a departure from living in obedience to God.\textsuperscript{2538} For Irenaeus, through human disobedience, Adam and Eve were no longer acceptable to live in God’s Eden and were cast out.\textsuperscript{2539} If Irenaeus did not agree with the Augustinian position concerning the original perfect sinless nature of humanity,\textsuperscript{2540} he at least seemingly would agree that human beings had lost their moral position and right standing with their maker.\textsuperscript{2541} Harvard Professor, Everett Ferguson (1996) in his article ‘Irenaeus’ claims Irenaeus believed that what was lost in the disobedience because of the first Adam, was restored through the second Adam, Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{2542} This again appears to make it possible that although Irenaeus and Hick have a similar view on the original immaturity of humanity,\textsuperscript{2543} that to Irenaeus the first human beings lost a right standing with God because of disobedience,\textsuperscript{2544} forfeiting a life of abundance with God.\textsuperscript{2545} Clearly it is plausible that Irenaeus would view this as some type of fall or departure from grace.\textsuperscript{2546} This does not mean that Irenaeus held to an Augustinian view of the fall,\textsuperscript{2547} but it appears Irenaeus understood human beings as being morally inferior to what they were previous to their initial sin against God.\textsuperscript{2548}

\textsuperscript{2537} Irenaeus (c.175-185)(1998: Book III, Chapter 18: 7).
\textsuperscript{2538} Irenaeus (c.175-185)(1998: Book III, Chapter 18: 7).
\textsuperscript{2539} Irenaeus (c.175-185)(1998: Book III, Chapter 18: 7).
\textsuperscript{2540} Hick’s conjecture.
\textsuperscript{2541} Irenaeus (c.175-185)(1998: Book III, Chapter 18: 7).
\textsuperscript{2542} Ferguson (1996: 569).
\textsuperscript{2544} Irenaeus (c.175-185)(1998: Book III, Chapter 18: 7).
\textsuperscript{2545} Irenaeus (c.175-185)(1998: Book III, Chapter 18: 7).
\textsuperscript{2546} Irenaeus (c.175-185)(1998: Book III, Chapter 18: 7).
\textsuperscript{2547} It may be closer to an Augustinian view than John Hick would be willing to admit.
\textsuperscript{2548} Irenaeus (c.175-185)(1998: Book III, Chapter 18: 7).
Friedrich Schleiermacher writes in his work of systematic theology *The Christian Faith*, that God’s original perfect creation was based on the environment being made suitable for human beings to have self-consciousness.\(^\text{2549}\) The human experience of God-consciousness and self-consciousness are fulfilled through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, and the related religious emotions.\(^\text{2550}\) For Schleiermacher, Christian theology is not a systemization of revelation of God but rather a coherent understanding of Christian religious experience related to the redemptive work of Christ.\(^\text{2551}\) In *On Religion*, Schleiermacher expresses the belief that dogma is not part of religion, but arises out of religion.\(^\text{2552}\) Religion is essentially intuitive and consists of the experience of feeling.\(^\text{2553}\) Therefore, Christian theology was not dictated by a direct human encounter with God but by concepts of religious experience, and Hick’s theodicy is seemingly in agreement with this idea.\(^\text{2554}\) Schleiermacher explains that the original perfection of creation is its finite ability to provide an environment for God-consciousness to take place in human beings.\(^\text{2555}\) Similarly, Schleiermacher understands original human perfection as not primarily a condition, but rather the ability through both good and evil experiences to have the consciousness of God stimulating and influencing humanity.\(^\text{2556}\) Hick views Schleiermacher as understanding that an aspect of the development of God-consciousness takes place when human beings commit wrong actions, experience guilt and then grasp the need for redemption.\(^\text{2557}\) This would allow for the problem of evil to be part of God’s program for humanity.\(^\text{2558}\)

\(^{2549}\) Schleiermacher (1821)(1976: 234).
\(^{2550}\) Schleiermacher (1821)(1976: 76).
\(^{2552}\) Schleiermacher in Kedourie (1799)(1961: 26).
\(^{2553}\) Schleiermacher in Kedourie (1799)(1961: 26).
Schleiermacher rejects the idea of original nature that became corrupt; instead he views humanity as having a nature that required redemption. He philosophically exchanges original human righteousness for original human sinfulness that comes with the ability to be aware of God-consciousness. Ultimately for Schleiermacher, God would draw all humanity to himself through an awareness of God-consciousness. He rejects the concept of hell because he postulates that those living in heavenly bliss could not do so in good conscience without sympathy for those in hell. This makes the universal efficacy of Christ’s redemptive work more likely, because hell would have to be nonexistent for heaven to truly be a place of peace and happiness. Schleiermacher’s views on universalism and hell are similar to the modern views of Hick which are discussed in *Evil and the God of Love*.

According to Hick, Schleiermacher was not directly influenced by Irenaeus; however, he did share the idea of a two-stage creation of humanity with Irenaeus. To Schleiermacher, the first Adam had the potential for perfect God consciousness, but this only became an actual reality through Jesus Christ, the second Adam.

2. Hick’s Review of Augustinian Type Theodicy

Creation Made Good

Augustine’s ideas on creation and goodness were discussed in Chapter Two, and there is no need to completely restate his views, but I do wish to discuss how Hick understands

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Augustine and why he criticizes his approach. Hick reasons that although Augustine was influenced by Platonic thought, he rejected Platonic, Neo-Platonic, Gnostic, and Manichaean notions that matter was somehow evil and opposed to the spiritual realm. For Augustine, the omnipotent God created the universe and therefore evil could not be a positive substance. Instead it must be a corruption, malfunction and parasite of something originally perfectly good. 

Atheist William Rowe (1996) writes that Augustine assumed God was perfect, and this meant if there was evil in God’s creation, it was not natural and was due to privation boni, a corruption and lack of goodness in something God had originally made perfect. Hick believes that Augustine’s view of privation is reasonable in regard to the claim that evil was not created by God, and thus is secondary and parasitic within God’s universe.

However, Hick raises an objection, which I discussed in Chapter Two, that privation in creatures is not merely an absence of something good, but consists of its own positive, destructive quality as private creatures not only lack the will to do what is good, but persons will to do evil. Hick points out Augustine’s idea of privation fails to deal with the fact that corrupted persons do not always tend to disintegrate and cease to exist in will and personality. This would seem correct as a corrupted and evil entity can grow in intelligence and power, so a

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2570 R. MCL. Wilson in ‘Gnosticism’ notes it is the term used to describe a religious movement that existed during the early Christian era. The gnosis was considered a special knowledge of God and the nature of humanity. This gnosis would provide a person with the power to be free from negative cosmic forces. Wilson (1999: 226). Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard explain that although gnosticism existed in the first century it did not become a full-fledged philosophy until the second and third centuries. Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard (1993: 382).
mere corruption of a being from original perfection does not appear to weaken it to that status of non-existence. Geivett attempts to defend privation by concluding that people will usually call something evil by comparing it to what is understood to be good. Something is considered evil because it can be seen to have a diminished degree of goodness. This appears reasonable; however, the diminished goodness in a creature is not replaced by non-existence, but by an actual often thriving corrupted nature within the person.

Hick concludes that Augustine and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) were not content with merely establishing a Biblical doctrine of God’s goodness and the related goodness of his creation. Augustine and Aquinas were influenced by Neo-Platonic thought and equated being with goodness, so that greater existence (existence without evil) meant greater goodness. Aquinas postulates that everything desired as an end is perfection, and that since every nature desires its own being and perfection, this is good. Therefore evil cannot signify a being, form, or nature, as evil is not desirable and is only possible by corrupting the good. It appears that Hick’s point is reasonable, at least to the extent that greater goodness does not equal greater existence. This is difficult to measure because as discussed previously in this work, much of traditional theology states that all creation has been corrupted. We are therefore comparing imperfect creatures that are in existence with hypothetical perfect creatures, and we are

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2589 Aquinas (1261)(1920: 1.48.1).
2590 Aquinas (1261)(1920: 1.48.1).
2591 Aquinas (1261)(1920: 1.48.1).
2593 Although I reason God is infinitely good and Satan, for example, can at best be finitely evil. But satanic power can conceivably grow.
2594 Within Augustinian and Reformed models.
attempting to judge whether or not these hypothetical creatures would have greater existence because they were perfectly good. This becomes a very speculative procedure, and I agree with Hick that the Augustinian view of God’s goodness is accurate in regard to human goodness being secondary to God’s, as finite beings contain finite goodness.\footnote{Hick (1970: 178).} Hick, however, denies the metaphysical doctrine that human beings were created good,\footnote{Hick in Davis (2001: 40-41).} and I would respectfully differ siding with Augustinian and Reformed traditions.\footnote{Augustine (388-395)(1964: 33). Calvin (1539)(1998: Book II, Chapter 2, 7).}

Free Will

Hick summarizes Augustine’s free will approach: (1) human beings were created with freedom to do either good or evil,\footnote{Hick (1970: 75).} (2) human beings willingly committed wrong actions, and lost the ability to do what was good according to God, and\footnote{Hick (1970: 75).} (3) God had foreknowledge of the human fall and had plans for dealing with it.\footnote{Hick (1970: 75).} Hick has two major objections.\footnote{Hick (1970: 75).} First, he views it as absurd to believe that God would make perfect human beings who lived with him in paradise, and then still favoured rebellion and disobedience.\footnote{Hick (1970: 75).} Second, Hick sees God as being ultimately responsible for sin under this proposal as God would have created beings that he knew would rebel and cause evil.\footnote{Hick (1970: 75).}

Concerning Hick’s first objection,\footnote{Hick in Davis (2001: 40-41).} I have already agreed in broad terms with Hick and Irenaeus that the original human beings were spiritually and morally immature.\footnote{Irenaeus (c 175-185)(2005: Book IV: Chapter 39: 2).} Therefore, although it is difficult to understand how morally perfect creations would reject God, it is not a
philosophical absurdity for persons to rebel against God because their immaturity allows for the possibility of human error. This immaturity, even accepting the Augustinian, Reformed idea that God created original humanity morally perfect and sinless, would allow the possibility that human beings possessing finite, immature goodness could disobey God without a comprehensive understanding of the consequences such as sin, sinful nature, alienation from God, and the need for divine restoration. Thiessen states that at some point, Adam found a sinful disposition that lead to a disobedience of God. This was uncaused by God and done freely by Adam, according to Thiessen. Seemingly this human disposition was largely based on ignorance and lack of experience. This was new to Adam’s nature, as would be the consequences of the change in his very being. Samuel J. Schultz and Gary V. Smith (2001) state that doubt and defiance were likely reasons for the first human rebellion. Doubt and defiance seem reasonable and plausible reasons to disobey God, especially in light of the spiritual and moral immaturity of original humanity. An immature human being is far more likely than a mature one to question that God is entirely correct in all his commands, and defiance leading to rebellion can take place when these doubts are fully realized. An experienced and mature human being who has developed spiritually and morally with God is perhaps more willing to obey commands that are not completely understood, because God has been experienced over a long period and is tested and true.

2606 Hick (1970: 75).
2609 Thiessen (1956: 247).
2610 Thiessen (1956: 247).
2612 Thiessen (1956: 247).
Steven Davis agrees with Hick,\textsuperscript{2617} it is true a perfectly moral being would not sin;\textsuperscript{2618} however, Davis thinks that the Biblical idea of original humanity being made very good should not be equated with moral perfection.\textsuperscript{2619} Instead, original humanity should be understood as being creatures that were harmonious with the cosmos.\textsuperscript{2620} In other words, they were originally what God intended them to be and not corrupted, but what they were intended to be by God does not, to Davis, mean that they were morally perfect.\textsuperscript{2621} This is a plausible explanation;\textsuperscript{2622} however, in Scripture, from a traditional interpretation, post disobedience humanity is shown to be unacceptable to God, and they were expelled from the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3:24, according to Schultz and Smith.\textsuperscript{2623} and Victor P Hamilton.\textsuperscript{2624} However, if Adam and Eve were only expelled because of moral failure\textsuperscript{2625} and not because of changed and corrupted nature, then they were primarily exiled because they disobeyed God and failed to be what God intended them to be.\textsuperscript{2626} If they were morally imperfect before the fall and acceptable to live in the Garden,\textsuperscript{2627} then why were they not acceptable after they disobeyed God?\textsuperscript{2628} It seems reasonable that human beings with moral imperfection by nature would be expected to sometimes commit wrong actions,\textsuperscript{2629} but these errors should not cause expulsion as long as actions did not lead to a total rejection of God’s rule. Would a mere failing of human beings to be exactly what they should be in Genesis 3, lead to their exile from the Garden,\textsuperscript{2630} and a corrupted humanity which fuels the

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{2618} Davis (2001: 72-73).
\textsuperscript{2619} Davis (2001: 72-73).
\textsuperscript{2620} Davis (2001: 72-73).
\textsuperscript{2621} Davis (2001: 72-73).
\textsuperscript{2622} Davis (2001: 72-73).
\textsuperscript{2623} Schultz and Smith (2001: 15-16).
\textsuperscript{2624} Hamilton (1988: 52).
\textsuperscript{2625} Davis (2001: 72-73).
\textsuperscript{2626} Schultz and Smith (2001: 15-16).
\textsuperscript{2627} Davis (2001: 72-73).
\textsuperscript{2628} Davis (2001: 72-73).
\textsuperscript{2629} Davis (2001: 72-73).
\end{footnotesize}
problem of evil? If they were created morally imperfect,\textsuperscript{2631} human error and disobedience that was not complete rebellion against God would seemingly be expected and acceptable to God because the creator would know that morally imperfect creatures would not act morally perfect. If Davis is correct,\textsuperscript{2632} there would not have been any change in the nature of humanity after their disobedience. It would have remained imperfect,\textsuperscript{2633} but God’s reaction of throwing humanity out of his presence and the resulting apparent sinful nature, appears to point to the idea of a critical change in human nature.\textsuperscript{2634} The changed nature and resulting growth of sin\textsuperscript{2635} was a major part of what caused the problem of evil to become a menace. Geivett criticizes Hick’s argument and notes that spiritual immaturity is not necessarily constitutive of a moral defect.\textsuperscript{2636} He reasons that original humanity could have been morally innocent,\textsuperscript{2637} capable of committing wrong actions, without possessing a morally imperfect nature.\textsuperscript{2638} I deem this as reasonable, although Hick and Davis have raised a plausible intellectual objection.\textsuperscript{2639}

Concerning Hick’s second objection,\textsuperscript{2640} that God is ultimately responsible for sin and the problem of evil within an Augustinian system, I agree that this is a logical perspective and true in a sense;\textsuperscript{2641} however, this does not automatically indicate that God is by implication a contradictory or sinful, evil, deity.\textsuperscript{2642} The buck does ultimately stop with God in regard to the problem of evil, as Luther and Calvin noted that God used evil for good purposes.\textsuperscript{2643} From a traditional theological position, it is God’s universe and his creation, and since he is infinite and

\textsuperscript{2632} Davis (2001: 72-73).
\textsuperscript{2635} Hamilton (1988: 52-53).
\textsuperscript{2636} Geivett (1993: 202-203).
\textsuperscript{2637} Geivett (1993: 202-203).
\textsuperscript{2638} Geivett (1993: 202-203).
\textsuperscript{2640} Hick (1970: 75).
\textsuperscript{2641} Hick (1970: 75).
\textsuperscript{2642} As discussed within Chapter Three.
omnipotent, he has the power to rid the universe of evil. Feinberg pointed out in Chapter Three, a perfectly holy God could have good reasons for willingly allowing the problem of evil within his creation. Hick’s soul-making theory and similar approaches could also provide plausible reasons for God willingly allowing evil within his creation, as both sovereignty and soul-making theodicy speculate that the human struggle with evil can lead to greater human development with God’s help. It would appear feasible that an infinite, omnipotent, omniscient God would be able to willingly allow rebellion from his creations with good personal intentions on his part, and then gradually, throughout time and history, work out matters according to his plans.

As God is considered omniscient within a traditional theological framework, he has foreknowledge of all human decisions to commit wrong actions and can plan to turn these things towards the greater good. Leibniz notes in *Theodicy*, God’s knowledge of future events in itself does not make them determinate, rather because certain things will occur, God foreknows them. This concept means that God can foresee human rebellion as he knows all human souls, but he does not force or coerce persons to oppose him. However, since I accept that God is an infinite and omnipotent deity, I think it reasonable that he has the ability to influence through circumstances certain individuals to commit wrong actions, but I would consider it possible for God to remain pure in nature as his motives remain good, as Luther and Calvin noted. There

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2650 As discussed within Chapter One.
2654 This is discussed primarily within Chapter One.
are Biblical examples of God influencing persons to commit evil,\(^{2656}\) such as hardening Pharaoh’s heart in the book of Exodus, as Robert P. Gordon (1986) explains.\(^{2657}\) Gordon notes that it can be gathered from the text that Pharaoh also hardened his own heart,\(^{2658}\) but we need not baulk at the idea of God influencing a person towards evil.\(^{2659}\) Gordon states that God is the first cause of everything,\(^{2660}\) and that he is ultimately responsible for the well being of some, and the disappointment of others.\(^{2661}\) This is, of course, a difficult concept to deal with,\(^{2662}\) but it seems reasonable that God could remain pure in motive and harden a rebellious heart to commit evil actions against the people of Israel in order to facilitate the Exodus.\(^{2663}\) If Gordon’s idea is correct,\(^{2664}\) then God could willingly allow all evil, and even at times be a major influence in it occurring,\(^{2665}\) but this would all be part of his sovereign and good plans.

Donald E. Gowan (1994) calls the idea of God hardening Pharaoh’s heart a perennial problem,\(^{2666}\) but he says that he will not try to soften what the Biblical text states by claiming that God is merely confirming the evil intentions of Pharaoh.\(^{2667}\) Gowan concludes that there may be a problem for systematic theology,\(^{2668}\) but clearly the sovereignty of God is a central concept in the text.\(^{2669}\) Gowan implies that God is somehow influencing the actions of Pharaoh, and these

\(^{2656}\) Gordon (1986: 159).
\(^{2657}\) Gordon (1986: 159).
\(^{2658}\) Gordon (1986: 159).
\(^{2659}\) Gordon (1986: 159).
\(^{2660}\) Gordon (1986: 159).
\(^{2662}\) And is an important aspect of the debate between concepts of incompatibilism, compatibilism and hard determinism.
\(^{2663}\) Gordon (1986: 159).
\(^{2664}\) Gordon (1986: 159).
actions parallel the king’s hard heart. There exists the theological possibility that God foreknew the heart and inclination of Pharaoh and planned to influence him towards evil.

I would conclude that God’s creation of beings which he knew would rebel within the Augustinian and Reformed traditions, is not incoherent or contradiction. Hick is correct. God bares the ultimate responsibility of having evil occur within the universe; however, if the Augustinian and Reformed traditions can demonstrate God does not coerce or force his creations to sin, Hick’s second objection may be overcome because God’s essential nature and intentions will be shown to be good despite the rebellion that God willingly allows.

Hell

John Hick strongly disagrees with the Augustinian tradition of an everlasting hell. Within this approach, the idea that significantly free persons reject God and do not repent and follow the creator, leads to a conclusion that God will issue post-mortem punishment of these people. Hick reasons such a view is a product of religious imagination. He writes that the everlasting hell idea has served the Christian Church well throughout history because it demonstrated the cosmic drama that separates humankind from God and Christ. Hick, however, sees the fatal flaws within the view of everlasting hell as necessarily leading those who

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2673 Hick (1970: 75).
2674 Hick (1970: 75).
study theodicy in the modern era to reject such a doctrine.\textsuperscript{2683} He notes since everlasting punishment would not assist in soul-making that it would be unconstructive, constituting the largest part of the problem of evil.\textsuperscript{2684} Since the universe would forever contain the evil of rebellious persons, God’s creation would permanently be spoiled and ultimately a failure.\textsuperscript{2685} Clark Pinnock (1992) describes a conditional immortality view within the \textit{Four Views on Hell} text by William V. Crockett.\textsuperscript{2686} Pinnock explains that reconciliation and redemption would be questionable within heaven if evil existed in hell forever.\textsuperscript{2687} Surely God would have to abolish all evil in his new creation postulates Pinnock.\textsuperscript{2688} The subject of everlasting punishment is not central,\textsuperscript{2689} and therefore as seen within this thesis is not reviewed within the theodicy work of Augustine, Plantinga, or Feinberg. Everlasting hell was connected by Hick to Augustinian and Reformed thought,\textsuperscript{2690} but arguments for or against everlasting hell are not directly related to free will or sovereignty theodicy.\textsuperscript{2691}

\textsuperscript{2683} Hick (1970: 284-285).
\textsuperscript{2684} Hick (1970: 377). It can be deduced that everlasting hell is a realm that is not an aspect of God’s creation intended for human development. It would not have to be free from the problem of evil. Our present universe would be restored through Christ and the problem of evil ended. Any everlasting hell would not constitute, in our context, the largest aspect of the problem of evil.
\textsuperscript{2685} Hick (1970: 378).
\textsuperscript{2686} Pinnock in Crockett (1992: 154).
\textsuperscript{2687} Pinnock in Crockett (1992: 154).
\textsuperscript{2688} Pinnock in Crockett (1992: 154). Browning suggests everlasting hell concepts such as Hades may relate to the Christian, New Testament use of ancient myths that consisted of the ‘decent of deities to the underworld,’ such as Orpheus, Eurydice and Persephone. Christ may be understood to have descended here after his death (First Peter 3: 19). Browning (1997: 168).
\textsuperscript{2689} It is a related issue to the study of theodicy.
\textsuperscript{2690} Hick (1970: 284).
\textsuperscript{2691} Hick (1970: 284).
3. A Modern Theodicy

Evolution of the Soul

Hick’s soul-making theodicy rejects the idea of humanity having been created perfect and in a finished state; instead Hick views persons as being in a process of spiritual evolution. F.R. Tennant (1930)(1956) writes an evolutionary type theodicy and notes that a world characterized by static perfection is incompatible with our known world of evolutionary process. As noted previously, Hick writes that some form of a two-stage creation of humanity must be accepted by Christian theodicy in order to provide an effective modern, progressive approach. Human beings must, through uncompelled responses and co-operation with the creator, become children of God. As discussed, Hick notes importantly that the soul-making evolutionary process would not be caused by natural and inevitable human progress.

Although there has been some ethical progress throughout history, the morality of humanity remains much the same as it has always been. To Hick, humanity is not being developed by a preset divine evolutionary condition towards godliness, but rather God will evolve individuals through a personal spiritual experience within each person. Tennant believes that in future ages good may begin to gain over evil in accelerated speed, but he

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2700 Western secularism has placed an importance on human rights in regard to women’s rights and the rights of ethnic minorities. However, Gebara would state that women’s suffering worldwide need to be better understood through a feminist construct. There is a male view of evil that has been predominant throughout Christian history. Gebara (2002: 4-6).
acknowledges that evil may continue everlastingly, while never being able to overcome good.\textsuperscript{2705} Hick, in reviewing Tennant’s work on theodicy, views the possibility of everlasting evil as gravely weakening Tennant’s evolutionary approach.\textsuperscript{2706} It would not guarantee a completely successful teleological\textsuperscript{2707} theodicy in which all human beings are eventually redeemed by God.\textsuperscript{2708} Hick states that there is a universal human process which will continue in most post-mortem souls, as only a few have a proper understanding of God while on earth.\textsuperscript{2709}

D.Z. Phillips (2001) criticizes Hick’s view that evolution will continue within humanity after death, noting this implies that the earthly process obviously failed.\textsuperscript{2710} Phillips strongly disagrees with Hick’s position calling it horrendous that human beings should be expected to trust in the idea that death is an actual state and everything will work out for the best.\textsuperscript{2711} John K. Roth (2001) provides a similar objection when he states that Hick’s progressive theodicy is just too good to be true.\textsuperscript{2712} Although, in general terms, I do accept a concept of divine soul-making, both of the above objections\textsuperscript{2713} are serious ones. Phillips critique seems correct.\textsuperscript{2714} It is apparent in many cases soul-making fails in certain individuals this side of the grave.\textsuperscript{2715} This being the case, why should critics necessarily believe that God will redeem all post-mortem souls?\textsuperscript{2716} If there was little or no evidence from an individual’s life of a disposition towards God while they were alive,\textsuperscript{2717} then why should it be accepted that there will be a change in attitude after

\textsuperscript{2705} Tennant (1930)(1956: 195).
\textsuperscript{2706} Hick (1970: 252-253).
\textsuperscript{2707} Bloesch (1987: 19).
\textsuperscript{2708} Hick (1970: 252-253).
\textsuperscript{2711} Phillips in Davis (2001: 58).
\textsuperscript{2712} Roth in Davis (2001: 62). Hick’s theodicy is too speculative and sentimental.
\textsuperscript{2714} Phillips in Davis (2001: 58).
\textsuperscript{2715} Phillips in Davis (2001: 56).
\textsuperscript{2716} Phillips in Davis (2001: 58).
\textsuperscript{2717} Phillips in Davis (2001: 58).
The philosophical assumption of universalism appears very speculative on Hick’s part. Phillips correctly points out that life after death is not scientific fact and Hick is trusting in a hypothetical state for the eventual demise of the problem of evil. Hick is resting his theodicy on the idea that if this state actually exists, persons that previously had rejected God would eventually change their ways bringing about a Kingdom of God without rebellion. Phillips, correctly in my view, points out that Hick ‘does not treat human life seriously enough."

Hick and Human Freedom

Hick deals with the compatibilistic views of Antony Flew and J.L. Mackie, which were discussed in Chapter Two. Hick explains their understanding that God could have made human creatures in a way they always freely committed right actions. He admits that the conclusions of Flew and Mackie are logically correct in that it would be possible for God to create persons so they would always freely act rightly towards each other. Hick, contrary to Flew and Mackie, states it was not logically possible for God to create human beings so they would freely respond to him in love and faith. Hick postulates that God, without contradiction...

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2719 Hick in Davis (2001: 51).
could create human beings that would always freely act justly to each other,\textsuperscript{2727} but the same cannot be guaranteed for a free and sincere human love for God.\textsuperscript{2728}

Geivett explains that Hick rejects a traditional free will approach\textsuperscript{2729} by agreeing with Flew and Mackie\textsuperscript{2730} that God could have guaranteed persons would remain both free and perfectly good, even if only in regard to each other.\textsuperscript{2731} This would be consistent with Hick’s overall rejection of the Augustinian tradition in regard to theodicy.\textsuperscript{2732} Geivett views Hick as allowing that God could grant persons the moral freedom to not commit wrong actions against each other,\textsuperscript{2733} but God could not guarantee persons the religious freedom to love and follow him.\textsuperscript{2734} Geivett claims that Hick is making a false distinction between moral and religious freedom, as it seems possible that significantly free persons who always treated each other justly, would by nature treat God justly and follow their creator.\textsuperscript{2735} If for the sake of religious freedom, God could not have originally made significantly free human beings that would always act rightly and obey their creator,\textsuperscript{2736} then why should it be accepted that God would eventually bring this about freely through soul-making?\textsuperscript{2737} Geivett raises a difficult intellectual problem for Hick’s theodicy.\textsuperscript{2738}

If God could not create persons that would always freely love him because of human religious freedom,\textsuperscript{2739} then this freedom would have to somehow be overridden through divine

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{2727} Hick (1970: 311).
\textsuperscript{2728} Hick (1970: 311).
\textsuperscript{2729} Such as Plantinga’s view.
\textsuperscript{2731} Geivett (1993: 195).
\textsuperscript{2732} Hick in Davis (2001: 40-41).
\textsuperscript{2735} Geivett (1993: 195).
\textsuperscript{2737} Geivett (1993: 195).
\textsuperscript{2738} Geivett (1993: 195).
\textsuperscript{2739} Hick (1970: 311).
\end{footnotesize}
action in order for universal redemption to take place.\textsuperscript{2740} God would need to use some type of compatibilism, or even perhaps hard determinism, to guarantee that all of humanity would eventually live in harmony with their creator.\textsuperscript{2741} At some point, for God to redeem all of humanity\textsuperscript{2742} he would seemingly need to violate Hick’s own concept of religious freedom, which prevented God from initially creating significantly free beings that would always do what was right in regard to their creator.\textsuperscript{2743} It seems reasonable that if Hick thinks both Flew’s and Mackie’s compatibilism is correct in regard to moral freedom between human beings,\textsuperscript{2744} then it is difficult to appeal to a religious freedom based on a free will approach which states that eventually all persons will follow God, but could not initially.\textsuperscript{2745} If universal soul-making would eventually occur,\textsuperscript{2746} then it appears that God must somehow persuade, mould, or in some way determine persons with the use of compatibilism, which is in line with the thinking of Calvin, Feinberg and this author. Hick, however, rejects this type of theology stating that it is extreme and uncompromising.\textsuperscript{2747}

Hick answers Geivett in the ‘Afterword’ of Geivett’s text by stating the following: (1) Due to God’s omnipotence, it is logically necessary that all will be contingently\textsuperscript{2748} saved through human free will.\textsuperscript{2749} (2) It is not logical by necessity\textsuperscript{2750} that all will be saved, but universalism will occur through the use of human free will.\textsuperscript{2751} Therefore universalism will not take place

\textsuperscript{2740} Hick in Davis (2001: 51).
\textsuperscript{2741} Hard determinism would cancel out significant human freedom.
\textsuperscript{2742} Hick in Davis (2001: 51).
\textsuperscript{2743} Hick (1970: 311).
\textsuperscript{2744} Hick (1970: 311).
\textsuperscript{2745} Hick (1970: 311).
\textsuperscript{2746} Hick in Geivett (1993: 236).
\textsuperscript{2747} Hick (1970: 126). It may be that Hick’s insistence on universal salvation causes him to be uncompromising on alternative views which allow, for example, for the continuation of evil within Tennant’s theodicy, as well as with his difficulties accepting Reformed perspectives. Tennant (1930)(1956: 195). Hick (1970: 252-253).
\textsuperscript{2748} A proposition is contingent if its denial is logically possible. Pojman (1996: 596).
\textsuperscript{2749} Hick in Geivett (1993: 236).
\textsuperscript{2750} A proposition that cannot logically be false. Pojman (1996: 598).
\textsuperscript{2751} Hick in Geivett (1993: 236).
because of necessity, but because of the contingent use of human free will. Hick seems logical as he separates contingently from necessity in regard to universal salvation, although Geivett seemingly deems this approach contradictory. Hick may not violate logic here, but his idea that God will contingently, necessarily save everyone with their own free will, seems problematic if God cannot, with the use of compatibilism, strongly persuade and mould human beings, which previously had rejected following their maker.

