

**Creational Man/Eschatological Woman:**  
A Future for Theology

**Inaugural Address by Nik Ansell**  
Senior Member in Theology  
Institute for Christian Studies  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Convocation, May 26, 2006



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## Genesis 2

**1** Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. **2** And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. **3** So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

**4** These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, **5** when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; **6** but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground— **7** then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. **8** And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. **9** Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

**10** A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. **11** The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; **12** and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. **13** The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush. **14** The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

**15** The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. **16** And the Lord God commanded the man, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; **17** but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.”

**18** Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.” **19** So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. **20** The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. **21** So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. **22** And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. **23** Then the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
this one shall be called Woman,  
for out of Man this one was taken.”

**24** Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. **25** And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> All biblical references, unless otherwise stated, are taken from the *New Revised Standard Version*.

## Introduction<sup>2</sup>

Although the chapter divisions of our Bibles only go back to the medieval period, it is providential that Gen. 2 begins where it does and that the creation of Adam and Eve is thus connected to the Sabbath. And this is where we shall begin as we explore “A Future for Theology” via the theme of “Creational Man/Eschatological Woman.”

In the first of the two versions of the Decalogue,<sup>3</sup> Exod. 20:8-11 grounds the Sabbath in God’s creation of the world, while Deut. 5:12-15 emphasizes its redemptive significance, thus anticipating the sabbatical idea of the Jubilee which looks towards healing and release from sin and injustice.<sup>4</sup> For the Reformed way of reading Scripture that has influenced our own ‘Reformational’<sup>5</sup> tradition at ICS, there is something strange about apparently ascribing redemptive significance to something creational in this way. This strangeness is intriguing.

In the Reformational tradition of reading, ‘creation, fall, and redemption’ are seen as the most comprehensive themes of biblical revelation. The good creation that is pulled into the vortex of human idolatry is not to be eradicated, relativized, supplemented or escaped in salvation, but redeemed, healed, saved, reconciled to God. Creation begins in

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<sup>2</sup> This inaugural address, delivered at the ICS Convocation held at the Church of the Redeemer in Toronto on Friday, May 26, 2006, began by acknowledging “the ICS community in the widest sense, including family, friends and those here in spirit.” See also nn. 57 and 62 below. The present text remains virtually identical to the lecture. The Appendix is an addition which, along with material in these footnotes, further explores some of the implications of my proposal. Thanks to Debbie Sawczak for her copyediting suggestions. Special thanks also to ICS colleagues and class participants who have commented so helpfully on earlier drafts of this text.

<sup>3</sup> “First” here refers to canonical order which I take to be more significant for the confessional/kerygmatic meaning of Scripture than (what we can know about) the diachronic order in which texts were written. For an articulation of this approach to interpretation, see my “The Call of Wisdom/The Voice of the Serpent: A Canonical Approach to the Tree of Knowledge” in *Christian Scholar’s Review* 31/1 (Fall, 2001): 31-58.

The Sabbath command in the two versions of the Decalogue occurs within a twelvefold repetition within the Pentateuch (see Exod. 16:22-30, 20:8-11, 23:12, 31:12-17, 34:21, 35:2-3, Lev. 19:3, 19:30, 23:3, 25:2-7, 26:2, Deut. 5:12-15). It is always helpful to read biblical commands in the light of prior blessings and benedictions. This twelvefold command should thus be read in the light of Gen. 2:3. On the canonical structuring of the various law codes, see the helpful and significant discussion of John H. Sailhamer, “Appendix B: Compositional Strategies in the Pentateuch” in his *Introduction To Old Testament Theology: A Canonical Approach* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 272-289. On the NT relativization of the Sabbath Day, see n. 9 below.

<sup>4</sup> See Lev. 25, Isa. 61:2 and Lk. 4:19. In the various publications of the Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative ([www.web.net/~jubilee](http://www.web.net/~jubilee)), there are regular references to Sabbath. See, for example, Sylvia C. Keesmaat, “Sabbath And Jubilee: Radical Alternatives for Being Human” in *Making A New Beginning: Biblical Reflections on Jubilee* (Toronto: Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative, 1998), chap. 2, 15-23. Jubilee is a sabbatical idea calling for the integration of what is normally separated within a variety of theologies that are themselves often polarized.

<sup>5</sup> “Reformational” refers to a self-critical attitude towards contemporary Christianity in which the expressions of our faith, including those that have been consciously reformed in the past, are seen in principle as in need of ongoing reformation in the light of Scripture. Scripture here is read as focused in the ongoing redemptive work of ‘God-in-Christ-in-the-Spirit-in-us.’ Theologians in the Reformational tradition (and here I situate myself) tend to see this dynamic perspective as neither theologically ‘conservative’ nor ‘liberal’ as these terms were commonly utilized throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Contributions from several ICS faculty members to James K. A. Smith and James H. Olthuis, eds., *Radical Orthodoxy And The Reformed Tradition: Creation, Covenant, and Participation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005) provide a good indication of how this tradition might be theologically situated in a contemporary context.

original blessing. The whole of reality is distorted by the curse of our sin. Redemption embraces, liberates and reaffirms everything God has made.

Articulating these three themes in this comprehensive way is a life-affirming alternative to a dualism determined to misread the opposition between salvation and sin as an opposition between redemption and creation. But for all the undoubted strengths of our holistic reading of the world in which there is no division of existence into sacred and secular, for all the advantages of our holistic approach to Scripture in which salvation is the “focus” of a drama that has the goodness of creation as its “foundation”,<sup>6</sup> the apparent slippage between the category of creation and redemption with respect to the Sabbath is not something that this reading would anticipate. In fact it looks as if the Bible itself is guilty of a category mistake.<sup>7</sup>

The solution to a ‘Sabbath in slippage’,<sup>8</sup> I suggest, is to be found in eschatology; an eschatology that is not subsumed under the category of redemption but is related to *fulfilment*. If we view it as an ‘eschatological’ day, the Sabbath points in two directions: *firstly* to the *fulfilment* of *creation*, including not only the initial work of the Creator but also the fulfilment of the call to make history given to humanity in Gen. 1:26-28, and *secondly*, after the fall, to the *fulfilment* of God’s desire, in response to our sin, to bring *redemption* to that history so that God’s creational-eschatological goal of becoming “all in all” might be realized. The movement between creation and redemption occurs with the Sabbath, I am suggesting, because this day points to consummation. And consummation can be related not only to a salvation history that must reach its goal, but also to his-

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<sup>6</sup> This creation/redemption distinction is helpfully articulated in Brian J. Walsh and J. Richard Middleton, *The Transforming Vision: Shaping a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984), a work that has been one of the most widely read introductions to a “Reformational” worldview. The distinction between (creational) “foundation” and (redemptive) “focus” comes from *ibid.*, 43-44.

<sup>7</sup> Other traditions do not have this ‘problem.’ Gustavo Gutiérrez, for example, is just as opposed to dualism in his seminal work *A Theology Of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*, trans. and ed., Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1973), 153, where he asserts that “There are not two histories, one profane and one sacred, ‘juxtaposed’ or ‘closely linked.’ Rather there is only one human destiny, irreversibly assumed by Christ the Lord of history.” Christ’s “redemptive work”, he says, “embraces all the dimensions of existence and brings them to their fullness.” But Gutiérrez’s holistic, comprehensive vision is not grounded in the conviction that a once-good creation is now to be redeemed. For him, “Creation” itself is “The First Salvific Act” (*ibid.*, 154). More recently, Dorothy Soelle in her *To Work And To Love: A Theology of Creation* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984), 8, interprets the reference to Sabbath in Deut. 5 to mean that “liberation precedes creation”, this being a key in *ibid.*, 11 to “interpret[ing] creation faith in the light of liberation theology.”

From a “Reformational” perspective, this sounds as though Creation and Fall are being conflated and that the original blessing and goodness of existence have become eclipsed (and thus undermined) by liberation, a point clearly articulated with respect to Gutiérrez’s fellow Liberation theologian Juan Luis Segundo by James H. Olthuis in “Evolutionary Dialectics and Segundo’s *Liberation Of Theology*” in *Calvin Theological Journal* 21 (1986): 79-93. A Reformational response to Gutiérrez and Soelle would typically assert that the Creator is the Redeemer, but creation is not redemption. In this sense, the foundation, or the founding of creation and history, is not seen as having salvific meaning unless it is *re-affirmed*. Although I would concur with this response, my point here is that if the two versions of the Decalogue are read together, this would seem to support ascribing *redemptive* significance to the seventh Day of *creation* already in Gen. 2. An adequate response to this apparent category mistake, I will suggest, calls for an opening up of the Reformational paradigm.

<sup>8</sup> Here I am alluding to John D. Caputo’s reference to a world in “slippage” in his *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), 228.

tory from the beginning.<sup>9</sup>

In the reading of Scripture I am proposing, creation was certainly good before being pulled into the vortex of human idolatry. But God was not “all in all” in the beginning. Creation, from the beginning, is eschatologically open. That openness to fulfilment is evident in the original Sabbath. Redemption therefore is not just restoration but also renewal, a re-opening of history that has become closed down in and through sin to a future beyond what is implicit in its origins.<sup>10</sup> The future, to combine a distinction found in the theology of Jürgen Moltmann with a distinction basic to the philosophy of Herman Dooyeweerd, may be viewed in two directions: in the foundational direction as the *futur-*

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<sup>9</sup> The NT “all in all” texts (such as 1 Cor. 15:28) will be discussed below. The ‘eschatologically open’ character of the original Sabbath is also evident in the absence of the evening and morning formula used of the preceding days. Its eschatological significance may also account for why, with the coming of Christ, the observance of a specific day is no longer called for (see Rom. 14:5-6 and Gal. 4:10 together with the accounts of Jesus’ deliberate confrontation with Sabbath observance in, e.g., Mk. 2:23-28). This does not mean that the sabbatical theme of Scripture is abolished, in my view, but that it must now be understood in Christ. Far from referring to static fulfilment, the phrase “in Christ”, even after the Resurrection and Ascension must be understood within the eschatologically dynamic theme of glorification (as seen in, e.g., John’s Gospel and 1 Cor. 15).

To further understand how the Sabbath of history is reached in Christ, we need to pay attention to the two fundamental ways in which we may read Gen. 2:4ff. in the light of Gen. 1. In the first perspective, the Adam and Eve narrative begins after God’s Sabbath rest and portrays Adam and Eve and their descendants being called to continue God’s forming and filling in (and as) history, ‘resting’ on the foundation that God has established. The Sabbath in this perspective underlies and underlines the goodness of the creation-gift. But because Gen. 2:4ff. narrates the creation of humanity as male and female, thus in a sense repeating Gen. 1:27, the story of Adam and Eve and their descendents can also be situated within Day Six of the Divine creation week and thus placed before Day Seven which is thus yet to come. The structure of Gen. 1-2 is intended to convey both meanings simultaneously in my view (cf. n.14 on the two possible meanings of 2:4a).

In the light of the second perspective, we may say that in Christ, the Sabbath of history is reached. The Gospel accounts of Christ’s death and resurrection all highlight Jesus’ crucifixion the day before the Sabbath and his being raised to new life on the day after the Sabbath. (For an examination of how John’s resurrection account works with motifs from Gen. 1-2, see my forthcoming paper “Like The Angels? Reimagining Sexuality in God’s Future.”) The celebration of the Lord’s Day on the first day of the new week elsewhere in the New Testament may be seen in the light of an eschatological view of history. In Christ, Israel’s meaning and humanity’s meaning find fulfilment redemptively and creationally because Jesus, as “Son of God” (an Old Testament term for Israel and for Israel’s representative king) and as ‘New Adam’, keeps the covenant with God previously broken through human idolatry. The Lord’s Day is the first day of a *new* week and the *first* day of a new week (cf. Jn. 20:1). This latter emphasis (read within the former) points to the redemptive historical calling of the ‘Body of Christ’ (an all-too-familiar term on which see the final section below).

<sup>10</sup> Theologically, this means that the ‘grace restores nature’ understanding of redemption that characterizes important expressions of Reformed and Reformational thinking is inadequate. Here, I see affinities between my approach and that of Herman Bavinck, Abraham Kuyper’s successor at the *Vrije Universiteit*, Amsterdam. In his “Translator’s Preface” (i-ii) to Jan Veenhof, “Nature and Grace in Bavinck” (Toronto: ICS, nd), a translation of Jan Veenhof, *Revelatie En Inspiratie* (Amsterdam: Buijten en Schipperheijn, 1968), 345-365, Albert M. Wolters uses this phrase (“grace restores nature”) twice of Herman Bavinck. Yet in the translation itself, Bavinck is cited on p. 20 as saying, “Grace *restores* nature *and* raises it to its highest *fulfilment*, but it does not add a new, heterogeneous component to it” and “There is a movement from creation through redemption to sanctification and glorification. The point of arrival *returns* to the point of departure, and is simultaneously a high point *elevated* high above the point of departure.” My emphases. (The first citation is [translated] from Herman Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, III (Kampen: J. H. Bos, 1898), 582. The second is from Bavinck’s *Our Reasonable Faith: A Survey of Christian Doctrine*, trans. Henry

um that responds to and is built upon the gift and call of creation, and in the transcendental direction as the *adventus* that comes to us as the promise and call of the eschaton. This latter future, or to put it more accurately: this eschatological direction to the future, is not a *telos* we move towards out of the past. This is the coming future brought into existence through hope.

In this inaugural lecture, I will explore these themes in terms of biblical theology, which I see as part of foundational or fundamental theology (having offered a more philosophically-focused discussion elsewhere).<sup>11</sup> After exploring the creational and eschatological directions of existence further in terms of the gender symbolism found in Gen. 2 and elsewhere, I will briefly turn to what is arguably the central topic of systematic theo-

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Zylstra (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1977), 144). See the discussion of Wolters' interpretation of Bavinck in Syd Hielema, "Herman Bavinck's Eschatological Understanding Of Redemption" (Unpublished Th. D Thesis, Wycliffe College, Toronto School of Theology, 1998), 260-265 and 284, n. 313. For Hielema's discussion of "elevation" in Bavinck, see 284ff. As "elevation" (like *theosis* in the Eastern Orthodox tradition) can imply a denaturing of creation, I prefer Bavinck's reference to "glorification." Cf. my claim above that God as "all in all" refers to the eschaton, not creation in the beginning, and cf. the reference to 'new creation' as more than 'creation', in n. 40 below. For the newness that is not heterogeneous but also not 'more of the same', see the discussion in the Appendix.