Even if Hick avoids contradiction, he is left with the problem of explaining why human free will, specifically religious freedom, without God using compatibilism or hard determinism, would eventually lead to humanity universally following God, when religious freedom prevented persons from doing so when human beings were first created. It seems reasonable that if human religious freedom prevented all of humanity from following God in the beginning of human existence, then it could very well continue to do so forever. This appears likely, because soul-making without God’s use of compatibilistic persuasion and a moulding of the will, would not change the nature of each person substantially enough to guarantee universal redemption. As noted earlier, it appears that many reject God this side of the grave. It would seem, if there is life after death, that their religious freedom could very

2759 Phillips in Davis (2001: 58).
2762 Phillips in Davis (2001: 56).
well be leading them continually away from God as opposed to bringing them closer to their creator.\textsuperscript{2764}

4. Genuine Evil?

Gratuitous Evil?

When discussing eschatology,\textsuperscript{2765} Hick asks if evil is really good from a divine perspective, only seeming to be bad from a human point of view, or is evil really a bad thing?\textsuperscript{2766} Hick insists evil is genuinely evil and not good,\textsuperscript{2767} and that God has willed it for greater purposes.\textsuperscript{2768} Hick views God as ordaining genuine evil as a means within his creation to form the infinite good of a Kingdom of God which will feature significantly free creatures that will love and serve him.\textsuperscript{2769}

C. Robert Mesle (1986) states that Hick’s approach has the same problem as every classical theistic concept, that being a denial of genuine evil.\textsuperscript{2770} He notes that Hick risks making God into a devil as he has God ultimately responsible for evil,\textsuperscript{2771} and if Hick denies that God can prevent evil, he ceases to be a classical theist.\textsuperscript{2772} Mesle writes that Hick’s position would be stronger if he admitted that not every evil led to something good occurring.\textsuperscript{2773} He thinks that much of the evil in existence is unredeemed and can be called gratuitous evil which is unnecessary evil,\textsuperscript{2774} and is more harmful than good for humanity.\textsuperscript{2775} Gratuitous evil, as an

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{2764} Phillips in Davis (2001: 58).
\item \textsuperscript{2765} Hick (1970: 398-399).
\item \textsuperscript{2766} Hick (1970: 398-399).
\item \textsuperscript{2767} Hick (1970: 398-399).
\item \textsuperscript{2768} Hick (1970: 398-399).
\item \textsuperscript{2769} Hick (1970: 398-399).
\item \textsuperscript{2770} Mesle (1986: 418).
\item \textsuperscript{2771} Mesle (1986: 418).
\item \textsuperscript{2772} Mesle (1986: 418).
\item \textsuperscript{2773} Mesle (1986: 424).
\item \textsuperscript{2774} Mesle (1986: 424).
\item \textsuperscript{2775} Mesle (1986: 424).
\end{itemize}
argument, is also known as the evidential argument for evil\textsuperscript{2776} and has been presented by atheistic philosopher William Rowe (1990) on more than one occasion. He presents an argument for gratuitous evil\textsuperscript{2777} in ‘The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism’ in \textit{The Problem of Evil}.

Rowe’s evidential argument for evil\textsuperscript{2778} states the following propositions:

1. God, an omnipotent, omniscient, perfectly good being exists.\textsuperscript{2779}

2. Gratuitous evil exists.\textsuperscript{2780}

3. A perfectly good being would always eliminate gratuitous evil as far as it possibly can.

4. There are absolutely no limits to what an omnipotent being can do.\textsuperscript{2781}

Rowe concludes that there is no good state of affairs where an omnipotent, omniscient being would be justified in allowing evils where no possible good can arise from them taking place;\textsuperscript{2782} he also calls these inscrutable evils, which are evils that cannot be understood.\textsuperscript{2783} Rowe’s proposition (1) seems reasonable from a traditional Christian perspective.\textsuperscript{2784} Proposition (2) is debatable because it assumes that concepts of those within sovereignty and soul-making theodicy are incorrect and that an infinite, omnipotent God cannot use all wrong actions by creatures for the greater good.\textsuperscript{2785} Proposition (2) really does not prove anything, but simply states a disagreement between Rowe and many within Christian theism on whether or not God’s purposes are being fulfilled, even when horrendous evils occur. Rowe states that there is too

\textsuperscript{2776} Rowe (1990: 1-3).
\textsuperscript{2777} Rowe (1990: 1-3).
\textsuperscript{2778} Rowe (1990: 1-3).
\textsuperscript{2779} Rowe (1990: 1-3).
\textsuperscript{2780} Rowe (1990: 1-3).
\textsuperscript{2781} Rowe (1990: 1-3).
\textsuperscript{2782} Rowe (1990: 1-3).
\textsuperscript{2783} Rowe (1990: 1-3).
\textsuperscript{2784} Kreeft and Tacelli (1994: 89-99).
much evil that does not make sense in existence. Numerous theists would answer that although finite human beings cannot know the purpose of evil, God has a purpose. The human being is therefore unable to truly judge if too much evil exists. Proposition (3) is questionable because it builds upon the debatable proposition (2). It assumes that God cannot use all evil towards the greater good, and since gratuitous evil would exist, it implies that God likely is not a perfectly good being. Proposition (4) can be challenged by the theist, because although God technically could rid the world of evil, both Feinberg and Hick for example, have provided good reasons why the creator would allow preventable evil. Feinberg states that eliminating evil would prohibit other divine plans for the greater good, and Hick writes that God must allow a hostile imperfect environment in order for soul-making to occur.

Rowe has written a logical argument, but it is not necessarily true because theists can debate proposition (2) and claim the infinite, perfectly good God can always use the evil actions of his finite creations for the greater good. It also can be stated concerning proposition (3) that as Calvin noted, God’s motives would remain pure even while horrendous evils take place, and God need not be less than perfectly good. This would seem reasonable and possible for an infinite deity to accomplish as he is dealing with finite creatures that could never match him in morality, power, and knowledge.

2786 Rowe (1990: 3).
2788 Rowe (1990: 1-3).
2789 Rowe (1990: 1-3).
2790 Rowe (1990: 1-3).
2791 Rowe (1990: 1-3).
2797 Calvin (1543)(1996: 40).
Frances and Daniel Howard-Snyder (1999) reason that a way to deny premise (3) is to state that there is no such thing as a minimum amount of suffering that God must allow in order for the greater good to be accomplished.\textsuperscript{2799} This idea would not accept the critic’s notion that there is a minimum amount of evil and suffering that God must allow in a situation,\textsuperscript{2800} and if he goes beyond that amount, gratuitous evil has occurred and God therefore does not exist.\textsuperscript{2801} Jeff Jordan (2003) disagrees and argues that the no minimum amount of evil and suffering claim is false or implausible,\textsuperscript{2802} because for any distribution of evil for divine purposes, there is always a less painful distribution that would accomplish the same purposes.\textsuperscript{2803} This is possible,\textsuperscript{2804} but I think it more likely that for each varying amount of evil and suffering that God willingly allows, there are resulting amounts of greater good or evil that occur. There is the possibility that if God allows a certain amount of evil and suffering in a given situation, the greater good will not occur and therefore God would not allow this amount of evil and suffering to take place. As well, since the amount of evil and suffering is largely related to the amount of greater good, it is not likely that a smaller amount could accomplish the same results as a greater amount.\textsuperscript{2805} The amount of evil and suffering that occurs in a situation, or if no significant evil or suffering whatsoever is willed by God in a situation, would be determined by God’s plans for the greater good each time. I therefore doubt Jordan’s claim that a less painful distribution of evil would accomplish the exact same purposes.\textsuperscript{2806}

\textsuperscript{2799} Howard-Snyder (1999: 129).
\textsuperscript{2800} Howard-Snyder (1999: 129).
\textsuperscript{2801} Howard-Snyder (1999: 129).
\textsuperscript{2802} Jordan (2003: 238).
\textsuperscript{2803} Jordan (2003: 238).
\textsuperscript{2804} Jordan (2003: 238).
\textsuperscript{2805} Contrary to what Jordon assumes.
\textsuperscript{2806} Jordan (2003: 238).
Mesle (1991) notes that if God was truly omnipotent and had moral values equal to the best human ones as we understand them, then there would be less suffering in the world. He states that Hick misses the point by not acknowledging gratuitous evil as Hick sees that all evil must play a redemptive role for humanity. Hick answers this objection within a section of *John Hick’s Theodicy* (1991) where he writes that the existence of an enormous amount of evil does not entail that God cannot work his ultimate good purposes. He comments that evils are not rendered good, or turned into merely apparent evil by the fact that God can turn them towards a good purpose. It should be stated that natural evils are not a major concern within Hick’s soul-making theodicy. This is because he thinks that human beings must exist in a challenging, dangerous environment in order for human progress to be made. For this reason natural evils would be a natural means which could assist God in potentially building souls.

5. Summary and Practical Theology

Three practical theological ramifications of an acceptance of soul-making theodicy will be discussed briefly.

First, Hick understands theodicy and the human problem of evil in evolutionary terms. As noted this is not primarily scientific evolution but spiritual in nature. For those that reject Augustinian and Reformed approaches to theodicy, an evolutionary theodicy that allows for

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2814 Hick in Davis (2001: 48).
2815 Hick in Davis (2001: 48).
2816 Hick in Davis (2001: 48).
human error without ultimate condemnation may appear progressive in thought.\(^{2819}\) An acceptance of Hick’s soul-making view, or similar evolutionary theory in regard to the human soul,\(^{2820}\) would allow for the rejection of traditional understanding of sin and punishment. Human error would not primarily be a bad thing to be condemned by those within the Christian Church as sin,\(^{2821}\) but rather in some ways human moral mistakes could be considered a good thing,\(^{2822}\) by which human development occurs.\(^{2823}\) This type of evolutionary soul-making concept of human progression would not deny that bad things occur,\(^{2824}\) but would insist that God can work things for the greater good without ultimately condemning humanity.\(^{2825}\) Hick, like Calvin, believes that God turns truly evil acts towards the greater good,\(^{2826}\) but unlike Calvin, Hick optimistically assumes the universal salvation of humanity.\(^{2827}\) Hick’s theory allows the religious exclusivism of traditional Christianity in regard to everlasting salvation to be abandoned, according to Kreeft and Tacelli.\(^{2828}\) Within universalism there is essentially one road for all of humanity to follow to know God, and according to Hick that road will eventually be followed by every single person.\(^{2829}\) Pragmatically speaking for a secular world, soul-making theory and universalism in a sense,\(^{2830}\) provides much more comforting practical theology, than a view that excludes those outside of Christ. I can acknowledge this fact, even as I reject the notion of universal salvation in favour of a traditional Christian view.\(^{2831}\)

\(^{2819}\) Hick in Davis (2001: 41).
\(^{2820}\) Such as Tennant’s.
\(^{2821}\) Hick in Davis (2001: 41).
\(^{2822}\) Howard-Snyder (1999: 129).
\(^{2823}\) Hick in Davis (2001: 41).
\(^{2827}\) Hick in Mesle (1991: 130).
\(^{2828}\) Kreeft and Tacelli (1994: 318-319).
\(^{2831}\) Which is primarily Reformed.
Second, Hick’s theodicy maintains human free will in regard to fellowship with God. Hick thinks that God will not use a Reformed type compatibilism to mould people into following the creator.\(^{2832}\) He reasons that given enough time and existence after death, people will freely choose to follow God, as resistance will have been exhausted.\(^{2833}\) Hick’s theodicy should encourage persons to freely pursue God and spirituality, and this openness may allow opportunity for religious workers, Christian and otherwise, a chance to evangelize. Gebara explains that persons should have freedom in word and act,\(^{2834}\) and soul-making theodicy has a commitment to human freedom of choice in regard to religious thought that denies the heavy divine influence of Reformed theology and Calvinism or Augustinian thought.\(^{2835}\) Pragmatically the freedom expressed within Hick’s soul-making theodicy will draw certain people to religious worship that would never accept a traditional Christian framework, in particular a Reformed one.\(^{2836}\)

Third, since Hick believes that souls continue to develop post-mortem,\(^{2837}\) his theodicy provides practical comfort to those who have lost loved ones. People whose loved ones lived less than exemplary lives can hope for better things in the future,\(^{2838}\) and persons still alive that have experienced disappointing lives can hope that existence post-mortem will improve.\(^{2839}\) Those such as Clarence Darrow, who wrote ‘The Myth of the Soul’ in *The Forum*,\(^{2840}\) would disagree claiming belief in the afterlife was a product of blind religious faith, ignoring facts.\(^{2841}\)

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2836 Some within the progressive liberal wing of the Church may embrace Hick’s view in a strong fashion, and many including myself although not adherents of his theodicy do see God as using some type of soul-making/soul-building within human history in order to culminate the Kingdom of God which suitable human citizens.
2837 Hick (1978: 13).
2838 Hick (1978: 13).
2839 Hick (1978: 13).
Phillips and Roth raised similar objections against Hick’s view, claiming there was no good reason to think that the human condition would become better after death. For those that deny the existence of the human soul, soul-making would seem untenable and ‘wild dreams’ and ‘hopeless hopes’ as Darrow states. However, for those within mainline, liberal Christian traditions and other religious systems that believe in a spirit or soul that exists after death, an improved quality of life for all persons after this earthly life, can be a thing to be considered and welcomed. Delton Lewis Scudder explains that within an evolutionary system God can work out final victory for good over evil and provide immortality for persons in a progressively suitable physical condition. Tennant (1930) writes that Supreme Being is a God of the living and not of the dead, and that this God would respect persons and not cut them off with everlasting death, but provide them with everlasting life. An evolutionary theodicy that believes in soul-making provides all of humanity with the hope that post-mortem existence will be good and an improvement from earthly life.

2844 Hick (1978: 13).
2845 Scudder (1940: 253).
2846 Scudder (1940: 253).
2847 Tennant (1930: 205).
2848 Tennant (1930: 205).
2849 Hick (1978: 13).
CHAPTER FIVE

PRACTICAL/EMPIRICAL THEOLOGY AND THEODICY

1. Introduction

Practical Theology Definition

Don S Browning (1985)(2005) writes practical theology should be a public enterprise that consists of theological reflection on church ministry in the world, and should also deal with the theology of professional ministerial activity within the church. Practical theology when done properly would have both an ecclesial and public direction. Ray S. Anderson (2001) explains that practical theology examines how God works through the ministry of human beings in this world. The Church is the primary mode of mediation to the world through the Holy Spirit. Gerben Heitink (1983) reasons practical theology is a theory of action that features empirically orientated theological notions that are a meditation of the Christian faith in modern society. For Heitink, practical theology needs to take empirical data very seriously as further theological theory is developed. Practical theology, like theoretical theology, uses the
Scripture, history and philosophy, but places an importance on empirical findings which philosophical, theoretical theology does not. Paul Ballard and John Pritchard (2001) write that it is a particular field of theology that specifically deals with Christian life and practice within the Church community and in relation to society. Practical theology raises theological issues of meaning and truth in relation to living the Christian life in faith. When practical theology works correctly it brings together theological theory and actual practice related to pastoral skills and ministry training. The theoretical and practical nature of this type of theology must be concerned with social and cultural issues. Mark Cartledge defines it as focusing on actual lived experiences of contemporary persons in the church and secular society, with the implications of practical theology being important to research.

Praxis

Simon Blackburn explains that the term praxis originated in the era of Aristotle and included the concept of goal-directed action, the action in itself being part of the end. Praxis is therefore concerned with not merely applying theoretical knowledge, but adding to knowledge in the process of practically applying theory. Practical theology takes a reflective, critical look into the praxis of church theology while studying the Bible, tradition and other

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2859 Ballard and Pritchard (2001: 1).
2860 Ballard and Pritchard (2001: 5).
2862 Ballard and Pritchard (2001: 5).
Practical theology aims to discover if church praxis is accurately reflecting in a modern context, God’s plans for his creation. In the modern setting, according to Ballard and Pritchard, the concept of praxis comes out of the Marxist tradition and is an attempt to overcome distinction between theory and practice.

Mark Cartledge explains that practical theology should take the concept of praxis seriously. Praxis is a complex term but, to Cartledge, denotes theological and value-laden actions, habits and practices. Praxis is a method of existing in the world that is an aspect of a person’s worldview. James Woodward and Stephen Pattison provide a similar definition when they write that practical theology is very committed to an understanding that leads to praxis that would be considered theory and practice. Anderson differentiates between practice and praxis. He writes practice refers to tasks that carry out plans and actions that relate theory to a task. He uses the example of a physician having a medical practice. In contrast, praxis involves a task but in performing the task, meaning is discovered and not merely applied. Praxis is more than the application of theory and is discerning truth from the application of actions. In terms of practical theology this means that the actual practical results of theoretical theology are very important in the lives of church attendees. In regard to theodicy, if one holds to free will, sovereignty, or soul-making views, it would be important to deduce what type

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2875 Cartledge (2003: 17).
2876 Cartledge (2003: 17).
2877 Cartledge (2003: 17).
2883 Anderson (2001: 239)
of praxis results from the theories.\footnote{2885} The empirical findings within the thesis should help one understand what an acceptance of each theory leads to in regard to praxis. Empirical findings should assist one in discovering what the actual applications of each theoretical view actually are, and in theory what they actually should be. A major concern with practical theology is that philosophical, theoretical theology must be grounded in praxis.\footnote{2886}

Empirical Theology Definition

Tyron Inbody explains that classical empiricism itself, which influenced empirical theology,\footnote{2887} came about in the eighteenth century and understood empiricism as the ability to perceive reality through the use of the five senses.\footnote{2888} Robert T. Handy (1999) similarly teaches that the roots of empirical theology come through German and British empirical philosophers.\footnote{2889} The idea was to explain Christian theology symbols in a way that would be effective in the scientific/industrial age.\footnote{2890} Early empirical theologians were influenced by American pragmatism\footnote{2891} and saw the need for empirical data,\footnote{2892} which was used in history, sociology and philosophy.\footnote{2893}

As noted in Chapter One: Introduction, Dean explains that empirical theology begins with a particular speculative view of life,\footnote{2894} which in turn leads to the use of the empirical

\footnote{2885} This will be discussed within the Conclusion.
\footnote{2887} Inbody (1995: 216).
\footnote{2888} Inbody (1995: 216).
\footnote{2889} Handy (1999: 177).
\footnote{2890} Handy (1999: 177).
\footnote{2891} According to Louis P. Pojman, pragmatism is a theory set forth by C.S. Peirce and William James, which interprets the meaning of a statement by its consequences. Usually a proposition is true or false based on whether it is pragmatic. Pojman (1996: 598).
\footnote{2892} Handy (1999: 177).
\footnote{2893} Handy (1999: 177).
\footnote{2894} Dean (1990: 85-102).
method. An empirical theologian interprets the world, and the empirical method refers to how that interpretation is made workable and is revised if needed. Empirical findings may indeed back up theological speculation, but if they do not, then theological concepts may need further evaluation. Clive Erricker, Danny Sullivan and Jane Erricker (1994) explain that empirical theology questions how theology relates to social sciences. Both sociologists and those within religious education have advocated this approach. As noted in Chapter One, Professor Leslie J. Francis and the Practical Theology Team of the University of Wales, Bangor writes that an element of practical theology is the use of empirical data. In this sense, empirical theology is a way of doing practical theology. Mark Cartledge describes empirical theology as experience orientated theology that studies beliefs, values and practices in people, and is usually developed through social science research methods. R. Ruard Ganzevoort (2005) similarly believes that practical theology is developed and explained in empirical data, and this becomes empirical theology. Coming from a philosophical theological background, I see empirical theology and the social sciences as important in understanding truth about humanity. I do not have difficulty with using social sciences to complement theology, provided Christian theology still relies on an accurate historical, grammatical, and methodological interpretation of Scripture through exegesis. Neal Windham (1991) writes that exegesis is the process of determining what the author meant when writing to his initial
audience. W.R.F. Browning (1997) explains exegesis is a Greek word found in the Septuagint/LXX meaning ‘explanation’ and today refers to commentary on Biblical texts relating to a word, or verse in a section. The definition of exact meanings of words is sought and textual criticism is used. New Testament scholars Stephen Neill and Tom Wright (1964)(1988) explain ‘the exegete’ is a ‘literary critic’ concerned with language, the meaning of words, along with ‘sentences’, ‘phrases’ and entire books. Grenz and Olson note that the historical-critical method of studying the Bible began in the Reformation era, and uses exegesis to seek the actual historicity of Biblical events.

The practical theologian can use the social sciences to understand the strengths and weaknesses of practical theology. Social sciences should not dictate what Christian theology should be, rather they should assist in judging the effectiveness of concepts within practical theology. Empirical data can be helpful in this process.

The Importance of Practical Theology

Stephen Pattison (2000)(2007) mentions a very important point in his Chapter entitled ‘Some Straw for Bricks.’ He explains that dealing with theological concepts can frighten many people, as formal theology appears to come from persons whose profound ideas are

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2914 Grenz and Olson (1992: 275).
2915 Francis (2005: 4).
2916 Francis (2005: 3).
2917 Ganzevoort (2005: 6).
Many persons are unable to understand academic theology thoroughly according to Pattison, and therefore think theological reflection and interpretation is too difficult. I have studied Biblical Studies, theology and philosophy of religion for many years, and on a personal level philosophical theology has often had natural practical implications for me. So, although I do not share the struggle described by Pattison, I realize that many persons within and outside of the Christian Church struggle with the issue of theology being practically relevant. Pattison explains that through a practical theology approach, theology is set free from its academic bondage and is viewed primarily as contemporary enquiry. Practical theology and pastoral care which includes counseling and the use empirical data, can provide through the process of enquiry new ways of looking at Christian doctrine.

I have no problem with the concept as long as the contemporary enquiry is used to interpret and not reinvent traditional Christian theology. I would reason that contemporary enquiry should not overturn traditional Christian theology, but present it in a way in order that many persons within and outside of the Church are not frightened or intimidated by theology. This should not mean we risk committing theological error, but rather that there are, at times, less complex ways to explain and make comprehensible certain theological concepts within Christian tradition. As Pattison notes there are also various ways to explain theology, and

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2923 It has not been primarily contrasted by life experience.
2925 Pattison in Woodward and Pattison (2000)(2007: 137). Browning (1985)(2005: 2). This can be especially true in regard to theodicy where theory concerning the problem of evil needs to be complemented by practical concepts.
there are different ways of making it useful in various situations. Anderson explains practical theology needs a solid theological foundation in order that the practical does not overwhelm or determine the theological. At the same time theology should not just be concerned with creeds and history, but should also be contemporary. Practical theology therefore complements and does not replace philosophical theology.

A Brief Historical Overview of Practical Theology

This thesis is not aiming to provide a brief history of practical theology, but rather a brief historical overview. An actual history of practical theology is not required for a work primarily concerned with theodicy with practical theology. As previously mentioned, according to Stephen Pattison and James Woodward, the term practical theology came to existence within late eighteenth century German academia. The purpose of practical theology was to apply theological principles to church activities such as church worship, preaching, teaching, and government. The German academics, which included Friedrich Schleiermacher, C.I. Nitzch and Philip Marheineke began the connection between Christian theology and the social sciences. Schleiermacher is likely the first to work with such concepts. What developed from these understandings was the notion that theoretical theology that deals with

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2934 Anderson (2001: 46).
2935 This would primarily be a concern of philosophical and systematic theology.
2936 Anderson (2001: 46).
2937 The differencing being that practical and empirical theology is a main focus only in the context of evaluating theoretical philosophical data.
2938 As seen in Chapter One to Four.
2942 Anderson (2001: 24). This is not surprising as in The Christian Faith, Schleiermacher often focuses on subjective and personal aspects of theology in regard to persons.
possibilities between life and action, needs to be differentiated from practical theology that deals with realities between life and action.

Don S. Browning (1996) concludes that despite some intellectual differences between early thinkers, within practical theology they share the view that practical thought is the centre from which human thinking and theoretical understandings come. Theoretical thought consists of abstractions from practical thinking. This is in contrast to much Protestant tradition where practical theology is thought to come from philosophical theoretical theology. I would cautiously deduce that practical theology at times comes by taking philosophical theology and applying it practically, but that discussion is not central to this thesis. Michael G. Lawler presents material from Gerben Heitink (1999) where Heitink writes that historically practical theology in both Protestant and Roman Catholic traditions, is the empirically orientated theological theory, which connects theory to praxis for society. This understanding led to broad, ecumenical considerations of praxis within the religious European academic circles, in particular in the Netherlands and Germany.

A twentieth century model for practical pastoral theology developed which emphasized the importance of preaching God’s word in order that through meditation healing could be provided to congregations. F. LeRon Shults (2004) deduces that the increased importance of

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2946 Browning (1996: 8).
2947 Browning (1996: 8).
2948 Browning (1996: 8).
2949 Browning (1996: 8).
2950 This model order may be in play at times: Biblical exegesis, Biblical theology, systematic/philosophical theology, practical theology. There are other disciplines that can considered influences on this model such as philosophy of religion in conjunction with systematic and philosophical theology.
relational theology within the practical theology movement may require a critical evaluation of some traditional Christian doctrines. The hope for Shults being that this evaluation will lead to a more effective praxis within the twenty-first century church, rather than there being too much dependence on what he views as static doctrine. Paul Ballard and John Pritchard explain practical theology began to expand academically in United Kingdom Universities in the 1970’s with Manchester, Birmingham, and Wales. Several courses in regard to practical and pastoral care were offered at major Universities, and the field continues to expand in the twenty-first century. It is also mentioned that simultaneously with the growth of practical theology in the academic world, pastoral care and counseling also grew in importance within the United Kingdom. In the twenty-first century practical theology is contextualizing doctrines and concepts concerning God and raising issues of theological truth and how these relate to living out a life of Christian faith. Paul Ballard (2000)(2007) notes that practical theology in the United Kingdom is developing in regard to theoretical literature and is moving towards the centre of contemporary theology. Not only are church related issues being dealt with, but also social concerns such as poverty, employment, and community.

John Patton (2000)(2007) places much emphasis on pastoral care within practical theology in his article ‘Modern Pastoral Theology in the United States.’ He explains that

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2959 Ballard and Pritchard (2001: 2).
2960 Ballard and Pritchard (2001: 2).
2961 Ballard and Pritchard (2001: 2).
2962 Ballard and Pritchard (2001: 2).
2963 Ballard and Pritchard (2001: 2).
pastoral care in regard to race, culture, gender, and power issues is most important in the American church presently. Feminist issues that were previously ignored by male caregivers are now being given serious consideration. The overall need for change in society and the need for greater care of those suffering within the American political process is also an aspect of American practical and pastoral care.

Author’s Viewpoints

My background is primarily in philosophical theology, which is examining philosophical concepts concerning God from both the disciplines of philosophy and theology, but depending more on the latter. I have presented three philosophically influenced theodicy approaches in this thesis, and interact with them theologically and philosophically. This is not to say that I do not have any background in practical and empirical theology, for in my Master of Philosophy at Wales, Bangor, I also presented philosophical theology and worked with practical concepts and empirical research.

Theology, especially philosophical and systematic, is often seen as not being practical, but I have never viewed it as such. S.W. Sykes (1999) in his article ‘Systematic Theology’ describes it as a method by which theology is given a rational and orderly account.

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2973 And also quite extensively philosophy of religion.
2974 Philosophy of religion would also combine the disciplines of philosophy and theology, but depend more on the former. There are philosophers of religion such as Flew and Mackie, discussed earlier, who are noted atheists in writing. Antony Flew and A. MacIntyre (1999) make it clear that some philosophers of religion would see reasoning about religion as a waste of time, and instead argue against religious belief. Flew and MacIntyre (1999: 446).
2975 My free will theodicy presentation consisted of two related views, one being Plantinga’s philosophical free will defence, and the other Augustine’s primarily theological free will theodicy.
2976 With the assistance of Dr. William Kay.
Systematic theology is the systemization of theological concepts. Erickson explains that systematic theology draws upon the entire Bible and does not exegete texts in isolation. It attempts to analyze and understand Scriptural teachings in a harmonized way. I would add that philosophy also plays a part in systemizing theology. Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard explain systematic theology attempts to make Christian doctrine coherent, Biblical, and written in a culturally contemporary way. Systematic theology will always be influenced by the theological agenda of the writer.

Theissen makes it clear that theology only has a deadening effect upon the spiritual life of a Christian, if it is treated as mere theory. He explains that a proper use of theology will fuel the spiritual life and provide intelligent thinking about religious problems. My research in this thesis, and the previous work, has directly influenced my theology and how I view God and others in regard to the problem of evil, and therefore, thankfully does not fall into Thiessen’s description. Theology is an important aspect of understanding life, not just philosophical ideals, but the actual workings of life. As Don Browning notes practical theology is useful for theological reflection and for the developments of church ministry and therefore I think it should not be overlooked as a discipline in academic and church contexts.
Johannes van der Ven’s Background

This scholar, born in 1940, has had a major impact in fusing practical, empirical, and systematic theology. Leslie J. Francis states that Professor Johannes van der Ven is a pioneer in the development of methodology for empirical theology. There are two key principles that Francis views as coming from van der Ven. First, the social sciences provide legitimate tools for the methodology and agenda of empirical theology. They also provide reasonable ways for empirically studying the ideas within practical theology. An empirical method of surveying academics, theology students, and congregations can lead to evaluations of data, which can measure the effectiveness of practical theology and where it needs to change and become more effective. Second, van der Ven favours an actual full-integration of the social sciences within practical theology. Professor van der Ven believes that practical theologians must have a worldview and perspectives that are far more influenced by theology than the social sciences. This means theology still must have some separation from the social sciences with an intra-disciplinary approach. Francis, in contrast to van der Ven, favours an integrated inter-disciplinary approach to empirical theology over the intra-disciplinary view.