Ironically, Brian J. Walsh in "Theology Of Hope And The Doctrine Of Creation: An Appraisal of Jürgen Moltmann" in *The Evangelical Quarterly* 59/1 (January, 1987): 53-76, follows Wolters' misreading of Bavinck to oppose Bavinck's view of the nature-grace relationship to that of Moltmann on pp. 61-62. In my view, Bavinck represents a point of contact between Moltmann and the Kuyperian tradition worthy of further exploration. See my 2005 *Vrije Universiteit* PhD dissertation, *The Annihilation of Hell: Universal Salvation and the Redemption of Time in the Eschatology of Jürgen Moltmann* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, forthcoming). Hielema detected 'Bavinckian' tendencies in my own work (see *ibid.*, 241-242) long before I did. I am happy to express my gratitude here.

<sup>11</sup> For a philosophical exploration, see my "Foundational and Transcendental Time: An Essay" in Ronald A. Kuipers and Janet Catherina Wesselius, eds., *Philosophy As Responsibility: A Celebration of Hendrik Hart's Contribution to the Discipline* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2002), chapter 5, 63-79 and also my *The Annihilation Of Hell*, chap. 5. In that context, I also argued that the way the past is taken up into the present in the foundational direction of time points to a new way of conceiving of 'immanence', while the way the future transcends the present which anticipates it in the transcendental direction of time points to a new conception of 'transcendence.' Given the two directions to time, one may speak of creation's immanence and transcendence and also the immanence and transcendence of God's presence. Transcendence is not 'closer' to God than immanence in this understanding.

Although this philosophy of time has decisively influenced the present discussion, in this study I will explore the foundational/transcendental distinction in terms of 'biblical theology.' I recognize that the nature and even possibility of biblical theology is much debated and variously interpreted (cf. James Barr's extensive survey and discussion, *The Concept Of Biblical Theology: An Old Testament Perspective* (London: SCM Press, 1999) and the constructive proposals in two works by Francis Watson, *Text, Church And World: Biblical Interpretation in Theological Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994) and *Text And Truth: Redefining Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997)). Before indicating my own conception of biblical theology, I should say something about 'theology' itself, as this is also notoriously hard to define.

Put all-too-briefly, 'theology' as a field attends to the God/world relationship by focusing on (a) the nature of (and norm for) faith and hope (the correlation between faith/hope and revelation, both true and false), and (b) the relationship between faith/hope and belief(s), in the context of exploring (c) the relationship between faith/hope and love—which is to say Life in the deepest and broadest (and biblical) sense.

I understand 'biblical theology' as the thematically focused sifting of Scripture with a view to articulating theological connections in terms of biblical motifs. In my view, biblical theology is prolegomenal to a 'systematic theology' in which we work on the conceptual coherence of our web of beliefs. Although it has its own theological focus, in my view biblical theology should be attentive to and funded by the pre-scientific and in that sense pre-theological reading of Scripture that Henry Vander Goot wishes to honour in

logy: Christology.

### Genesis in Two Directions

It is well known that the days of Gen. 1 are interrelated thematically, Day One to Day Four, Day Two to Day Five, and Day Three to Day Six. This leaves Day Seven, the Sabbath, which may be related to verses 1-2 before Day One.<sup>12</sup> Sabbath fulfilment is thus contrasted and correlated with the theme of beginning and original emptiness. In this sense, the Sabbath is the ‘end’ of God’s primordial work, ‘end’ meaning goal rather than termination. To borrow once more from Moltmann and from the title of his recent work: *In The End—The Beginning*.<sup>13</sup> Sabbath, in bringing to an ‘end’ God’s creative “Let there be”s, is itself a beginning, a transition, to the first human week.<sup>14</sup>

Another way to see that God is not “all in all” in the beginning is to examine the “Let there be light” of Day One. Created before the sun and the moon on Day Four, this is best interpreted as referring to the Light of God’s Glory,<sup>15</sup> as reflected by the greater

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his *Interpreting The Bible In Theology And The Church* (New York and Toronto: Edwin Mellen Press, 1984), a work that explores Hermann Dooyeweerd’s (in my judgment) problematically articulated yet extremely valuable distinction between naïve experience and theoretical thought. Biblical theology may then be a vital part of ‘fundamental theology’ and may also be an area of theology that can be of vital interest and relevance to Christian scholars working in the non-theological disciplines. Hence the focus of the present study.

<sup>12</sup> It is interesting, in the light of the gender symbolism explored later in this study and in the light of the eschatological significance of the Sabbath explored here, that in the Jewish tradition the Sabbath was and is seen as a Queen and Bride in relation to (male) Israel. See Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1951), 51-62. This was suggested in part because the preceding six days are all paired. The structure of Gen. 1 in this respect has been set out in many places, including Henri Blocher, *In The Beginning: The Opening Chapters of Genesis*, trans. David G. Preston (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984), 54-55. The double significance of the Sabbath that I go on to propose is not part of this tradition of interpretation.

<sup>13</sup> See Jürgen Moltmann, *In The End—The Beginning: The Life of Hope*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2004). The pairing of the Sabbath with Gen. 1:1-2 suggested above fits with the idea that the Sabbath is an ending which is also a beginning.

<sup>14</sup> We may also read Gen. 2:4ff. ‘within’ (Day Six of) the creation week of Gen. 1. See n. 9 above. The phrase found in 2:4a “These are the generations of the heavens and the earth” has been a source of contention because some take it as pointing forwards to what follows (in line with other occurrences of the *toledot* formula in Gen. 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 11:10, 11:27, 25:12, 25:19, 36:1 and 9, 37:2) while others see it as summarizing what has gone before. Here we can contrast the text layout of the NIV with that of the NRSV. Perhaps like the Sabbath, 2:4a may be best understood as having a double significance.

<sup>15</sup> Interpreting the light of Gen. 1:3 as the Light of God’s Glory is a position that several contemporary commentators come close to endorsing. Nahum M. Sarna in *Genesis*. The JPS Torah Commentary series (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 7, notes that in the rabbinic tradition, this Light is seen as “the effulgent splendour of the Divine Presence”, specifically citing Genesis Rabba 3:4. He also refers to Ps. 104:2. Gordon Wenham, in his *Genesis 1-15*. Word Biblical Commentary, 1 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 18, refers to Ps. 56:14, Isa. 9:1, Prov. 6:23 and Exod. 10:23 having observed that “light is often used metaphorically for life, salvation, the commandments, and the presence of God.” One can also see a strong connection between light and glory in Isa. 58:8; 60:1, 13, 19; Lk. 2:32; Heb. 1:3 and Rev. 21:1, 24. The connection with Gen. 1 is most explicit in 2 Cor. 4:6: “For God, who said “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” Cf. Margaret Barker, *On Earth As It Is In Heaven: Temple Symbolism in the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), chap. 2 and the discussion of light imagery in Watson, *Text And Truth*, 281-284.

If the light/Glory connection is accepted, it need not be problematic that Gen. 1:3 refers to

and lesser lights as they “rule” over the day and night respectively.<sup>16</sup> This forms a precursor to the human rule described on Day Six. The Light shines in the darkness, to use the language of John’s prologue.<sup>17</sup> In our idolatry, the darkness would seem to gain the power to resist the light (Jn. 1:5b). But in the beginning it is not evil. Creation is on the move to glory.<sup>18</sup> The call to humanity to fill the earth in Gen. 1:26-28 is the call to fertility within the wider call to fill the earth with God’s presence by guiding history to its fulfilment.

Further exegetical support for an ‘eschatologically open’ view of creation in which existence is called and empowered not only to live out of the gift of its beginnings but also towards and in response to the promise of its coming fulfilment can be seen in

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something that is created, I suggest. After all, Wisdom seems to be divine in some sense and yet is also “created” according to Prov. 8:22, though this is a point about which the various translations differ (the NRSV has “created” but the NIV has “brought forth” while the AV has “possessed”). If Wisdom here is “the first of [God’s] acts of long ago” (NRSV) or the “first of his works” (NIV), this may be understood as referring to the same reality as Gen. 1:3 (cf. Prov. 8:22-31), whether we take *re’shit* as “first” in importance or “first” in a chronological sense or both. If *qanani* earlier in the verse is taken as “created” (rather than as birthed/begotten or acquired/possessed) as it is in the NRSV and most translations, this provides additional support. So how can either Glory or Wisdom be both divine and created? If creation is called to reveal the presence of God, to make God present, to speak of and for God, to be God’s presence, to be God (so to speak), then biblical language may not be as hard to understand as we might first think. Seeing God’s presence as ‘creational’ (and ‘eschatological’ in the sense I am exploring in this study) also helps make sense of God’s incarnation in, indeed as, flesh and blood.

Another possibility is that *qanani* in v. 22 means that God ‘acquires’—or, to use a non-possessive term, ‘embraces’—Wisdom in line with how the verb is translated in Prov. 1:5; 4:5, 7; 16:16 and 23:23 with respect to human beings. Cf. n. 40 below. This could then mean that Wisdom for God and humanity lies in the deepening of the covenant relationship, an interpretation that coheres well with the covenantal interpretation of the tree of knowledge of good and evil proposed in my “The Call Of Wisdom/The Voice Of The Serpent”, 40-41. Perhaps correlating Wisdom/wisdom (or God’s Wisdom and Creation’s Wisdom) with the two sides of the covenant can be related to the suggestion I make about the ‘bi-vocalizability’ of Prov. 8:30 in n. 24 below.

In my view, the Wisdom figure in Proverbs is best understood as the way in which the voice of creation may become the Voice of God to those who listen in faith (cf. Roland E. Murphy, *The Tree Of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 138-139.) The phenomenon of ‘creational revelation’, I suggest, need not be identified with some kind of ‘creation order.’ Though ‘creation order’ thinking has allowed many important things to be said in the Reformed tradition, this can be the result of imposing the ‘universal’ language of philosophical realism onto the confessional use of political—not ontological!—law metaphors in Scripture. This tendency can be seen in Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, “The Book Of Proverbs: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible, Volume V* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), 17-264, especially 86-104 (on Prov. 8-9). Overall, the metaphors in Prov. 8-9 hardly suggest an understanding of female Wisdom as *Ordnung*. “Who has ever sued for, or been pursued by order”, asks Roland Murphy (on p. 9 of his “Wisdom And Creation” in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 104/1 (1985): 3-11), “even in the surrogate form of a woman?” Richard J. Clifford’s “Introduction To Wisdom Literature” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible, Volume V* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), 1-16 also connects biblical wisdom to order in several places, yet his frequent qualifying of this association is revealing. It is true that many major wisdom scholars have made order central to their conception of wisdom in Proverbs, not least Gerhard von Rad in his important work *Wisdom In Israel* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1972). But it is to von Rad’s reading in particular that Murphy’s apt question is posed.

<sup>16</sup> See Gen. 1:16. It seems that every contemporary commentary on Genesis makes the claim that the non-occurrence of the terms “sun” and “moon” is a relativization of their status given their idolatrous significance in the ancient Near East. The relation to Divine Glory and the language of ruling and separating in 1:16-18 might be better read as an affirmation of their special status: “God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. God set them in the dome of



the distinction between “image” and “likeness” in Gen. 1:26. Most commentators today reject the view, most famously associated with Irenaeus in the second century, that “image” is creational while “likeness” is eschatological,<sup>19</sup> preferring to take these terms as an example of synonymous parallelism.<sup>20</sup> But although God says, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness”, the following verses mention “image” twice while “likeness” does not appear.<sup>21</sup>

It is not until Gen. 3:22 that we hear God say, “See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil.”<sup>22</sup> This coheres well with the interpretation of the tree of knowledge as intended for humanity at the right time in the right context. In this reading

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the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness.” (For the biblical connection between glory and ruling, see also 1 Chron. 29:11; Job 19:9; Ps. 8:5; 24:10; 29:9; 57:5, 11; 97; 108:5, 113:4; Dan 7:14; Mt 19:28; 24:30; 25:31; Mk 10:37; Rev. 4:11; 5:1.) This does not sound like a defensive relativization to me. The ordinary terms “sun” and “moon” would seem to be passed over in order to emphasize their role as “great” (!) lights. In addition, G. K. Beale in his most helpful work *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Downers Grove, IL.: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 34, points out that the term for “light” in its 10 other occurrences in the Pentateuch refers to the lights on the tabernacle lampstand, implying that the cosmos in Gen. 1 is seen as a cosmic temple just as the temple is seen to represent the cosmos.

The sun and moon play an important role in 1 Cor. 15, a passage which I believe strongly supports my claim that the fulfilment of creation cannot be understood simply in terms of what is implicit in creation's original blessing but must also be seen in the light of God's eschatological promise. (See n. 10 above for the related claim that a merely restorationist view of redemption is inadequate). In vv. 40-41, Paul contrasts the glory of the earthly body with the glory of the heavenly bodies in the sense of the sun, moon and stars. In vv. 47-49, he then contrasts the man from dust with the man from heaven, clearly connecting Jesus' resurrection body with the bodies that reflect the light of God's glory. The reference in v. 44 to the “spiritual” body in this context means that we will be animated by the life-giving spirit of the Last Adam (see v. 45). So the creation of Adam is recapitulated (cf. Gen. 2:7), but recapitulation does not mean repetition or restoration as this New Creation must be seen in the Light of Glorification.

<sup>17</sup> See Jn. 1:5. It is interesting that in her consistently non-eschatological focus on what I am calling the foundational direction, that Catherine Keller, in her *Face Of The Deep: A Theology of Becoming* (London: Routledge, 2003), 202, claims that in Gen. 1:3, “light is first a part or potential within the darkness-on-the-face.” But while both the land (1:20) and earth (1:24) “bring forth” life, suggesting (co-)creation in the foundational direction, the Light of Gen. 1:3-4 would seem to shine in(to) the darkness rather than emerging from it. There would thus seem to be a parallel between 1:4 and 1:14. The light of Gen. 1:3 brings the time of primordial darkness to an end whilst also being a beginning of something new. It is thus an ending/beginning that parallels the Sabbath (cf. nn. 9 and 13 above). This is echoed in the evening/morning (not morning/evening) structure to the six days (see Gen. 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). The themes of beginning and fulfilment (a fulfilment which is an ending/new beginning) are thus expressed in Gen. 1-2 in terms of Days 1-6/Sabbath and darkness/light. If we see Light here as eschatological, then it is not a *telos* that emerges from what is prior but itself has eschatological power to call the origin into be(com)ing. This side to becoming seems to be largely absent in the reductionistic models of creation developed in classical theism, open theism, and process theology. Keller's sympathy for the latter fits her exegesis.

<sup>18</sup> Speaking of creation being on the way to glory highlights the way in which glory can be heard as an eschatological term. For an eschatological reading of Light/light, see n. 17 above.

Seeing the “Let there be light” as the Light of God's Glory, which will in time fill all things as God becomes all in all and as creation is brought to its fulfilment, can also help us with finding an alternative interpretation of a central theme in Reformed dogmatics. Reformed theology is famous for the emphasis that it places on the ‘eternal decree.’ In this theological tradition, God's will for election and reprobation is situated beyond time and (in a special non-temporal sense) ‘prior to’ creation via an appeal to biblical passages that refer to God's will or action “before” the foundation/creation of the earth. For a lucid and succinct discussion, see Philip C. Holtrop, “Decree(s) Of God” in Donald K. McKim, ed., *The Westminster Handbook To Reformed Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 54-56. But this

the serpent, prior to its being pulled into a human idolatry that would seize knowledge apart from covenant, may be seen as the wisest rather than as the craftiest of the wild animals (as the Hebrew easily allows). In the folly of our autonomy, however, wisdom is severed from covenant to become foolishness. Gift and call become curse and temptation. I have argued for a covenantal approach to the tree of knowledge in detail elsewhere.<sup>23</sup> Here I will just mention that the only other linguistically explicit reference to this kind of knowledge in the Pentateuch is to be found in Deut. 1:39 in relation to children who are too young to know the difference between good and evil. This supports an intertextual argument (rather than a lexicographical one) that this knowledge and likeness is something that is not originally given but nevertheless promised: a likeness that humanity is to grow

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biblical phrase (found according to the NRSV in Jn. 17:24, Eph. 1:4 and 1 Pet. 1:20; this translation has “from” the foundation of the earth in Mt. 25:34, Rev. 13:8 and 17:8. Cf. the “since” of Heb. 9:26) does not, in my judgment, mean prior to creation, or prior to Gen. 1:1. In the opening chapter of the Bible, the earth is not formed, and thus the foundations for life in that sense not established, until Day Three. This allows for the possibility of a theology in tune with such ‘before the foundation’ biblical passages having its beginning not in a timeless eternity but with the first “Let there be” of God’s Glory, a Glory which will indeed shine throughout creation, thus grounding our faith and hope.

When election is mentioned in these “before” and “from the foundation” passages, this may (and I would argue, should) be read not first and foremost as election to salvation (with non-election to salvation being implicit for others) but as a being chosen to reflect the light of God’s Glory to others. Although Exod. 19:5b-6a in the NRSV reads: “*Indeed* the whole earth is mine, *but* you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation”, the Hebrew is best understood to say: ‘*Because* the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation’ (my emphases. Cf. the translation suggestions for v. 5 and v. 6 in Wayne A. Meeks, Gen. ed., *The HarperCollins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), 114). Here priesthood implies mediation between God and the nations. On the shift, engendered by the golden calf event, from the kingdom of priests to a kingdom with priests and to a more separatist notion of holiness after Exod. 32 (a shift that must not be read back into Exod. 19:5-6—here 1 Pet. 2:9-12 is instructive), see the helpful and important discussion of Sailhamer, “Appendix B: Compositional Strategies in the Pentateuch.”

Holtrop concludes his article (*ibid.*, 56) by saying: “One thing is clear: One’s view of the decree lies at the heart of what it means to be Reformed.” I agree. Consequently my vision for what it means to be Reformational in theology involves taking to heart the first and thus foundational “Let there be” of Gen. 1:3 and allowing that Light to fill all in all.

<sup>19</sup> Claus Westermann in his *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press, 1984), 148, claims that Irenaeus was the first to clearly distinguish between *imago* and *similitudo*, thereby placing him at the beginning of an extremely widespread tradition that Westermann notes has been decisively rejected especially in modern Protestant theology. As for the basis for the distinction in Gen. 1:26, Westermann, in *ibid.*, 149, claims (in 1974) that exegetically, “There is unanimity in the abandonment of the distinction.” Without wishing to deny the influence of Irenaeus, we should note that Paul’s earlier distinction between “image” and “glory” in 1 Cor. 11:2-16, on which see below (including n. 49), also represents a differentiated reading of Gen. 1:26. I believe that this can be exegetically (and not just theologically) defended.

Irenaeus’ distinction (evident in his *Adversus Haereses*) may be best known today via the reference made to it by John Hick in his widely read essay “An Irenaean Theodicy” in Stephen T. Davis, ed., *Encountering Evil: Live Options in Theodicy* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1981), chap. 2, 39-52 (especially 41-42). Cf. *Encountering Evil: Live Options in Theodicy*. A New Edition (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), chap. 2, 38-52 (especially 40-41). I would wish to be “Irenaean” in a different way and would reject Hick’s theodicy for similar reasons to those put forward in the latter volume by D. Z. Phillips (see *ibid.*, 56-58 and his “Theism Without Theodicy” in *ibid.*, 145-161, especially 147-152).

In Andrew Louth, ed., *Genesis 1-11*. Ancient Christian Commentary, Old Testament 1 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 29-30, the authors cite Origen, *On First Principles* 3.6.1 and Diadochus of Photice, *On Spiritual Perfection* 4 as exemplifying the widespread acceptance among the Greek Fathers of an image/likeness distinction. I would differ from the Patristic tradition inasmuch as it tended to

into.<sup>24</sup>

Gen. 2 ends with the well-known words: “And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.” It is one of the joys of the Song of Songs that the garden in this sense remains within God’s world after the fall.<sup>25</sup> But the theme of nakedness is complex in the Book of Genesis and beyond. When God clothes the human couple in Gen. 3:21, this is not just an act of mercy but moves the story on historically.<sup>26</sup> Because the God that humanity is called to image is clothed in glory in the Old Testament theophanies, it has been suggested that Adam and Eve were never intended to remain in this

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identify “image” with something structural and given and “likeness” with something to be ethically established and dynamic. (This became a standard assumption in the Augustinian tradition for many centuries, and in different terminology entered Reformed theology as the distinction between the ‘broad’ and ‘narrow’ image of God). I also find the language of natural and supernatural, traditionally applied to the *imago/similitudo* distinction, to be very unhelpful and problematic. But I am happy to find and acknowledge the points of contact.

<sup>20</sup> Hick himself accepts the synonymous parallelism exegetically (though not theologically). See pp. 42 and 41 of the respective editions of his “An Irenaean Theodicy.” In addition to Westermann, *ibid.*, 149, cf. the confidence with which Sarna in *Genesis*, 12 asserts that the two terms are “virtually identical in meaning.” Some scholars see “likeness” as modifying “image”, as J. Richard Middleton notes in his important recent study, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2005), 46, but this is still an undifferentiated reading from my point of view. Middleton’s focus on “image” after the discussion of 45-48 does not lead him down the avenues I am exploring (despite the potential convergence of pp. 21 and 107, n. 51). Although Middleton’s work exhibits a Reformational sensitivity that extends the Reformed tradition in a vital contemporary way, my creational/eschatological reading attempts to further that tradition in a way that is more specifically consonant with the Reformed theology of Herman Bavinck. See n. 10 above.

<sup>21</sup> In Gen., image and likeness appear separately and together as follows:

1:26	image and likeness
1:27a	image
1:27b	image
3:5	like(ness)
3:22	like(ness)
5:1	likeness
5:3	likeness and image
9:6b	image

Although the word for “like” in 3:5 and 3:22 is different from 1:26, 5:1 and 5:3, the thematic connection is strongly present throughout, I suggest.

<sup>22</sup> This confirms 3:5 and is the first time God uses the language of likeness since 1:26. Cf. n. 21 above.

<sup>23</sup> See my “The Call of Wisdom/The Voice of the Serpent.” There is precedent for seeing the tree of knowledge in this positive light in the early (second century AD?) *Epistle To Diognetus* 12 (though the traditional interpretation of the serpent is adhered to here). The relevant passage may be found in Andrew Louth, ed., *Early Christian Writings: The Apostolic Fathers*, trans., Maxwell Stamford and Andrew Louth (London: Penguin, 1987), 150. It is interesting that M. D. Stafleu, in his “Being Human In The Cosmos” in *Philosophia Reformata* 65 (1991): 101-131, sees knowing the difference between good and evil as characterizing what it means to be uniquely human (see *ibid.*, 119, though his understanding of Genesis in *ibid.*, 121-122 differs greatly from the approach I explore in “The Call of Wisdom/The Voice of the Serpent”). Cf. n. 24 below.

<sup>24</sup> The theme of maturity, of being vitalized not just by the gift of life but also by growing towards the promise of new life, may also be seen in Gen. 5:1 where humanity’s creation in the likeness (not image) of God is emphasized in relation to the promise and gift associated with the birth of Seth in the likeness and image (the text uses this ‘reverse’ order) of Adam in 5:3. To anticipate the theme of Christology in the final

original state of innocence.<sup>27</sup> Beginnings are important and good. But we are to live *out* of the past, not *in* it. Humanity was supposed to grow, without sin, ‘out of’ and thus beyond an original innocence into the likeness of God who, in the language of Ps. 104:1-2, is “clothed with honour and majesty, wrapped in light as with a garment.”<sup>28</sup>

Before picking up many of these themes in the context of gender symbolism, I will mention one other way in which the idea of an ‘eschatologically open’ view of creation is present in the opening chapters of Genesis: in the theme of macrocosm/microcosm. This will help us appreciate the ‘eschatologically open’ character of the New Creation also.

If we read Gen. 2 in the light of Gen. 1:28, the four rivers flowing from the centre

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section, Luke’s genealogy of Jesus ends (in Lk. 3:28) with the words “son of Seth, son of Adam, son of God.” In the letter to the Hebrews, growth and maturity/maturation in Jesus’ own existence is emphasized, there taking on redemptive significance. Thus in Heb. 5:8-9, it is stated, “Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.”

One might also consider connecting the preceding discussion about Wisdom and maturity to the reference to the knowledge of good and evil in 1 Ki. 3:9, for it is surely significant that Solomon in the preceding verse refers to himself as a “little child”, not least because the Wisdom figure in Prov. 8:30 may also be a “little child”—a translation possibility noted in, e.g., the NRSV margin based on the re-vocalization of the highly obscure term *amon* as *amun*. (For a helpful overview of translation challenges in Prov. 8:30 and 8:22 [cf. n. 15 above], see Kathleen A. Farmer, *Who Knows What Is Good? A Commentary on the Books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 53-56.). Wisdom, we might say, reveals the distinction between the childlike and the childish in a particular way. ‘Wisdom calls for wisdom’, so to speak. To receive Her, we need the trust and wonder of a child. In Wisdom we are then led to maturity in the discernment between good and evil, wisdom and folly.

Terence E. Fretheim, in his *God And World In The Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2005), 214-215 rejects the reading of “little child” in favour of “master worker”, thus re-vocalizing *amon* as *omman*, mainly because scholars who adopt the former do not sufficiently recognize “Wisdom as Created Co-creator” (*ibid.*, 213) in this passage. But this admitted oversight is not required by the “little child” reading. An alternative to “master worker” is “adviser” (thus Van Leeuwen, “Proverbs”, 94-95; a possibility that coheres well with what I suggest regarding God’s “embrace” of Wisdom in n. 15 above and n. 40 below). It is also worth considering whether master worker/advisor and playful child are not both implied—a bi-vocalization of the Hebrew consonants being wisely called-for—as a way to connote both the co-creative and responsive sides of creation. Given Jesus’ profound understanding of God as Child in Mk. 9:36-37 and given the leadership role associated with the child of Isa. 11:6, these two sides to Wisdom might be very closely related. Perhaps it is through Wisdom’s childlike, joyful response that God receives advice from creation. Can we not read “And God saw that the light was good” in Gen 1:4, and the similar language found in 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25 and 31 in this covenantal sense? Is it only a theological *a priori* that would prevent us from seeing God’s own embrace of wisdom here?

If Wisdom begins as a little child, she is now ‘Woman Wisdom’ (in e.g., Prov. 8:1, 32) and so has come to maturity, a possibility that Fretheim too quickly dismisses. But his reference to Num. 11:12, in *ibid.*, 354, n. 63, for the “little child” reading (1 Ki 3:8 uses a different term, though thematically it should not be overlooked) opens up the possibility of a parallel with Israel who is also called to be(come) mature and wise. (In this passage, Moses implies that the Mother of the nursing child is God, whom he addresses with a feminine pronoun in 11:15—an issue I intend to address in a separate paper. Cf. the discussion in Lisa Guenther, *The Gift Of The Other: Levinas and the Politics of Reproduction* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006), 129-140, esp. 135-136 and the comments cited there on the feminine pronoun by Rashi and Nachmanides. In a canonically sensitive reading, the mothering role to which Moses appeals in his outburst to God is later invoked by the people in their appeal to Moses in Deut. 5:27, where the pronoun provides a catchword connection between the two passages. In both Deut. 5 and Num. 11, Israel would seem to resist a mature covenant relationship.) In n. 15 above, I suggested there was a relationship between the Wisdom of Prov. 8:22 as the first of God’s creations and the Light of God’s Glory in Gen.

of Eden beyond the Garden (2:10-14) indicate that Adam and Eve and their descendants were called to respond to the Spirit and Word of Life,<sup>29</sup> taking that Life beyond paradise to the ends of the earth in and as the course of history. Eden was thus established as a microcosm of and for creation.