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2990 van der Ven (2006a: 1).
2992 The Professor’s name in Dutch is van der Ven, the name beginning with a small ‘v’.
2993 Francis (2005: 2).
2994 Francis (2005: 2-3).
2995 Francis (2005: 2-3).
2996 Francis (2005: 3).
2997 Francis (2005: 3).
2998 Francis (2005: 3).
2999 Francis (2005: 3).
3000 Francis (2005: 3).
3001 This is an academic approach that puts one particular discipline in priority over others. The other disciplines are used secondarily. Cartledge (2003: 248).
3002 An academic approach that uses two different disciplines together so they interact, without one discipline having priority over the other. Cartledge (2003: 248).
3003 Francis (2005: 4).
tested by social science, and second, the empirical theologian can learn from practical problems that take place within the social sciences themselves. However, van der Ven admits that some social scientists may have difficulty engaging with the language and assumptions of theology. This is likely to be a valid point as practical and empirical theology can be influenced and even integrated by the social sciences, but Christian theology is a multifaceted discipline in itself and not every social scientist is going to be educated in theology, or even see God or theology as useful.

Ganzevoort writes that Johannes van der Ven is, without question, one of the most influential practical theologians of the present period. Professor van der Ven has been involved in the development of practical theology, the related empirical research and used systematic theology with these disciplines. ‘The Journal of Empirical Theology’ has publicized much of van der Ven’s methodological approach to practical and empirical theology since 1988. Professor van der Ven’s notable works on theodicy include Suffering, Why for God’s Sake (1996), which he co-wrote with Eric Vossen, and ‘Learning Theodicy’ an article he published in ‘The Journal of Empirical Theology’ that same year with Vossen and Paul Vermeer. For the purpose of this thesis, I will mainly review theodicy work he has done singularly, which includes Practical Theology (1993), and God Reinvented? (1998). I also have engaged in

3004 Francis (2005: 4).
3005 Francis (2005: 4).
3006 Francis (2005: 3-4).
3007 Francis (2005: 3-4).
3008 Francis (2005: 3-4).
3009 Many scientists will be naturalists, and perhaps atheists.
3010 Ganzevoort (2005: 1).
3011 Ganzevoort (2005: 1).
3012 Francis (2005: 2).
3013 Francis (2005: 2).
3014 This provides a distinction in viewpoints between van der Ven, Vossen and Vermeer.
email correspondence with Professor van der Ven directly which has been helpful.\footnote{My thanks to Professor van der Ven and to Dr. Mark Cartledge for initially contacting the professor on my behalf.} I therefore have received updated information from the professor that is in line with previous work.\footnote{van der Ven (2006a: 1). van der Ven (2006b: 1)} I was specifically instructed by Dr. Mark Cartledge\footnote{My original PhD thesis advisor who is published expert on practical and empirical theology.} to email Professor van der Ven and use the information provided by the email interviews.\footnote{This material has slight changes in van der Ven’s reasoning is comparison to other cited works and therefore is quite beneficial and original.} This was in order to have the most recent and cutting edge material possible.\footnote{A central idea of this work from Dr. Cartledge was to provide new and recent relevant material in order to add originality to this thesis. Dr. Rob Warner also supported the use of this material.}

Vossen’s and Vermeer’s Background


Paul Vermeer’s book \textit{Learning Theodicy},\footnote{Learning Theodicy, Leiden, Brill.} appears to be a later work related to the article of the same name from 1996. Although this is a singular effort, he is not only influenced...
by Vossen, but the similarity of his work to van der Ven’s is apparent. Vermeer, like the other two scholars, is a professor at Radboud University, Nijmegen.

2. The Workings of Practical Theology

Related Hermeneutics

Cartledge defines hermeneutics as theories or strategies for interpretation of written texts.\textsuperscript{3027} The idea of social and community hermeneutics could also exist.\textsuperscript{3028} In this concept, society is interpreted with what would be called a hermeneutic.\textsuperscript{3029} Ray S. Anderson who is a senior professor of theology and ministry at Fuller Theological Seminary,\textsuperscript{3030} provides a moderate traditional and conservative perspective.\textsuperscript{3031} He states the practical theology is essential hermeneutical theology,\textsuperscript{3032} and assumes that practical theology must be developed through the text of Scripture seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{3033} To Anderson practical theology is theological and not just spiritual since it specifically trusts in the Scriptural teaching.\textsuperscript{3034} Anderson states that the Biblical resurrection of Christ serves as hermeneutical criterion that does not replace the other Scripture,\textsuperscript{3035} but rather his resurrection work is criterion that fulfills the idea of a new humanity.\textsuperscript{3036} Within this concept\textsuperscript{3037} a key idea for practical theology is that men and women are called to serve Christ in this process of creating a new humanity,\textsuperscript{3038} and this

\textsuperscript{3027} Cartledge (2003: 248).
\textsuperscript{3028} Cartledge (2003: 248).
\textsuperscript{3029} Cartledge (2003: 248).
\textsuperscript{3030} From the back cover of his 2001 text \textit{The Shape of Practical Theology}.
\textsuperscript{3031} Anderson (2001: 37).
\textsuperscript{3032} Anderson (2001: 37).
\textsuperscript{3033} Anderson (2001: 37).
\textsuperscript{3034} Anderson (2001: 37).
\textsuperscript{3035} In context the Hebrew Bible otherwise known as the Old Testament.
\textsuperscript{3036} Anderson (2001: 101).
\textsuperscript{3037} Anderson (2001: 101).
\textsuperscript{3038} Anderson (2001: 101).
cannot occur without the Biblical resurrection of Christ. Within the Christian community some of those also concerned with practical theology, social policy, and feminist theology, such as Ivone Gebara, that are to the liberal left of the theological spectrum, will not agree with Anderson and would think that the literal resurrection of Christ is idealistic theory based in philosophy. Gebara views a metaphorical resurrection of actual presently living bodies as more helpful theologically and practically. She also comments that concentrating on the resurrection of the body after death does not put the forces of oppression and exclusion at risk. Although I fully accept the historical, Biblical concept of the resurrection of Christ, in agreement with Anderson, I can conclude that Gebara has at least half a point. By this I mean that a philosophical and practical theology that accepts the Biblical resurrection of Christ and his followers, in no way should overlook or endorse temporal evils. In ministry, to truly have concern for others is to care about them in both the short and long term, and therefore the present earthly care of others should be considered crucial within contemporary practical theology. This earthly care at times should cause those within the church to take political and social stands against those in power that commit evil acts against others as indifference promotes greater evil.

3045 Matthew, Chapter 28; Luke, Chapter 24; John Chapters 20-21; Acts, Chapter 1.
3048 1 Corinthians, Chapter 15.
Hermeneutics of Suspicion

Marie McCarthy (2000)(2007) writes that given the human tendency to distort the truth within a certain tradition,\(^{3052}\) a certain hermeneutic of suspicion should exist.\(^{3053}\) She is not specifically discussing Biblical hermeneutics,\(^{3054}\) but is concerned that certain individuals may make personal spiritual experiences normative.\(^{3055}\) In particular as with Gebara,\(^{3056}\) McCarthy is concerned that a hermeneutics and a spirituality that overlooks the real human suffering of persons should be questioned.\(^{3057}\) I would agree and not only does a heavily personalized, experiential type of practical theology potentially overlook the needs of the poor and suffering,\(^{3058}\) but may also overlook Scripture that Anderson mentioned was essential for the development of effective practical theology.\(^{3059}\)

Christopraxis

Ray S. Anderson defines Christopraxis as the continuing power of Jesus Christ, as his ministry works with followers through the Holy Spirit.\(^{3060}\) Anderson’s theory of Christopraxis assumes a bodily resurrection of Christ, which Anderson states is a fact of history,\(^{3061}\) but presently Christ works through the Holy Spirit in this world.\(^{3062}\) The inner core of practical theology, as Anderson views it, is the life of a historical Jesus Christ, his resurrection and the

\(^{3059}\) Anderson (2001: 37).
\(^{3060}\) Anderson (2001: 29).
\(^{3061}\) Anderson (2001: 52).
work of the Holy Spirit of God continuing the gospel plan on earth. Anderson deduces that
the concept of Christopraxis includes the Holy Spirit of God working with Scripture to bring
about revelation and reconciliation to persons within the Christian Church. Gebara does not
deny the death of Christ on the cross as a historical event and she explains there is evidence that
he was crucified. Gebara’s feministic theology is concerned that making the death of Christ
central for salvation within the Christian faith, affirms a path of suffering through male
martyrdom as the only way for salvation. Gebara concludes that this theory of salvation
makes the suffering of women over the centuries useless. Although I can fully acknowledge
that women have suffered throughout history and continue to suffer in ways that are not always
recognized, I respectfully disagree with Gebara, as the New Testament salvation is for
persons that believe and trust in Christ. God has a definite plan of salvation for persons.
Women’s status before God within the New Testament is equal to that of men with respect to
personal salvation, and there is no difference between male and female as both are saved through
the atoning work of Christ. There is no exclusion of persons based on their gender within this
process.

3063 Anderson (2001: 52).
3064 Anderson (2001: 54).
3071 John 3:16 mentions that whoever believes in Christ will have everlasting life, and John 14: 6 explains that no one comes to the Father, but through Christ. My point is not to exegete or exposit these verses but to point out that females and women are included and not excluded from the salvation process. Male and female alike are saved within the Christian tradition through faith and trust in Christ. NASB (1984: 1197, 1215).
3072 Thiessen (1956: 277).
3074 Thiessen (1956: 277).
Bloesch suggests feminists desire for men and women to be able to work together as equals. Rosemary R. Ruether (1998) acknowledges that within Christian history there has been a theology where the original equality of all people in Christ is restored. She believes that equality shall not be completely accomplished until social hierarchy is ended, but she states that in Christ’s new Kingdom all class, race and gender divisions are overcome. This Kingdom will include both men and women redeemed through the work of Christ. Rebecca S. Chopp (1995) suggests that a goal of feminist theology is to deconstruct patriarchal images of God. She writes that feminist theology looks to overthrow oppression based in patriarchy. New Testament scholar Aida Besançon Spencer (1991) notes that the feminist critic is to alert the reader that there is a human tendency to alienate those persons who are different and have less power. Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard explain that feminists desire readers to examine the Biblical stories concerning women from a feminine perspective.

3. Johannes van der Ven
Theology and Suffering

Professor van der Ven explains that his theodicy is an enlightened attempt in philosophy and theology to explain and justify the existence of God in an evil world. An aspect of his work in theodicy is an effort to understand why the problem of evil and suffering are a human

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3075 Bloesch (1987: 256). I can support this desire in general terms, even while accepting men and women are equal but not the same, even as all men, and all women, are not the same.
3080 Chopp (1995: 88-89). Patriarchy can limit God to being humanly understood from a male point of view.
3083 Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard (1993: 455).
problem. Professor van der Ven explains that his theodicy project was motivated by a desire to make sense of certain pastoral praxis concerning Christian ministers struggling with how to assist people who are suffering. It seems that many pastors have a deep sense of frustration and desperation in trying to provide hope to people, even though Christianity theoretically and theologically, is a faith and philosophy that provides ultimate salvation from suffering. To assist in understanding suffering practically, van der Ven establishes certain religious symbols and reviews their interpretations. These shall be discussed later within this Chapter.

According to Eric Vossen (1993), Jürgen Moltmann, has had major influence in the development of theodicy concepts and symbols. Moltmann appears to be commenting on this issue when he asks if the fatal problems of modern humanity will be apprehended and solved with critical interaction with the gospel, or will other sources, that are less problematic, be sought. It seems that Christian ministers and leaders must provide theoretically sound explanations for evil and suffering, and provide practical ways for the God of the Bible to be of comfort. As sufferers seek the power of the gospel, these persons must have something tangible to rely on for support. If Christianity and the gospel is seen as theoretically and practically corrupt and useless, then the Church may be rejected as an option for providing the explanation for evil and suffering.
For example, within the Christian community, if someone has lost a loved one, theological explanations of why sin and death exist in the universe can be useful in helping the sufferer make sense of the death. God’s justice can be understood somewhat, but for the sufferer to realize theologically that death is a result of human sin and a corrupt world system, it is not really all that comforting, although the concept is Biblically and theologically correct. The helpful traditional practical explanation that the resurrection awaits those who trust in Christ, is both theoretically and practically sound, and may be of comfort to a believer. Yes, God is a creator who demands justice, but through the atoning work and resurrection of Christ, his love and grace is also shown to followers. The resurrection of Christ, from a traditional perspective, is also not purely a theological concept, as the Kingdom of God is progressing towards its culmination. It can be pointed out practically that the resurrection of Christ as King has to take place for a culminated Kingdom of God to ultimately occur. An actual Kingdom would require the resurrection of a historical Christ. The historicity of Christ in detail is obviously out of the scope of this thesis, but my point is that it is vital to ground Christian practical theology in the historicity of Christ. If Christ was not a real person, and his supernatural resurrection untrue, then the Biblical doctrines concerning his resurrection cannot be trusted. Christ’s resurrection validates his ministry, according to Erickson. There would be no hope, from a traditional Christian perspective, for everlasting life and salvation for those

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3097 Or perhaps outside of the Church as well.
3098 As with the four theoretical viewpoints presented in this thesis.
3108 The Apostle Paul admits this would be the case in First Corinthians 15: 12-19.
who have died without the resurrection.\textsuperscript{3110} Death would thus end all hopes of ultimate reunion between those who remain and those who have died.\textsuperscript{3111}

Benefits of an Empirical Study of Theodicy

Professor van der Ven suggests that an empirical study would be useful in finding connections between a rational belief in God,\textsuperscript{3112} and faith in that same God,\textsuperscript{3113} in regard to theodicy.\textsuperscript{3114} It is important for van der Ven to understand what people experience, and how they deal with the meaningfulness or meaninglessness of these experiences in a religious sense.\textsuperscript{3115} It would seem valuable, through empirical research, to gain an understanding of how people within the Church deal with the problem of evil.\textsuperscript{3116} This research may provide ministers and leaders with insights on how to better serve their attendees and members.\textsuperscript{3117} It would be important to find out if people within the Church primarily deal with suffering in faith, believing that God is just and good, or is there also reason at work?\textsuperscript{3118} It would seem to be important for persons within the Church to have at least a basic rational understanding of theological reasons for the problem of evil.\textsuperscript{3119} Simultaneously, there should be a faith in place that can trust in a God that has intervened in history through his prophets, apostles and, of course, the atoning and resurrection work of Christ.\textsuperscript{3120}

\textsuperscript{3110} Thiessen (1956: 332).
\textsuperscript{3111} Anderson (2001: 54).
\textsuperscript{3112} van der Ven (1993: 160).
\textsuperscript{3113} van der Ven (1993: 160).
\textsuperscript{3114} van der Ven (1993: 160).
\textsuperscript{3115} van der Ven (1993: 160).
\textsuperscript{3116} van der Ven (1993: 160).
\textsuperscript{3117} van der Ven (1993: 159).
\textsuperscript{3118} van der Ven (1993: 160).
\textsuperscript{3119} van der Ven (1993: 160).
\textsuperscript{3120} Anderson (2001: 54).
Related to this issue, according to van der Ven, is the tension between divine omnipotence and divine love.\textsuperscript{3121} Christ is seen as both a representative of the divine judge,\textsuperscript{3122} and the expiatory sacrifice and sufferer for humanity.\textsuperscript{3123} Expiation is the idea that Christ’s atoning death covers sin in believers and cleanses followers from corruption, according to Erickson.\textsuperscript{3124} Professor van der Ven is wise to suggest that an empirical analysis of how the ideas of God’s justice and love work together would be useful.\textsuperscript{3125} Understanding these concepts may be a struggle to many within the Church that are suffering, and ministers and leaders need to be aware of these difficulties in order to be of greater assistance.\textsuperscript{3126}

Theodicy Theme

In developing the theodicy theme, van der Ven states that there are three criteria needed.\textsuperscript{3127} These are scientific relevance,\textsuperscript{3128} practical relevance,\textsuperscript{3129} and researchability.\textsuperscript{3130} Scientifically, the project uses both descriptive and hypothesis testing forms,\textsuperscript{3131} and therefore theological attitudes and practices are described and insights are sought for why certain beliefs exist.\textsuperscript{3132} Professor van der Ven calls this approach explorative-explanatory research as he attempts to understand typical attitudes and how they influence pastoral work.\textsuperscript{3133}

In regard to practical relevance, van der Ven attempts to examine experiences in order to make observations concerning central theological tenets, and the concepts of pastoral care that

\textsuperscript{3121} van der Ven (1993: 161).
\textsuperscript{3123} van der Ven (1993: 161).
\textsuperscript{3124} Erickson (1994: 811). Expiation shall be discussed further within this Chapter.
\textsuperscript{3125} van der Ven (1993: 160).
\textsuperscript{3126} van der Ven (1993: 159).
\textsuperscript{3127} van der Ven (1993: 169).
\textsuperscript{3128} van der Ven (1993: 169).
\textsuperscript{3129} van der Ven (1993: 169).
\textsuperscript{3130} van der Ven (1993: 169).
\textsuperscript{3131} van der Ven (1993: 169).
\textsuperscript{3132} van der Ven (1993: 169).
\textsuperscript{3133} van der Ven (1993: 170).
The scientific study should produce observations that may show certain theological assumptions lead to a certain way of performing pastoral care. It may be that some inadequate theology leads to less than adequate care, or possibly that the theology is adequate, but it is not being correctly reflected in pastoral work for those within and outside of the Church. It is also possible that certain societal views cause difficulties in the acceptance of controversial traditional Christian doctrines. Researchability attempts to find information concerning the intensity of certain human sufferings, and to find out how sufferers view their situation. These three criteria are put together, the theodicy theme and a question is formulated as to what kind of attitudes exist concerning religious suffering, what factors can determine these viewpoints, and what kind of practical, pastoral understanding can be gathered from this research. Professor van der Ven is attempting to take certain philosophical and theological concepts, which he calls ‘explicit theodicy’, and examine how these concepts are dealt with by sufferers, which he then calls ‘implicit theodicy.’

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3139 van der Ven (1993: 170). This could include free will and sovereignty theodicy approaches.
3145 van der Ven (1993: 170). Explicit theodicy would be closer in association with concepts similar to theoretical theodicy such as free will, sovereignty and soul-making perspectives than would implicit theodicy which would be dealt with more by practical and empirical theology and statistics.
Theodicy Symbols

Professor van der Ven’s works, *Practical Theology* (1993) and *God Reinvented* (1998), both present seven theodicy symbols. In contrast, the work of Vossen and Vermeer deal with theodicy models. I specifically asked the Professor about the issue of symbols versus models, and Professor van der Ven emphatically explained to me by personal email which contained his symbols that there was within his empirical theology *no difference* between theodicy symbols and models, and there does not appear within any of his work to be any clear-cut distinction by comparing the two. Vermeer does see a difference between symbols and models, which will be explained when his work is reviewed. In discussing these symbols, I am not seeking to primarily critique his understanding of theodicy as I did with Augustine, Plantinga, Feinberg and Hick; that is a secondary consideration for me with his work. Professor van der Ven is not writing a philosophical theodicy approach with the use of his symbols, and it is my primary concern to understand and explain what these symbols mean and how van der Ven uses them to relate theodicy to practical theology. He does make philosophical assumptions in the production of these symbols, but he is not writing and defending a philosophical theodicy; rather he is taking philosophical and theological concepts and presenting the symbols in order to empirically test a sample group of people.

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3150 van der Ven (2006b: 1).
3151 van der Ven (2006b: 1).
3152 Vermeer (1999: 18). There is a difference in approach and definitions between van der Ven and Vermeer.
3154 His work is more concerned with practical and empirical theology.
Professor van der Ven’s first three symbols deal with the absolute transcendence of God. Transcendence is the idea that God is completely and distinctively separate from his creation. Grenz and Olson write God is the ‘Transcendent One’ and is ‘self-sufficient’ from the world. God is from beyond the world and universe. J.S. Whale explains transcendence makes God inaccessible and unknowable to finite creatures. For Whale, Christ revealed the nature of the transcendent God in his life and ministry. According to Kreeft and Tacelli, God is not part of the physical universe, and is not limited by the universe. God is the creator of the universe and all things, and is ‘other’ than the universe.

With the first symbol, God is viewed as apathetic and unaffected by suffering. For God to be apathetic means he is unmovable and unmoved by what goes on in his creation, yet he keeps all things in motion and in existence. Professor van der Ven finds Moltmann’s discussion on the ancient view, that God is apathetic towards his creation, useful. Moltmann notes the related Greek term ‘apatheia’ which is the idea of an irresistible force that cannot be influenced by outside forces. Historically in early Greek times from Aristotle onwards, God was viewed as being without emotions. Brian Davies (1999) notes that the term ‘impassibility’ corresponds to ‘apatheia’ and defines impassibility as the traditional

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3159 Grenz and Olson (1992: 10).
3160 Grenz and Olson (1992: 10).
3161 Grenz and Olson (1992: 10).
3162 Whale (1958: 56).
understanding that God, the divine nature, cannot experience pain or suffering.\textsuperscript{3173} Davies believes it is incorrect to assume God’s impassibility should mean that the creator is indifferent or unconcerned about his creation.\textsuperscript{3174} For Erickson, the idea of God’s divine nature as impassible is based upon the influence of ancient Greek thought rather than Scripture.\textsuperscript{3175} Erickson points out that with the incarnation of Christ, God the Son did experience human suffering.\textsuperscript{3176} He possessed a human nature that did suffer in life and in death, even though his divine nature coexisted with his human one.\textsuperscript{3177} Kenneth Surin (1982) writes that God is considered by some within orthodox Christian theology to be unable to experience pain or sorrow.\textsuperscript{3178} However, others concede that concluding God is impassible is a questionable view within traditional thought.\textsuperscript{3179} Surin thinks that perhaps God limits his omnipotence by identifying with human suffering.\textsuperscript{3180} Paul Helm (2006), Professor Emeritus of the University of London,\textsuperscript{3181} reasons impassibility has lost intellectual support,\textsuperscript{3182} even though throughout the ages many within the Church have accepted the doctrine.\textsuperscript{3183} Helm suggests that the doctrine needs to be reconsidered as God is not indifferent to human suffering,\textsuperscript{3184} nor does God express emotions of anger and passion as humans do.\textsuperscript{3185} The concept of impassibility opens up a complex discussion beyond this thesis, but it seems reasonable God can be both all-powerful and feel negative emotions. It should be concluded suffering does not alter his divine attributes.

\textsuperscript{3173} Davies (1999: 288).
\textsuperscript{3174} Davies (1999: 288).
\textsuperscript{3175} Erickson (1994: 737).
\textsuperscript{3176} Erickson (1994: 737).
\textsuperscript{3177} Erickson (1994: 737).
\textsuperscript{3178} Surin (1982: 97).
\textsuperscript{3179} Surin (1982: 97).
\textsuperscript{3180} Surin (1982: 97).
\textsuperscript{3181} Helm (2006: 1).
\textsuperscript{3182} Helm (2006: 1).
\textsuperscript{3183} Helm (2006: 1).
\textsuperscript{3184} Helm (2006: 1).
\textsuperscript{3185} Helm (2006: 1).
Thiessen describes the immutability of God as meaning his divine nature, attributes, consciousness, and will cannot change.\textsuperscript{3186} Erickson explains that God does not grow or develop, as there are no variations in his nature at different points within his existence.\textsuperscript{3187} R.C. Sproul and Robert Wolgemuth (2000) deduce that as God is eternal he has no beginning or no end.\textsuperscript{3188} As God is understood to be eternal and beyond time without a progression in nature, his infinite being would make a change in nature and character impossible.\textsuperscript{3189} My modest proposal reasons since God is infinite and considered immutable,\textsuperscript{3190} it is impossible for him to suffer in the exact way that human beings do. David A Pailin (1999) explains that within some process theology\textsuperscript{3191} approaches, God’s existence may be viewed as absolute, necessary and unchanging.\textsuperscript{3192} However, God’s character can change and is determined through interaction with his creation.\textsuperscript{3193} Pailin postulates that God’s character can change, as he loves his creatures.\textsuperscript{3194} In my view, the divine nature does not have a physical body that can be altered, changed or die, as in John 4:24 where Jesus stated that God is spirit.\textsuperscript{3195} Christ could suffer because he was both true God and true man,\textsuperscript{3196} but God as spirit\textsuperscript{3197} cannot suffer in human terms. Since God is immutable,\textsuperscript{3198} any type or amount of suffering cannot alter his essential nature or being, or divine character.\textsuperscript{3199} In contrast, suffering can definitely change the essential nature of human beings as, for example, in

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{3186} Thiessen (1956: 127).
\item\textsuperscript{3187} Erickson (1994: 274).
\item\textsuperscript{3188} Sproul and Wolgemuth (2000: 2).
\item\textsuperscript{3189} Sproul and Wolgemuth (2000: 2).
\item\textsuperscript{3191} Process theology as discussed previously is a twentieth century approach based on the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead that presents a God that is involved in the continual process of world through two natures. God has a transcendent nature which contains God’s perfect character and the consequent immanent nature by which God is part of the changing cosmic process. Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling (1999: 95-96).
\item\textsuperscript{3192} Pailin (1999: 469).
\item\textsuperscript{3193} Pailin (1999: 469).
\item\textsuperscript{3194} Pailin (1999: 469).
\item\textsuperscript{3195} The New American Standard Version Bible (1984: 1198).
\item\textsuperscript{3197} The New American Standard Version Bible (1984: 1198).
\item\textsuperscript{3199} Pailin (1999: 469).
\end{itemize}
the case of an amputated limb or death. Suffering can also change the mental and spiritual well being of a person, but God would not be altered in the same way.  

Erickson explains that it does seem a rational possibility, however, to conclude God does have emotions, although they are controlled. \(^{3201}\) He indicates anger is involved in the idea of God’s wrath in the Biblical example Romans 1:18. \(^{3202}\) God also has ‘agape’ love for his creatures, which is a steadfast, unselfish concern for them. \(^{3203}\) It is reasonable to deduce that God’s love for humanity is not only a decision to care for them, but also includes intense concern for his creation. \(^{3204}\) An understanding, infinite God could comprehend the sufferings of his finite creatures, \(^{3205}\) but God’s essential nature and being would not be altered by the experience of these feelings. \(^{3206}\) There is no need to conclude that the sufferings of finite creatures alter the nature of an infinite God who can comprehend and feel those sufferings. \(^{3207}\) Therefore, even if, for the sake of argument, impassibility is a correct deduction concerning God’s nature, \(^{3208}\) Christ possessing the full nature of God \(^{3209}\) and a full human nature \(^{3210}\) enabled him to experience suffering and evil. \(^{3211}\) God the Son can therefore relate to human suffering on a personal level. I reason God’s immutable nature does not necessarily make him impassible.