The many points of connection between the Garden and the Temple point in the same direction.<sup>30</sup> Not only was the Temple structured to represent the creation, but the tabernacle and subsequent temples are part of a story in which God's presence, though initially limited to the holy of holies, was to be extended worldwide as we see in the eschatological temple of Rev. 21. This may be understood in the most expansive sense imaginable. Working with the idea that the Garden of Gen. 2 is a microcosm of and for the world, we can say that when the present creation is finally purged of evil in the coming of God's kingdom, creation-as-*the-earth* may itself be seen as an Eden, a microcosm, in relation to creation-as-*the-entire-(macro)-cosmos*.<sup>31</sup>

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1:3. Wisdom calls for(th) wisdom. Israel in keeping covenant is called to be a light to the Gentiles and a revelation of God's wisdom to the world. This understanding lies behind Paul's critique of Israel in Rom. 2:1ff. (read in context) and is implied in texts that see Jesus as incarnating Wisdom, such as 1 Cor. 1:24.

<sup>25</sup> The contrast between Gen. 3:16b and Song of Songs 7:10 is surely deliberate and significant. In the former, we hear God's description of (not prescription for!) the fallen world in the words addressed to the woman: "yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." In the latter text, the young woman whose voice and experience are central to the entire book declares, "I am my beloved's, and his desire is for me." Cf. the successive titles to chapters 4 and 5 in Phyllis Trible, *God And The Rhetoric Of Sexuality* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1978), in which "A Love Story Gone Awry" makes way for "Love's Lyrics Redeemed."

<sup>26</sup> The same redemptive dynamics may be discerned in the Babel narrative. See David Smith, "What Hope After Babel? Diversity and Community in Gen 11:1-9, Exod 1:1-14, Zeph 3:1-13 and Acts 2:1-13" in *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 18:2 (1996): 169-191.

<sup>27</sup> This is noted by Meredith G. Kline, one of the most creative Reformed OT scholars, in his *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Overland Park, KS: Two Age Press, 2000), 77 and *Images Of The Spirit* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1999 [1980]), 31-32.

<sup>28</sup> David W. Cotter in *Genesis. Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative and Poetry* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2003), 36, n. 21, cites numerous biblical texts in which the garment provided by God in Gen. 3:21 (a *kuttōnet*) signifies authority. The good movement towards being clothed in glory can be seen in Gen. 37:3 (his first example), not least because the relationship between Joseph and his brothers symbolizes Israel in relation to the nations (a theme explored in my "Commentary: Genesis 27:29, Isaiah 60:14-16 and Genesis 32:27-30" in *Third Way* 25/6 (August 2002): 16). As Noah is portrayed as the one in whom the image of God is renewed after the Flood narrative (Gen. 9:1-19), this motif may explain why the uncovering of his nakedness (Gen. 9: 20ff.) is an issue. Cf. 1 Sam. 19:24 in relation to the loss of kingship. The references to the white robes in Rev. 3:5, 3:18, 4:4, 6:11 and to nakedness in Rev. 3:17-18 and 16:15 can be read in this light also, as can Paul's discussion of resurrection in 2 Cor. 5:1-10. On the connection of clothing with light and glory, see Barker, *On Earth As It Is In Heaven*, chap. 5.

<sup>29</sup> I see the Spirit/Word of Life as the Gift/Call (the *aufgabe* in German) of Life in the creational/foundational direction and as the Promise/Call (the *promissio* in Latin) of Life in the eschatological/transcendental direction. Cf. n. 11 above.

<sup>30</sup> To cite just two examples, the gold and precious stones of Gen. 2:12 and the east-facing entrance of Gen. 2:8 can easily be related to the Temple. For a full discussion, see Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 66-80. This work is also important for emphasizing the expanding, cosmic, eschatological significance of the Temple. See *ibid.*, 81-169 *et passim*.

<sup>31</sup> D. Vaden House in his "For The Birds: Science and Religion in Critical Perspective" in Ronald A. Kuipers and Janet Catherina Wesselius, eds., *Philosophy As Responsibility: A Celebration of Hendrik Hart's Contribution to the Discipline* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2002), chapter 10, 151-

With the dawn of the eschaton, history, in the full cosmic sense, will have barely begun. Paul speaks of us being transformed ‘from glory to glory’ (2 Cor. 3:18<sup>32</sup>), suggesting an ongoing process. If glory is a dynamic category, then so too is fulfilment. In this sense, we could speak of multiple *eschata* or, alternatively, we could picture the arrival of ‘the eschaton’ which marks *the* historical end of evil as the coming of a New Creation which itself is ‘eschatologically open’. World without end, Amen.

### Gender Symbolism in Two Directions

The distinction between the foundational or creational direction and the transcendental or eschatological direction is symbolized for us in the gender distinction of Gen. 2. In Adam and Eve, we see our humanity, made in the image and towards the likeness of God, in its creational and eschatological meaning.<sup>33</sup>

This distinction is supported by the ring structure of the narrative. In the generation or birthing into history attributed to the heavens and the earth in 2:4, Adam<sup>34</sup> is

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169, asks (on p. 160), “Can we take the faith dream of an end to death as we once might have in the face of our ecological knowledge of the limits of ecosystems and in relation to what we know about population growth?” If our faith vision embraces the cosmos beyond the earth, then “what we [might] know” need not limit resurrection faith.

<sup>32</sup> This more literal translation (cf. the *New Jerusalem Bible*) is to be preferred over the NRSV’s “from one degree of glory to another” as the latter supplies terms that seem indebted to the unbiblical notion of the ‘great chain of being.’ For the impact of the latter on the history of theology, see Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain Of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1948).

<sup>33</sup> Exploring the distinction/relationship between creation and eschaton in terms of gender has advantages and disadvantages. While gender may capture everyone’s attention, its power to illustrate, express and symbolize certain themes may become problematic due to our own convictions about what we believe may and may not be said or implied about gender and sexuality in a (would-be) normative sense. If we find ourselves relating to the symbolism I am exploring without difficulty, it is important to remember that (however we evaluate this) we also live in a world in which *gender* includes the reality of *trans-gender* and in which *sexuality* includes the presence of a number of *sexualities*. In the Appendix below, I suggest that the male-female covenant has a central role in the biblical tradition in large part because the gift of fertility and descendants was experienced as one of the most central of God’s blessings. The way this is relativized within Scripture, I suggest, is related to the way the meaning of these texts expands as the New Covenant dawns.

While the full meaning of the creation-eschaton distinction/relationship should not and cannot be enclosed within the gender symbolism I am exploring (cf. my discussion of the pre-theoretical discourse of the Bible in the Appendix), this is not to say that the male/female distinction/relationship is ‘merely’ symbolic. While language is thoroughly metaphorical in my understanding, a symbol is a particular kind of metaphor. As Paul Tillich observed in his *Dynamics Of Faith* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), 42, symbols, unlike signs, participate in the reality to which they refer. If you set fire to an American Flag and then tell the media that this is ‘only’ a symbol, you either don’t know what you are doing or don’t know what you are talking about! I use symbol in this participatory, re-presentative sense in this study.

There are six characteristics that Tillich ascribes to the symbol, all of which I find to be insightful: (1) its reference to something beyond itself, (2) its participation in what it refers to, (3) its disclosure of levels of reality that would otherwise be unknown, (4) its revelation of aspects of ourselves that correspond to that disclosure, (5) its emergence from the individual or collective unconscious, and (6) its capacity to grow and/or die (I would add, come back to life) because of its meaningfulness or lack thereof to the community in which it arose. In appealing to Tillich’s (in some ways distinctive) view of the symbolic, especially the characteristic of participatory meaning, I am hoping not only to appeal to a recognized theological understanding but also to find resonance with Catholic and Orthodox notions of sacramentality and iconicity.

<sup>34</sup> To do justice to the wordplay in the Hebrew, we might refer here, at least initially, to ‘the earthling’ who

formed first in 2:7 to be placed in the Garden when it is ready in 2:15. Then all the beasts of the field and birds of the air are formed from the ground (2:19) and the Creator who has made all things through the calling and letting be of speech waits to hear what Adam's speaking and naming will mean for the histories of the other creatures of the earth. Then and only then is the woman created. Not second, as the second sex, but Last. Or better: Finally. Creational Man; Eschatological Woman.

Underlining the idea that the creational man will not be sufficient if history is to move towards its fulfilment is the statement of 2:18 (so striking in light of the refrain of Gen. 1): "It is not good that the man should be alone." In the second half of the verse, we are told that God will "make him a helper as a partner." If we turn to lexicography at this point without reading canonically, we can miss the full significance. The argument is often made that the Hebrew term translated as "helper" occurs 21 times in the Old Testament. While some references indicate an equal, the vast majority, 16 to be precise, refer to a superior. In no case does this word refer to an inferior or mere assistant as our English term might imply. Given the fact that the helper is made as a partner to the man, the equality argument is usually seen as decisive. And it is certainly valid. But there is more to be said. Read canonically within the Pentateuch, "[H]elper" outside this passage is always a reference to God.<sup>35</sup> The "not good" of male aloneness is met by the woman who fulfils and completes. We are all more than what we symbolize.<sup>36</sup> Even symbolically, the

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will later be called Adam. Phyllis Trible sees "the earth creature" of Gen. 2 as "sexually undifferentiated" (*God And The Rhetoric Of Sexuality*, 80) until the creation of woman. I think that the "ambiguous usages and meanings" (*ibid.*, 80) that she admits to later in the narrative (including Adam as a name and as a generic term for the human couple in 3:22-24) point to nuanced meaning from the outset. Contrary to Trible, I would suggest that in the beginning, the term (in part) points to a radically incomplete male or 'male.' This makes the exclamation of 2:18 meaningful. Cf. Phyllis Bird, "Images Of Women In The Old Testament" in Rosemary Radford Ruether, ed., *Religion And Sexism: Images of Woman in the Christian and Jewish Traditions* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), 41-88, especially 87, n. 88 where Bird is clearly responding to Phyllis Trible, "Depatriarchalizing In Biblical Interpretation" in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* XLI (1973): 30-48, especially 35-38. Although Trible rejected the androgynous interpretation of her early influential essay in favour of the sexual undifferentiation mentioned above (cf. *God And The Rhetoric Of Sexuality*, 141, n. 17), Bird's original response in *ibid.*, 87, n. 88, remains relevant and insightful. After insisting that the first human is "male" from the beginning because of 2:18, she adds, "His true nature as a sexual being is manifest only as he is confronted by the woman. Thus he is at once truly male and truly man when joined by the woman." Her emphasis is exactly right in my view.

<sup>35</sup> Although Samuel Terrien in *Till The Heart Sings: A Biblical Theology of Manhood and Womanhood* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004 [1985], 10-11) would seem to read the need for redemption into Gen. 2 in his portrayal there of "Woman as Savior", his discussion does recognize the connection with God established by the reference to woman as "helper." There are four references to God as Helper elsewhere in the Pentateuch: Ex. 18:4 and Deut. 33:7, 26 and 29. Cf. the verbal form in Gen 49:25 and Deut. 32:38 (where the implied source of true help is the true God). The three references in Deut. 33 are especially significant as they occur together in Moses' final testamentary blessing of Israel very close to the end of Deuteronomy, and thus at the end of the Pentateuch. This intensifies the connection with Gen. 2, close to the beginning of the Pentateuch.

For the claim that "helper" in Gen. 2 refers to (no less than, though no more than) the woman's equal status, see Letha Dawson Scanzoni and Nancy A. Hardesty, *All We're Meant To Be: Biblical Feminism for Today*. Third Revised Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), 1992), 26-27 (an argument also made in the influential first edition of 1974). Such a view is valid, but inattention to the term within the canonical unit in which Gen. 2 is situated results in the connection between the woman and God not being recognized. Cf. n. 38 below.

<sup>36</sup> Although a symbol participates in something greater than itself (see n. 33 above), as humans we are more than anything that we might symbolically represent or make present. This is partly because we may sym-

woman is not a ‘supplement’ to the male.<sup>37</sup> In her making good what is not good ‘in itself’, she represents God who will bring fulfilment to creation and will bring creation to its fulfilment.

“Therefore”, we are told after Adam’s poem, “a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.” Cleaving, it has been noted, is usually the action of a weaker party cleaving to a stronger.<sup>38</sup> This reinforces the idea that Adam on his own is help-less. The fact that it is man who is said to leave father and mother in search of woman makes a similar point, thus introducing a theme that we see in the lives of the Patriarchs.<sup>39</sup> And just as the future in its eschatological direction comes to us out of God’s promises to meet our hope or to be met with surprise, so the woman is brought to the man by God (2:22). Adam’s response is a covenant formula that embraces both the strength and vulnerability of their humanity. “This *at last*”, he says, “is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.”<sup>40</sup>

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bolize a host of different realities at any one time, but also because the meaning of our humanity cannot be reduced to our symbolizing or even to the totality (better: infinity) of ways in which we act, experience or relate to God, self and creation.

<sup>37</sup> Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex*, trans. and ed. H. M. Parshley (New York: Bantam, 1961), is a classic feminist work not least for rightly identifying and exposing the deeply held assumption that the male is a norm that is merely complemented or supplemented by the female (see *ibid.*, xvi). On de Beauvoir’s (mis)reading of Genesis, see n. 40 below.

<sup>38</sup> Scanzoni and Hardesty in *All We’re Meant To Be*, 28 in addition to referring to Ruth’s attachment to Naomi (Ruth 1:14) and the people’s commitment to David (2 Sam. 20:2), note that there are eight references to Israel ‘cleaving’ to God. [These are Deut. 4:4; 10:20; 11:22; 13:4; 30:20; Jos. 22:5; 23:8 and 2 Ki. 18:6. Five of these, like Gen. 2:24, occur in the Pentateuch, while seven are found in the Hexateuch (Genesis–Joshua), which on literary grounds might also be considered as a canonical unit. Cf. David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure Of The Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1999), 101.] Although Scanzoni and Hardesty recognize Gen. 2:24’s implicitly matrilineal understanding of marriage, as it is the man who is said to leave father and mother to cleave to the woman, their (valid) emphasis on equality means that the full (creational/eschatological) significance of the man’s need for the woman is not fully recognized.