Second, the retaliatory symbol views God allowing suffering as punishment for sin. \(^{3212}\) Professor van der Ven also calls this the retributive symbol, \(^{3213}\) and explains that evil was

\(^{3200}\) God has an infinite nature that cannot be changed, but finite human nature can be altered.
\(^{3201}\) Erickson (1994: 605).
\(^{3202}\) Erickson (1994: 605).
\(^{3203}\) Erickson (1994: 180).
\(^{3204}\) Erickson (1994: 180).
\(^{3205}\) Paulin (1999: 469).
\(^{3206}\) Thiessen (1956: 127).
\(^{3207}\) Thiessen (1956: 127).
\(^{3208}\) Surin (1982: 97).
\(^{3212}\) van der Ven (1993: 173).
\(^{3213}\) van der Ven (1998: 212).
considered to be located in original sin and needed to be punished ultimately in the end times judgment.\textsuperscript{3214} Professor van der Ven notes this symbol is often viewed as problematic, because it hampers God’s freedom and makes God’s ability to punish based on the sinful acts of humanity, as in original sin and the sins that follow.\textsuperscript{3215} A question arises; how is God’s freedom in danger by the fact that he can punish significantly free will actions of his creations that disobey him? If God cannot freely punish sin, what can he freely punish? Can God only freely punish actions that he coerced and forced? This would likely be far more problematic than God punishing significantly free beings that disobey him. Even with a sovereignty theodicy, human beings are viewed to have limited freedom,\textsuperscript{3216} being trapped in sin\textsuperscript{3217} and unable to please God without the Holy Spirit’s guidance and regeneration of individuals.\textsuperscript{3218}

Atonement is a multifaceted, complex subject\textsuperscript{3219} and would be another thesis in itself. I shall briefly deal with the complex idea of God punishing sin.\textsuperscript{3220} Erickson states Paul mentions the concept of propitiation in Romans 3: 25.\textsuperscript{3221} C.H. Dodd (1935) explains that the Greek word in Romans 3: 25 should be translated expiation and not propitiation,\textsuperscript{3222} and claims that many Greek translations have been incorrect.\textsuperscript{3223} Anthony D. Palma (2007) defines propitiation as to appease or pacify,\textsuperscript{3224} while expiation means to atone for as in offering or sacrifice.\textsuperscript{3225} Grenz, Guretzki and Nordling explain that expiation is, for the Christian, the concept that the atoning

\textsuperscript{3214} van der Ven (1998: 212).
\textsuperscript{3215} van der Ven (1993: 173).
\textsuperscript{3216} Feinberg (1986: 24).
\textsuperscript{3219} Erickson (1994: 783).
\textsuperscript{3220} Erickson (1994: 809-810).
\textsuperscript{3221} Erickson (1994: 809-810).
\textsuperscript{3222} Dodd (1935: 82-95).
\textsuperscript{3223} Dodd (1935: 82-95).
\textsuperscript{3224} Palma (2007: 1).
\textsuperscript{3225} Palma (2007: 1).
work of Christ covered over and cancelled out his/her sins.\textsuperscript{3226} Whale writes that expiation means God himself purges or covers human sin.\textsuperscript{3227} To state that Christ expiates sin\textsuperscript{3228} means that his atoning work enables God to forgive sins\textsuperscript{3229} and gradually, and eventually, purge sinfulness out of obedient followers.\textsuperscript{3230} Palma explains that some argue propitiation must be rejected in favour of expiation, since propitiation and its divine wrath is a concept that comes from pagan origins where pagan deities were appeased through sacrifice.\textsuperscript{3231} He reasons that within the New Testament, propitiation includes the idea of expiation, but expiation does not necessarily include the idea of propitiation.\textsuperscript{3232} James Strong explains that the word under review in Romans 3: 25, \textit{hilasterion}, is defined as an expiatory place or thing, an ‘atoning victim’ along with ‘mercyseat’ and ‘propitiation.’\textsuperscript{3233} This definition, although somewhat vague\textsuperscript{3234} does not contradict Palma’s concept that propitiation does include the idea of expiation.\textsuperscript{3235} From Strong’s definition, Romans 3: 25 does perhaps allow for the idea of atonement in both the sense of sacrifice and appeasement.\textsuperscript{3236} However, his definition does place more emphasis on expiation than propitiation in the atonement process in Romans 3: 25.\textsuperscript{3237} Walter Bauer writes that the meaning in Romans 3: 25 is uncertain and could be either expiates or propitiates.\textsuperscript{3238} According to Strong the definition of the word from 1 John 2:2 and 4:10 is ‘atonement’ along with ‘expiator’ and ‘propitiation’ and so 1 John does not solve the issue from Romans.\textsuperscript{3239} Since this thesis is

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{3226} Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling (1999: 50).
\item \textsuperscript{3227} Whale (1958: 81).
\item \textsuperscript{3228} Whale (1958: 81).
\item \textsuperscript{3229} Whale (1958: 81).
\item \textsuperscript{3230} Whale (1958: 81).
\item \textsuperscript{3231} Palma (2007: 1).
\item \textsuperscript{3232} Palma (2007: 1).
\item \textsuperscript{3233} Strong (1890)(1986: 48).
\item \textsuperscript{3234} Strong (1890)(1986: 48).
\item \textsuperscript{3235} Palma (2007: 1).
\item \textsuperscript{3236} Strong (1890)(1986: 48).
\item \textsuperscript{3237} Strong (1890)(1986: 48).
\item \textsuperscript{3238} Bauer (1979: 375).
\item \textsuperscript{3239} Strong (1890)(1986: 49).
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
primarily concerned with theodicy and atonement is a secondary, but important issue, let me conclude by stating that the Greek word allows for discussion and various interpretation.\textsuperscript{3240} Some within liberal, progressive Christian traditions may insist that expiation is all that is required within the atoning work of Christ;\textsuperscript{3241} while others such as myself, within moderate conservative traditions may conclude expiation and propitiation, both sacrifice and appeasement are reasonable concepts within Christian atonement.\textsuperscript{3242}

Third, van der Ven introduces a planning symbol, that being God has a hidden plan in the life of each individual.\textsuperscript{3243} Suffering has a certain function for a particular time in each life.\textsuperscript{3244} The understanding that God has a plan for everyone in humanity is prevalent throughout Christian history.\textsuperscript{3245} Whale writes creation has an ultimate meaning that is not disclosed until the end where the final purpose becomes clear.\textsuperscript{3246} Death is the ultimate end of temporal suffering and Whale reasons that natural phenomenon does not completely explain it as human beings are not purely natural, but also posses God’s image.\textsuperscript{3247} It seems, from a traditional Christian perspective, that in death, resurrection and judgment, the plan symbol\textsuperscript{3248} of God finally culminates. According to Moltmann, through the history of the crucified and risen Christ, lies the consummation of the Kingdom of God that sets things free and provides them with meaning.\textsuperscript{3249}

\begin{footnotes}
\item Palma (2007: 1).
\item Dodd (1935: 82-95).
\item van der Ven (1993: 173).
\item van der Ven (1998: 212-213).
\item van der Ven (1993: 173).
\item Whale (1958: 164).
\item Whale (1958: 166).
\item Moltmann (1993: 338).
\end{footnotes}
As noted earlier, Antony Flew (1983)(1996) writes that God cannot be demonstrated to have a plan for guiding humanity. Therefore the idea of God having such a plan is meaningless, as such a plan cannot be shown empirically true or false. Clarence Darrow (1932)(1973) writes that the best one can do is hold on ‘to the same speck of dirt’ as we proceed ‘side by side to our common doom.’ Phillips doubts that there is a God that works things out in the end times in order that there is a reality on earth that consists of happiness and perfection. Phillips reasons his criticisms will fall on ‘deaf ears.’ Many that ponder of theodicy deal with it in problematic philosophical terms and not in terms of reality. This understanding would likely view van der Ven’s plans symbol as a false concept.

Immanence is an aspect of the last four symbols. God’s immanence, according to G.R. Lewis (1996) explains God’s gracious presence in the lives of those forgiven and converted to Christ. For Erickson, God is immanent as he is present and active within creation, human nature, and history. Grenz and Olson warn that if immanence is over emphasized, theology can be too influenced by culture. Within each culture religious error occurs and this should not be blamed on God’s direct presence on matters.

Professor van der Ven first introduces this fourth symbol, the therapeutic symbol, which is a combination of transcendence and immanence. With this symbol, suffering is a means of

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3258 van der Ven (1993: 174).
3261 Grenz and Olson (1992: 12).
purifying people in order for them to realize their true humanity by serving God.\textsuperscript{3263} This view could be described as seeing the transcendent God as willing suffering upon disobedient humanity in order to immanently, through his Spirit, work inside believers for their ultimate betterment.\textsuperscript{3264} Martens notes salvation, although multi-faceted,\textsuperscript{3265} is secure through the suffering of the servant.\textsuperscript{3266} Gebara offers a different perspective when she discusses the idea of ‘God in the Absence of God.’\textsuperscript{3267} She explains the idea of God as something unforeseen that can change the course of things, but has not.\textsuperscript{3268} From a practical theology perspective one can understand that God as therapy\textsuperscript{3269} can be a hypothetical, but not apparently actual, concept in everyday life. The immanence symbols include compassion, the vicarious servant and the mystical.\textsuperscript{3270}

The fifth symbol is God’s compassion for humanity.\textsuperscript{3271} This is shown in the incarnate Christ and suffering through his atoning work for people.\textsuperscript{3272} Christ represents God as caring for his followers,\textsuperscript{3273} and as J. Clinton McCann, Jr. (1993) assumes, God’s divine plan that led to Christ’s atoning work, ultimately enables God’s forgiveness and compassion.\textsuperscript{3274} Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1937)(1963) explains that suffering and rejection sum up the cross of Christ.\textsuperscript{3275} This was part of God’s essential plan.\textsuperscript{3276} God’s compassion for humanity suffering under the problem of evil is shown as God incarnate Jesus Christ, suffers for the sins of humankind as the crucified God.\textsuperscript{3277} God is not uncaring as God the Son was placed within the problem of evil in

\textsuperscript{3263} van der Ven (1998: 213).
\textsuperscript{3264} van der Ven (1998: 213).
\textsuperscript{3265} Martens (1990: 108).
\textsuperscript{3266} Martens (1990: 108).
\textsuperscript{3267} Gebara (2002: 155).
\textsuperscript{3268} Gebara (2002: 155).
\textsuperscript{3269} van der Ven (1998: 213).
\textsuperscript{3270} van der Ven (1993: 174).
\textsuperscript{3271} van der Ven (1993: 174).
\textsuperscript{3272} van der Ven (1993: 174).
\textsuperscript{3273} van der Ven (1993: 174).
\textsuperscript{3274} McCann (1993: 120).
\textsuperscript{3275} Bonhoeffer (1937)(1963: 96).
\textsuperscript{3276} Bonhoeffer (1937)(1963: 96).
order to overcome it.\textsuperscript{3278} The non-empirical nature of the theological divine compassion concept,\textsuperscript{3279} would be met disagreeably by many atheists.\textsuperscript{3280} They could argue that it would be difficult to show God has compassion for persons since he cannot be shown to be empirically doing anything for humanity.\textsuperscript{3281} This thesis is not involved in arguing philosophically for God’s existence, but relies on Biblical and theological argumentation concerning the work of God and Christ in creation. As Moltmann indicated Christ lived and did God’s work, and this is important for both historical and eschatological\textsuperscript{3282} understandings.\textsuperscript{3283}

Sixth, the vicarious servant is the innocent sufferer who takes the place of God himself in order to surrender for people that are suffering.\textsuperscript{3284} Specifically, the term ‘vicarious’ is usually, within Christian theology, used in the context of atonement and means ‘in the place of’\textsuperscript{3285} and that Christ died in the place of sinful humanity.\textsuperscript{3286} Whale reasons ‘vicarious suffering’ consists of one taking suffering for another.\textsuperscript{3287} Vicarious atonement, according to Kreeft and Tacelli, can be sufferings that do not obviously appear to help someone, but may help certain persons atone for sin.\textsuperscript{3288} For van der Ven, the blameless sufferer is God’s martyr and saves others on God’s behalf.\textsuperscript{3289} Christ is the ultimate martyr within a Christian model,\textsuperscript{3290} but van der Ven explains that all are brothers and sisters in suffering, and this provides a fellowship of the weak.\textsuperscript{3291}

Bonhoeffer deduces that Christ transforms the mortal agony of his martyrs by granting them

\textsuperscript{3279} van der Ven (1993: 174).
\textsuperscript{3282} The doctrines of the last things, including the Second Coming of Christ, the Resurrection, Judgments, the Millennium and the Final State. Thiessen (1956: 440).
\textsuperscript{3283} Moltmann (1993: 126-127).
\textsuperscript{3284} van der Ven (1998: 214).
\textsuperscript{3285} Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling (1999: 120).
\textsuperscript{3286} Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling (1999: 120).
\textsuperscript{3287} Whale (1958: 81-82).
\textsuperscript{3288} Kreeft and Tacelli (1994: 125).
\textsuperscript{3289} van der Ven (1993: 176).
\textsuperscript{3290} van der Ven (1993: 176).
\textsuperscript{3291} van der Ven (1993: 176).
peace in his assured presence.\textsuperscript{3292} This type of sacrifice, to Bonhoeffer, is how those who follow Christ overcome suffering as Christ did.\textsuperscript{3293}

Professor van der Ven’s seventh theodicy symbol, and third symbol that is exclusively dealing with immanence, is that of the mystical.\textsuperscript{3294} He describes this as a mystical union with God, which sees the sufferer surrendering to the will of the creator.\textsuperscript{3295} E.J. Tinsley (1999), notes although Christian mysticism is difficult to define,\textsuperscript{3296} its main characteristics appear to be a sense of union and unity with God,\textsuperscript{3297} God being experienced beyond time continuously,\textsuperscript{3298} the experience between the believer and God is beyond mere subjectivity, joy is present,\textsuperscript{3299} and lastly there is a sense of the presence of the transcendent God.\textsuperscript{3300} Mysticism is an attempt through prayer and meditation to achieve a heightened union with God,\textsuperscript{3301} and this mysticism is not only experiential, but a perceived actual experience with the transcendent God.\textsuperscript{3302} Earl E. Cairns (1981) explains that mysticism exists in three forms.\textsuperscript{3303} First the epistemological type which emphasizes how persons come to know God.\textsuperscript{3304} With this approach spiritual intuition is crucial and more important than reason.\textsuperscript{3305} Second, the metaphysical type which postulates the absorbing of the spirit of a person into the divine being that takes place on occasion.\textsuperscript{3306} Third, the Biblical type which views mysticism as allowing the spiritual nature of an individual to relate

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\textsuperscript{3292} Bonhoeffer (1937)(1963: 101).
\textsuperscript{3293} Bonhoeffer (1937)(1963: 101).
\textsuperscript{3294} van der Ven (1993: 174).
\textsuperscript{3295} van der Ven (1993: 174).
\textsuperscript{3296} Tinsley (1999: 387).
\textsuperscript{3297} Tinsley (1999: 387).
\textsuperscript{3298} Tinsley (1999: 387).
\textsuperscript{3299} Tinsley (1999: 387).
\textsuperscript{3300} Tinsley (1999: 387).
\textsuperscript{3301} Tinsley (1999: 388).
\textsuperscript{3302} Tinsley (1999: 388).
\textsuperscript{3303} Cairns (1981: 100-101).
\textsuperscript{3304} Cairns (1981: 100-101).
\textsuperscript{3305} Cairns (1981: 100-101).
\textsuperscript{3306} Cairns (1981: 100-101).
\end{footnotesize}
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to God through Christ, and the indwelling Holy Spirit.  

For one suffering with the problem of evil, an attempt at some type of mystic understanding with God would seem a reasonable thing to pursue.  

Biblical mysticism does not appear like a practice that would oppose a traditional Christian understanding, as long as the mystic does not place mystical interpretations in priority over those found through studying Scripture and theology. It would be quite natural for one suffering great evil to attempt, with God’s help, to harness a greater fellowship and mystical understanding of the God who is willingly allowing evil to befall that person.

Cosmodicy Symbols  

Cosmodicy symbols, to Johannes van der Ven, are an immanent extension, or provide an alternative to transcendent theodicy. Larry Alderink (1999) explains that cosmology in a general sense, indicates a view of the world or universe, and in particular how it is arranged. Whale writes that cosmology is looking at the cosmos and visible universe from a theistic perspective denying that it is self-explanatory. Pojman mentions that theistic versions of cosmology deduce something outside of the universe is required to explain its existence. Paul Edwards (1973) explains cosmology reasons that all things come into being through other things, and since a causal series of events cannot go back in infinity, there must be a first cause. Thomas Aquinas is famous for discussing The Five Ways and his cosmological

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argument within *Summa Theologica*.*3318* Plantinga reasons that aspects of Aquinas’ presentation*3319* are reasonable, but overall the argument is unsuccessful.*3320* I reason this does not render all arguments for first cause unsuccessful, but Plantinga points out difficulties with Aquinas’ approach,*3321* which is perhaps too extensive.*3322* Edwards comments*3323* would adequately explain a more modest and reasonable idea concerning first cause.

Professor van der Ven appears to be fusing the terms cosmology and theodicy to create the concept of cosmodicy symbols which parallel the theodicy symbols.*3324* First, the apathy symbol represents a cosmic view that nature is viewed as indifferent towards humanity.*3325* Nature is not beneficial to humanity and can cause human suffering,*3326* and is governed by coincidence and fate.*3327* Second, opposing this first view is the idea that the cosmos is ordered by justice.*3328* Since law governs the universe, it naturally retaliates against human wrong actions.*3329* Third, human beings resign themselves to suffering with faith that their problems fit into an overall cosmic plan.*3330* Fourth, the cosmic therapeutic symbol views suffering as an ascetic*3331* vehicle to develop people towards the greater good.*3332* Fifth, the compassion symbol views nature in a metaphorical way as interacting with the suffering of people in order that peace

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*3319* Aquinas, Thomas (1261)(1920).


*3321* Aquinas, Thomas (1261)(1920).

*3322* Aquinas’ presentation although classic and important, is very speculative and Plantinga has disagreements with his overall work. Plantinga (1977)(2002: 80). Geivett reasons Plantinga is too negative concerning natural theology as possibly working. Geivett (1993: 59-60).


*3324* van der Ven (1993: 174).

*3325* van der Ven (1993: 175).


*3329* van der Ven (1993: 175).

*3330* van der Ven (1993: 175).


*3332* van der Ven (1993: 175).
can be found in nature. Sixth, in order to make cosmic tragedy bearable, the concept of vicarious fellowship is introduced, meaning that people are to share sufferings with one another. Seventh, the mystic symbol explains suffering as a way of arriving at a deeper connection with nature. The cosmodicy symbols parallel the theodicy ones except suffering is approached from a naturalistic, secular or perhaps atheistic perspective. The basic concept of the seven items is the same, except in cosmodicy, where naturalism replaces theism as the primary force of nature.

Additional Symbols

From personal correspondence in 2005 and 2006, Professor van der Ven sent nine theodicy symbols with corresponding items. Included were retribution, plan, compassion, apathy, and the mystical. These five items appear to be covered in his previous work, although he has added four items. The didactic symbol was added, which he states consists of God inviting sufferers to learn from suffering, sufferers turning problems into learning experiences, and lastly, God providing people with the strength to become better human beings through suffering. Professor van der Ven has also added the substitution symbol which

\[334\] van der Ven (1993: 176).
\[335\] van der Ven (1998: 216).
\[336\] van der Ven (1993: 174-175). I question whether many atheists would adopt these cosmodicy/cosmology symbols which still assume an overall cosmic plan. Perhaps for many atheists there is no plan but just mutual existence and mutual death. Human beings simply get along as best possible. Darrow (1932)(1973: 453).
\[337\] van der Ven (1993: 174).
\[338\] van der Ven (2005: 1-2).
\[340\] The work just reviewed.
\[341\] van der Ven (2005: 1-2). These are four items added that are not in a published work. My advisor, Dr. Cartledge, having known this as an expert in the field of empirical theology, had Professor van der Ven share this new and original information with me in order that this PhD thesis be as recent as possible. It would be detrimental to this work not to include this correspondence.
\[342\] van der Ven (2005: 1-2).
\[343\] van der Ven (2005: 1-2).
\[344\] van der Ven (2005: 1-2).
he understands consists of God urging people to serve others through suffering, God providing people through suffering the strength to help others, and God inviting people to make suffering a sacrifice for others. Notably, the therapeutic symbol is missing from van der Ven’s 2005 scheme, but the substitution symbol provides therapeutic elements by people helping others who are suffering while they are suffering simultaneously. The vicarious servant symbol is also missing from van der Ven’s 2005 scheme. Professor van der Ven has, however, included in 2005 an accusation symbol, which like the retaliatory symbol would relate to the concept of God’s justice. He lists the accusation symbol as consisting of sufferers accusing God of allowing evil, persons blaming God for the amount of evil, and people holding God responsible for evil. Lastly, van der Ven adds a lamentation symbol which consists of people reaching out to God, sufferers asking God for support, and finally people crying out to God while suffering.

Background Factors

It is not the intention of this Chapter to explain detailed empirical, statistical findings, but rather to shed light on the theoretical concepts behind and within empirical studies. 

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3357 In contrast to the questionnaires and statistics to be presented in Chapter Six.
3358 As presented by the empirical theologians, but also in comparison to the theoretical views presented in the first four Chapters.
Johannes van der Ven attempts to explain the factors within a tested group that lead to the acceptance of certain theodicy symbols. There are background factors such as age, gender, urbanization, education and profession. He notes, for example, that women tend to prefer the compassion theodicy symbol to a greater degree than men. Political leanings are also considered important for van der Ven, in the development of an understanding of theodicy symbols.

Describing the Research

Professor van der Ven’s theodicy research project was conducted in a Roman Catholic context through parishes in Tilburg and Nijmegen in the Netherlands. A key factor is that most people attending the Roman Catholic Church in the Netherlands are above fifty years old. There were 158 respondents within the study and more than two thirds were over fifty years of age. This means that the views of younger people, which may be more reflective of societal trends, may not be well reflected in the study. Additionally, van der Ven writes that ratio of women to men in the survey is 76% to 24%. This is a rather disproportional sample as women are making up more than 75% of the respondents. The educational level of the respondents varied with 40% having completed lower secondary school in the Netherlands.

3366 van der Ven (1993: 185).
3367 In contrast I managed to survey 213 for this project.
3368 van der Ven (1993: 185).
3369 This sample may be somewhat limited as young persons were not well presented, although it is has validity, as in statistical integrity. Bryman (2004: 545).
and 32.5% having achieved a post-secondary school diploma,\textsuperscript{3373} demonstrating that the educational background of these people appears typical for the Netherlands.\textsuperscript{3374} The occupations of the respondents were varied although over 50% of persons surveyed were business owners or professionals.\textsuperscript{3375} Professor van der Ven found that 98% of respondents favoured left wing to centre political parties, with 70% supporting a centrist party.\textsuperscript{3376}

A Summary of the Survey Results

Professor van der Ven’s empirical results showed that the respondents did not differentiate between theodicy and cosmodyicy.\textsuperscript{3377} The first conclusion van der Ven arrives at from the survey findings is that Christian and secular worldviews overlapped to the point that there was no major difference in how the respondents looked at theodicy or cosmodyicy.\textsuperscript{3378} There is a coordination of religious and scientific views, and one is not viewed as superior or containing more truth than the other.\textsuperscript{3379} These findings should not be too surprising since van der Ven’s core concepts remain the same between theodicy and cosmodyicy, other than exchanging God for nature as the cause of all things.\textsuperscript{3380} There were some key conclusions van der Ven establishes from the survey that I will summarize.\textsuperscript{3381} The greater level of education of some respondents did not conclusively lead to a decrease of acceptance of traditional symbols.\textsuperscript{3382}

\textsuperscript{3373} van der Ven (1998: 220-221).
\textsuperscript{3374} van der Ven (1998: 220-221).
\textsuperscript{3375} van der Ven (1993: 187).
\textsuperscript{3376} van der Ven (1993: 187).
\textsuperscript{3377} van der Ven (1998: 222).
\textsuperscript{3378} van der Ven (1998: 222).
\textsuperscript{3379} van der Ven (1998: 222).
\textsuperscript{3380} van der Ven (1993: 174).
\textsuperscript{3381} van der Ven (1993: 211).
\textsuperscript{3382} van der Ven (1993: 211).
Yes, apathy and retaliation were viewed negatively, but the teaching symbols, such as therapeutic, were not viewed differently by people with different educational levels. The immanence symbols such as compassion, which represent God’s solidarity with humanity, were less valued by those with greater levels of education. A conclusion could be made that although highly educated people tend not to appreciate transcendent theodicy models that present God as distancing himself from humanity and judging it, they also do not assume that God immanently will assist sufferers.

Somewhat surprisingly the test showed that a right-wing or centrist political orientation did not lead to traditional theodicy symbols reflecting God’s transcendence, and left-wing political leanings did not lead to acceptance of less traditional perspectives.

4. Eric Vossen

Theodicy Models

In his 1993 work, ‘Images of God and Coping with Suffering’ Vossen presents three theodicy models, which are related to the work of van der Ven and Vermeer. One, the retaliation model, that Vossen sees as relying heavily on the idea of God the supreme, omnipotent judge. Two, the plan model, where God is viewed as guiding earthly happenings

3384 van der Ven (1993: 211).
3385 van der Ven (1993: 211).
3386 van der Ven (1993: 211).
3387 van der Ven (1993: 211).
3388 van der Ven (1993: 211).
3389 van der Ven (1993: 211).
according to his intentions,\textsuperscript{3392} and the emphasis is on God’s omnipotence and love for humanity.\textsuperscript{3393} Three, the compassion model, where suffering is understood as an intrinsic aspect of finiteness and contingent occurrences.\textsuperscript{3394} The atoning work of Christ\textsuperscript{3395} is central to this model as God is seen as showing compassion to humanity through this work, and is in solidarity with humankind.\textsuperscript{3396} Vossen writes that the three models represent three different general assumptions about God.\textsuperscript{3397} The retaliation model is based primarily on the idea of God’s transcendence,\textsuperscript{3398} the plan model is a balance between the transcendent and immanent,\textsuperscript{3399} and the compassion model represents, for the most part, God’s immanence.\textsuperscript{3400} Vossen’s approach is very similar to van der Ven’s with no great difference in opinion presented.\textsuperscript{3401} Vossen’s work, like that of van der Ven and Vermeer, is largely a collaborative effort with the University of Nijmegen. The three men have worked together and shared data.

Coping Strategies

Vossen presents three coping strategies for the problem of evil, which parallel his three theodicy models.\textsuperscript{3402} First is the hope for removal of suffering over time.\textsuperscript{3403} A key to this strategy is a trust in God’s sovereign intervention in matters, perhaps supernaturally, or with the help of medical science.\textsuperscript{3404} With the first coping strategy, God is viewed by Vossen as being the

\textsuperscript{3392} Vossen (1993: 21).
\textsuperscript{3393} Vossen (1993: 21).
\textsuperscript{3394} Vossen (1993: 21).
\textsuperscript{3396} Vossen (1993: 21).
\textsuperscript{3397} Vossen (1993: 21).
\textsuperscript{3398} Vossen (1993: 21). God is distant and separate from humanity. Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling. (1999: 115). He is not human and in his holiness will judge humankind.
\textsuperscript{3399} Vossen (1993: 21).
\textsuperscript{3400} Vossen (1993: 21). God shows compassion to his followers and therefore demonstrates a personal closeness.
\textsuperscript{3401} Lewis (1996: 458-459).
\textsuperscript{3402} Vossen (1993: 21).
\textsuperscript{3403} Vossen (1993: 24-28).
\textsuperscript{3404} Vossen (1993: 24-28).
supreme judge who has retaliated against sin. Vossen thinks this concept is influenced by the idea of ‘inner-worldly causality’ where within our world wrong human actions have caused God to punish people. Second, concentration on the completion of life, realizing that God has a plan and has promised a better life in the hereafter. This concept ties into an understanding that the present suffering will ultimately work towards the sufferer’s salvation. The person in pain is being presently prepared for an eventual finalized state of salvation. Third, concentration on the loving proximity of other people in the present. This is a survival instinct, which depends on the love, care and compassion of friends and family as sharing with them in solidarity, pain and suffering. This view is dependent both on the immanent love of family and friends, as well as on the love and care of an immanent creator.

A Summary of the Survey Results

Vossen’s test was based on data from Catholic parishes in Nijmegen, Netherlands, and Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Concerning a retaliation model and coping strategy, the data test showed great scepticism with highly educated people in regard to God intervening and removing suffering. Vossen’s study indicates that the greatly educated respondents found God’s intervention in human suffering to be less rational, and rejected the idea of God’s retaliation

3409 Vossen (1993: 24-28). This a speculative metaphysical argument for the benefits of pain. Phillips questions whether God, if he exists, would have morally sufficient reasons for allowing such evil. Phillips (2005: 201). Although in general terms pain could be a tool used by God for the development of believers it would be quite difficult in concrete terms to equate a person’s pain with a definitive plan of God. This leaves room for both the theist and atheist to question God.
3413 Vossen (1993: 30).
3414 Vossen (1993: 36).
3415 Vossen (1993: 36).
against human wrong actions for the same reason.\textsuperscript{3416} As noted earlier, there is within some theological approaches, an outright rejection of the idea of God punishing sinful people in retaliation,\textsuperscript{3417} and especially with divine anger.\textsuperscript{3418} The plan model, according to Vossen was not understood primarily as God’s immanent presence with followers,\textsuperscript{3419} but rather his transcendent workings and an understanding that God will provide everlasting life to believers.\textsuperscript{3420} Clearly the results of the test showed that God’s ultimate plan of salvation for those in Christ was viewed as transcending them,\textsuperscript{3421} yet the idea of everlasting life was a vital aspect of the faith.\textsuperscript{3422} Biblically the exact nature of everlasting life in God’s Kingdom is not comprehensively explained, and there is good reason to view it is beyond human understanding. John Hick points out that many religious and secular writers reject everlasting life as empirically improvable,\textsuperscript{3423} and instead view it as either a moral quality that takes place in temporal life,\textsuperscript{3424} or God’s everlasting remembrance of each of his creation.\textsuperscript{3425} Clarence Darrow doubts there are proofs available for life after death,\textsuperscript{3426} and states there is strong evidence against the idea of personal consciousness after death.\textsuperscript{3427} For Darrow the immaterial soul does not exist and cannot be reasonably conceived.\textsuperscript{3428}

It is true that a culminated Kingdom of God is not presently empirical,\textsuperscript{3429} but has been presented as Biblical teaching and theology in academic circles for two millennia.\textsuperscript{3430}

\textsuperscript{3416} Vossen (1993: 36).
\textsuperscript{3417} van der Ven (1993: 173).
\textsuperscript{3418} Palma (2007: 1).
\textsuperscript{3419} Vossen (1993: 36).
\textsuperscript{3420} Vossen (1993: 36).
\textsuperscript{3421} Vossen (1993: 36).
\textsuperscript{3422} Vossen (1993: 36).
\textsuperscript{3423} Hick (1999: 332).
\textsuperscript{3424} Hick (1999: 332).
\textsuperscript{3425} Hick (1999: 332).
\textsuperscript{3426} Darrow (1928)(1973: 261).
\textsuperscript{3427} Darrow (1928)(1973: 261).
\textsuperscript{3428} Darrow (1928)(1973: 261).
\textsuperscript{3429} It is predicted to occur within Scripture, but has not as of yet. Moltmann (1993: 171-172). A non-traditional and metaphorical understanding of this concept may view a literal Kingdom of God as a reality where all souls eventually evolve to a place of belief and trust in God. Hick in Davis (2001: 51).
\textsuperscript{3430} Moltmann (1993: 166-196).
With the compassion model, Vossen believes church culture or ambiance contributed to a compassion theodicy model working with a coping strategy of religious proximity.\textsuperscript{3431} Vossen clearly points out the idea of God demonstrating compassion through the love and care of other church attendees and members, was for this group a more plausible alternative to the transcendent idea of God’s retaliation.\textsuperscript{3432} I would agree with the respondents that the compassion model is crucial within the Christian Church,\textsuperscript{3433} and simultaneously the religious proximity of other believers is an essential method of coping and growing together with people in Christ.\textsuperscript{3434} However, the fact that a concept of God retaliating against sinful humanity, perhaps in anger, is not very comforting,\textsuperscript{3435} does not make God’s punishment of humanity a false doctrine. As noted previously, the concept of propitiation is a Biblical possibility.\textsuperscript{3436} It is simply more comforting within a pastoral, counseling context, to believe one is receiving God’s compassion in suffering,\textsuperscript{3437} than to realize that perhaps the human problem of evil is somewhat a result of human nature and wrong choices worthy of punishment.\textsuperscript{3438} It is a possibility that a compassion model cannot be deeply understood in the context of salvation without an understanding of God’s justice.\textsuperscript{3439} It is plausible that for Christians to adequately understand God’s compassion, they must also understand how horrendous wrong actions committed against a holy God are.\textsuperscript{3440} It is reasonable therefore to understand a retaliation model as ultimately being a result of God’s desire for both justice and love simultaneously.\textsuperscript{3441}

\textsuperscript{3431} Vossen (1993: 37).
\textsuperscript{3432} Vossen (1993: 37).
\textsuperscript{3433} Vossen (1993: 37).
\textsuperscript{3434} Vossen (1993: 37).
\textsuperscript{3435} Vossen (1993: 37).
\textsuperscript{3437} Vossen (1993: 37).
\textsuperscript{3440} These evils caused by a human choice to disobey God. Augustine (426)(1958: 254-255).
5. Paul Vermeer

The Importance of Practical Theodicy

Paul Vermeer, born in 1962, is the third of the trio of Nijmegen scholars that shall be reviewed. His text Learning Theodicy from 1999 is useful in the empirical study of theodicy. Within the ‘Introduction’ he makes the observation that the problem of evil, and the resulting attempts at theodicy, cause religious questions to be asked in a secular world. For Vermeer, many people in today’s society reject religion because there does not appear to be adequate theodicy to deal with the evil that people experience. He explains some have difficulty reconciling a perfectly good and omnipotent deity with the evil that is present. Theodicy must find a way to practically influence what people believe, or they may have a weak or non-existent religious faith. As mentioned in Chapter One, Henri Blocher explains that philosophical explanations have failed in dealing with the problem of evil. Although I somewhat disagree with this comment, I can acknowledge philosophical theodicy does not take the place of effective practical theology that can assist a sufferer in having a true Christian religious experience. Carl Henry, as noted in Chapter One, reasons that theistic arguments do not in themselves vindicate God and God’s revelation is required. In other words, through the study of Scripture and personal experience with God through revelation, the creator can be better understood, even though he willingly allows evil.