<sup>39</sup> See Gen. 24 and Gen. 28–29. We might connect this searching to the way creation is described as “restless” by Augustine, and also by Dooyeweerd. Cf. James H. Olthuis, “Dooyeweerd on Religion and Faith” in C.T. McIntire, ed., *The Legacy Of Herman Dooyeweerd: Reflections on Critical Philosophy in the Christian Tradition* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985), 22. But this is (as Olthuis also comments) perhaps too negative a term. The eschatological dynamic is better indicated by speaking of history as being on the move towards its fulfilment.

<sup>40</sup> Although this phrase in Gen. 2:23 might be read as implying not only that Eve finds her origin in Adam but that she is *derived* from him, this fails to do justice to at least two aspects of this part of the narrative.

Firstly, we should pay close attention to the central verb of the preceding verse (2:22): “And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman.” Although Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex*, xvi, commenting on the way woman has been seen as lacking, defective, and incidental by Aristotle and St. Thomas, claims “This is symbolized in Genesis where Eve is depicted as made from what Bousset called “a supernumerary bone” of Adam”, this misses the way in which the woman is created in her own right. Robert Alter, in his *Genesis: Translation and Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1996), 9, suggests “built” is the appropriate term for the way she is made, noting Sarna’s observation that the term for “rib” elsewhere denotes an architectural element (see Sarna, *Genesis*, 22–23). What neither Alter nor Sarna mention is that this term is used repeatedly as an element in the elaborate construction of the Temple (see 1 Ki. 6:8 [story, i.e., floor], 1 Ki. 6:15, 16 [boards], 1 Ki. 7:3 [rafters]). The term also occurs frequently with reference to a side or side room of the Tabernacle (see Exod. 25:12; 26:20, 26, 27, 35; 36:25, 31, 32 and 37:3. Cf. 1 Ki. 6:5). The connections between Gen. 2 and 1 Ki. 6 cohere strikingly with Paul’s understanding of Adam and Eve, male and female, head and glory as these relate to his organic



If the man is the beginning of creation here and if woman is the end, we must remind ourselves that in eschatology the end is the beginning. Eve's name is thus associated in 3:20 with her being "the mother of all living." As the one who brings to fruition and who births into existence, and thus as the one in whom we see a transition from end to beginning, Eve as mother embodies and represents God in her own way. Some of the most striking female imagery for God seems to pick up on these motifs. In Isa. 42:13-16, for example, Yahweh begins to speak as a warrior and then becomes a woman in the agony of childbirth, destroying the landscape before expressing a forgiveness that heals and transforms. Birthing is thus the transition. Here, I suggest, we have an important source for the idea of apocalyptic as being simultaneously the death-throes of the old world order and the birth-pangs of the new creation.<sup>41</sup>

### 1 Corinthians 11 in a New Light

One biblical passage that almost cries out for discussion in this context is 1 Cor. 11:1-16, traditionally taken as establishing a God-male-female hierarchy.<sup>42</sup> Attending to the two

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Temple theology, to be explored in the following section. Neither "supernumerary bone" nor "*Spare Rib*" (the understandably defiant title of an important feminist magazine launched in the UK in 1972) do justice to the description of the woman's creation by God in Gen. 2:22. Woman is irreducible to man; new creation is more than creation.

Secondly, although we may be inclined to see derivation as the core meaning of "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh" (Gen. 2:23), this is a covenant formula denoting a partnering across the extremes of our humanity from strength (bone) to vulnerability (flesh). This is evident in 2 Sam. 5:1. See also Gen. 29:14; Jud. 9:2; 2 Sam. 19:12, 13 and 1 Chron. 11:1. Kinship is a side to the meaning in many of these passages. This reinforces the covenantal significance and coheres with the expression and experience of solidarity, but it does not absorb it. The way the 'kinship' theme might be said to be present in Gen. 2 might best be understood with reference to the way we speak of two people being 'kindred spirits.'

It is interesting that in the Song of Songs, the lovers often use kinship terms of each other (see 4:9, 10, 12; 5:1, 2 [sister] and, in that thematic light, 8:1 [brother]). In Prov. 7:4, the same term occurs when the "son" of v. 1 (here the NIV is more literal than the NRSV which has "child") is exhorted to "Say to wisdom, 'you are my sister', and call insight your intimate friend." This interpretation of Wisdom as lover and partner (in the light of 3:18 and 8:35, we might say 'Life partner') indicates her (Her) presence in the women with whom the sons are encouraged to keep covenant in 5:18 (cf. n. 57 below on 12:4). All this deepens the significance of the call to "embrace" Wisdom discussed in nn. 15 and 24 above.

The incarnate presence of Wisdom receives the most sustained attention in the closing section of the book, the alphabetic acrostic poem of Prov. 31:10-31, which is ultimately attributed to a woman in 31:1. In the closing verses to this "heroic panegyric", to use the genre classification suggested by Al Wolters, *The Song Of The Valiant Woman: Studies in the Interpretation of Proverbs 31:10-31* (Carlisle, UK: Pater-noster Press, 2001), 12, the woman who "fears the Lord" and who is represented by the woman of the preceding verses, "is to be praised" (30:30 cf. 1:7). The final phrase, "let her works praise her in the city gates" (31:31), recalls the place where Wisdom calls out in 1: 21 and 8:3. And the Hebrew used for the "praise" that should be offered to her, *(wi)haleluhā*, witnesses to her intimate relation to the *halelu-yāh* of the Creator and Redeemer (see *ibid.*, 7). My comments about the significance of woman as Wisdom, Helper (see n. 35 above), and Glory (see nn. 40, 46 and 53 below) point to a cohering of numerous biblical passages that is extremely powerful and significant. Here, woman is to be understood as nothing less than the presence of God to man.

<sup>41</sup> Ernst Käsemann's famous claim that Jewish apocalyptic is the "mother" of early Christianity has a depth of meaning that he may not have fully realized.

<sup>42</sup> In this case, "traditionally" also means erroneously. Traditional exegesis at this point is not confined to conservative theologians. In his essay "Heterosexism And The Interpretation Of Romans 1:18-32" in Matthew Keufler, ed., *The Boswell Thesis: Essays on Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 130-151, Dale Martin asserts (140), "In the first place,

directions of time allows us to see this passage in a different light.

In response to a gender confusion<sup>43</sup> that most likely had its origin in Paul's own presence in Corinth (to which I shall return),<sup>44</sup> Paul makes his case for why the Corinthians should pray and prophesy as 'men' and 'women' by appealing to Gen. 2 in particular.

When Paul says that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God,<sup>45</sup> this reflects what I have been calling the foundational or creational direction of existence. Paul's use of head as origin seems to have grown out of his 'organicizing' of the kind of temple theology we find elsewhere in the NT, in which Christ is the cornerstone, literally the head of the corner, the foundation stone, of the new temple.<sup>46</sup> There is a special kind of honour that goes with the head in the various contexts

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Paul is here concerned to maintain the male-female hierarchy assumed to exist in the cosmos. God is to Christ as Christ is to man as man is to woman (11:3). Man is the reflection of God, and woman is the reflection of man (v. 7)." Cf. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory Of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 229 and Antoinette Clark Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990), 38 *et passim*.

Normally a great deal of argumentation is demanded to displace a traditional interpretation. I hope to develop my approach in more detail elsewhere. In what follows, I am not primarily attempting the kind of exegesis that wishes to unearth authorial intention (although I do think my argument could be extended in this way). In this context, I am interested in the more modest (and more fruitful?) goal of seeing whether this passage will 'sustain' a reading in the light of the creational /eschatological distinction I am proposing.

<sup>43</sup> It is important to read the passage in question as dealing with confusion that needs to be straightened out, as this (in my view) sets the right tone for exegesis. The issue is not insubordination, female or otherwise. Both sexes are addressed. Paul wants the Corinthians to follow his example (11:1) especially in seeking the good of others (10:32 cf. 11:17ff.). Here (in 11:1, in contrast to 11:17) he praises the Corinthians but has to deal with the confused way in which they have been influenced by his behaviour (on which see below). "I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions just as I handed them on to you", he writes in 11:1, "[B]ut I want you to understand . . . ."

This focus distinguishes this passage (1 Cor. 11:1-16) from the gender concerns of 1 Cor. 14:34-36. For a brief discussion of the latter text, see my *The Woman Will Overcome The Warrior: A Dialogue with the Christian/Feminist Theology of Rosemary Radford Ruether* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994), 144. Perhaps the most important point in my earlier discussion is the connection drawn between the "law" of v. 34 and the "law" of v. 21, which introduces a quotation from Isa. 28:11-12. This suggests that the reference to the drunken prophets in Isa. 28:7 is central to Paul's meaning in 1 Cor. 14:34-36. I have never been persuaded by the text-critical arguments that would see this passage (at least in part) as a non-Pauline interpolation. But I now think that the discussion relating to vv. 34-35 in the earlier, unreinforced text of Codex Vaticanus as summarized in Eldon Jay Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2005), 15-20, needs to be duly noted. If it is a very early marginal gloss, vv. 34-35 could still authentically respond to and thus help reveal Paul's meaning. So the (re-)interpretation of these verses remains important.

<sup>44</sup> This relates to Acts 18:18, to be discussed briefly below.

<sup>45</sup> 1 Cor. 11:3 in the NRSV reads: "But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the husband is the head of his wife, and God is the head of Christ." There is no linguistic justification for having "wife" rather than "woman" here. This is an unhelpful interpretive gloss.

<sup>46</sup> See the citation of Ps. 118:22 in Mt. 21:42, Mk. 12:10, Lk. 20:17, Acts 4:11 and 1 Pet. 2:7. Cf. Eph. 2:20. See the discussion in Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 184-186 which makes a connection to Dan. 2 that is also explored in my "Commentary: Genesis 1:27f., Daniel 2:35 and Ephesians 1:22f." in *Third Way* 25/1 (February 2002): 24. See n. 40 above on the connection between the "rib" of Gen. 2:22 and OT Temple theology.

The literature on the meaning of head (*kephalē*) in Paul is voluminous. Fortunately we are well served by the survey provided by Anthony C. Thiselton in his major work *The First Epistle To The Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand

in which Paul uses it. But there is special honour in the eschatological direction too. “Head” in Paul’s discussion does not find its counterpart in obedience or submission. Here the correlate of “head” is “glory.”<sup>47</sup> Creational man/eschatological woman.<sup>48</sup>

Man may be the image and glory of God, Paul says, but woman is the glory of man.<sup>49</sup> When the NRSV makes woman the “reflection” of man here, it is out of order.<sup>50</sup> Paul should not be read as continuing to think in the foundational direction. Woman viewed in relation to glory is not an argument for secondary, derivative being. This is a statement about woman’s own unique weight and status. Paul’s argument (in vv. 8-9) is that “woman [was made] from man”, not vice versa; the “woman [was created] for the

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Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 812-822. Although I favour the position that sees head primarily as origin (see Thiselton’s summary in *ibid.*, 814-816), I am doing something different from other advocates of that viewpoint by rooting this in NT and Pauline temple theology (a connection Thiselton misses, which is frustrating given the references made in *ibid.*, 817 and 818. On where I differ with Thiselton in other respects, see n. 48 below.) My argument for also connecting (woman as) glory to biblical temple theology as articulated below adds considerable weight to this suggestion, I would contend. See n. 40 above and n. 53 below.

<sup>47</sup> Thiselton recognizes that head has connotations of pre-eminence and honour (see *ibid.*, 821 *et passim*) but (despite the potential of the discussion of secondary literature on *ibid.*, 835) fails to see that in a different way this also holds good for glory. This limited view of pre-eminence persuades him to adopt a reading of *kephalē* in which he drifts back towards the hierarchal position he claims to reject (see *ibid.*, 814-5, 815-6). The subordination of woman to man is thus softened but not rejected (see his reference to “hierarchy” on *ibid.*, 821). I am suggesting a way to decisively reject the traditional hierarchy.

In several places (e.g., *ibid.*, 812 and 816), Thiselton refers to Eph. 5:21-33 in a way that suggests he has imported his reading of that passage into 1 Cor. 11:3-16, despite the absence of a head-body distinction in this 1 Cor. passage. On Eph. 5:21ff., see the discussion in my *The Woman Will Overcome The Warrior*, 147-148 and the most helpful approach suggested by John Howard Yoder, *The Politics Of Jesus: Vicit Agnus Noster*. Second Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994) 162-192, the “epilogue” to which (188-192) responds to Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza’s engagement with the first (1974) edition.

Reading other passages from the Pauline corpus to see if they might shed light on 1 Cor. 11 is legitimate provided we are aware of the danger of reading in misreadings of those passages, thus compounding the exegetical and hermeneutical challenge. This point also applies to the use that is sometimes made of 1 Tim. 2:11-16 (highly debatable interpretations of which have also been allowed to control the reading of Gen. 2). On this passage see my *The Woman Will Overcome The Warrior*, 145-146.