3442 van der Ven (2006a: 1).
3443 Vermeer (1999: 2).
3444 Vermeer (1999: 2).
3445 Vermeer (1999: 2).
3446 Vermeer (1999: 2).
Vermeer views Leibniz’ approach in ‘Theodicy’ as limited. Leibniz wrote that reason could reconcile the omnipotent and good God with the problem of evil. With this approach Leibniz is viewed as overlooking the practical aspects of theodicy for the sake of theoretical presentation. It is not a priority within this thesis to thoroughly examine Leibniz and his theodicy, but it states that God by his perfect nature created the best, and therefore his theodicy promotes the idea that God created the best possible world. God is not the author of sin, but evil is permitted by God as evil is a privation of the good. For Leibniz, God has the ability to allow angelic and human sin and the suffering it promotes, yet God can promote and use sinful evil for the greater good. Leibniz’ approach would be within a traditional Christian perspective, as are many free will and sovereignty approaches, although as discussed in the theoretical Chapters, Plantinga and Feinberg would deny Leibniz’ claim that God could create a best possible world and would, instead, hold to ‘Modified Rationalism’ which states God, freely and without necessity, created a good world that was one of many he could create. Vermeer writes, in his first Chapter, his work in theodicy is not primarily concerned with the philosophical question of whether or not the existence of evil contradicts God’s omnipotent and good nature. In this respect, Vermeer’s approach is different than the theoretical section of this thesis where three theodicy approaches are analyzed for their philosophical and theological

3453 Vermeer (1999: 5).
3455 Vermeer (1999: 5).
3456 Leibniz theodicy was not reviewed in this work because it is a traditional approach, as is the work of Augustine, Plantinga and Feinberg, and therefore the non-traditional perspective from Hick is reviewed for balance.
3462 Leibniz would likely be the equivalent of a modern day compatibilist. Leibniz (1710)(1998: 61).
3465 Vermeer (1999: 5).
3466 Vermeer (1999: 5).
tenability. However, there is a continuity within this thesis as the aim is to review theodicy for logic, reason, and Biblical viability, and then to examine to what degree they are practically and empirically applicable. Therefore, there exists a connection between this thesis and the empirical research of Vermeer and Nijmegen University, as there is a shared goal of attempting to understand theodicy as practical theology.

Evil Versus Suffering

Vermeer, within his study, makes a distinction between evil and suffering. Evil is a harmful event or situation that causes human suffering. Natural disasters and disease would be considered evil; whereas, in contrast, suffering is the active emotional human response to evil. Evil is not suffering, but it is only when human beings attempt to find meaning with the negative results of evil that suffering exists. As Francis Young (1999) points out, there is no simple satisfactory answer for suffering within theodicy, but the cross of Christ has the power to provide a genuine meaning in the lives of Christians. Suffering was part of Christ’s redemptive work. Bonhoeffer writes suffering, along with rejection ‘sum up the whole cross of Jesus’ as he died on the cross, Christ faced human rejection. Gebara offers a different position when she writes that the suffering of a God-man has been used by certain people to accept their own suffering within conformity, and some religious movements can use this

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3467 To be assisted by the empirical data of Chapter Six.
3473 Young (1999: 556).
3474 Young (1999: 556).
concept of suffering to cover up ‘misery or unjust crosses.’ Gebara notes that suffering caused by evil persons committing wrong actions, should be distinguished from ‘anguish present in every human life.’ The existence of evil is understood, but Vermeer and the Nijmegen school are attempting to make empirical sense of resulting suffering, in light of the saving work of Christ on the cross.

Theodicy Models

Vermeer explains that his three theodicy items are models and not symbols, because they represent abstract distinct theoretical concepts, as opposed to straight forward statements associated with certain theodicy ideas. As noted earlier, in contrast, van der Ven states there is no difference between theodicy symbols and models, and a clear distinction is not found. Vermeer presents retaliation, plan and compassion models. He notes that each model contains a different understanding of divine omnipotence and goodness.

The retaliation model, to Vermeer, answers the question of why people are suffering. Vermeer appeals heavily to Hick’s critical evaluation of Augustine and Calvin, which has already been reviewed, and views Augustine as the forefather of retaliation thought in regard to the problem of evil. Vermeer correctly points out that Augustine, with the use of free will

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3480 From research, at least within liberal and conservative Christian traditions, evil is deemed to exist, as is the problem of evil. This is not to state that every single documented religious philosophy acknowledges evil and the problem of evil.
3482 van der Ven (2006b: 1).
3484 Vermeer (1999: 21).
theodicy, blames human evil and suffering on free will disobedience to God.\textsuperscript{3488} Augustine writes that divine punishment was allotted to those that freely sinned.\textsuperscript{3489} In regard to the suffering of children, Augustine, as does Calvin in the Reformation era, would appeal to original sin to explain why this occurs.\textsuperscript{3490} Children, although innocent compared to adults, who reasonably comprehend their sinfulness, would still be corrupt creatures because of original sin and the fall.\textsuperscript{3491} Vermeer notes\textsuperscript{3492} that Calvin, like Augustine, believed human beings freely rebelled in evil against God,\textsuperscript{3493} and thus all persons were worthy of divine punishment, the full extent of this only avoidable through election to salvation.\textsuperscript{3494} For Vermeer, the retaliation model uses the ‘doctrine of divine omnipotence’ which states that God is all powerful and yet human suffering is attributed to human sin.\textsuperscript{3495} So ultimately people receive what they deserve and are fully punished for their sins outside of God’s grace in election.\textsuperscript{3496} Vermeer, unlike Hick,\textsuperscript{3497} admits the retaliation model can be reasonably upheld without the justice and goodness of God being questioned.\textsuperscript{3498}

The plan model consists of the assumption that human suffering is part of the divine plan.\textsuperscript{3499} Vermeer portrays the plan model as stating human rebellion causes evil and suffering, and although it opposes God, suffering is ultimately part of God’s divine plan.\textsuperscript{3500} The plan model, like the retaliation model, holds to the doctrine of divine omnipotence, but according to

\textsuperscript{3489} Augustine (388-395)(1964: 3).
\textsuperscript{3490} Vermeer (1999: 25).
\textsuperscript{3491} Vermeer (1999: 25).
\textsuperscript{3492} Vermeer (1999: 26).
\textsuperscript{3494} Calvin (1543)(1996: 154, 349).
\textsuperscript{3495} Vermeer (1999: 27).
\textsuperscript{3496} Vermeer (1999: 27).
\textsuperscript{3497} In regard to everlasting hell, for example. Hick (1970: 377).
\textsuperscript{3498} Vermeer (1999: 26).
\textsuperscript{3499} Vermeer (1999: 27).
\textsuperscript{3500} Vermeer (1999: 33).
the concepts of Leibniz,\textsuperscript{3501} and especially Hick,\textsuperscript{3502} as we have seen God uses suffering for the purpose of soul-making.\textsuperscript{3503} Vermeer points out that with the retaliation model, divine punishment results in suffering,\textsuperscript{3504} in contrast with the plan model where suffering is part of God’s scheme as God created the best possible world where free will creatures would inevitably sin.\textsuperscript{3505} For the plan model, for Vermeer, God’s goodness could not be questioned as the problem of evil was all part of a divine plan.\textsuperscript{3506}

This differentiation presented between the retaliation and plan models seems too simplistic.\textsuperscript{3507} It is apparent that the writings of Augustine and Calvin both include the concept of God saving the elect from sin while, at the same time, judging humanity for it.\textsuperscript{3508} Augustine (398-399)(1992) describes God’s plan for those in Christ that are, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, justified, separated from the wicked, subjected to the authority of Scripture, and gathered together for a single aspiration of acquiring the celestial reward.\textsuperscript{3509} This commentary by Augustine, portrays a divine plan of God to save followers from the evil and suffering in creation.\textsuperscript{3510} Calvin (1543)(1996) explains that God can take the wicked actions of people, yet still accomplish his work and execute his judgment.\textsuperscript{3511} Within that statement, one can see a judgment or retaliation model, and at the same time God is accomplishing his work concerning humanity which is implying a plan model.\textsuperscript{3512} Calvin writes, in the same text, that God does a

\textsuperscript{3501} Leibniz reasons that God works all things to the greater good. Leibniz (1710)(1998: 61). This could perhaps include the idea God would develop in the best possible world, as Leibniz viewed it, human souls.

\textsuperscript{3502} Hick in Davis (2001: 48).

\textsuperscript{3503} Vermeer (1999: 34-35).

\textsuperscript{3504} Vermeer (1999: 27).

\textsuperscript{3505} Vermeer (1999: 30).

\textsuperscript{3506} Vermeer (1999: 36).

\textsuperscript{3507} Vermeer (1999: 35).


\textsuperscript{3509} Augustine (398-399)(1992: 303).

\textsuperscript{3510} Augustine (398-399)(1992: 303).

\textsuperscript{3511} Calvin (1543)(1996: 37).

\textsuperscript{3512} Calvin (1543)(1996: 37).
work of perseverance in a believer, so by grace the believer stays in Christ for life.  

God’s work of perseverance in elected individuals is clearly not retaliation, but a divine plan to save sinful persons despite the fact they are worthy of punishment. Instead, the atoning and resurrection work of Christ allows the elect to avoid the penalty for sin, being part of the divine plan of salvation.  

The compassion model, for Vermeer, has been largely rejected throughout Christian history, although in the twentieth century it gathered some support. The concept is that God has compassion for human beings and does not focus on retaliation or plan ideas. As with van der Ven’s symbols, the notion of God’s impassibility is discussed in regard to a compassion model. Vermeer correctly points out that there exists in Scripture, anthropomorphic language to describe God as one who, like the human beings he created, has feelings and emotions. The fact God is a loving being would allow for the logical and reasonable deduction that he is a compassionate being.  

A vital point Vermeer makes concerning the compassion model is that it asks how God responds to human suffering, while the retaliation and plan models are more concerned with why God permits evil and suffering. The compassion model envisions a God that is immanent

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3517 Vermeer (1999: 36).
3518 Vermeer (1999: 36).
3520 Vermeer (1999: 36).
3522 Vermeer (1999: 37).
Within his creation, the emphasis on the creator as a God of love, leads to this conclusion. Within the compassion model, the ‘doctrine of divine goodness’ clearly takes precedence over the doctrine of divine omnipotence. Theologically and Biblically, the compassion model is a vital aspect of the atoning work of Christ, and therefore would be important for Christian theodicy. Christ as God renounced his privileges and experienced an agonizing death on the cross. For Christ as the God-man, to renounce his rights as God and die for the humanity he loves, definitely shows compassion as does God’s participation in the death and resurrection of Christ. A compassion theodicy symbol or model is therefore acceptable within orthodox Christianity, although I believe judgment and plan are vital theodicy concepts.

A Summary of the Survey Results

Vermeer’s field research was conducted among Roman Catholic students from the age of 14 to 18, with the average age being 15.6 years old. The empirical research was to answer two questions: First: What was the direct influence of the taught curriculum on their comprehension of theodicy? Second: What was the indirect influence the taught curriculum had on theodicy judgment by way of its influence on theodicy comprehension.

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3526 Vermeer (1999: 44).
3528 Vermeer (1999: 45).
3533 Vermeer (1999: 45).
3535 Vermeer (1999: 141, 144).
3536 Vermeer (1999: 146).
Concerning the first question, Vermeer states their taught curriculum did not directly significantly influence the views of the young people, as the post-test results concerning theodicy judgment were virtually the same as the pretest results. With the second question, Vermeer writes that the curriculum’s influence on the children’s theodicy judgment was almost entirely indirect, with most of the views generally not being directly altered by the taught curriculum. There was some influence on the judgment of the three theodicy models due to the taught curriculum, but Vermeer admits the direct educational concept within the curriculum did not facilitate a rational theodicy judgment. Vermeer concludes that the taught curriculum did assist with an understanding of theodicy models, but it did not significantly change the judgments of the children concerning theodicy, although taught material did influence, to some degree, judgments concerning the plan model. Perhaps youth and, more importantly, limited educational experience, largely caused the lack of a rational theodicy judgment influenced by the taught curriculum.

6. Conclusion

The Nijmegen school through van der Ven, Vossen, and Vermeer has produced some important and useful work. My questionnaire and approach is taking concepts primarily from

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3541 Vermeer (1999: 153). An implication being that culture has a large impact on a young person’s view of theodicy.
3547 Vermeer (1999: 141, 144). In contrast with my questionnaire, I surveyed adults.
3548 Examining practical and empirical theology in regard to theodicy in a modern Roman Catholic context.
my theoretical work reviewed, but also from some social issues. The Nijmegen school has produced an approach to theodicy and empirical results, but my work is taking concepts from primarily four sources and compiling results. I shall therefore provide an original approach that is not only somewhat indicative of my personal sovereignty theodicy, but primarily a result of the writings of four scholars work on the problem of evil. These are four different perspectives and three approaches to theodicy, whereas the Nijmegen school is three different perspectives and one approach. The school importantly has established with the sample groups, empirical findings demonstrate that compassion symbols or a compassion model was practically superior to retaliation or plan symbols, or a retaliation or plan model.

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3549 Through my Reformed perspective.
3550 Dr. Cartledge suggested I discuss women’s issues, which I do within the questionnaire and in the main body of this thesis to a limited degree. An adequate feminist/feminism theodicy was not found and so we agreed that this was the best course of action.
3551 Clearly my work is significantly different from that of the Nijmegen school.
CHAPTER SIX

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

1. Methodology

The previous Chapter explained that my theoretical work dealt with free will, sovereignty, and soul-making perspectives. Practical and empirical theology based in questionnaire data, interpretation and reflection of these theodicy approaches would be produced within this thesis providing new and original material. Pattison explains theological reflection can frighten many people, as theology appears to come from academic sources that are too difficult to comprehend. Theology can become less of a burden to those not academically trained, if elements of practical theology and empirical data are used in the process of understanding and enquiring about what theology means in our present culture. Practical theology used in conjunction with empirical data can provide, through the process of enquiry, new and different ways of looking at Christian doctrine. This thesis has provided influential

3553 Augustine and Alvin C. Plantinga.
3554 John S. Feinberg.
3555 John Hick.
3556 Therefore an original PhD thesis.
3559 I must add that for those of us academically trained in theology, in general terms, theoretical theology is much more beneficial when connected with practical concepts.
approaches to theodicy within Christian tradition, both conservative and liberal, and examines practical and empirical results of these views from the perspective of church attendees from various denominations primarily in North America, Western Europe, and Oceania. It is my view that in conjunction with the theological perspectives reviewed, there are possible ideas and concepts that, through the use of practical and empirical methods, can assist in the development of theological praxis.

Rationale for Questionnaire Method and Questions Provided

Dr. Mark Cartledge is well-known as a researcher within empirical theology and practical theology, having written a textbook on the subject in particular within Pentecostal and charismatic theology. Cartledge took over supervising this theodicy and practical/empirical theology project from Dr. William Kay, who is also within the field of empirical and practical theology and was Cartledge’s ‘doctoral supervisor.’ These two experts on practical and empirical theology guided this project along with the assistance of Dr. Rob Warner who took over advisement after the questionnaire had already been developed. It was understood that taking often quite complex philosophical propositions and putting them in a

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3563 As represented in my selection of theodicy approaches.
3564 Australia and New Zealand. South Africa may also be considered a Western nation of the European tradition.
3565 As noted previously, Simon Blackburn writes that the term praxis originated in the era of Aristotle and included the concept of goal-directed action, the action in itself being part of the end. Blackburn (1996: 298). Praxis is not concerned with merely applying theoretical knowledge, but adding to knowledge in the process of practically applying theory. Anderson (2001: 22).
3566 Now of the University of Birmingham (UK).
3569 Dr. Kay is of Wales, Bangor where I earned my MPhil thesis degree.
3571 Cartledge (2003: back cover). Cartledge (2003: ix). Dr. Cartledge was my main advisor in establishing the questionnaire in a correct manner.
3572 Dr. Warner also has experience within the field of practical/empirical theology. Dr. Warner fully supported the questionnaire as it is presently and it was not altered.
simplified form for the questionnaire,\textsuperscript{3573} would be a challenge, and it has been.\textsuperscript{3574} But, it was accomplished and this type of project would be original by PhD standards.\textsuperscript{3575} The questions within the questionnaire are based on free will, sovereignty and soul-making theodicy approaches,\textsuperscript{3576} with general theology and feminism questions included. The survey questions needed to be relevant and understandable to respondents within the Christian Church.\textsuperscript{3577} The theodicy approaches come from within the Christian community with free will and sovereignty being moderately conservative approaches and soul-making a progressive liberal approach.\textsuperscript{3578} General theology questions were included in order to demonstrate empirically that respondents, being of the Christian Church, were able to answer basic propositions relevant to the Church. It is important to establish that those sampled within the Christian Church reason in a way that is historically Christian and this is established by the use of general theology questions.\textsuperscript{3579}

Ivone Gebara’s book \textit{Out of the Depths} has been very helpful in providing me with material in order to base my feminism questions.\textsuperscript{3580} This provides another layer of originality for this project and as well allows me to more objectively deal with the important issue of women and suffering,\textsuperscript{3581} which Gebara reasons has often been overlooked in Christian history dominated by males.\textsuperscript{3582} She admits that her work is not particularly Biblical,\textsuperscript{3583} and more importantly for this thesis, I reason it is not particularly philosophically theological or is it

\textsuperscript{3573} Which is included within this thesis.
\textsuperscript{3574} The questionnaire took approximately one year to develop and complete.
\textsuperscript{3575} These type of theoretical propositions had not been presented in this way previously.
\textsuperscript{3576} Reviewed approaches.
\textsuperscript{3577} Overall the questionnaire questions were considered understandable by respondents that contacted me on the matter, however, there is the difficulty of lack of context as respondents did not have the opportunity to read my theoretical work. This could not be rectified by the nature of this project.
\textsuperscript{3578} However, as noted, I reason as a moderate conservative that soul-making in general terms does have some academic and intellectual merit.
\textsuperscript{3579} This includes views from conservative and progressive liberal perspectives.
\textsuperscript{3580} My feminism questions were an attempt for me as a male theologian to present them from a feminist perspective as opposed to a Reformed one. Gebara’s work assisted me in this goal.
\textsuperscript{3581} Gebara (2002: 1-44).
\textsuperscript{3582} Gebara (2002: 1-44).
\textsuperscript{3583} Gebara (2002: 8).
primarily dealing with philosophy of religion. She explains that her work is coming from the perspective of ‘theological anthropology’ and is seeking to examine the legitimate historical sufferings of women and the need for justice and human solidarity. Her approach is more so that of practical theology and therefore, with advisement, it was determined that her approach is not a work of philosophical theodicy as is the work of Augustine, Plantinga, Feinberg, and Hick and could not be reviewed as such. It was rather a sociological work of anthropological theology that could be discussed within my thesis and reviewed within the questionnaire. This is why Gebara’s work is not reviewed as a feminism theodicy.

The graphs provided in the Appendix add a very useful visual perspective that would be lacking from just reading the statistical results within this Chapter. Quite importantly, it should be noted that neither Dr. Cartledge or Dr. Warner suggested or requested graphs be produced for this thesis, and so the statistics were never developed with the intention of producing graphs. Also, I was specifically and more importantly told to only use selective information from my statistics when presenting the information in this Chapter and this will, of course, show with the graphs in the Appendix as that is the documented data available to me. Neither the statistics in this Chapter, or the graphs in the Appendix, are exhaustive information from my questionnaires. The information is selectively based in order to best relate to

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3584 Gebara (2002: 8).
3585 Gebara (2002: 8).
3586 Gebara (2002: 8).
3587 As with Chapter Five.
3588 Gebara (2002: 8).
3589 As in Chapter Six.
3590 As her methodology and approach is so much different than the theoretical presentations reviewed, it would not work well to attempt direct comparison of her book with the works of Augustine, Plantinga, Feinberg and Hick.
3591 Another layer of empirical theology is added.
3592 Graphs were an after PhD viva addition to this project.
3593 Too much data would not assist in establishing clarity for this project.
connecting my theoretical theodicy approaches to practical and empirical theology. This means often there is a priority on the highest numbered results for a question.\textsuperscript{3594}

I have provided a good-sized sample with 213 respondents, but it needs to be stated that my sample is limited. There are several denominations represented and not one of them has been surveyed exhaustively.\textsuperscript{3595} The idea of the questionnaire was to sample the Christian Church overall, from both conservative and liberal traditions, and this does not include a large worldwide examination of the views of one particular Christian group or denomination. A large examination of one particular denomination or group would be beneficial in a narrow sense,\textsuperscript{3596} but in this work I am looking for a wider perspective.\textsuperscript{3597}

2. Frequency

Definition

The frequency procedure produces tables that display both the number and percentage of cases for each value of a variable.\textsuperscript{3598} Variables represent different types of data compiled including numbers, strings, currency and data.\textsuperscript{3599} Alan Bryman (2004) explains frequency tables provide the number of people and percentage that belong in each variable category.\textsuperscript{3600} Julie Pallant (2004) notes frequencies include all the individual variable items that make up the represented scales.\textsuperscript{3601}

\textsuperscript{3594} Some results from fewer respondents will not be discussed.
\textsuperscript{3595} When I state that a denominational group came to a particular conclusion with a certain percentage, it should be understood that this is not a sweeping statement meant to represent the overall worldwide views of the entire group.\textsuperscript{3596} A larger sample would be provided.
\textsuperscript{3597} As a moderate conservative theologically, I purposely sampled leaders and attendees from progressive liberal and conservative fundamentalist churches that would have quite different perspectives at times from myself. I know this from survey results and personal emails received in response to my questionnaire. I also sampled persons from my own denomination and others from denominations with moderate conservative and moderate liberal views.
\textsuperscript{3598} SPSS (2006: 82).
\textsuperscript{3599} SPSS (2006: 51).
\textsuperscript{3600} Bryman (2004: 227).
\textsuperscript{3601} Pallant (2004: 42).
Frequencies of this Thesis

As noted, statistically there are 213 valid respondents. These respondents are the people on whom research has been conducted for this project. This indicates that all 66 variables/questions are answered by 213 respondents, or 14,058 times. This project does not contain missing data, as it is useful to distinguish between those respondents who refused to answer a question and those who did not respond because it was not applicable. Within my questionnaire, some questions provided the ‘Other’ option as opposed to ‘Not Applicable’.

3. Variables

Data and Interpretation

It should be noted that this section will contain less citations than the rest of the thesis. This is because of the following reasons. One, I am discussing the questionnaire as the source of the information and there would be no point in continuously citing the questionnaire. Two, many of the subjects raised within the questionnaire will have already been dealt with in the thesis and I wish to avoid needless repetition. I do not wish to create redundant work. Three, key issues will be further discussed within the Theology and Application section.

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3602 Validity is the concern with the integrity that is generated from a piece of research. Validity is usually measurable in statistics. Bryman (2004: 545). The validity of a scale is in regard to the degree to which it measures what it is supposed to measure. This is done empirically in statistics. Pallant (2004: 6-7). Other important statistical terms include ‘mean’ which is known as ‘arithmetic mean’, and is defined as the average of the total distribution of values divided by the number of values. Bryman (2004: 537). ‘Median’ is the mid-point in distribution values. Bryman (2004: 537). ‘Standard deviation’ is the measure of dispersion around the mean, in other words where variables differ from the average. Bryman (2004: 544).

3606 This would not be beneficial for thesis presentation.
Question 1: Sex

As stated, all questions are valid.\textsuperscript{3607} The frequency for male respondents is 130, for female respondents 83, and indicates 61\% are male and 39\% female. The valid percentage is identical to the percentage.\textsuperscript{3608} The cumulative percentage starts at 61\% after the male total, and goes to 100\% after the female total.\textsuperscript{3609} Within the process of handing out, mailing and emailing questionnaires there was no preference made in regard to gender.\textsuperscript{3610} Although I contacted more mainline churches\textsuperscript{3611} than evangelical or fundamentalist,\textsuperscript{3612} primarily in Canada, United States, United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand, and English speaking churches in continental Europe, the majority of ministers, elders and leaders were men.

The Christian Century Group in the article ‘Women in ministry - women clergy face discrimination, lower wages’ (1999) explains it is difficult for female ministers to progress in this male dominated profession.\textsuperscript{3613} Some denominations will not sanction women ministers.\textsuperscript{3614} As well, even if the majority of members of a congregation would find a female minister acceptable, and a minority of the same congregation do not, this could cause dissention in the church indicating it is less likely that a woman minister would be hired.\textsuperscript{3615}

Question 2: Age

The age group with the highest percentage and valid percentage was the ‘under 25’ group, with 29 (13.6\%) respondents, followed closely by the ‘25 to 29’ group with 28 (13.1\%).

\textsuperscript{3607} Bryman (2004: 545).
\textsuperscript{3608} In this case, there was no missing data so the valid percentage, the percentage of data with integrity matches the percentage of data received.
\textsuperscript{3609} For each response the percentage is taken and accumulates toward the total of 100\%.
\textsuperscript{3610} For the sake of a balanced presentation.
\textsuperscript{3611} Which were progressive and at least moderately liberal.
\textsuperscript{3612} I was not looking for primarily Reformed churches, although some were surveyed.
\textsuperscript{3613} Christian Century Group (1999: 1).
\textsuperscript{3614} Christian Century Group (1999: 2).
\textsuperscript{3615} Christian Century Group (1999: 2).
respondents. The next group was ‘35 to 39’ year olds with 27 (12.7%) respondents, followed by ‘30 to 34’ year olds with 24 (11.3%) respondents. It is interesting that the four youngest age groups were 50.7% of my total respondents. It is possible that young people are more likely to fill out a questionnaire. Statistically there is a general decline in respondents as the age increases. The two groups with the lowest respondents are the ‘70 to 74’ and ‘75 and over’ groups, that together total 13 (6.1%) respondents. Within the graphs presentation in the Appendix, for the sake of clarity eight groups were combined to form a group of ‘40-70’ or over year olds that is presented.\footnote{Non-young adults.} I first combined the ‘40-69’ year olds that made up 43.2% of respondents.\footnote{The groups that were combined were ‘40-44’, ‘45-49’, ‘50-54’, ‘55-59’, ‘60-64’ and ‘65-69’.} I then combined the 40-69 years old group with those over ‘70’ years of age.\footnote{This demonstrates that 49% of the persons that completed the questionnaire were middle-aged or seniors. Fifty-one percent of respondents were young adults.}

As mentioned in the previous Chapter, Paul Ballard and John Pritchard (2001) explain that, historically, practical theology began to expand academically in United Kingdom Universities in the 1970’s in Manchester, Birmingham, and Wales.\footnote{Ballard and Pritchard (2001: 2).} John Patton notes pastoral care in regard to race, culture, gender, and power issues is presently most important in the American church.\footnote{Patton in Woodward and Pattison (2000)(2007: 57).} Empirical, and practical theology and related pastoral care have become more popular since the 1970’s\footnote{Ballard and Pritchard (2001: 2).} and, therefore, questionnaires dealing with empirical theology would be culturally familiar to younger people, and a greater number of young persons may be willing to complete a questionnaire.\footnote{This is speculative and I am not dogmatic on this point.}
Question 3: Marital Status

In regard to marital status, 126 (59.2%) respondents were married (including those separated). Next there were 69 (32.4%) single respondents, followed by widows/widowers with a frequency of 10 (4.7%) and finally divorcees at 8 (3.8%).

Question 4: Qualifications

The top three by frequency are Bachelor Degree at 62 (29.1%) respondents, followed by Master Degree with 45 (21.1%) respondents. The third high frequency group is high school diploma at 34 (16%). There are 20 (9.4%) respondents who have received a Doctorate Degree. From the data, 59.6% of respondents have some type of post secondary degree.

Question 5: Occupation

Many of the respondents who are ministers do not consider themselves professionals and chose the ‘Other’ option; 76 (35.7%) respondents chose this option. Next 52 (24.4%) respondents are involved in professional services, some of these are ministers. The questionnaire does not ask specifically if someone is a minister as this could interfere with confidentiality, but I deduce from my results that many of the 60.1% are Christian ministers or leaders.

Therefore, my respondent group is not primarily made up of lay people in the congregation. The top two respondent groups are far ahead of the next highest group, that is tied between homemakers and students at 18 (8.5%) each.

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3623 I did not think separated persons warranted their own group since they are still legally married.
3624 Many respondents wrote down that they were ministers on the questionnaire.
3625 Since many of my respondents were ministers and church leaders this provided some educated perspectives on theodicy. Many of these Christian leaders should have Bachelor’s degree and a few would have higher degrees.
Question 6: How long have you been a Christian?

There is a wide range of respondents starting with the frequency of 51 (23.9%) of over 45 years, followed by 35 (16.4%) for the age group 15 to 19 years. The next largest group of 21 (9.9%) respondents is the 10 to 14 years group.

Question 7: Denomination

With my research, I initially expected to survey mainly local respondents but through the use of the internet received responses from the United States, United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, and other countries where English is spoken, including continental Europe. The questionnaire was designed with local denominations in mind, but it contained an ‘Other’ option for international denominations which was useful with the internet responses received. I shall list the denominations that had ten or more respondents. First, there is Non-denominational, with 48 (22.5%) respondents. No further explanation was required by respondents when answering this question and I, therefore, cannot break down whom these 48 respondents are affiliated with; however, from my research many of them are independent charismatic and Baptist churches from North America and the United Kingdom.

There are 46 (21.6%) respondents from my own denomination, the Presbyterian Church in North America. This is a Canadian variant for the American church planting denomination known as the Presbyterian Church in America. It should be no surprise that the highest number of

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3626 Every frequency group has double figures in respondents except for the under 5 years group at 3.8%. There was a wide range of Christian leaders and church attendees with this research; therefore, some persons have been Christians for many years and some for only a few.

3627 Within Greater Vancouver, also known as the Lower Mainland in British Columbia, Canada.

3628 Using churches found on the internet and worldwide web as a source, as well as local churches, provided me with a greater number of respondents than I could have sampled locally in the time allotted.

3629 Since this group is represented by a variety of non-denominational churches, the responses from this frequency group cannot be considered as meaningful as those from denominations that are actual religious groups.

3630 My pastors allowed me to hand out or email from a list, the questionnaire to persons from both of our church sites. Our church is moderately conservative and evangelical. It is neither fundamentalist nor liberal.
respondents from an actual denomination comes from my own church, but it does not represent even a quarter of my data. Therefore, it is an indicator that I pursued a wide range of responses in regard to theodicy within the Christian Church. Next we have 23 (10.8%) respondents who are Methodist, and I received their questionnaires through email and regular mail, mainly from the United States. Lutherans both local and worldwide, and not from specific Lutheran denominations, make up 16 (7.5%) respondents. Persons from the Church of the Nazarene, mainly local, make up 14 (6.6%) respondents. Lastly, with 11 (5.2%) respondents are people who attend the Church of God.

Questions 8 to 10: Religious Labels

Question 8 represents primary religious label, while question 9 represents secondary religious label, followed by question 10 representing tertiary religious label. ‘Evangelical’ has 69 (32.4%) respondents for primary label, for the secondary label it has 54 (25.4%) respondents. As a tertiary religious label it features 12 (5.6%) respondents. Overall 63.4% of respondents chose evangelical as an option. ‘Conservative’ is the primary preference of 45 (21.1%) respondents, 45 (21.1%) respondents for a secondary preference with a leading frequency for tertiary preference at 25 (11.7%) respondents. The conservative label was chosen by 53.9% of respondents and this is an indicator of my efforts to have those within liberal, progressive Christianity specifically in my project, since although a majority of respondents chose

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3631 Even if hypothetically over 50% of the respondents are from my church and/or denomination, there would be no guarantee that the majority of these people would support my Reformed, sovereignty perspective. My church is in Vancouver, an urban centre where many people are transient, and has many attendees and members that have not grown up in the Reformed tradition. Among church leaders there would generally be support for my sovereignty theodicy, but not necessarily among the congregation, and most of the 46 respondents are from the congregation.

3632 The mean, which is the total of a distribution of values divided by the number of values. Bryman (2004: 537), is 21.13%.

3633 There was not a concerted effort to bring in evangelical respondents, in fact, I spent most of my time locally, and particularly on the internet, searching for mainline perspectives. It is likely that some moderately liberal, still consider themselves evangelical.

3634 The mean total for ‘conservative’ is 18%.
conservative as a label, it is not an overwhelming majority. ‘Charismatic’ is the primary preference of 18 (8.5%) respondents, a secondary preference of 12 (5.6%) respondents, and 10 (4.7%) respondents as a tertiary preference. So 18.8% of respondents chose this as a religious label. ‘Catholic’ is the primary religious label of 16 (7.5%) respondents, secondary preference frequency of 12 (5.6%), and tertiary preference of 10 (4.7%). Bishop James Judd (2003) explains within ‘Short History of the Old Catholic Church’ that the term ‘catholic’ equates with the term ‘universal.’ The term catholic literally means ‘universal’ or ‘worldwide.’ Since the term ‘catholic’ is not defined in my questionnaire, some respondents who state they are catholic are not necessarily Roman Catholic. Thirty-eight respondents state they are catholic for religious label, but only 9 respondents at 4.2% are part of the Roman Catholic denomination. A total of 17.8% chose the catholic option. This is not necessarily an indicator that they are members of the Roman Catholic Church, but they consider themselves catholic Christians.

Question 11: God reveals himself in the Bible

The frequency for ‘Agree Strongly’ is shown as ‘AS’ and is 185 (86.9%) respondents. The frequency for ‘Agree’ shown as ‘A’ is 23 (10.8%) respondents. ‘Not Certain’ represented as ‘NC’ has 5 (2.3%) respondents. Interestingly, no respondent chose ‘Disagree’ which is ‘D’, or ‘Disagree Strongly’ which is ‘DS’. On this question 97.7% of respondents selected ‘AS/A’ and therefore this concept overwhelmingly is accepted within my data.

3635 A mean of 6.27%.
3636 A mean of 5.93%.
3637 Judd (2003: 1).
3638 Judd (2003: 1).
3640 Judd (2003: 1).
Question 12: The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the same God

For this question, 186 (87.3%) respondents chose ‘AS’ while 20 (9.4%) selected ‘A’. Therefore 96.7% strongly supported the Biblical idea of the Trinity and only 4 (1.9%) respondents chose ‘D’ or ‘DS’. Within this data, the concept of the triune God of the Bible is not a major topic of debate between evangelical and mainline Christianity whether from conservative or liberal perspectives.\footnote{As noted in Chapter Three, the Trinity is a subject of controversy in the context of some groups that have a restoration view of Christianity, as in a need to restore Christianity to its original theology, even though these groups tend to lack Scriptural support for their key and crucial doctrines. With groups such as the Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints the Trinity is rejected. Bowman, Robert M. (1990) \textit{Why You Should Believe in the Trinity}, Grand Rapids, Baker Book House. Martin, Walter (1965)(1997) \textit{The Kingdom of the Cults}, Bethany House Publishers, Minneapolis. Ankerberg John and John Weldon (1999) \textit{Encyclopedia of Cults and New Religions}, Eugene, Oregon, Harvest House Publishers. The Trinity is also of course at times a controversial subject with those religions outside of cultural Christianity which can have radically different views on the nature of God.}

Question 13: God is close to all persons

With a frequency of 95 (44.6%) respondents ‘AS’ is the top response, followed by 54 (25.4%) respondents for ‘A’. So 70% of respondents support this idea. There are fair numbers of ‘NC’ as 26 (12.2%) respondents made that choice, and 38 (17.8%) respondents chose ‘D/DS’. I do not view this question as primarily important for work on theodicy, but interestingly God’s closeness to persons or immanence is accepted by 70% of the respondents in a world where the problem of evil exists.

Question 14: God is beyond his creation

One hundred and fifteen (54%) respondents chose ‘AS’ and 30 (14.1%) chose ‘A’. This indicates 68.1% support of this idea. It is not specifically indicated in the questionnaire due to
limitations of empirical theology, but I am within the survey communicating the idea of transcendence, which shall be discussed in the Theology and Application section.

Question 15: God is in all things

This question concerned the concept of pantheism, and not immanence. From the results, bearing in mind the context of the question is not provided with empirical theology, many respondents understood the question as dealing with immanence. Therefore 74 (34.7%) respondents preferred ‘AS’ while 46 (21.6%) respondents selected ‘A’. It is doubtful that 56.3% of those in the Christian Church, whether conservative or liberal, are pantheists! Sixty-nine (32.4%) respondents chose ‘D/DS’ and therefore I deduce these respondents reasoned pantheism was being discussed. Pantheism will be further discussed in the Theology and Application section.

Question 16: God separates himself from his creation

This is a difficult question. The idea behind the proposition is a concern on whether or not the transcendent and immanent God, as infinite and omnipresent, limits his influence on creation and, in a sense, separates his will from that of created beings, allowing them significant, but limited free will. Sixty-four (30%) respondents preferred ‘AS/A’ with this question, 41 (19.2%) chose ‘NC’, while 108 (50.7%) respondents selected ‘D/DS’.

Question 17: God cannot suffer.

The subject of impassibility was discussed in the practical theology Chapter. I have pointed out in this work that Kenneth Surin reasons some within orthodox, traditional, Christian

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3642 Immanence was defined and discussed in Chapter Five, and pantheism in Chapter One.
3643 I would have no good reason, based on historical and present Church culture to believe this a reality.
3644 There was no attempt on my part to retrieve a particular answer from respondents through a lack of clarity.
theology consider God as unable to experience pain or sorrow. However, others concede that concluding God is impassible is a questionable view. Surin thinks perhaps God limits his omnipotence by identifying with human suffering. I conclude that God suffers but cannot alter his essential infinite and immutable nature. Seventy-two (33.8%) respondents chose ‘D’, while 78 (36.6%) respondents preferred ‘DS’. Therefore 70.4% of respondents reason that God suffers in some way. It can be deduced that many of these persons would assume God suffers simultaneously with his creation when they experience the problem of evil.

Question 18: Life is a result of evolution

This is by no means a scientific thesis and the subject of evolution will not be dealt with exhaustively. The evolution question was placed in the questionnaire in order to receive an idea of how many respondents that attend Christian churches would consider evolution as part of God’s initial plan in creation. Laurence Moran (1993) who is in the Department of Biochemistry at the University of Toronto, defines evolution as a process, which results in noticeable heritable changes in a population spread over many generations. It is a change in the gene pool from one generation to another. Moran’s definition is explaining the scientifically based theory of evolution and does not include speculation on how this occurred. His definition is based on empirical scientific evidence as opposed to scientific theory/philosophy speculating on how matter began to exist. One hundred and fifty-nine respondents (74.6%) selected

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3648 Moran (1993: 1).
3649 Moran (1993: 1).
3650 Moran (1993: 1).
3651 Moran (1993: 1).
3652 Moran (1993: 1).
3653 I am not going to engage in this speculation within this thesis, as it is too complex of a topic to thoroughly examine in the context of a work on theodicy which has its own complexities.
‘D/DS’ and therefore did not support the notion of life resulting from evolution. Thirty-two (15%) respondents reason that ‘AS/A’ are proper responses. These results are, in my opinion, primarily a rejection of the idea of evolution causing life to exist and not a rejection of the idea of God using evolution of some type in the creation process.\(^{3654}\) This second idea would not contradict Moran’s definition.\(^{3655}\)

Question 19: All religions seek the same God

This concept is soundly rejected by 174 (81.7%) respondents. My deduction is that the respondents, whether evangelical or mainline, conservative or liberal, for the most part believe that the God of Christianity is not the same God of all religions. Moltmann (1993) explains that Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God\(^{3656}\) and is of one substance with God, not being created.\(^{3657}\) For Moltmann, Jesus was the eternal presence of God among humanity.\(^{3658}\) The Church established by Christ’s disciples and apostles, according to Vinroth Ramachandra (1998) has the universal mission to be the bearer of God’s saving purpose for the world.\(^{3659}\) There is a universality of Christ for all cultures and the salvation that he provides is God’s singular plan for humanity.\(^{3660}\) Edith Humphrey (1998) explains that the Biblical basis for salvation can be traced to the triune God.\(^{3661}\)

\(^{3654}\) Moran (1993: 1).
\(^{3655}\) Moran (1993: 1).
\(^{3656}\) Moltmann (1993: 88).
\(^{3657}\) Moltmann (1993: 88).
\(^{3658}\) Moltmann (1993: 88).
Question 20: If something works, it is good

This question relates to the idea of pragmatism. If something works pragmatically, it is good. Louis P. Pojman defines pragmatism as the theory that interprets the meaning of a statement in terms of practical consequences. Some judge the truthfulness or falseness of a statement/proposition on whether or not it is pragmatic. Gene Edward Veith, Jr., (1994) states ‘what works and what’s practical’ is pragmatism. Pragmatism is rejected by 170 (79.8%) respondents choosing ‘D/DS’.

Question 21: Jesus died in our place

Two hundred and one (94.3%) respondents support with ‘AS/A’ the idea that Jesus Christ died for humanity. This question is delivered in the context of the atoning work of Christ, which has been discussed throughout this thesis, and the respondents understand this idea. One hundred and seventy-nine (84%) persons chose ‘AS’ and I reason that ‘A’ may be a better response, in that the death of Christ on the cross for sin does not take away earthly human death. Thiessen explains that all persons physically die because of the consequences of sin. This would be a key doctrine in traditional Christian theology. However, it appears that, resoundingly, the respondents accept a view of some type of sacrificial atonement by Christ. According to Sproul and Wolgemuth, Christ suffered the sanctions of God so that persons would not have to suffer for their sins. Christians are blessed to belong to God because Jesus was cursed in their place in his death. Christ suffered on behalf of his people.

3664 Veith uses a contraction, which I do not normally use in academic work.
3666 Thiessen (1956: 257).
Question 22: God does not cause evil

This free will theodicy based question deals with a crucial and original aspect of my thesis and statistical data. I conclude within a sovereignty perspective that God does cause evil and I will explain this concept in this Chapter from both theological and philosophical perspectives from my theoretical research in the Theology and Application section. One hundred and seventy-nine respondents (84%) selected ‘AS/A’ for this question. Only 17 (8%) persons supported my notion by choosing ‘D/DS’.

Question 23: God allows sin

Here 169 (79.3%) respondents prefer ‘AS/A’ for their answer. Thirty-four persons (16%) were in opposition with ‘D/DS’. The respondents appear to grasp the concept that infinite, omnipotent God does not have sin forced upon himself in his creation.

Question 24: God’s interference would limit human spiritual growth

This question is based on Hick’s soul-making theodicy. With soul-making, human beings must have significant freedom away from their creator’s direct influence. Hick deduces that human beings need epistemic distance from their maker in order to develop an uncoerced consciousness of God. Somewhat similarly, Feinberg has the idea that God could not remove evil and solve the problem of evil without contradicting other plans God had in

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3670 This was already discussed in Chapter Three as well.
3671 Hick in Davis (2001: 48).
3672 Hick in Davis (2001: 48).
3673 Hick in Davis (2001: 48).
With both concepts God’s direct influence upon humanity would interfere with his plan to develop persons. Hick reasons that humanity, in the presence of God, could not fully develop, and I can agree with this in the sense that an infinite being must restrain his presence in order for finite beings to have significantly free consciousness and limited free will. From Feinberg’s perspective God’s interference to a great degree, for example eliminating evil in this present realm, would contradict other plans, which would include the overall spiritual development of followers of Christ. This proposition is rejected by a majority of respondents as 109 (51.2%) persons preferred ‘D/DS’. Sixty-three (29.6%) persons selected ‘AS/A’. A large number at 41 (19.2%) were ‘NC’. It is possible that a majority of persons reasoned that through the gospel work, God does interfere with human spiritual growth, and I can grant this point. Hick’s concept, from my research, would require a God more distant from his creation.

Question 25: Scripture describes women as more evil than men

One hundred and thirty-four (62.9%) respondents selected ‘DS’ and fifty-one (23.9%) chose ‘D’. So 86.8% of completed questionnaires contain the view that Scripture does not describe women as more evil than men. This proposition was soundly rejected. Only 11 (5.2%) persons chose ‘AS/A’. Gebara offers a different perspective stating that within Christian tradition, only male sacrifice is valuable. She also notes that women symbolically have often

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3676 Hick in Davis (2001: 48).
3677 Hick in Davis (2001: 48).
3680 Hick in Davis (2001: 48).
been represented as weak and ‘evil.’

Biblically, although Christ was male, he died for both genders within Christian tradition. Additionally, within Gebara’s own Roman Catholic tradition, Mary is known as the ‘Mother of God.’ Within this view, Mary is recognized and praised as Jesus was born of a truly ‘human mother.’ This is a key example of a woman being highly esteemed within Gebara’s tradition, and therefore, although I do not dismiss her comments, they should be considered cautiously.

Question 26: God cannot cause free human actions

This is also a key question that would differentiate between free will and sovereignty theodicy. Free will theodicy that holds to incompatibilism would state that God cannot cause free human actions. Compatibilism, as noted with the previous question reasons that God can simultaneously will/determine freely committed human actions that are not forced or coerced. Sixty-five respondents (30.5%) were ‘NC’ with this question. This was the highest single category choice of respondents, and does not support either free will or sovereignty theodicy. Sixty-nine persons (32.4%) selected ‘AS/A’ in support of incompatibilism, while 79 (37.1%) respondents chose ‘D/DS’. These 37.1% were supporting a compatibilistic notion, which can be deduced to mean there is some support for Reformed, Calvinistic doctrine. However, by combining the ‘NC/AS/A’ categories, 62.9% of total respondents do not support an idea of compatibilism/soft determinism. Therefore a majority (62.9%) of respondents either reject this concept, or are not sure if a Reformed, Calvinistic view of God determining the free

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3687 And discussed primarily in Chapters Two to Four.
acts of persons is true. This is hardly a resounding endorsement of one of the core concepts of my sovereignty theodicy. 3690 Within my denomination, 19 (41.3%) respondents selected ‘D/DS’ while 11 (23.9%) persons chose ‘A/AS’. Sixteen (34.8%) persons were ‘NC’. The concept received reasonable support from the Presbyterian Church in North America (41.3%) but there remains 58.7% not in support.

Question 27: God influences the actions of all persons

The previous question was similar from an incompatibilist, free will theodicy perspective, while Question 27 asks a question from a compatibilist, sovereignty theodicy view. Ninety-one (42.7%) respondents support this compatibilistic idea with ‘AS/A’, which is slightly higher than the ‘D/DS’ response of 37.1% for the previous question. Eighty-one (38%) persons chose the incompatibilist ‘D/DS’ option which is slightly higher than the 32.4% ‘AS/A’ for the previous question. Forty-one (19.2%) respondents were ‘NC’ and this is a fair drop in percentage from the 30.5%, which was the leading individual choice in the previous question. I deduce that more persons that reject or are unsure about compatibilistic notions will have difficulty accepting Question 26 and its idea of God causing free actions, than they would with the concept of God influencing actions in Question 27. In a sense, Question 27 is stating a very similar idea, but has softened the language slightly. Some incompatibilists may reason that God influences human actions without determining them, 3691 but I deduce that if God’s influence from his will is going to lead to a human action actually taking place, it must be determined. 3692 If this was not so, God could influence hypothetical human actions that would not necessarily occur due to human free will, and God’s influence would have no actual effect on these actions. God’s influence would,

3690 And also demonstrates my attempt at objectivity in research with this work.
therefore, be useless at certain times, meaning God does not influence the actions of all persons. My denomination had 28 (60.9%) persons supporting this concept with ‘AS/A’ while 11 (23.9%) respondents selected ‘D/DS’ so there is solid support for Reformed, Calvinistic concepts with this question. In contrast, Lutherans had 7 (43.7%) respondents who chose ‘AS/A’ and the same amount selected ‘D/DS’ although 5 (31.3%) persons preferred ‘AS’ and 2 (12.5%) persons chose ‘DS’, so the slight statistical edge goes to favouring the proposition. Lutherans are, of course, a denomination influenced by the deterministic views of Martin Luther, but compatibilism and incompatibilism seem to be on a virtual equal footing from this sample.

Question 28: Humanity was created imperfect

Both John Hick and Steven Davis reason that God created humanity imperfect. In Chapter Four, I acknowledged that these men made good points but from the Genesis account with the expulsion of humanity from God’s presence after the fall, humanity’s moral imperfection made them unacceptable to God. I have, instead, argued that original humanity was immature although morally perfect as they lacked knowledge of good and evil, and did not have experience with the results of evil. One hundred and forty-four (67.6%) persons rejected the idea of Hick and Davis, while 45 (21.1%) chose ‘AS/A’ in agreement.

Question 29: God desires that women’s sufferings be understood

Many respondents, 140 (65.7%) supported this idea while only 16 (7.5%) opposed it with a choice of ‘D/DS’. Fifty-seven (26.7%) were ‘NC’. Gebara writes that Biblical Scripture,  

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3693 Luther (1525)(1972: 133).  
3694 Hick in Davis (2001: 40-41).  
3696 It has been discussed that the book of Genesis does use figurative language in places, and this must be understood in attempting to make theological interpretations.
which emphasizes differences between male and female, has led to a ‘hierarchical dualism’ that is used to exclude women.\textsuperscript{3697} Gebara reasons evils experienced by women are often linked with the idea they are considered a second, less valuable sex.\textsuperscript{3698} Gebara’s comments demonstrate that her particular feminist views\textsuperscript{3699} are not supported by the majority of my respondents.

Question 30: God is not able to cause people to follow him

One hundred and thirty-four (62.9\%) respondents chose ‘D/DS’; 54 (25.4\%) were in agreement with ‘AS/A’. This sample, may on the surface contradict the findings from Questions 22, 26, 27, and 35. I fully grant that empirical theology does not provide the context that philosophical, theoretical theology would.\textsuperscript{3700} It appears that the majority of respondents did not connect the concept in this question with the other four questions relating to the rejection of compatibilism, and my sovereignty theodicy.

Question 31: God could have created humans who were only good

This is a sovereignty related question dealing with compatibilism. As noted, incompatibilism reasons God could not have made human beings in a way that they were both truly free and, at the same time, always committed good actions God desired.\textsuperscript{3701} Plantinga thinks it logically possible and reasonable that God could not have made free creatures that never committed wrong actions, since they would lack significant freedom.\textsuperscript{3702} Feinberg\textsuperscript{3703} disagrees

\textsuperscript{3697} Gebara (2002: 5).
\textsuperscript{3698} Gebara (2002: 85).
\textsuperscript{3699} Gebara (2002: 2, 85). This is not to imply that many of my respondents do not support feminist theology in some regard.
\textsuperscript{3700} Empirical theology has a different function than philosophical theology. It is useful in evaluating practical concepts that result from philosophical theology with data. It does not explain in detail philosophical theology, but evaluates data from it.
\textsuperscript{3701} Feinberg (1994: 60).
\textsuperscript{3702} Plantinga (1977)(2002: 30).
with incompatibilism on this point, as does Flew\(^{3704}\) and Mackie.\(^{3705}\) One hundred and forty-seven (69\%) persons agreed with this proposition while 31 (14.6\%) chose ‘D/DS’. A substantial number of 35 (16.4\%) were not certain. I reason the majority that supported this proposition would assume that without the use of compatibilism/soft determinism human beings could have been made in order to only commit good actions. I would respectfully disagree since the infinite, omnipotent God wills and determines all events\(^{3706}\) and that for human beings to remain morally perfect, this would require minimally, soft determinism.\(^{3707}\) The human state regardless of its condition will be primarily determined by God, and secondarily determined by persons.\(^{3708}\)

Question 32: Humanity was created immature

One hundred and five (49.3\%) respondents disagreed with this proposition, while 56 (26.3\%) chose ‘AS/A’. Importantly the second highest single choice was ‘NC’ with 52 (24.4\%) persons. I have already stated that I support this proposition, and have discussed this issue.

Question 33: God desires women to have influence in the Church

One hundred and ninety-five (91.6\%) persons supported this proposition; 101 (47.4\%) agreed strongly with the question. This question was not dealing with thorny issues of women leadership such as being elders and pastors,\(^{3709}\) but was simply dealing with the broader idea of general influence. Therefore, in my estimation, this strong support for the proposition is because

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\(^{3703}\) For Feinberg since God can simultaneously will human actions that are not done under compulsion, it is possible if God desired, only good actions would take place.


\(^{3708}\) In philosophy some hold to compatibilism and that human beings are secondary cause of human actions, without mentioning God as the primary cause. Stace (1952)(1976: 29). It is therefore possible for atheists to be compatibilists.

\(^{3709}\) Christian Century Group (1999: 1).
the idea of female influence will not cause disagreement between conservative and liberal wings in the Christian Church. Mennonite New Testament scholar, Willard M. Swartley (1983) reasons ‘the concept of equality’ for women is present in the New Testament, but he asks what these concepts mean in regard to ‘social, political and economic’ contexts. Swartley also ponders on what equality for women means within the Biblical ancient texts, and what it should mean today. Individual churches need to consider concepts of equality for women with men, when deciding where women should have greater influence.

Question 34: God is not able to create persons that do not sin

This question is very similar to Question 31, which was discussed, except this is written from a free will theodicy perspective, and not a sovereignty one. In basic agreement with the results of Question 31, 159 (74.6%) respondents chose ‘D/DS’ and ‘DS’ led with 88 (41.3%) selections. Several respondents may have reasoned humanity was originally made in a way that they did not sin, but chose to sin by the use of free will, which caused human corruption.

Question 35: God will decide who will follow him

The question asks whether or not respondents support the theological idea of God electing persons to salvation. Eighty-three (38.9%) respondents selected ‘AS/A’ while 101 (47.4%) chose ‘D/DS’. Twenty-nine persons (13.6%) were ‘NC’ so 61% of respondents are rejecting, or are unsure concerning the Reformed, Calvinistic doctrine. Although the concept in

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3713 This should include conservative churches, even if they do not sanction women in the role of pastor.
3715 Calvin explains that grace for salvation is only given to those who God wills and the rest, for whom it is not given, remain evil and have no ability to do the good and obtain salvation. Calvin (1543)(1996: 136). J.S. Whale explains the doctrine of New Testament election proclaims that salvation is the sovereign act of the living God, untouchable by human activity. Whale (1958: 133).
this question was not accepted by the majority of respondents, 36 of 46 (78.2%) persons in my denomination chose ‘AS/A’. The other denominations with 10 or more persons completing the questionnaire, rejected the idea in this question by a majority. The Anglican Church, which includes attendees from the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and the Episcopal Church in the USA, chose ‘D/DS’ with 11 out of 18 (61%) respondents and only 4 (22.2%) persons chose ‘AS/A’. With the Lutherans, 7 persons out of 16 (43.8%) rejected the concept while 6 (37.5%) persons accepted it. With the non-denominational respondents, they are not a denominational group and therefore this statistic represents persons from a variety of backgrounds. Twenty-two of 48 (45.8%) persons chose ‘D/DS’ while 21 (43.8%) persons selected ‘AS/A’. With those that chose Methodist as a denomination, 14 of 23 (60.8%) did not support this concept, while 3 (13%) were in support. For those from the Nazarene Church, 11 out of 14 (78.6%) persons chose ‘D/DS’ while only 3 (21.4%) selected ‘AS/A’. Finally, with the Church of God, 8 of 11 (72.7%) persons rejected the idea of the question while 1 (0.9%) person was in support. Overall, we can statistically see a rejection of a Reformed, Calvinistic view of God’s election of his followers. I would deduce the majority of persons assume that human free will plays a greater part in human salvation than does God’s election of individuals. This is a rejection of key components of sovereignty theodicy, which reasons that God can only save persons by altering their nature through regeneration, and this requires soft determinism and election. Without the election of individuals through soft determinism, from a sovereignty theodicy perspective, the Kingdom of God would not be culminated, because the sinful nature and choices of persons would prohibit them from ever coming to Christ and, therefore, there would be no citizens to inhabit the Kingdom. Leibniz reasoned that God had very good reasons for his election and

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dispensation of grace to some persons and recognized that these reasons were unknown to persons in any detail.\[3718\]

Question 36: God allows evil to exist to build human character

Eighty-one (38\%) persons supported this idea; 46 (21.6\%) were ‘NC’; 86 (40.4\%) were not in support of the proposition. This is a controversial question among respondents. I agree strongly with the proposition in that I reason God creates significantly free creatures that will eventually commit wrong actions. However, through the atoning work and resurrection of Christ applied to believers, they will develop a character that tires of rebellion against God and awaits God given restoration in his culminated Kingdom.\[3719\] If creatures never sinned and experienced evil, it is possible they would not have the steadfast commitment to God of creatures that have been rescued from the problem of evil, through the atoning work and resurrection of Christ.\[3720\] I am not stating that this is the only reason why elected individuals will have a steadfast commitment to God. The regeneration and resurrection process will turn a previously sinful nature into a holy one.\[3721\] Moltmann writes that the resurrection message of the early Christian community was the anticipation of what was to come.\[3722\] The resurrection of Christ created the hope for the eventual world of a new righteousness.\[3723\] In the new heaven and new earth, the life

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\[3719\] This is not to presume that all Christians will develop character in a similar mature fashion. I admit that, in some cases, Christians may live relatively disobedient lives, but I am confident in finalized regeneration through the resurrection.
\[3720\] With this speculative idea, my personal sovereignty theodicy goes beyond that of Feinberg’s which, in my opinion, lacks in this area. It is better if a theodicy provides some good reasons why God would allow evil, and Feinberg’s explanation remains very general in nature. I do not pretend, however, to know why God allows evil in certain situations, for example, as in the premature death of loved ones.
\[3722\] Moltmann (1993: 177).
\[3723\] Moltmann (1993: 177).
of the believer will be transformed in completion.\textsuperscript{3724} Believers will share the likeness of God,\textsuperscript{3725} and this will be a life of moral perfection.

Question 37: God dislikes women being viewed as sex objects

One hundred and eighty-nine (88.7\%) respondents supported this proposition; 136 (63.8\%) chose ‘AS’. Only 8 (3.8\%) persons, four from each category, disagreed. Gebara notes some women have high value as objects of ‘enjoyment’ and ‘pleasure’ or on the flip side, ‘revenge’ and ‘hate.’\textsuperscript{3726} She lists prostitution as an example of women being viewed as ‘merchandise.’\textsuperscript{3727}

Question 38: Something is evil when its goodness is taken away

Ninety-five (44.6\%) persons supported the idea; 58 (27.2\%) were not certain; 60 (28.2\%) chose ‘D/DS’.

Question 39: Ending evil now would oppose God’s ultimate plans

This question comes from Feinberg’s concept\textsuperscript{3728} discussed in Question 24 that ending the problem of evil would contradict God’s plans for humanity, in other words the greater good. There is diverse opinion with this question. Sixty-three (29.6\%) respondents chose ‘AS/A’; 67 (31.5\%) persons were not certain; 83 (39\%) chose ‘D/DS’.