The proposal of Richard Clark Kroeger and Catherine Clark Kroeger in their *I Suffer Not A Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11-15 in the Light of Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992), 103, is most interesting in the present context, as they suggest on linguistic grounds that what is not permitted in 1 Tim. 2:12 is for the woman to set herself up (within an Eve-centred Gnostic hierarchy) as the origin of man. In my judgment, the Kroegers’ proposal reflects good intuitions about the connotations of *authentēin* in this context that go beyond what they can establish philologically. A revised and updated edition of this work which could offer a response to its critics (see, e.g., the review by Al Wolters in *Calvin Theological Journal* 28 (1993): 208-213) would be welcome. Crucial to any updating would be close attention to the very extensive Thesaurus Linguae Graecae computer database that has been available to scholars since the late 1980s. Although it is far from clear whether this could provide additional support for their specific proposal concerning the use of *authentēin* in 1 Tim. 2:12, early claims that that the TLG database supports the traditional understanding of this verb as to “have authority over” (as found in the NIV and NRSV in distinction from the AV and NEB) were premature, to say the least. It is remarkable that the important paper by L. E. Wiltshire, “The TLG Computer and Further Reference to *Authenteō* in 1 Timothy 2.12” in *New Testament Studies* 34 (1988): 120-134 was so quickly taken to support a traditional conclusion, a misreading that Wiltshire himself addressed in his later “1 Timothy 2:12 Revisited: A Reply to Paul W. Barnett and Timothy J. Harris” in *Evangelical Quarterly* 65 (1993): 43-55. For a helpful overview of this and many other contested exegetical issues, one might consult David M. Scholer, “The Evangelical Debate Over Biblical ‘Headship’”, available online at <http://www.godswordtowomen.org/healing/abusearticles/scholer.htm>

<sup>48</sup> Paul would seem to have seen a distinction in the Genesis text (rather than a synonymous parallelism, cf.

sake of man”, not vice versa. Why? The implied answer is: because it is not good for the man to be alone, because he is help-less. Far from arguing for her submission, the next verse goes on to say that the woman has authority on her head, this being a reference to her own authority in God’s creation. Paul adds the phrase “because of the angels” as divine glory is revealed here too. More specifically, Paul has what Hebrews 9:5 refers to as “the cherubim of the Glory” in mind.<sup>51</sup> In the temple theology of that epistle, capital G “glory” (as it is translated here in the NIV) is not just something owed *to* God.<sup>52</sup> It is a term *for* God, as in several OT texts.<sup>53</sup> If the first woman as helper can be related to God as Helper, woman as the glory of man here can be related to God as “the Glory of Israel”

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nn. 19 and 20 above) between image and likeness, this being present in his own distinction between image and glory, which itself reflects at the linguistic level the LXX [Septuagint translation] of Gen. 1:26-27. This coheres well with my suggestion that image has a creational meaning in both settings, while likeness and glory each have an eschatological meaning. Cf. nn. 17, 18 and 19 above. An association between likeness and glory also calls to mind the reference to “the likeness of the glory of the Lord” in Ezek. 1:28.

I do not think that biblical authors consistently distinguish between image and likeness as if there were a careful conceptual distinction at work. I doubt the NIV can be faulted for using “image” in Isa. 40:18 where the NRSV has “likeness.” Similarly in the NT, Jas 3:9, for example, would seem to equate the two terms. Nevertheless, I do think the distinction is discernable in Paul beyond 1 Cor. 11. Consider, for example, the subtle difference in tenses and the contrasting (yet complementary) emphases first on origin and then on goal in the (otherwise) parallel texts Col. 3:9-10 and Eph. 4:22-24:

Col. 3:9-10: “Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator.”

Eph. 4:22-24: You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”

I also think that an image/glory or image/likeness distinction is present in the way Paul would have understood the (Pauline or pre-Pauline) hymn of Phil. 2:6-11. (For a most helpful survey of the many ways this passage has been read, see N.T. Wright, “Jesus Christ Is Lord: Philippians 2.5–11” in *The Climax Of The Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1991), chap. 4, 56-119 especially 81.). I would interpret the hymn as narrating how Jesus’ truly human covenant fidelity leads to his exaltation by the God he incarnates and reveals from the beginning. In this context, I see v. 6 as establishing a contrast between Jesus and Adam, in which Jesus is seen to have imaged God (taking *en morphē theou* as imaging in line with the use of *summorphizomenos* and *summorphon* in 3:10 and 3:21 and as expressed in [not contradicted by] the *morphēn doulou* of 2:7), without “grasp[ing]” (2:6, NIV cf. Gen. 3:6 and Gen. 6:2) at the likeness of God (*isa theō*). The exaltation of v. 9ff. reveals both human fulfilment and divine glory. This explains why the hymn is framed (in vv. 5 and 12-13) by a call to a Christic way-of-being. In his divinity, Jesus reveals the gift and promise of our humanity.

<sup>49</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, in “1 Corinthians” in James L. Mays, Gen. ed., *Harper’s Bible Commentary* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1988), 1168-1189, although not slow to point out what she sees as a patriarchal chain of command in 1 Cor. 11:3, still gets the emphasis of 11:7 exactly right in *ibid.*, 1183: “[T]he midrashic argument in vv. 7-9 does not deny woman the “image of God” status but focuses on “glory.”” (Cf. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory Of Her*, 229, where this is put less clearly for my purposes.) Here I am attempting to identify Paul’s focus and offer a reinterpretation of its meaning.

<sup>50</sup> This is also strongly rejected by Thiselton in *ibid.*, 835. Cf. n. 54 below.

<sup>51</sup> Given the verbal and thematic connection between 1 Cor. 11:2-16 and 2 Cor. 3:7-18 (see n. 57 below), it is not difficult to think that Paul could connect the woman’s glory with Exod. 34:29-34 (on the glory reflected by Moses) in full awareness of how this passage is framed by the cherubim of the glory mentioned in Exod. 25:18-22 and soon afterwards in the reference to Moses in Exod. 37:7-9 (and also in Exod. 36:8, 35). Other passages that refer to these two cherubim include Ps. 80:1, Ps. 99:1, Num. 7:89 and 2 Chron. 3:8-14.

Although I think that this angelic Glory is the primary meaning, this does not preclude also seeing

(1 Sam. 15:29). The glory of man, woman, represents the God of creation.<sup>54</sup>

The fact that Paul is emphasizing woman's distinctive authority fits with the way he immediately adds: "nevertheless" woman 'is not without man and man is not without woman.' Clearly maleness and femaleness have no autonomous meaning.<sup>55</sup> After repeating that woman is "from" man, he says that man is "born of" (literally man is 'through'<sup>56</sup>) woman, thus seeing her not in terms of foundational origin here but as an ending/beginning, as we find in Genesis.

In what is for us the most culturally relative part of his argument, the relationship between male and female and between head and glory is worked out further in the relationship between head and hair, the symbol for Paul of woman's authority.<sup>57</sup> The implica-

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a connection between the angels and prophecy via 1 Cor. 13:1. This provides a link with 1 Cor. 14:34-36, on which see n. 43 above.

<sup>52</sup> That said, God's Glory revealed in creation and creation's glorifying of God are closely related, and are so for Paul who has just written in 1 Cor. 10:31, "Do all things to the glory of God."

<sup>53</sup> The NIV capitalizes Glory in this way in 1 Sam. 15:29, Ps. 106:20, Jer. 2:11, Hos. 4:7 and Heb. 9:5. The NRSV capitalizes Glory in 1 Sam. 15:29. If this is how Glory is understood in 1 Cor. 11:7 (and I think that this is at least a dimension of the meaning), then Moffat's suggestion that "glory" means "supremacy", which Thiselton is far too quick to reject via an appeal to the argument of Feuillet (see *ibid.*, 835), has some merit. Once Paul's temple theology is kept in mind (cf. my comments on his notion of head in this context in n. 47 above), it is natural to see his reference to Glory as rightly capitalized given the connotations of the divine Glory filling the temple.

<sup>54</sup> This is the only sentence I have added to the text of the inaugural lecture in the attempt to further clarify my central exegetical claim and thus further counter the tendency to interpret woman's glory as a reflection of man's being (cf. n. 50 above). Man as head of woman makes God present in the foundational-creational direction. Woman as glory of man makes God present in the transcendental-eschatological direction.

<sup>55</sup> In Miroslav Volf, "The Trinity And Gender Identity" in Douglas A. Campbell, ed., *Gospel And Gender: A Trinitarian Engagement with being Male and Female in Christ*. Studies in Theology and Sexuality, 7 (London: T and T Clark International, 2003), 153-178, this literal translation—"woman is not without man and man is not without woman"—receives a correlative emphasis as "woman is 'not without' man and man is 'not without' woman" in *ibid.*, 174. Here Volf, following Alison Weir, *Sacrificial Logics: Feminist Theory and the Critique of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 7-8, sees this as a view of identity in which identity itself does not exclude but "include[s] difference and otherness". Although inclusion can carry the wrong connotations, this is a serious attempt to honour what we might call the close correlation between identity and relatedness. The relationships in which we stand are not extrinsic to who we are. We can only be male or female together as male and female.

<sup>56</sup> As man here finds his identity as man through woman, we should not see this as only referring to the significance of birth. On connecting the "from" and 'through' of 1 Cor. 11:11 to the "from", "through", and "to" of Rom. 11:36, see n. 65 below.

<sup>57</sup> On the connection between glory and weight and thus authority, see James H. Olthuis, *I Pledge You My Troth: A Christian View Of Marriage, Family, Friendship* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 139, a work to which I am indebted not least because the discussion of *kephalē* on pp. 137-138 seems to sense the affinity between 1 Cor. 11:3 and Dooyeweerd's foundational direction to time/reality. This is a good place to express my gratitude to Jim Olthuis, my doctoral supervisor/mentor and also ICS emeritus Senior Member in Philosophical Theology.

The connections between hair, glory, weight, and authority are also evident in 2 Sam. 14:25-26 (cf. 18:9): "Now in all Israel there was no one to be praised so much for his beauty as Absalom; from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. When he cut the hair of his head (for at the end of every year he used to cut it; when it was heavy on him, he cut it), he weighed the hair of his head, two hundred shekels by the king's weight." Cf. the reference to the woman and the crown in Prov. 12:4 in the light of n. 40 above.

The argument that the authority on the woman's head refers to her own authority and not to her

tion is that the hair has its origin in the head and grows out of it, bringing the head to glory, to completion, to fulfilment. The man in symbolizing the head or origin should not have long hair; the woman in symbolizing the glory or fullness should not have short hair.<sup>58</sup> In the language of hair as covering, we might even detect the complex Genesis theme of nakedness and clothing. Most likely Paul is also alluding ironically (with humour) to the ending of his Nazirite vow, for Luke tells us in Acts 18:18 that he was shorn of his own long hair (considered disgraceful for a male, Paul says in verses 4 and 14!) after he left Corinth to set sail for Ephesus.

### **New Adam/New Eve Christology**

There are many themes in contemporary theology that we could explore in the light of the perspective I am working with.<sup>59</sup> Here, in travelling with Paul from Corinth to Ephesus,

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submission was proposed over forty years ago by Morna Hooker in her well-known essay “Authority On Her Head: An examination of 1 Cor 11:10” in *New Testament Studies* 10 (1964): 410-416. I would read the woman’s glory and authority, symbolized by and revealed through her hair, in the light of what I claim about the reference to the angels/cherubim above. In this light, her ‘created’ authority as a woman is simultaneously a ‘divine’ authority/authorizing. In v. 15 the woman’s hair is said to be given to her “*anti peribolaion*” which I think should be translated as ‘instead of a veil.’ This phrase must bear some relationship to 2 Cor. 3:7-18 where, in contrast to the veil Moses used to cover the fading glory (*kalumma epi to prosōpon*, v. 13), Paul states (in v. 18) “all of us, with unveiled faces [*anakekalummenō prosōpō*], seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another [literally from glory to glory]; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.” The reference to the head being covered or not earlier in 1 Cor. 11 (see vv. 5, 6, 7, 13 where the verb used is *a/kalupt-*) suggests that 1 Cor. 11:15 means that the face must not be veiled, in line with the many biblical passages in which the face is an important locus of revelation. (In addition to 2 Cor. 3:18 and the reference there to Exod. 34:33-35, see 2 Cor. 4:6, 1 Cor. 13:12, Mt. 17:2 and Rev. 1:16.) In reading 1 Cor. in the light of 2 Cor., therefore, we may hear Paul saying that the woman’s glory does not fade. Her hair is not a veiling but a revelation. The eschatological glory is here: revealed in woman as woman.

<sup>58</sup> For my understanding of the origin of males with long hair in this setting, see the reference to Paul’s own behaviour below (cf. Acts 18:18) in the light of n. 44 above. Paul’s resistance to women taking on a typically male appearance implies that he sees this as a mistaken (we would say an androcentric) attempt at status that misses the meaning of her true status and the status of her true meaning. The historical Paul of 1 Cor. would thus oppose the Paul of the *Acts Of Paul And Thecla*, a second century text helpfully discussed in E. Margaret Howe, “Interpretations Of Paul In *The Acts Of Paul And Thecla*” in Donald A. Hagner and Murray J. Harris, eds., *Pauline Studies: Essays Presented to Professor F.F. Bruce on his 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday* (Exeter, UK: Paternoster Press, 1980), chap. 3, 33-49. In *AThe* 25 and 40, Thecla can only join Paul as an itinerant preacher if she cuts her hair and dresses like a man.

<sup>59</sup> The ‘eschatologically open’ nature of the biblical canon is certainly one fundamental issue. Cf. the approach (in different language) suggested by N.T. Wright, “How Can The Bible Be Authoritative?” in *Vox Evangelica* 21 (1991): 7-32 and explored by J. Richard Middleton and Brian J. Walsh in their *Truth Is Stranger Than It Used To Be: Biblical Faith in a Postmodern Age* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 181-195. This has major implications, I believe, for how we approach the issue of our contemporary privileged metaphors for God (and thus creation). The significance of biblical male and also female language for God (and here we should not ignore the fact that even “God” is a male word because our language knows the term ‘Goddess’) may also be seen afresh in the light of such a model of Scripture. What might happen to the biblical material that John W. Cooper analyses in *Our Father In Heaven: Christian Faith and Inclusive Language for God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998) if this were to be seen in the eschatological light of the God who becomes all in all in 1 Cor. 15:28?

Our central metaphors for God (whether as Sovereign, Suffering Servant, Loving Father, Compassionate Mother, Liberator, Mystery, Friend, or whatever) profoundly shape our ways of life, including our worldviewing and (in a more academic setting) our theologies. Here Sallie McFague, *Models Of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1987) remains an important

from 1 Corinthians to Ephesians, I will offer some reflections on Christology.

In Eph. 1:21-23, Paul speaks of how God has “raised [Christ] from the dead and . . . has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.”<sup>60</sup> The language of placing under the feet comes from Ps. 8:6, a psalm that focuses on humanity’s authority in creation and allows us to connect the language of “filling” here to the foundational command to humanity in Gen. 1. Here God in Christ fills all things. The same motifs, including Ps. 8:6, appear in I Cor. 15, where God becoming all in all is viewed as yet to come.