\textsuperscript{3724} Mounce (1990: 388).
\textsuperscript{3725} Mounce (1990: 388).
\textsuperscript{3726} Gebara (2002: 34).
\textsuperscript{3727} Gebara (2002: 34).
\textsuperscript{3728} Feinberg (1994: 126).
Question 40: Evil will continue in everlasting hell

One hundred and seventeen (54.9%) respondents supported this idea; 57 (26.8%) were not certain; 39 (18.3%) chose ‘D/DS’. With my denomination 35 out of 46 (76%) persons supported this concept. Every denominational group had more respondents that supported this proposition than rejected it. Lutherans agreed with 9 out of 16 (56.3%) persons supporting. Anglicans supported this with 11 out of 18 (61.1%). With non-denominational categories, 21 out of 48 (43.8%) supported the idea; however, not a majority, as 16 (33.33 %) was the largest number for a single choice of ‘NC’. Eleven (22.9%) respondents chose ‘D/DS’. With Methodists who are not one defined Methodist denomination, 15 out of 23 (65.2%) respondents supported the proposition and only 1 opposed (0.43%). With Nazarene, 7 out of 14 (50%) supported the concept, while 2 (14.3%) opposed. The Church of God had 8 out of 11 (72.7%) who chose ‘AS/A’ with no one in disagreement. It is surprising that with the many mainline churches contacted there was not a greater rejection of this proposition.3729 An in depth discussion of everlasting hell is outside of the scope of this thesis,3730 but I would have expected a higher number of persons from progressive churches to question and/or disagree with this proposition. Harold Lindsell explains that the inerrancy of Scripture is rejected by many within liberal churches.3731 He reasons that inerrancy equals infallibility and a trustworthy Bible.3732 Within progressive churches the issue of everlasting punishment can be complicated by questioning of inerrancy of related verses. The issue of the trustworthiness of Scripture mentioned by Lindsell,3733 and as well the symbolic nature of the Biblical language describing

3729 Based on research throughout my academic career and accepting that Hick’s theodicy comes from a liberal viewpoint, reasoning other liberals may support his type of approach.
3730 It is not central to theodicy but is discussed as a secondary issue at times.
3732 Lindsell (1976: 19). I can support inerrancy for the original documents, which no longer exist. No copies or translations are inerrant.
everlasting hell,\textsuperscript{3734} could create doubt concerning the doctrine of everlasting punishment within liberal churches.

Question 41: Christian thought has been dominated by men

One hundred and forty-four (67.6\%) respondents chose ‘AS/A’, 44 (20.7\%) persons chose ‘D/DS’. This question can be related back to my earlier comments regarding how difficult it is for women to become senior pastors.\textsuperscript{3735} The concept of ‘Christian thought’ within this question is not necessarily regarding professional leadership alone, but is presented in the context of both professional leadership and lay teaching.

Question 42: Rebellion against God will always be possible

Throughout my thesis work I have reasoned that God, through Christ, will restore his creation, and culminate the Kingdom of God with his people.\textsuperscript{3736} A Reformed view of everlasting hell would understand rebellion against God as being punished everlastingly, but would not allow evil to exist in the creation that God intended humanity to have dominion\textsuperscript{3737} over. I reason, through the use of compatibilism, God will determine and persuade citizens within the culminated Kingdom not to rebel against him, as the first human beings did. Rebellion would therefore only be technically possible if God would willingly allow this to occur.\textsuperscript{3738} I deduce that since Revelation 21:4 describes a new creation free from death and suffering, that whatever the figurative nature of this portion of Revelation, a finalized state free from human rebellion is

\textsuperscript{3734} Mounce (1990: 367).
\textsuperscript{3735} Christian Century Group (1999: 1-2).
\textsuperscript{3737} Genesis 1:26.
\textsuperscript{3738} I reason persons in the culminated Kingdom will be filled with the Holy Spirit, or in philosophical terms will be heavily influenced by God, in order that they maintain perfect nature and pure thought and do not ever sin.
going to be established. Ninety-eight persons (46%) supported this question, while 43 (20.2%) were ‘NC’, and 72 (33.8%) disagreed. There is ambiguity with this question, but I gather that how a person interprets the question may shed light on how they answer it. From my perspective, God’s creation that he intended for humanity to rule, shall be free from rebellion once the Kingdom is culminated.

Question 43: God is in control of all events

One hundred and sixty persons (75.1%) supported this idea. This does not equate to support of sovereignty theodicy by my respondents. There are scholars that hold to incompatibilistic concepts of free will that believe God has sovereign control over the universe but does not control every detail. This subject was discussed previously; however, Clark Pinnock writes that the universe would ultimately be under the sovereign control of God, but not everything that occurs is according to God’s intentions. John Sanders supports a concept of general sovereignty in contrast to a Calvinistic specific sovereignty. General sovereignty would view God as allowing structures to be set up by which significant human freedom and resulting choices would allow persons input on how things turn out. Contrary to how I understand compatibilism and specific sovereignty, Sanders sees specific sovereignty making hard determinism necessary. In contrast, I deduce that God can have very

\[3739\] Mounce (1990: 385).
\[3740\] Mounce (1990: 385).
\[3743\] Pinnock (1986: 145).
specific intentions in every situation, while allowing significant limited free will, and this has been explained throughout this work.

Question 44: The Bible states that all persons will follow God

This is a soul-making theodicy question, as Hick supports the idea of universal salvation. One hundred sixty-two persons (76%) disagreed with this idea, while only 24 respondents (11.3%) chose ‘A/AS’.

Question 45: Women need freedom from male authority

Seventy-one (33.3%) persons chose ‘AS/A’, while over twenty percent of respondents were ‘NC’ (21.2%). Over forty-five percent (45.5%) of persons were not in support of this idea. Admittedly, this is a strongly worded statement, but two denominations were in support of this idea with a majority. Anglican respondents with 10 out of 18 (55.5%) supported it, as did United Church of Canada respondents with 8 out of 8 (100%). Twenty-nine of forty-eight persons (60.4%) surveyed in my non-denominational group choose ‘D/DS’ for this question. As alluded to earlier, this non-denominational group is not an actual denomination, but some of these persons were from independent, fundamentalist Baptist churches in the United States that have very conservative views that would minimally preclude women from elder and clergy positions.

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3748 Compatibilistic free will.
3750 I reason from months of research on the internet that many American, non-denominational, independent, Baptist churches with leaders and attendees that filled out my survey, were quite conservative and would have certain fundamentalist doctrines that I as a moderate conservative would not accept. This thesis has limited space and a different focus and therefore I will not discuss these differences in detail.
Question 46: The world is becoming more evil

With these questions the scale changed, and is now ranging from 1 to 5, 1 being ‘little’ and 5 being ‘much’. One hundred and eleven respondents (52.1%) chose ‘4 to 5’ meaning a majority favour the proposition. Sixty persons (28.2%) chose ‘1 to 2’ and 42 (19.7%) chose ‘3’.

Question 47: Churches are losing the battle against social evils

The largest single response was ‘3’ with 68 respondents (31.9%). Eighty-six persons (40.4%) chose ‘4 to 5’ while 59 persons (27.7%) disagreed with the question choosing ‘1 to 2’.

Question 48: Church attitudes are influenced by society

There was solid agreement with this question, with 140 (66%) persons choosing ‘4 to 5’. Only 26 (12.2%) respondents were in disagreement.

Question 49: The Bible should still be obeyed

One hundred and seventy-four (81.7%) respondents chose ‘4 to 5’. This response is an indicator that to some degree, the respondents take the position of those, such as Lindsell, seriously.\(^{3751}\) This does not mean that these groups will all interpret major Biblical doctrines in the same way, but demonstrates that the great majority takes the Bible very seriously in regard to Christian faith. It also does not mean that all Christian groups place equal priority on the Bible in establishing doctrine. Pattison and Woodward write that practical theology is often unsystematic, and in a way can be discarded and reinvent itself for future use.\(^{3752}\) They note that since practical theology is experimental,\(^{3753}\) people’s experiences and data used for theological

\(^{3751}\) Lindsell (1976: 185).
reflection are sometimes given status alongside Scripture. This concept would be unacceptable for many within conservative and moderately liberal Christian traditions. Erickson points out that Scripture is always given primacy in theological matters. Having worked with practical and empirical theology with my MPhil and PhD theses, I view practical and empirical theology as having importance but coming from a Reformed tradition, still as Erickson notes, place priority on the Bible for doctrine. Erickson makes it clear that Biblical doctrines may not necessarily be maintained precisely with the same form of expression as they were in Biblical times, and notes philosophical truth can be found from other sources. Much of this thesis is based on theoretical deduction, which I reason is in agreement with Scripture in general terms, although some particular views may not be clearly explained in Scripture.

Question 50: Rich people suffer less than poor people

One hundred and seventeen (54.9%) persons agreed ‘little’ choosing ‘1 to 2’ with 85 (39.9%) choosing ‘1’. I am in disagreement with the majority of respondents, but to answer this question in an in depth manner could require a major sociological study. My view is tentatively that rich persons generally will suffer less, but that all persons suffer from the problem of evil. Excessive wealth allows one to avoid some extreme results of the problem of evil, such as many health problems, whereas the poor especially, are likely to be more impacted. Everyone dies due to a failure of the body, but I reason that the wealthy often have a definite advantage over others, in regard to the degree to which certain evils are experienced. I agree

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3758 A purpose in asking this question was not so much to come to a conclusion, but to measure bias. I wanted to know whether my primarily middle class respondents thought their rich counterparts had an advantage in avoiding the results of the problem of evil in comparison to their poor counterparts.
with Gebara, there is a ‘geography of evil’ that impacts poor women everywhere. Poor women and poor persons will be more impacted by suffering than their wealthier counterparts overall. Therefore the poor require a response by the church community in a way that needs are met.

Question 51: The world is being judged by God

One hundred and six (49.8%) chose ‘5’ and another 39 (18.3%) chose ‘4’, therefore 68.1% supported this idea. I reason that God may judge throughout history, but as far as a final judgment is concerned, this will be a climactic one at the end of history. Charles Ryrie states that God may have issued judgments throughout history, but there shall be one final and climactic judgment. I therefore would support the idea that God is willingly allowing human beings to participate in evil, and the problem of evil shall take its course. From a Biblical perspective, eschatological, final judgment is inevitable. Walter M. Dunnett (2001) an expert in Biblical literature, explains the Scriptural concept that sin and death are banished, and that which sin has defiled is restored, following God’s final judgment.

Question 52: Churches should assist exploited women

One hundred and forty-one (66.2%) chose ‘5’ as an option. With adding another 36 (16.9%) that chose ‘4’, this brings the total to 177 persons (83%) that supported this idea. Gebara explains that the Church should understand the physical, psychological, and social

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suffering of women in regard to the cross. The community suffering of women needs to be understood, and this obviously should include those persons that need extra assistance.

Question 53: Using embryonic stem cells for research is okay

One hundred and twenty-eight (60.1%) persons chose ‘1 to 2’ with 103 (48.4%) of those choosing ‘1’. I am not attempting to discuss or debate the science or ethics of embryonic stem cells, but the question was attempting to find out if the majority of respondents would take a position deemed conservative, that would oppose the use of these cells. The National Institutes of Health in the United States writes that embryonic stem cells are derived from embryos that develop from fertilized eggs, and then donated for research purposes with informed consent of the donors. From my research, this idea is opposed by the majority of my respondents who take a somewhat conservative position, and do not want to see human embryos used for scientific research.

Question 54: Religions should not be beyond criticism

‘Five’ was chosen by 111 (52.1%) persons. This combined with 44 respondents (20.7%) who chose ‘4’ means 155 persons (72.8%) supported this concept.

Question 55: Differing religious views should be tolerated

One hundred and twenty (56.3%) persons supported this idea. So examining Questions 54 and 55 together, one can conclude that the majority of respondents think that religions should

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3768 The National Institutes of Health (2006: 1).
3769 The National Institutes of Health (2006: 1).
3770 The National Institutes of Health (2006: 1).
be criticized, but also tolerated. A key issue to ponder on is how much should a religion be criticized before it is no longer tolerated.\footnote{This is an important societal issue in regard to freedom of religion.}

The next section began with the question asking ‘How much have the following helped you to understand the problem of evil?’ The scale is the same being ‘1’ is ‘little’ and ‘5’ is ‘much’.

Question 56: Television

One hundred and eight (50.7\%) respondents chose ‘1 to 2’. Seventy-nine of those (37.1\%) chose ‘1’ as the option. Christian television in the Western world is not generally known for complex theological teaching on topics such as theodicy.\footnote{This is not the forum to evaluate televangelism, but I should state that in North American Christian television at least, there is very little scholarly teaching presented and therefore it would be difficult for one to learn about theodicy through Christian programming. This is unfortunate as television could provide opportunities for scholarly debate and dialogue.}

Question 57: Preachers

One hundred and thirty-two persons (62\%) chose ‘4 to 5’. This does not indicate that many preachers/ministers are teaching on theodicy, but that when it is taught the majority of church attendees have heard it discussed in church.

Question 58: Books

One hundred and thirty-three (62.4\%) respondents chose ‘4 to 5’. Interestingly this statistic is almost identical to the previous question concerning preachers. This does not mean that many books on theodicy are being read, but that the majority view books as a source for the
topic. This statistic is, of course, not a measure of the academic quality of the material reviewed by the respondents.

Question 59: Personal Experience

One hundred and forty-four (68%) persons chose ‘4 to 5’. This statistic shows that many people learn about the problem of evil from personal experience. There is a need for practical theology to complement philosophical theology, in order for persons to make rational sense of their experiences. Anderson writes that in post-modern thought, theory and practice need to be discerned together as practice includes theory, and theory can be understood through practice. Persons need to understand their experiences through theological theory, and also understand theology as they live it.

Question 60: Bible Study

One hundred and fifty-eight (74.2%) persons strongly supported this idea by choosing ‘4 to 5’. This statistic is not a surprise since 81.7% reason that the Bible should still be obeyed, as was discussed previously. The Bible is not crystal clear on God’s reasoning in allowing evil, but does assert that God will bring about his completed Kingdom in a meaningful way through the work of Christ in history. Geivett, when discussing God’s reasoning for allowing evil, states that God cannot commit the logically impossible. God cannot violate his own good nature, and is therefore not a contradictory being theologically by willingly allowing evil in his creation.

Ninety-five respondents (44.6%) chose ‘1 to 2’, 62 persons (29.1%) chose ‘4 to 5’. This connects to my idea that theodicy is not efficiently taught within formal education. By including the ‘3’ option (56 persons at 26.3%) with ‘1’ and ‘2’, over 70% (70.9%) of persons who attend Christian churches and completed this questionnaire, have not learned significantly about theodicy through an education process. This is a problem within the Christian church where every person suffers under the problem of evil. There is no surprise that my sovereignty theodicy is somewhat rejected and misunderstood from these empirical findings, when just fewer than 30% of my respondents have received any formal training on the subject. Practically, there appears to be a need for church courses dealing with the subject of the problem of evil, presented from atheistic, eastern, free will, soul-making and sovereignty perspectives.

Preaching from the pulpit is not mainly an academic forum, but if over 70% of persons have not received any formal kind of training in regard to theodicy, this may be a serious spiritual problem. I am not suggesting that a PhD or MPhil level course on theodicy, free will and determinism should be routinely taught in Christian churches, but perhaps at a Bachelor’s degree level, some of the very serious issues concerning theodicy should be presented in church course settings.

Option 1 was chosen by 121 respondents (56.8%).

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3778 From my research, these fewer than 30% of respondents are more likely to have been taught free will, as opposed to sovereignty theodicy.
3779 In order to provide a thorough presentation on theodicy.
3780 Many evangelical churches may wish to avoid serious theological teachings in church courses, but do not oppose members/attendees attending Bible School, seminary and University.
Question 63: Video/DVD

Options 1 and 2 were chosen by 131 persons (62%). It can be reasoned that there is more need for serious and yet practical teaching to make available information concerning theodicy in audio, video, and DVD form. It is a difficulty that all of humanity suffers with the problem of evil, and yet there is so little serious academic material available for people to digest in a non-written form. It can be deduced that many persons would be more entertained and less intimidated studying about theodicy in audio/video form rather than trying to read through several texts.

Question 64: Internet discussion groups

Option 1 was chosen by 167 respondents (78.4%). The internet is gaining in popularity and I reason that more persons\textsuperscript{3781} in the future shall learn about theology through internet discussion groups, Facebook, and blogs.\textsuperscript{3782}

Question 65: Friends and family

Options 4 and 5 were selected by 111 persons (52.1%). This result is not surprising as many times tragedy occurs within the family structure, and support can also be found within that structure. The family is a core social relationship by which people exist and develop as persons,\textsuperscript{3783} and can offer support in times of suffering.

\textsuperscript{3781} In particular those that are presently young adults and younger.
\textsuperscript{3782} There are already a growing number of theology blogs present on the internet.
\textsuperscript{3783} Anderson (2001: 255).
Question 66: Other, please specify

One hundred and seventy-seven persons (83.1%) selected option ‘1’ which means ‘little’. This ‘other’ option was largely rejected.

4. Theology and Application

The following is theology and application concerning selected questionnaire propositions.

God Reveals Himself in the Bible

It can be deduced that although conservative and liberal Christians can disagree on the nature of Biblical revelation, they do agree that it exists. David A. Pailin (1999) explains that since the Enlightenment era, the traditional propositional view of revelation has widely, but not completely, been replaced by the understanding that divine revelation comes through events. The Enlightenment has been mentioned previously in this work in the context of Enlightenment era writers, but greater explanation is better placed here. Veith explains that this age of reason features scientific discovery, and the rejection of much of revealed religion in favour of a reliance on reason. It was thought for a time that science could explain all of existence.

The term ‘Enlightenment’ refers to the philosophical movement among seventeenth and eighteenth century Western intellectuals. Enlightenment thinkers tended to reject external

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3784 This is a key within Christian tradition. God has revealed self through revelation, although there are disagreements on how literally this is done within certain Scripture.
3786 Most notably with my review of Kant.
sources of knowledge and elevated human reasoning.\textsuperscript{3791} Biblical doctrines were therefore under suspicion.\textsuperscript{3792}

The Bible records these revealed events and they are perceived through faith for significance.\textsuperscript{3793} Lindsell would support a traditional understanding of Biblical revelation where he states that through special supernatural revelation in Scripture, Jesus Christ is revealed to selected persons.\textsuperscript{3794} Lindsell does not believe that a human being can be saved outside of this revelation.\textsuperscript{3795} The 97.7\% support for God revealing himself in Scripture is not necessarily resounding intellectual support for either a traditional or Enlightenment view on revelation.

Grenz and Olson explain that Christianity has been changed and influenced since the Enlightenment, and it will never be the same.\textsuperscript{3796} Christians ignore the Enlightenment to the peril of theology.\textsuperscript{3797} The Enlightenment is not only an aspect of liberal progressive theology,\textsuperscript{3798} but has effected conservative theology as well.\textsuperscript{3799} Grenz and Olson point out that the Enlightenment understanding of reason would no longer allow the Church to be the sole teacher of Bible and Christian doctrine.\textsuperscript{3800} Individuals with the use of reason would need to question Church teaching.\textsuperscript{3801} Individual church members and attendees understanding of Scripture and theology is an integral part of modern evangelical thought,\textsuperscript{3802} and this can be traced back to Enlightenment thinking,\textsuperscript{3803} and to some degree the Reformation. Christianity and the

\textsuperscript{3791} Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling (1999: 44-45).
\textsuperscript{3792} Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling (1999: 44-45).
\textsuperscript{3793} Pailin (1999: 505).
\textsuperscript{3794} Lindsell (1976: 17).
\textsuperscript{3795} Lindsell (1976: 17).
\textsuperscript{3796} Grenz and Olson (1992: 15-16).
\textsuperscript{3797} Grenz and Olson (1992: 15-16).
\textsuperscript{3798} Grenz and Olson (1992: 21).
\textsuperscript{3799} Grenz and Olson (1992: 21).
\textsuperscript{3800} Grenz and Olson (1992: 21).
\textsuperscript{3801} Grenz and Olson (1992: 21).
Enlightenment are not completely antithetical, as they are both modernist\textsuperscript{3804} philosophies which overlap at points in their pursuit of truth.\textsuperscript{3805}

God is Close to All Persons

Immanence has been previously discussed within Chapter Five, and was the subject of an important questionnaire proposition and, therefore, I provide further explanation. It is the concept of God being present in, involved, and close to his creation.\textsuperscript{3806} Christian theology reasons that God is always immanently involved in his creation,\textsuperscript{3807} although separate from it in nature. Concerning immanence, J.I. Packer (1973) explains that God knowing a person is initially more important than the person knowing God.\textsuperscript{3808} Within Packer’s theology, God takes the initiative in knowing an individual.\textsuperscript{3809} Kreeft and Tacelli explain that God’s immanence means the creator must give created beings what they need.\textsuperscript{3810} If God was not actively communicating being\textsuperscript{3811} to all his creation, his creation would cease to exist.\textsuperscript{3812} God’s immanence would not indicate that each individual knows God personally in the sense of salvation.\textsuperscript{3813} God is providentially involved in human affairs,\textsuperscript{3814} and immanence makes divine contact with those outside of the Christian faith possible.\textsuperscript{3815}

\textsuperscript{3804} Modernity was the dominant worldview heavily influenced by the Enlightenment. Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling (1999: 79-80). Veith writes that in the late twentieth century these views have been replaced by post-modernism, which has less emphasis on absolute truth. Veith (1994: 19). This is not to state that post-modernism completely sets aside the concept of truth, but post-modern philosophies are often less dogmatic in approach than ones from the modern era.
\textsuperscript{3805} Veith (1994: 43).
\textsuperscript{3806} Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling (1999: 63).
\textsuperscript{3807} Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling (1999: 63).
\textsuperscript{3808} Packer (1973: 37).
\textsuperscript{3809} Packer (1973: 37).
\textsuperscript{3810} Kreeft and Tacelli (1994: 93-94).
\textsuperscript{3811} Kreeft and Tacelli with the use of the word ‘being’ are stating that God, in an abstract sense, is communicating himself to his creation.
\textsuperscript{3812} Kreeft and Tacelli (1994: 93-94).
\textsuperscript{3813} This would require election as discussed previously.
\textsuperscript{3814} Pojman (1996: 599).
\textsuperscript{3815} Erickson (1994: 312).
God is Beyond His Creation

According to Grenz and Olson, it is true that God is divinely transcendent and immanent.\(^{3816}\) God is above the world and beyond creation as transcendent, but as an immanent God is involved in history.\(^{3817}\) Whale writes that unless God reveals himself in history, God remains in a mysterious depth of infinitude, inaccessible and unknowable.\(^{3818}\) God has bridged the divide between himself and humanity in history.\(^{3819}\) Kreeft and Tacelli note that God as transcendent is not part of the material universe.\(^{3820}\) God is ‘other’ than his creation yet maintains it as transcendent.\(^{3821}\) Earle Craig (2004) explains in his article ‘Pagan Christianity’ that God as transcendent is the creator of reality and has sovereign control over that reality.\(^{3822}\) God’s transcendence, therefore, can be comforting to Christian believers since his distance from persons does not detract from his control over every day lives as he works for the greater good. Interestingly, forty-one (19.2\%) respondents were ‘NC’ for this question. Perhaps the notion of transcendence is confusing for some, and is not being explained significantly in church teachings.

God is in All Things

Erickson discusses immanence and pantheism together.\(^{3823}\) With immanence God and nature have independent status,\(^{3824}\) with pantheism they do not.\(^{3825}\) Within pantheism God could

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\(^{3816}\) Grenz and Olson (1992: 10).
\(^{3817}\) Grenz and Olson (1992: 16).
\(^{3818}\) Whale (1958: 56).
\(^{3819}\) Whale (1958: 56).
\(^{3820}\) Kreeft and Tacelli (1994: 93).
\(^{3821}\) Kreeft and Tacelli (1994: 93).
\(^{3822}\) Craig (2004: 1).
\(^{3823}\) Erickson (1994: 303).
\(^{3824}\) Erickson (1994: 303).
\(^{3825}\) Erickson (1994: 303).
not exist prior to natural order, and therefore there is not a creation concept. S.A. Nigosian (1994) notes that a pantheist is a person who believes that all laws, forces and existing phenomena in reality are manifestations of God who is everything and everything is God. D.W.D. Shaw (1999) writes that the word ‘pantheism’ is derived from the Greek words *pan* meaning all and *theos* meaning God. For pantheism everything is in the mode of one single reality, and therefore God and nature are identical. Pantheism is incompatible with Christianity as God is immanent and is distinct from his material creation in traditional Christian thought.

God Does Not Cause Evil

At the end of my Chapter Three, I discussed three practical theological ramifications of sovereignty theodicy. I explained that with an evaluation of the empirical data, I was planning to develop practical theology for those suffering under the problem of evil that hold to Reformed, Calvinistic thought.

Theologically, throughout this thesis I have discussed and concluded that God is sovereign, indicating that he is almighty and has control over events in creation and the universe. Therefore, anything that occurs within his creation, both good and evil, is sanctioned by him. God also has providence over his creation, which is the method by which

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3831 Shaw (1999: 423).
he rules. The fact that God is sovereign and has providential control over his creation does not mean everything that takes place is within God’s perfect will, as some things that occur are within God’s permissible will. For Erickson, God’s perfect will, will 1 as he calls it, is God’s general intention and what pleases him most. God’s will 2, is God’s specific intention in every given situation and what God actually decides will occur. This is permissible will. Erickson explains that there are many times when evil and sin occur that God, in his perfect will, does not wish these events to take place, but permits them. Erickson writes that with will 2, since God does not intervene to prevent particular evil and sin, he permissibly wills it. Therefore, Biblically and theologically, in one sense, God causes evil. When God does not intervene and prevent evil and sin, he therefore willingly allows it and is the cause of it. Erickson points out that God never tells someone to commit evil or sin. Since God is infinite, omnipotent, and omniscient as discussed, when he does not follow his perfect will causing only good and, instead, follows his permissible will, which at times causes evil and sin, he therefore, theologically, is the cause of evil.

It needs to be stated that by God permissibly and willingly allowing evil does not make him evil and sinful in nature. God’s motives remain pure in the simultaneous willing of

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3844 This concept provides opportunities for a critic such as Roth to state that God should repent of his evil. Roth (1981: 10). Atheists will often conclude that such a God is nonsensical and conceivably some incompatibilists will reason this God is unworthy of worship.
human actions that are evil and sin.\textsuperscript{3851} Calvin wrote that human beings and their actions were freely committed, and at the same time were willed and determined by God.\textsuperscript{3852} God’s motives in willing an action are always pure, working toward the greater good even while human beings freely sin.\textsuperscript{3853} Therefore, practically speaking from a Reformed influenced sovereignty perspective, God causing evil does not make God evil and sinful, as his motives remain pure. He uses evil for his greater purposes.\textsuperscript{3854}

In the context of this question, God is the primary cause of all actions including ones leading to evil and sin,\textsuperscript{3855} and human beings are the secondary cause.\textsuperscript{3856} In this way the act is entirely determined\textsuperscript{3857} by God as the primary cause and yet is done voluntarily by the secondary human cause without force or coercion.\textsuperscript{3858} This is in line with Calvin and Feinberg’s theological explanations.\textsuperscript{3859} Philosophically, God can determine actions that are also committed by secondary causes,\textsuperscript{3860} and this does not necessarily mean that the reasoning and motives of the primary and secondary causes are identical or similar.\textsuperscript{3861} I conclude that theologically and philosophically God, with pure motives, can will and permit evil and sin that human beings will and commit with rebellious attitudes, using limited compatibilistic\textsuperscript{3862} free will and not under compulsion.\textsuperscript{3863}

\textsuperscript{3851} Calvin (1543)(1996: 37-40).
\textsuperscript{3852} Calvin (1543)(1996: 37-40).
\textsuperscript{3853} Calvin (1543)(1996: 37-40).
\textsuperscript{3854} Calvin (1543)(1996: 37-40).
\textsuperscript{3856} Pojman (1996: 596).
\textsuperscript{3857} Pojman (1996: 596).
\textsuperscript{3858} Pojman (1996: 596).
\textsuperscript{3860} Edwards (1754)(2006 2.1: 1-1-2).
\textsuperscript{3861} Calvin (1543)(1996: 37-40).
\textsuperscript{3863} Pojman (1996: 596).
Compatibilism and the Questionnaire

(1) At the end of Chapter Three, I stated it was rather meaningless for a Christian to readily accept a notion of God willing all things for the greater good within Reformed, Calvinistic thought when the greater good is not practically explained meaningfully. Perhaps with much Reformed and Calvinist theology, the negative aspects of a God who has the power and does cause evil,\(^{3864}\) overshadows the positive aspects in the minds of respondents.\(^{3865}\) The positive aspects being that if God has this much control over his creation, matter, the universe, and this world, that he ultimately can deliver his people from the problem of evil, and does so through the work of the gospel and the second coming of Christ.\(^{3866}\) This type of theodicy would be in agreement with Biblical promises of a restored Kingdom of God in Revelation Chapters 21-22.\(^{3867}\)

(2) With my second and third points at the end of Chapter Three, I discussed God’s love and the logical and reasonable nature of sovereignty theodicy. I stated that God’s love within Reformed, Calvinistic systems needs to be demonstrated. In my opinion, a Reformed, Calvinistic sovereignty theodicy is Biblical, logical and reasonable by nature.\(^{3868}\) At times there is a heavy reliance on complex theology and philosophy which is not generally taught in Sunday school, Church sermons, televangelism, devotional Christian books and, quite frankly, in many

\(^{3865}\) These positive aspects are often speculative and those such as Gebara are looking for the greater good now and not primarily in some future realm. She suggests for example, that we need ‘Everyday Resurrections.’ Gebara (2002: 121-132). Phillips reasons that there is not actual hope for persons after death in another realm. Phillips (2005: 248). This would appear empirically true, but if the Biblical resurrection is true there hope for those in Christ.
\(^{3866}\) Mounce (1990: 350).
\(^{3867}\) Robert Mounce in his commentary on *Revelation* provides many helpful insights. Figurative language is definitely used within the book of Revelation, but an actual culminated Kingdom of God is being mysteriously described. Mounce (1990: 368-397).
\(^{3868}\) As argued in particular within Chapter Three.
University, college, and seminary classes.\textsuperscript{3869} Basically, most Christians, even persons with some level of post-secondary education, are just not familiar enough with the complex theological and philosophical material\textsuperscript{3870} to accept the notion of God causing evil,\textsuperscript{3871} because the idea comes across as implying God, who is perfectly good, is also evil and uses compulsion in having his human creation commit evils acts and sin.\textsuperscript{3872} This would hardly be a loving God! This would be an evil being that needs to change into something better if possible.\textsuperscript{3873} The complex theology and philosophy of Reformation theology and Calvinism\textsuperscript{3874} in regard to theodicy needs to be partnered with the idea of God’s love and the desire to restore his creation.\textsuperscript{3875} Calvin described heaven as a place where complete and full enjoyment of glory would take place.\textsuperscript{3876} I do not favour a watering down of Reformed doctrine in order to change its meaning, but the love of God in willing evil for the God’s glory\textsuperscript{3877} needs to be better explained.\textsuperscript{3878}

Within the Christian Church, the problem of evil, and other controversial theological and philosophical topics related to the nature of God, are often avoided in favour of sociological and psychological approaches to teaching Christian doctrine.\textsuperscript{3879} I am not opposed to sociological and psychological methods of teaching theology in sermons and post-secondary classrooms,\textsuperscript{3880} but

\textsuperscript{3869} I reason that a reasonable goal is for one to be able to present aspects of complex Reformed theology and philosophy in an understandable and practical fashion. Philosophical theology always has practical ramifications and these need to be understood and explained by those that teach Reformed views.