Here Jesus is the beginning of the new cosmic temple (Eph. 2:20-22), to be completed and brought to fulfilment by and as the Church, an embodying of God that is to be ‘fleshed out’ by us: this is what that all-too-familiar phrase “body of Christ” means. Theologically the implications are revolutionary, calling for an integration of Christology, ecclesiology, and anthropology that, in my judgment, has yet to be developed.<sup>61</sup> This is something I look forward to exploring communally in my work as Senior Member in Theology.<sup>62</sup>

And the theme of creational man/eschatological woman is highly relevant and suggestive here. Paul’s understanding of Christ and the Church, head and embodying, is developed in terms of a New Adam/New Eve Christology. When he moves on to discuss the reorientation of patriarchal marriage in Eph. 5, he follows his comments about male-female love by saying: “‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ This is a great mystery”, he adds,

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work. For another significant attempt at re-orientation that is exegetically focused, see Terence E. Fretheim, *The Suffering Of God: An Old Testament Perspective* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984).

If the biblical story is seen as an ‘enclosing’ metanarrative so that our stories are swallowed up into it (and are not seen as potentially continuing and extending the biblical story in their own way), then ‘canon’ becomes akin to the ‘literary canon’ (which contains all true literature) and loses its role as ‘yardstick’ (a traditional meaning of canon that I would endorse) for discerning the voice of God wherever that may be heard. Scripture, in my view, has this latter foundational, authorizing role. To be biblical is to find biblical orientation and inspiration and guidance in our times as the people we are called to be. To attempt to hide behind the biblical text via appeals to a metanarrative or by practising a karaoke-style hermeneutic, by contrast, is itself unbiblical and uninspired.

<sup>60</sup> The full text confesses that God has “raised [Christ] from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.”

<sup>61</sup> There is an affinity here with what are sometimes called Spirit Christologies. See Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism And God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1983), 130-134, the response in my *The Woman Will Overcome The Warrior*, 206-212, and also Paul W. Newman, *A Spirit Christology: Recovering the Biblical Paradigm of Christian Faith* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987). A recent Roman Catholic exploration worthy of note in this context is Gavin D’Costa, *Sexing The Trinity: Gender, Culture and the Divine* (London: SCM Press, 200), especially 195ff. One strength of Spirit Christologies is that they implicitly or explicitly maintain a close connection between Christology and theological anthropology. In the Roman Catholic tradition, this normative anthropological connection is often explored via Mariology. See, for example, Tina Beattie, *God’s Mother, Eve’s Advocate: A Marian Narrative of Women’s Salvation* (London: Continuum, 2002).

<sup>62</sup> Here I would like to acknowledge the work of ICS emeritus Senior Member in Systematic Theology, George Vandeveld. I heard the news of George’s passing just as I was putting the finishing touches to these footnotes.

“and I am applying it to Christ and the church.”<sup>63</sup>

Hierarchical, ‘eschatologically closed’ understandings locate the locus of theology in the past, substituting for covenantal responsibility an obedience that can offer only pale imitation. But the biblical confession “For from [God] and through [God] and to [God] are all things”<sup>64</sup> must be understood in response to the God who is both Alpha and Omega. In that light, in this light, there may indeed be A Future For Theology.

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### **Appendix: Sex and Gender Between Creation and Eschaton<sup>65</sup>**

In this envisioning of a future for theology, I have been using gender symbolism to re-interpret the creation/eschaton distinction/relation. But something more needs to be said about what this symbolizing might mean for an understanding of gender *per se*. My comments here—which form an Appendix to the above discussion—will lead to some suggestions about the nature of patriarchy and its connection to an ‘eschatologically-closed’ view of creation to which, I will propose, theology should not return.

Thus far, I have been arguing that even the “good” creation of Gen. 1 is theologically inadequate on its own and so must be seen (normatively speaking) as eschatologically open from the beginning, this being symbolized in the male-female relationship of Gen. 2 where we hear, in vv. 18 and 24 (against the 6 + 1 refrain of “good” and “very good” found in Gen. 1: 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 21 and 31): “It is not good that the man should be alone” . . . “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.” If Gen. 2:4ff. is read ‘within’ Day Six of Gen. 1 [as explored briefly in n. 9 above], then the “very good” of 1:31 is to be related to the “at last” of 2:23.

Gen. 2 discloses the ground of be(com)ing and the horizon of hope in terms of the covenant between male and female. In the ways in which male and female together form humanity and bring humanity into existence, the creation-eschaton relationship, which includes what I have called the creational and eschatological directions to reality in the present age and in the New Creation, is made visible. This is not simply an illustration. If symbols, unlike signs, participate in the reality to which they refer [see n. 33 above], this means not only that the male-female relationship reveals the creation-eschaton relationship in its own way, but that significant dimensions of its own meaning are disclosed in the light of this ultimate (creational/eschatological) horizon. My agenda for theology, in other words, implies a certain theology of gender.

### **A Pre-theoretical Hermeneutic**

Many definitions of male and female, not least in the history of theology, subordinate the gift and mystery

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<sup>63</sup> While texts such as 1 Cor. 6:15-17 and 2 Cor. 11:2 allude to Gen. 2 when they speak of the church being united with Christ, here the focus is on the Last Adam.

<sup>64</sup> Rom. 11:36. This continues: “To [God] be the glory forever. Amen.” Relating the “from”, “through”, and “to” God of this text to the “from” man and ‘through woman’ of 1 Cor. 11:12 (to translate literally) is appropriate as the same three terms also appear in 1 Cor. 8:6, where “from” and “to” are related to God and “through” is related to Christ. (Although there are no other threefold parallels in the NT, “through” and “to” occur together in Col. 1:16 and Heb. 2:10.) While “from” implies a relation to an origin and “to” implies relation to a goal or fulfilment, “through” implies mediation. In 1 Cor. 11:12, I suggest, “from” man clearly implies man as the origin of woman, while ‘through woman’ implies that in birthing and beyond, woman in relation to man mediates not only the origin but also the fulfilment. Cf. my comments about woman as end/beginning in “1 Corinthians 11 in a New Light” above.

<sup>65</sup> This Appendix was not presented as part of the inaugural lecture.



of gender to other principles of meaning such as active and passive, public and private, outward and inward, cultural and natural, spiritual and material, divine and creaturely, fallen and redemptive. Given the long history of oppressive oppositions, confusing connotations and prescriptions posing as descriptions, it is sadly all too easy to imagine a gender-symbolized distinction between the creational and eschatological being used to legitimate the view that the man is (or ought to be) naturally 'initiating' or that woman represents those higher values needed to elevate the more basic form of humanity associated with the male. While such claims would constitute a misunderstanding of the creation-eschaton relationship, firstly by overlooking that side of initiation in which God's future has the eschatological power to call the origin into becoming [cf. n 17 above] and secondly by valuing and romanticizing the eschatological over (-against) the creational, the more fundamental problem is that the creation-eschaton relationship, far from disclosing further, relative-relational meaning, is being seen as 'defining' what it means to be male and female. Such totalizing conceptions, we might say, close down meaning 'by definition.' Just as gender can only truly reveal the creation-eschaton relationship in its own way and thus 'in terms of' gender, so the wider creational and eschatological horizons of meaning must not be seen as subsuming or dictating what it means to be male-and-female but instead may be trusted to ground, deepen, expand and transform our understanding of a relationship that has its own 'wisdom' and which therefore 'speaks' for itself [cf. n. 15 above on the voice of creation].

That said, viewing gender in the light of the ultimate horizons of meaning brings issues of male-female connection and distinction to the fore in a particular way. Gender's ability to illuminate the creation-eschaton relationship, I propose, strongly suggests that male-female difference has more than incidental or extrinsic significance. Seeing human beings as 'people' first and as 'male' or 'female' only secondarily is, for all the evils it may help us avoid, inadequate. In a holistic, integrated perspective, by contrast, personhood and gender may be truly distinguished only if they are not separated. While we may be more than our (psycho-social) gender, our gender in turn being more than our (biological) sex, we are male and female 'through and through.' I find it helpful, therefore, to think in terms of a different male or female sexual/gendered 'presence' which—'kaleidoscopically' and thus never stereotypically—expresses and comes to expression in and through all the other sides of our being. Viewing sexual difference and gendered presence in the light of the creational-eschatological distinction may help us explore some of the webs of meaning within which we live and move, within which we have our being and becoming.

If we were to develop a philosophical anthropology intent on honouring difference, I might suggest that we begin with Luce Irigaray's succinct yet suggestive claim [in Luce Irigaray and Sylvère Lotringer, eds., *Why Different? A Culture of Two Subjects*. Interviews with Luce Irigaray (New York: Semiotext(e), 2000), 95] that "Men and women are corporeally different. This biological difference leads to others: in constructing subjectivity, in connecting to the world, in relating." We might then go on to develop the implications, attentive to the distinction (as well as the potential connection) between the descriptive and the normative. Here, however, I am concerned with the ultimate horizons of meaning that might guide such reflections.

In this light, finding biblical orientation for our own thinking does not mean figuring out what biblical writers might have said about the general structural contours of sex and gender if they had thought about such matters; it means allowing Scripture to disclose the ultimate significance and meaning of and for our own situated and varied hopes and experiences. In finding authentic expression in our lives, these (biblically deepened and transformed) hopes and experiences may in turn find theoretical and conceptual articulations that can, in their own way, resonate with the biblical witness. My focus will thus be on the biblical symbols that can 'give rise to thought' (to paraphrase Paul Ricoeur [in the Conclusion to his *The Symbolism Of Evil*, trans. Emerson Buchanan (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1967), 347-357]) rather than on alleged biblical concepts that are supposed to do our thinking for us.

A 'pre-theoretical' approach to Scripture, in which its discourse is not treated as approximating or aspiring to the theoretical language and claims of anthropology or ontology, will help us avoid a totalizing (mis-)use of biblical texts. Given the way in which the Israelites, for generation after generation, experienced the blessing of descendants as so central to their life and future with God [see n. 33 above], the ways that they typically allowed their awareness of the creational and eschatological horizons of hope and experience to disclose the meaning of gender cannot be expected to speak to all the ways in which gender and sexuality are experienced today—at least, not in an equally 'direct' way. While readings of biblical texts that find a universal and thus ever-present order of meaning to which we need to be subject are mistaken in my view [cf. the discussion of Wisdom as *Ordnung* in n. 15 above], the pre-theoretical nature of biblical discourse does not mean that the Scriptures are thereby confined to the past. The relational nature of truth dis-

closed in the text means that the Word of God may speak today with authority. Totalized meaning, by contrast, is inevitably 'forced.'

Here an example may be helpful as the Bible itself evidences a hermeneutical movement within itself that can guide how Scripture may be read here and now. One fear today is that the biblical message is inherently 'heterosexist.' But such a reading is far from inevitable if we bear in mind that biblical writers (like us) related to matters of ultimate significance and meaning in terms of their own actual, situated hopes and fears, which can be seen to change within the canon itself. Far from undermining the message of Scripture, such change and movement may be seen as itself 'revealing.' A most striking example of this is the way the gift of fertility becomes relativized as the age of the New Covenant dawns. While the NT is often read as promoting a 'spiritualizing' vision in this respect, in effect severing it from the Old Testament that was Scripture for its writers, it is better understood as expanding on life-affirming promises found in the Hebrew Bible. Isaiah's vision for the eunuchs, for example, does not negate or 'supplement' what has been said before in order to address an exceptional situation; instead it sees God's promise of fertility from Gen. 1 onwards as finding its way even more profoundly into their lives as the gift of "an everlasting name" said to be "better than sons and daughters" (Isa. 65:5, cf. the earlier reference in 39:7. Isa. 65:5 also lies behind the words of Jesus in Mt. 19:10-12, I suggest). Here a biblical caring for those pushed to the margins (cf. Deut. 24:17-22; Jer. 22:3; Mt. 25:31-46) finds hermeneutical expression within the canon, thus giving guidance to how the gift and call of Scripture should be received today.

For the Word of and for Life to live in the reality of our hopes and fears, biblical symbols, which are not universal concepts, need to be allowed to participate in networks of meaning in which we can find meaning. This movement from text to life will allow specific, limited texts to be what they are in hope, trusting that the Spirit that animates such passages will, in keeping with the language of Isa. 55:10-11 (which prefigures the special fertility of 56:5), continue to speak the Word of Life until the Word becomes flesh and dwells among and within us.

### **Sexual Difference, Gendered Presence**

In my understanding, the creational man/eschatological woman symbolism as it is reflected in biblical passages such as Gen. 2 and 1 Cor. 11 finds its central significance within the life of the canon in the closest male-female covenant: the covenant in which the two (.) together become one, together. A symbolically sensitive approach to understanding the mystery of sexual difference and gendered presence might explore some of the concentric circles of meaning that radiate out from this centre as they participate in the covenantal dynamics of and for existence in the widest reaches of our experience and action in history. It is a profound biblical theme that all the covenants within which we live and move reverberate with meaning as they resonate with each other. This may be seen in Hos. 2:21-23 where hope for alienated children, the fecundity of the natural world, and the compassion of Israel's God call each other into being and are reflected in one another. Jer. 31:22 also participates in horizons of meaning in this way. Its understanding of the significance of the male-female covenant within the revelatory coherence of creation gives it special significance for the present discussion.

In the second half of Jer. 31:22, God's prophet calls Israel to return from exile by declaring that "the Lord has created a new thing on the earth: a woman encompasses a man." The Hebrew verb between the female and male here is obscure. But when this passage is read between the sorrow of 7:34, 16:9 and 25:10 and the joy of 33:10-11, there can be little doubt that this describes the 'consummation' of a love-in-the-making relationship that is itself to be read as a sign and expression of the New Covenant between God and Israel for the world. Given the close proximity between Jer. 31:22 and Jer. 31:31ff, the woman who 'surrounds' the man may be seen as representing God's love for humanity as the New Age is birthed into existence (cf. Isa. 42:14). [For the exegesis of the Jeremiah texts, see my "Like The Angels?" where I connect the exegetical approaches of William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 26-52*, ed. Paul D. Hanson, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1989), 195 and Trible, *God And The Rhetoric Of Sexuality*, 47-50.]