\textsuperscript{3870} If these concepts were taught academically often with practical application, more persons may gain a greater understanding of Reformed, Calvinistic doctrines.


\textsuperscript{3872} From this perspective, one can understand why many persons reject Reformed and Calvinistic doctrines.


\textsuperscript{3874} In particular the theology of those such as John Calvin and Jonathan Edwards.

\textsuperscript{3875} It needs to be philosophically and practically demonstrated that Reformed theodicy is not just another failed Christian approach that Phillips would view as postulating a happy ending that is a fraud. Phillips (2005: 247).

\textsuperscript{3876} Calvin (1552)(1995: 415).


\textsuperscript{3878} Reformed, Calvinistic doctrines need to be correctly taught with an open mind for revision, but God’s love cannot be overlooked in the context of willing evil for the greater good. The greater good includes his love for humanity, in particular those in Christ. Concepts of God’s justice and love need to be taught simultaneously.

\textsuperscript{3879} Pastors should not be expected to present theological lectures, but are to preach and this includes the use of theology.

\textsuperscript{3880} Psychology and sociology can be useful tools in presenting practical theology.
there is need for individuals, who as leaders, are willing to discuss tricky doctrinal issues professionally from a Christian perspective that many may wish to avoid attempting to teach.\textsuperscript{3881} A rejection of the concept raised within this question by a majority indicates that although free will theodicy has some educated and intelligent proponents, such as Augustine\textsuperscript{3882} and Plantinga,\textsuperscript{3883} that the related Reformed, Calvinist concepts are not being taught adequately.\textsuperscript{3884} Feinberg’s writings provide a good counter to Augustine and Plantinga and their free will perspectives, as do the atheist writings of Flew\textsuperscript{3885} and Mackie.\textsuperscript{3886} However, it is much more difficult to find secondary sources that specifically wrote on Feinberg’s sovereignty view than those who wrote on free will theodicy.\textsuperscript{3887}

Within my own denomination, the Presbyterian Church of North America, 34 (16\%) persons out of the overall data were ‘AS/A’ in choosing to support the idea that God does not cause evil with Question 22.\textsuperscript{3888} With 34 out of 46 respondents, in agreement with the proposition, this means 73.9\% of persons in my denomination disagreed with my concept. Only 6 (2.8\%) respondents out of 46 chose ‘D/DS’, which would be 13.0\% of my denomination in agreement. I reason that free will theodicy dominates the conservative evangelical North American landscape, and this is very relevant to theodicy and has affected Reformed churches.

\textsuperscript{3881} This is my mind would be a major reason for teachers within the Church to work on obtaining Doctorates in the fields of Theology, Philosophy of Religion, and Biblical Studies.
\textsuperscript{3882} As discussed in Chapters Two and Three. \textit{On Free Choice of the Will} in my view is his primary, but not only text related to this issue.
\textsuperscript{3883} As discussed in Chapters Two and Three. \textit{God, Freedom, and Evil} is his primary text, while \textit{The Nature of Necessity} provides overview at a future date.
\textsuperscript{3884} Reformed theology is likely often watered down in many cases as Reformed churches are marketing themselves as primarily evangelical as opposed to primarily Reformed. Church attendance can be so low in some cases that it is more marketable to avoid teaching and dealing with controversial Reformed concepts.
\textsuperscript{3885} ‘Divine Omnipotence and Human Freedom’ is a key Flew text on this issue.
\textsuperscript{3886} ‘Evil and Omnipotence’ is a key text for Mackie in regard to criticizing free will theodicy.
\textsuperscript{3887} Feinberg’s is well-known in Reformed and evangelical circles. Kreider (2003: 1). However, his work is not as academically discussed as the material of Augustine, Plantinga and Hick. Calvin and Edwards are much better known in the Reformed tradition than is Feinberg but Feinberg’s work unlike that of Calvin and Edwards has the benefit of being modern and able to deal with modern objections.
\textsuperscript{3888} I surveyed 46 persons from my denomination.
In our modern Western society there is a major emphasis placed on personal freedom, and I largely support this philosophy. The political and religious freedoms persons have in North America, Western Europe and Oceania are very important.\(^{3889}\) I reason that the rejection within my data of the idea of God causing evil is related to concepts of human freedom.\(^{3890}\) Tim Mawson writes that incompatibilism, which is closely related to libertarianism in regard to human free will,\(^{3891}\) states that true human free will must be uncaused by preceding states\(^{3892}\) This view would rule out God as a preceding force that determines the human will and actions.\(^{3893}\) Libertarianism\(^ {3894}\) is often viewed as a form of indeterminism.\(^ {3895}\) An action cannot be predetermined by any circumstance or desire.\(^{3896}\) Indeterminism is defined as the idea that there are no antecedent (preceding conditions) or simultaneous causes of human actions.\(^{3897}\) All human actions are only free if a person could have done otherwise.\(^{3898}\) I reason that many church attendees in our modern society make a connection, perhaps unconsciously, between libertarian political,\(^{3899}\) religious, social type freedom, and libertarianism\(^ {3900}\) in regard to God. However, political forces that grant some freedoms are finite (limited) entities and should not be equated with the freedom allowed by the infinite, omnipotent, omniscient God.\(^{3901}\) At the same time, God’s power to determine events is much greater than any political entity.\(^{3902}\) With a compatibilistic model, if the infinite, omnipotent God restrains himself and allows his

\(^{3889}\) And I support them personally.
\(^{3891}\) Mawson (1999: 324).
\(^{3892}\) Mawson (1999: 324).
\(^{3893}\) Mawson (1999: 324).
\(^{3894}\) Libertarianism supposes that human free choice is not causally determined, but is not random either. Blackburn (1996: 218).
\(^{3895}\) Geisler (1996: 429).
\(^{3897}\) Geisler (1996: 429).
\(^{3898}\) Geisler (1996: 429).
\(^{3899}\) Political libertarianism maximizes individual rights and the state has its power minimized. Blackburn (1996: 218).
\(^{3901}\) God as understood within traditional Christian theology as discussed within Chapter One.
\(^{3902}\) God has sovereign power over heaven and earth. Pink (1968: 20).
permissible rather than perfect will to take place, his will is still being done, and he is still determining events, by allowing evil and sin to occur and not intervening.

The Bible States that All Persons Will Follow God

In Matthew 7:13-14, Jesus uses an illustration relating to the ultimate destiny of individuals and explains that few persons enter by the narrow gate, and the wide and broad way of destruction is found by many. R.T. France (2001) explains that from these verses, and the perspective of Christ, true discipleship is a minority religion. He notes that in context, the narrow way should not so much be understood to be a difficult or hard path to travel on, but rather should be viewed as a restricted path. The narrow way of Christian discipleship is restrictive and requires a particular type of religious devotion taught further by Christ and his Apostles. There are many religions and religious persons in the world, but the restrictive nature of Christ’s gospel requires God to enlighten persons to what Christian tradition understands as true religion, as opposed to human attempts at religion. Within a sovereignty perspective, God will choose whom he wills to be present in his culminated Kingdom. Sentimentally, universalism is definitely more personally humanly satisfying.


Admittedly non-Christian worldviews can contain much truth.
These attempts would fail not because there was no truth within the religious systems, but because Christ was not leading these religionists via the Holy Spirit.
This idea is a key aspect of sovereignty theodicy, as God’s election of some is very important in the creator overcoming the problem of evil and ultimately culminating a Kingdom.
I am not denying there are academic arguments made for universalism. I am stating that the idea of all persons rejecting sin and evil for God is more intellectually satisfying for most than the alternative.
but it appears that Jesus disagreed with Hick on universalism. Laurence E. Porter (1986) describes a scenario in Luke 13:24-28 where some religious persons are rejected by God. It is not a popular idea in much of today’s society and religious academia, but based on these texts, Jesus did not accept the theology that a sincere religious devotion alone would lead one to God’s presence in the culminated Kingdom of God. This is not my hope for any individual person, but it is the theology that these verses appear to teach. From a traditional Christian perspective, some persons will never believe and follow the Biblical God.

The World is Becoming More Evil

The question was asked if individuals are becoming more evil, making the world more evil, and/or are incidents of evil simply being reported in greater numbers due to more television stations and the internet. It would take a thesis beyond the scope of this one to answer the first part of the question, but the answer to the second part is ‘yes’ in my view. News networks such as CNN provide a worldwide perspective on the problem of evil to local markets, whereas in the 1960’s and 1970’s local stations primarily provided local news with a secondary emphasis on national, and international news. The internet and the world wide web also provide worldwide coverage of events and therefore the problem of evil on a global scale can be digested by persons in local markets, and evil can appear to be greater in amount than it was thirty to forty years ago.

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3922 Including from a Reformed perspective.
3924 This was founded in 1980 by Ted Turner. Turner (2007: 1).
3925 In the Western world there are far more television stations available today than in the 1970s.
3926 There is also an emphasis on ‘bad’ and controversial news which often attracts readership and viewership.
Churches are Losing the Battle Against Social Evils

The societal move from modernity to post-modernism\textsuperscript{3927} would demonstrate that the Church is in many cases losing the battle against social evils\textsuperscript{3928} because of decreased influence.\textsuperscript{3929} However, the Christian Church is a very large, multi-faceted group of smaller churches and it would take a major academic study outside of the depths of this one, to conclusively answer this question, but cultural trends point towards a decline of influence of the Christian Church in the Western world.\textsuperscript{3930} Hal N. Ostrander (2004), Chair of the Religion & Philosophy Division at Brewton-Parker College in Washington State,\textsuperscript{3931} writes that in today’s post-Christian era and society, Christians will face cultural and intellectual challenges to the faith.\textsuperscript{3932} The Church is in a defensive position where it needs to defend a faith, not accepted by most in Western society.\textsuperscript{3933}

Church Attitudes are Influenced by Society

Elaine Graham (2000)(2007) writes that in a post-modern age of uncertainty,\textsuperscript{3934} many of the foundations of Western society are dissolving.\textsuperscript{3935} Graham reasons there needs to be new ways of looking at Christian practice and the understanding of Divine reality\textsuperscript{3936} which feature the use of empathy and solidarity with others.\textsuperscript{3937} For some on the liberal, progressive side of Christianity, secular society can perhaps offer some practical, theological improvements to the

\textsuperscript{3927} Veith (1994: 27-46).
\textsuperscript{3928} These would be perceived social evils where Christianity would differ in society from its secular counterpart.
\textsuperscript{3929} Veith (1994: 27-46).
\textsuperscript{3931} Ostrander (2004: 1).
\textsuperscript{3932} Ostrander (2004: 1).
\textsuperscript{3933} Ostrander (2004: 1).
Therefore this question may be answered with agreement and yet viewed as a positive occurrence. Traditionalists such as Lindsell, will view any move within the Christian Church away from Biblical teaching as a negative. Lindsell provides the opinion that many Christian institutions have slowly over time moved away from orthodox, Biblical theology and have gone astray. Some from the conservative perspective, who answered this question in the affirmative, may view secular influence on the Church as leading it into error.

5. Summary

My questionnaire data does not demonstrate a complete rejection of Reformed, Calvinistic, sovereignty theodicy, which is not accepted on key points in contrast to the acceptance of free will theodicy. It can be reasoned that Reformed compatibilistic concepts have been primarily rejected. With the very important Question 22, if God does not cause evil according to the majority of respondents, the reasonable conclusion would be an acceptance of the idea from free will theodicy that human beings alone cause evil and corruption. A compatibilistic model, as noted within the work, views both God and humanity as the cause of evil with God as the primary cause, but with sinless motives. There is also the important non-support of the ideas of God causing human actions, and deciding who shall follow him in 

3943 It can reasoned from the results that Reformed theology in the context of theodicy is not dominating Christian theological thought.
3944 This is significant enough to demonstrate that Reformed theology in regard to theodicy and free will and determinism has been overshadowed by the free will/incompatibilistic research and work of those such as Augustine and Plantinga.
election,\textsuperscript{3949} which are essential within a compatibilistic framework for God to fulfill his purposes and turn certain sinful human beings into members of his everlasting Kingdom.\textsuperscript{3950} Sovereignty theodicy is not as publicized as free will theodicy,\textsuperscript{3951} is not taught as much in post-secondary education, and is not as culturally relevant in Western society as free will concepts, which support libertarianism.\textsuperscript{3952}

In order for Reformed concepts of compatibilism and theodicy to gain increased prominence within the Christian Church,\textsuperscript{3953} sovereignty theodicy needs to be correctly explained, but theoretical theodicy is not sufficient in itself as its practical ramifications must be explained. A major reason why a sovereignty theodicy explains God wills all things, including evil and sin or the greater good,\textsuperscript{3954} is that with this and in particular, through the results of the atoning work and resurrection of Christ, God will ultimately rid his creation of the problem of evil.\textsuperscript{3955}

\textsuperscript{3950} Calvin mentions in his Acts Commentary that people who were strangers to the Kingdom of God, were purchased by Christ and flourished within. Calvin (1552)(1995: 415).
\textsuperscript{3951} This is quite clear from several years of academic research.
\textsuperscript{3952} Blackburn (1996: 218).
\textsuperscript{3953} In particular within Reformed churches.
CONCLUSION

Within this thesis I have evaluated three philosophical theodicy approaches from four authors. Using questionnaires, propositions were taken from these philosophical approaches and data provided.\textsuperscript{3956} I have concluded that a sovereignty theodicy, one of which is presented by John S. Feinberg,\textsuperscript{3957} is the most coherent form of theodicy,\textsuperscript{3958} although free will and soul-making theodicy approaches should not be disregarded as in error on each and every point.\textsuperscript{3959} I reason a perspective with greater emphasis on God’s sovereignty\textsuperscript{3960} makes better overall sense and defends the concept of God existing within a creation where evil flourishes,\textsuperscript{3961} better than the other two options.\textsuperscript{3962} The sovereignty approach, like all theodicy attempts, is not a remedy to the problem of evil, but rather an explanation.\textsuperscript{3963} I have noted on several occasions that the work of the gospel, Christ’s atoning and resurrection work and a culminated Kingdom of God, is the theistic, Christian remedy to the problem of evil.\textsuperscript{3964}

\textsuperscript{3956} Within Chapter Six and the Appendix. As noted data was provided as well through the use of feminism/feminist work and general theology questions.
\textsuperscript{3957} Within Chapter Three.
\textsuperscript{3958} I have raised some objections to Feinberg’s approach and provided alternative perspectives.
\textsuperscript{3959} I have agreed with aspects of both of these views. Gebara has shown that issues concerning women and the problem of evil are also very important.
\textsuperscript{3960} God has the power to willingly allow evil and to eventually rid his creation of it. God has power over good and evil. Edwards (1729)(2006: 414).
\textsuperscript{3961} All the views reviewed reason evil flourishes.
\textsuperscript{3962} Even as I acknowledge and review the serious academic criticisms of those such as Saunders, Pinnock, Griffin, Phillips, Roth and several others. A successful Reformed theodicy through the use of Feinberg’s material, my material, or other within Reformed theology, does not end the debate. Frankly, in this world there is just too much suffering and often not enough answers to end intellectual debate even though I reason I am philosophically on the right track.
\textsuperscript{3963} A philosophical explanation in regard to the problem of evil may solve intellectual problems, but may not assist with many of the everyday consequences of evil. This is where pastoral care and practical theology is important.
\textsuperscript{3964} Traditional Christian perspectives, Reformed and non-Reformed, sovereignty and free will, would typically accept this understanding. However, John Hick and soul-making theodicy rejects a traditional understanding of
With the use of empirical data, within this Conclusion, I wish to examine what could be considered *praxis* for each of the theodicy presented. As noted in previous footnotes, Simon Blackburn writes that the term *praxis* originated in the era of Aristotle and included the concept of goal-directed action, the action in itself being part of the end. Praxis is not concerned with merely applying theoretical knowledge but adding to knowledge in the process of practically applying theory.

**Free Will Theodicy Praxis Versus Sovereignty Theodicy Praxis**

The focus within a short Conclusion is not to review each proposition concerning each theodicy, but in general terms, to consider what would be the theological end result of an acceptance of a theodicy. The practical application of each theodicy view will be presented. When free will is practically applied, what are the results? A rejection by some within the Christian Church of the Reformed idea that God predestines with soft determinism individuals to salvation is important. This would work hand in hand with the rejection of the idea that God causes evil by allowing sin to exist. In both cases God’s divine sovereignty is downplayed, by Reformed standards. With free will theory God would be viewed as allowing salvation. Hick (1970: 172). Atheistic critics, as has been demonstrated within this thesis, reject this concept as hyper-speculative and unreasonable.

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3969 This was done within Chapter Six and can be seen in the form of graphs in the Appendix.
3970 The praxis.
3971 For some, non-determinism alone allows for significant human freedom. Geisler (1986: 75).
3973 God is not in control of human salvation as this is up to human free will. God can influence persons only and in no way can determine, even simultaneously, a truly free human act. McCann (2001: 115). Geisler (1986: 75). As human beings have incompatibilistic libertarian free will they have caused evil and God is not morally blamable for this because he could only prevent this evil by cancelling significant human freedom. Augustine (388-395)(1964: 33). A problem here is Reformed and atheistic critics have postulated that God could have created significantly free creatures that would not commit evil. Mackie and Flew reason human beings could be made in such a way, and I acknowledge that a type of human being could be made in order to have significant freedom and not sin. I also
the problem of evil for greater purposes, but not willing it. A praxis of free will theodicy would be that God can desire to save all persons, but cannot because human beings refuse to turn to God. Moral choices are not caused or uncaused by another being, but are self-caused. God therefore would be unable to save persons that freely reject him and they have made a moral choice to oppose God. In contrast to the sovereignty perspective, since God does not cause evil and does not predetermine human actions such as who shall believe in him, human beings are a greater impediment to a culminated Kingdom of God with a free will theodicy than with a sovereignty one. This fits into Plantinga’s reasoning that in every situation transworld depravity will cause wrong human actions. Transworld depravity provides the concept that in any possible world, including our own, each person would make at least one wrong decision and the resulting bad action would lead to evil occurring within creation. It can be reasoned that the praxis related end goal of free will theodicy is for God within an incompatibilist, libertarian system to convince many human beings to accept Christ and turn from evil in order to fully establish the Kingdom of God.

In contrast, with a compatibilistic sovereignty perspective, God is reasoned to transform and mould persons he chooses for salvation, so that the culminated Kingdom takes place at

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3976 Geisler (1986: 75).
3979 An atheist and critic could reasonably and rightly suggest that persons use free will to such a corrupt degree that God will never be able to culminate a Kingdom where significantly free creatures do not continue to at times commit horrendous evils.
3982 This assumes that human beings by grace through faith can be convinced into belief in Christ and then regenerated and indwelled by the Holy Spirit.
Both free will and sovereignty perspectives accept the Biblical idea of the culminated Kingdom, but free will places much more emphasis on the individual freely deciding that this is for him/her, rather than being determined in any way to do so. Free will advocates will understand the process as God making an offer and over time convincing persons to believe it. A devotion to God can only be a good thing when persons freely accept it. Sovereignty perspectives reason that God alone makes the choice to begin a regeneration process that leads to salvation in a human being. F.F. Bruce (1996) explains that because of the universal fact of human sin, there is no way to be accepted by God by human means. This divinely guided change in a person must occur in order for salvation to ever take place within a human being with a corrupted nature.

Free will theodicy, unlike soul-making theory, does not necessarily accept universalism as part of its praxis and it could logically be argued that Plantinga’s transworld depravity would apply in all post-mortem situations. In my view, these are perils of a praxis that rejects compatibilism and soft determinism. Even as traditional Christian free will theory would not accept universalism, it still reasons eventually those citizens saved by Christ would not sin within the culminated Kingdom. Those within the Kingdom will have been brought to

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3989 Bruce (1996: 93).
God through Christ.\textsuperscript{3995} The resurrection work would be reasoned to change the entire nature of saved persons to sinless and allow everlasting life,\textsuperscript{3996} but without God also determining\textsuperscript{3997} that sin would never again occur, I reason that transworld depravity could always be a concern.\textsuperscript{3998} A praxis of sovereignty theodicy would be that, from start to finish, salvation is primarily the goal directed\textsuperscript{3999} plan of God. Human beings are not brought to Christ through compulsion,\textsuperscript{4000} but when predestined in election\textsuperscript{4001} shall be convinced to accept the offer of salvation.\textsuperscript{4002} Praxis shifts from the incompatibilism of free will that assumes God desires to save all persons, but can only save those who are eventually persuaded to believe,\textsuperscript{4003} to an understanding that whom God desires to save shall be regenerated and placed in a process of salvation.\textsuperscript{4004} The problem of evil is therefore not primarily subject to, and in existence, because human sin is stalling the culmination of God’s plans.\textsuperscript{4005} I do not doubt that human beings do often oppose God’s plans, but God being almighty can overcome the problem of evil, and is working through this process slowly in history. Within a sovereignty perspective human sin does oppose God, but God will use sin for his purposes and regenerate and mould those he chooses towards salvation. As long
as one can accept the idea that a perfectly moral God wills and allows evil\textsuperscript{4006} within his plans for the greater good,\textsuperscript{4007} there is a degree of intellectual certainty with sovereignty theodicy that free will theodicy lacks. God could inevitably bring about, through the use of the regeneration\textsuperscript{4008} and the resurrection of elected human persons,\textsuperscript{4009} the end of human corruption,\textsuperscript{4010} and even Plantinga’s concept of transworld depravity.\textsuperscript{4011} If God willed and created a finalized Kingdom of restored persons that had experienced the problem of evil and were saved from it, then it could be reasoned that with God’s constant persuasion through the Holy Spirit\textsuperscript{4012} and human experience and maturity, transworld depravity\textsuperscript{4013} would never take place again. No human wrong decision\textsuperscript{4014} would need to occur as God always determines otherwise, and restored human beings do not lack experience as did the first humans who rebelled against God causing corruption. I speculate that theological praxis of sovereignty theodicy is more certain and comforting than free will theodicy, as transworld depravity is overcome by taking the primary choice of human belief in God away from corrupted human beings\textsuperscript{4015} and placing it in the hands of a sovereign God.\textsuperscript{4016}

\textsuperscript{4009}Whale (1958: 65-70).
\textsuperscript{4010}Berkouwer (1962: 192).
\textsuperscript{4011}Plantinga (1977)(2002: 53).
\textsuperscript{4013}Plantinga (1977)(2002: 53).
\textsuperscript{4014}Moral wrong decisions is meant here. A lack of infinite knowledge could still lead to a human being making a non-moral mistake, for example, not playing a perfect game.
Soul-Making Theodicy Praxis

A praxis of soul-making is that there is epistemic distance\textsuperscript{4017} needed to exist between humanity and God in order for persons to properly develop as individuals outside of God’s direct influence.\textsuperscript{4018} Hick and soul-making theodicy deduce that with free will many will reject God in temporal life,\textsuperscript{4019} but in post-mortem existence universal devotion to God will ultimately occur for all.\textsuperscript{4020} Since Hick rejects compatibilism,\textsuperscript{4021} ultimately God must inevitably convince human beings to freely follow him in a way that was amiss for many in their earthly lives.\textsuperscript{4022} Contrary to traditional Christian and Reformed doctrine which assumes corruption due to sin,\textsuperscript{4023} Hick’s soul-making philosophy reasons that human beings are not fallen, but immature and child-like\textsuperscript{4024} and need to evolve to a status of being able to worship and follow God.\textsuperscript{4025} There exists a praxis of progression from spiritual immaturity and inability to follow God\textsuperscript{4026} to the eventual point where all will follow God. The end goal and praxis is to take persons that are distant from God,\textsuperscript{4027} and to freely bring them into mature community with God.\textsuperscript{4028}

A sovereignty view also believes God shall bring persons into a finalized community with him,\textsuperscript{4029} but God must determine and persuade selected persons within that process.\textsuperscript{4030} A soul-making process could be considered an aspect of sovereignty theodicy.\textsuperscript{4031} As Hick accepts

\textsuperscript{4017} Hick in Davis (2001: 48). McDowell (2005: 2).
\textsuperscript{4019} Hick in Davis (2001: 48).
\textsuperscript{4020} Hick (1970: 381). This is the view of universal salvation as discussed in Chapter Four. Ankerberg and Weldon (1999: 503).
\textsuperscript{4021} Hick (1970: 381).
\textsuperscript{4022} Hick (1970: 381).
\textsuperscript{4024} Hick in Davis (2001: 40-41). Hick cites the views of Irenaeus for support. Irenaeus (c 175-185)(2005: Book IV: Chapter 39: 2).
\textsuperscript{4025} Hick in Davis (2001: 40-41).
\textsuperscript{4026} Hick in Davis (2001: 40-41).
\textsuperscript{4027} Hick in Davis (2001: 48).
\textsuperscript{4028} Hick (1970: 289-290).
\textsuperscript{4029} Calvin (1539)(1998: Book II, Chapter 3, 6).
\textsuperscript{4030} Feinberg (1986: 24-25).
\textsuperscript{4031} Not identical to Hick’s approach, however.
universalism, he rejects the notion that God would select some and reject others for everlasting hell. For soul-making the evolutionary development process leads to the salvation of all persons and, therefore, a universal community of each human being God has ever made will eventually exist. For Hick, God must save all persons or his creation would be a failure. Free will theodicy also consists of an idea of human progression, as God would convince certain persons within this temporal life to follow him. It does not accept that all persons will eventually follow God and credits this to free will. I have explained my difficulty with the idea that God can save corrupt human beings that reject him without the use of compatibilism throughout this thesis. Free will theory would not view a finalized God ruled Kingdom, that is missing some persons, as a failure as God desired all to be saved, but some refused God’s offer of salvation and call to election. This was done freely and is not God’s fault that some have rejected him, as to have these people follow him would require determinism and these persons would be less than significantly free.

Critical/Atheistic Praxis

The three approaches all take an ultimately positive view towards reality and that God would eventually succeed in his purposes. These three theodicy view evil as part of the end

4038 A difficulty shared by critics that are both atheistic and Reformed.
4043 A positive view of ultimate reality has been well challenged by those such as Phillips, Roth and Darrow within this work. Phillips (2005: 247). Roth (1981: 19). Darrow (1932)(1973: 453). An intellectual problem being that free will, sovereignty and soul-making perspectives are all very speculative and state that eventually reality will be
goal praxis of bringing about a greater good and justifying God, his perfect goodness and plans in the end. C. Robert Mesle has noted these types of views that use greater good arguments make God the author of evil and make evil less than genuine. As noted, atheist William Rowe states that not all evil can be used for the greater good and certainly some must be gratuitous. The greater good argument can always be challenged with good counter-arguments, and although I disagree with the concept of gratuitous evil, I accept Rowe’s point that some evil is inscrutable, which is evil that cannot be understood reasonably well by human beings. An atheistic praxis concerning the problem of evil could be that life has no deeper meaning or purpose beyond physical death, and that all persons suffer and die with no further meaning to life. Science does not offer humanity an end directed goal of continued life. As noted earlier in this work, Darrow writes the best one can do is basically cling to life on earth as we head toward ‘a common doom.’ An atheistic praxis coming from this type of view could be criticized as negative, but science cannot be primarily sought for support of theodicy, and theodicy should be based on solid religious and philosophical reasoning. In the case of free will and sovereignty perspectives, there is a heavy reliance on Scriptural revelation which is based in different and far better than it obviously is now empirically. Tennant, contrary to Hick, reasons with his evolutionary view of theodicy that evil might always exist. Hick (1970: 252-253). Mesle (1986: 418). Rowe (1990: 1-3). Rowe (1990: 1-3). Mesle (1986: 418). Rowe (1990: 3). Rowe (1990: 3). Philosophically certain evils and sufferings are inscrutable as Rowe states, but they can still treated with appropriate pastoral care. Collins explains that the needs of persons are attempted to be met through counsel within a Christian context. Collins (1988: 26). And certain deistic and agnostic praxis as well. Darrow (1928)(1973: 266). Darrow (1932)(1973: 453). Darrow (1932)(1973: 453). Darrow (1932)(1973: 453). Phillips (2005: 247). Darrow (1932)(1973: 453). I will not support a theodicy that is clearly against science, although I reason that metaphysical theodicy approaches are not scientific.
Hick’s view has an understanding that God could begin to be understood to some degree in metaphorical terms through the writings of a variety of religious traditions. He takes a Kantian understanding that God could not be affirmed as an actual or possible concept, although God can be assumed as possible. Hick takes this idea of Kant’s and deduces that when it comes to religious doctrine the noumena realm that relates to the phenomena realm may have little in common with resulting phenomena.

Certainly, an idea behind the writing of this thesis has been to make it clear that blind faith fueled theodicy is not intellectually acceptable. Theodicy should be based on research and reason using and considering a variety of perspectives. I reason this thesis has demonstrated a support for a reasonable Reformed theodicy and examined its strengths and weaknesses, as well as objectively reviewing other perspectives.

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4056 This has been discussed previously within Chapter Three and is a major reason I support sovereignty theodicy as an overall approach.
4062 That type of approach does not reasonably answer the objections and problems of those within and outside of the Church.
4063 As with this thesis and with my MPhil thesis, although I favour a Reformed approach, I do examine other Christian and secular perspectives.
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