Biblically speaking, it is not a coincidence that "consummation" is a well-known theological term for eschatological fulfilment. And here we can see the idea of an ending that is also a beginning [cf. my discussion of Sabbath] as consummation can also lead to conception, the beginning of new life (also envisioned in Jer. 31:22 in some interpretations, this rightly bringing out the connection to and contrast with Jer. 30:6). Conception is then brought to fulfilment in pregnancy, which in turn comes to fulfilment in giving birth. This is not simply a process with a *telos*, for the future mediated by the woman is (to use a distinction made in the Introduction [cf. n. 11 above]) both *futurum* and *adventus*. If referring to a mother-to-

be as 'pregnant' reflects a creational or foundational awareness in which the present is paving the way for the future, referring to her as 'expecting' highlights the eschatological or transcendental direction of meaning. Children are not just descendants of their ancestors but are born 'into' a family. The 'new' life, like the newness promised in Jer. 31:22 and 31:31, is not 'more of the same.' God's future (as *adventus*) is coming into existence.

In the biblical tradition, it is always and only women who conceive, contrary to a contemporary trend to speak of couples conceiving and contrary to a medical model that would speak impersonally of 'conception' happening [on the danger of which, see Susan Bordo, "Are Mothers Persons? Reproductive Rights and the Politics of Subject-ivity" in her *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. Tenth Anniversary Edition (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003 [1993]), 71-97]. It is interesting to note here that in Mt. 1:18, when the angel reveals that "the child conceived in [Mary] is from [*ek*] the Holy Spirit", the Spirit is placed grammatically and theologically parallel to Tamar (1:3), Rahab (1:5), Ruth (1:5), the wife of Uriah (1:6) and Mary (1:16), the five mothers in Jesus' genealogy [cf. Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution*. Second edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 650, n. 18 and *contra* Ben Witherington III and Laura M. Ice, *The Shadow Of The Almighty: Father, Son, and Spirit in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 50, n. 56]. In addition to God's mothering in the Spirit in Mt. 1, God's birthing of the New Creation in Isa. 42:14 illustrates well that the biblical awareness of the woman's power as mother is a far cry from the Aristotelian model of the active male and passive female. In this light, the way the biblical tradition connects the woman to fulfilment and to the bringing to fruition makes good sense of the "eschatological woman" side of the symbolism. Eschatology is not simply about a future yet to come. There is an eschatological side, we might say, to life's beginning.

Given the understanding that the woman conceives and also gives birth, male significance becomes especially associated with the earliest, beginning stages leading up to conception. The reference to Levi being "still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him" (Heb. 7:10, cf. Isa. 48:1) would seem to reflect a way of looking at life's origins present throughout the entire biblical witness. This connection with the origin is thus prior to what the AV refers to as the male 'begetting' that occurs if the woman conceives (see, e.g., Mt. 1:2ff.). Hence the "creational man" side of the symbolism.

Read in this light, I suggest, we may make the connection between Jer. 31: 22 and Jer. 31:31ff. and allow this connection to deepen, expand, and transform our own hopes and experiences. The intimate truth of the male-female covenant, its connection to the gift-promise of new life and to the mystery of male-female presence, may be seen as revealing the 'depth-meaning' of the present covenant between creation and God as this is expressed in the relationship between creation and new creation. At the same time, a vision of gender as meaningfully related to the ground of being and horizon of hope suggests a vision for gender beyond the confines of patriarchal discourse.

In what follows, I will offer a critique of patriarchal culture in keeping with the way in which symbols do not conceptually grasp relatively universal patterns of order, but invite us to look at life from particular angles. Imaginative re-envisioning looks for connections that open up new possibilities. Definitive fixed meaning misses the point. There is no need to insist that gender symbolism is *the* way the creation/eschaton distinction must be pictured. After all, in the founding narrative of Scripture, the gift-promise of life's ultimate horizons is also symbolically expressed in the relationships (all briefly touched on in the preceding discussion) between the six days and the Sabbath, darkness and light, nakedness and clothing, innocence and wisdom, and image and likeness. Any of these relationships could give rise to a biblical re-imagining of our culture. Because symbols are not root metaphors that lie at the centre of a world-picture, my approach (if accepted) need not mean that a different gender symbolism is thereby ruled out. And symbols may disclose different meanings in different situations. [Here one might consult, *inter alia*, John M. Hull, *In The Beginning There Was Darkness: A Blind Person's Conversations with the Bible* (London: SCM Press, 2001), the final chapter on death in Michael Vasey, *Strangers And Friends: A New Exploration of Homosexuality and the Bible* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1995, 238-250) and the section on distinctive emphases in the way Black American slaves read Scripture in Willard S. Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath, War And Women: Case Studies in Biblical Interpretation* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1983, 56-58).] My own exploration, in other words, works within limits that must not be turned into exclusions. But a symbol's limit is also its wisdom, a wisdom that calls out for connections that have not been made before. The 'depth symbol' of creational man/eschatological woman that I have been exploring has the potential, I suggest, to reveal what may otherwise not be seen.

### **Creational Woman, Eschatological Man?**

Patriarchy, etymologically speaking, means the ‘rule’ of the ‘father’, a rule that is culturally and thus linguistically extended to the male. But patri-archy’s etymology also suggests the father or male as the ‘origin’, or *arche*. In its distortion of the origin of/for existence, patriarchal thought would see the male as the original, normative human and the woman as the derivative, supplementary or second/ary sex. In traditional theologizing, patriarchy is legitimated by appeal to a cosmic hierarchy, a holy rule or origin to which woman is related only through the mediation of the male. A hierarchical reading of Gen. 2 (and often a reading of the curse of Gen. 3 as distorting or even reinforcing a male rule already put in place by God) then displaces the clear expression of male and female equality revealed in Gen. 1:26-28.

It is not surprising that much feminist and non-sexist theology has wanted to reclaim the true status of the creational woman of Gen. 1. Indeed, our conception of gender must begin again with the opening chapter of Scripture. An aim of this present study has been to build upon that conviction by suggesting that Gen. 2 reveals that the ‘creational woman’ has an eschatological significance from the beginning. In the all-too-brief final section on Christology above, I began to explore the way in which the ‘eschatological man’ has a creational side and thus a new creational significance that calls out to be continued. One place that this can be seen is in Paul’s extended discussion of resurrection in 1 Cor. 15. In v. 45, the re-articulation of Gen. 2:7 is unmistakable in the promise that we will be animated in the life of the age to come by the breath and Spirit of the Last Adam [cf. n. 16 above].

Stressing the creational side of the eschatological man helps us avoid seeing Scripture as a ‘meta-narrative’ in the sense of a story or Story that swallows up and subsumes the stories of our own lives, thus undermining instead of empowering us as women and men called to live out and thus extend the biblical narrative [cf. n. 59 above]. Earlier, I summarized my reading of Gen. 2 in the present context by connecting vv. 18 and 24: “It is not good that the man should be alone” . . . “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.” When Paul cites this second passage in Eph. 5:31 to apply it to Christ and the Church, we must allow even our Christologies to be sensitive to the “not good” of this first passage from Genesis. Patriarchal thought, in attempting to confine history and theology to a male origin sacralized by a male God, resists the very movement of Scripture.

Christ as the last Adam is thus the beginning of the new creation. The Church as new Eve is called to bring this new beginning to fulfilment. When Paul in Eph. 1:22 says that God “has put all things under [Christ’s] feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all”, he is citing Ps. 8:6, as noted above, and thereby calling to mind that psalm’s amazement at God’s Glory reflected in the glory of humanity. In a canonically-sensitive, inter-textual reading, Ps. 8:6 allows us to connect God’s “fill[ing]” all things in every way with the blessing to male and female in Gen. 1:28 to “fill” the earth [cf. my “Commentary: Genesis 1:27f., Daniel 2:35 and Ephesians 1:22f.” and cf. n. 46 above]. This dynamic movement is not enclosed in Christ but is through Christ open to God in the fullest possible sense.

This dynamism calls for a relativizing (that is, a relating) of creation to eschaton and also a relativizing of eschaton to creation. Although the horizon of meaning for theology can be nothing less than the “all in all” of God’s glory, the symbolism of creational man/eschatological woman does not mean a movement towards eschatological fulfilment that would leave original blessing behind. Instead we must picture blessing coming to fulfilment, the fulfilment of blessing. For God to be all in all, creation must be ‘eschatologically open’ and eschaton must be ‘creationally grounded’.

In Gal. 3:28, Paul gives us a symbol for this when he says “As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” Working backwards from the last phrase, Jew and Gentile are now “one” as are slave and free. Many have noted that the words “male and female” rather than ‘male or female’ here signify a quotation from Gen. 1:28 that would seem to mean the eclipse of gendered difference. This (alleged) transcending of gender is often thought to illustrate the New Testament’s (alleged) spiritualizing departure from the Hebrew Bible. But I would suggest that what we actually have is an example of the kind of ‘eschatologically open’, ‘creationally grounded’ reading of Genesis I have been exploring. The reference to “no longer male and female” indicates a movement not from ‘flesh’ to ‘spirit’ but from Gen. 1:28 to Gen. 2:24; from “male and female he created them” to “. . . and they became one flesh.” Here the male-female covenant, as in Jer. 31:22, is singled out to symbolize what it means for Jew and Gentile, slave and free, to be (in the language of the very next phrase) “one in Christ Jesus.” [Support for this interpretation can be found in Judith M. Gundry-Volf, “Beyond Difference? Paul’s Vision of a New Humanity in Galatians 3:28” in Douglas A. Campbell, ed., *Gospel And Gender: A*

*Trinitarian Engagement with being Male and Female in Christ*. Studies in Theology and Sexuality, 7 (London: T and T Clark International, 2003), 8-36, especially 33-34 which cautiously yet correctly draws on Gerd Theissen, “Soteriologische Symbolik in den paulinischen Schriften. Ein Strukturalistischer Beitrag” in *Kerygma und Dogma* 20 (1974), 282-304, especially 298-299.]

In a similar passage in Col. 3:11, the “no longer” is not grounded in the language of ‘oneness’ in Christ but in the related claim that “Christ is all in all.” This enables us to see the connection between Gal. 3:28 and Eph. 1:22. A theology that does not attempt to close history down to the origin and thus does not try to enclose eschatology in its new beginning will also be able to connect both of these passages to 1 Cor. 15:28, where Paul, having cited Ps. 8:6 again in the previous verse, then looks ahead to the time when “the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.” The creational woman of Gen. 1 has eschatological significance in Gen. 2. The eschatological man of Gal. 3:28 has creational significance in 1 Cor. 15. Thus the symbolism of creational man and eschatological woman gains additional depth within the developing narrative of Scripture.

### **These are the Generations**

What might this mean for the patriarchal culture in which we live? In the preceding discussion, I suggested that the mystery of gendered presence in history might be understood in the context of concentric circles of meaning that radiate out beyond the ‘depth symbol’ of Jer. 31:22. Naturally, this includes the conception of new life. As patriarchal discourse will be quick to try to ‘define’ woman as mother, it is important to say that any expressions of male-female difference must be taken in an expansive sense. Just as filling the earth implies an understanding of fertility that is so full of meaning that Gen. 1:28 and 1 Cor. 15:28 must be connected, so mothering and fathering may acquire a depth and expanse of meaning to which all may contribute and within which all may find themselves.

This is implied in Genesis. In Gen. 2:4, the reference to “the generations of the heavens and the earth” introduces a refrain that is found in Gen. 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 11:10, 11:27, 25:12, 25:19, 36:1 and 9, 37:2. Where Gen. 2:4 understands fertility in a cosmic sense, the sky and land being seen as created co-creators with God of all that proceeds and follows [see n. 14 above], later “generations” and ‘generatings’ include not only the descendants of Adam and Eve but also their shaping of history. Fertility, in other words, is understood in an expanded sense as culturally formative power. This is evident in Gen. 4:20-21 where, in the context of a long genealogy, Jabal is said to be “the ancestor of those who live in tents and have livestock” while Jubal is said to be “the ancestor of all who play the lyre and pipe.” The discussion of the Light of Gen. 1:3 in n. 15 above, suggests that such history-making is to fill the earth with God’s Glory.

While this is most significant for our understanding of the fuller significance of Gen. 1:28, the primordial blessing to male and female in that text also highlights that something is missing in Gen. 4 and beyond. Here the NIV reveals what the NRSV conceals as the term for “ancestor” is the Hebrew word for “father.” This underlines the ‘patriarchal’ nature of culture so soon after the Fall of Gen. 3, despite the woman’s own relation to the seed of life (said to be her seed in 3:15 cf. 16:10, 24:60) and despite the fact that her own name in 3:20 is ‘Life’ itself. The expanded meaning of ‘generation’ raises the question of how the “not good” of Gen. 2:18 relates to a world, a history, and a culture that has been ‘fathered’ but not necessarily ‘mothered’ into existence. The world of the text is also our world. To use a term related to both matter and mother, the redemption of gender would call for a very different cultural matrix.

If the symbol gives rise to thought, then a redemptive-historical approach to our own culture may find ongoing wisdom in the way gender may symbolize the creation–eschaton relationship. Our temporal existence as male-and-female reveals the ground of being and the horizon of hope for life lived between creation and consummation. Traditional theology holds that history, and life within history, is only for a time, until time itself makes way for eternity as earth makes way for heaven. In my “Like The Angels? Re-imagining Sexuality in God’s Future”, by contrast, I continue the present discussion by exploring how an ‘eschatologically open’, ‘creationally grounded’ theology might envision a future for sexual difference and gendered presence in the Age to Come. A new understanding of the heaven/earth relationship, and the nature of what Scripture calls the New Heavens and the New Earth, lies beyond the specific argument of the present discussion. But it does not lie beyond its imagination. For life between creation and eschaton—that is, life between male and female—discloses a future in which consummation does not signify the end.