

**A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE CHRISTOLOGY
OF HANS KÜNG**

by

Alrah Llewellyn Major Pitchers

**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the
Department of Religious Studies,
University of Natal
1993**

**Durban
1993**

PREFACE

The research for this thesis was carried out at the following Universities: Natal, South Africa, Tübingen and Zürich. Other institutions attended were, Ruschlikon Baptist Seminary in Switzerland, and the St. Joseph's Scholasticate, Cedara.

These studies represent original work by the author and have not been submitted in any other form to another University. Where use was made of others it has been duly acknowledged in the texts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to Prof. G.C. Oosthuizen for the encouragement he gave me throughout my research. Had it not been for him, I would not have attempted nor completed this thesis. He remains a true and loyal friend.

I wish to register my thanks to Dirk Büchner for his assistance with the correction of the German quotations.

I am grateful to the Faculty Secretary, Miss N. Mathura. The latter put many exhausting hours into the completion of the manuscript.

I have experienced nothing but kindness from the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Natal, which despite my long illness, showed great patience and concern. I acknowledge too the courtesy and helpfulness of the Administrative staff of Natal University.

I wish to register my indebtedness to Prof. Martin Prozesky who painstakingly supervised my manuscript even while he was overseas on sabbatical, a gesture of kindness indeed.

I am grateful to my wife Jean, who displayed an enormous amount of patience through a very trying period.

I thank Henry Keane who gave me encouragement and supplied many of the articles referred to in this thesis.

I offer my thanks to Dr. John Poorter, Prof. A.G. Rooks, Prof. B. Goba, Prof. Neville Heuer and Prof. P.J. Maartens and Rev. Victor Pillay for their support in my endeavour.

I, like many other men, am indebted to the late Rev. A.R. de Villiers for Christian love and nurture joyfully given at all times.

I dedicate this work to the Rev. A.S. Gilfillan, a great theologian and my former principle at the Baptist Theological College in Johannesburg.

ABSTRACT

This thesis considers Hans Küng's endeavour to make christology relevant to modern persons. His restatement of the ancient creeds, particularly Chalcedon with its emphasis upon the two natures of Christ, was condemned on three separate occasions by the German bishops and led to his dismissal as a teacher of Catholic seminarians at Tübingen, hence this attempt to clarify his aims and expound his christology. Küng believes he has been misrepresented by the above body and accuses them of a failure to read his christology. This thesis therefore traces his christological method with its ensuing results.

Küng makes an innovative effort to unite the philosophy of Hegel with the investigations of Strauss. This is developed through an Hegelian premise associated with the New Quest for the historical Jesus using the historical-critical method and the New Hermeneutic. For him christology thus begins from below.

Küng's thought is compared with certain trends in modern German christology. As noted in the study, his foundation rests upon the findings of German New Testament scholarship since Bultmann, showing a strong Lutheran bias. Indeed, Küng was among the first systematic theologians to base his dogmatics primarily on the findings of current New Testament scholarship, undergirded by Hegel's philosophy. This is his distinctive contribution to christology.

Where Küng concurs with or differs from Pannenberg, Moltmann and Jüngel this is briefly noted. In his use of Hegel linked to the historical Jesus Küng is an innovator, but he has failed to make the logical deductions following his premise of God's action in and

through history as revealed by Jesus Christ. While he expounds Hegel's concept of God as revealing divinity at a point in history (for Küng holds that God has a history as manifested in Christ), he fails to make deductions as do Pannenberg, Moltmann and Jüngel. He draws no conclusions of a "universal history", nor of the "suffering of God"; logical deductions from the use of Hegel. In contrast to Kasper and Schillebeeckx, both of whom also use the historical-critical method, Küng fails to see that his use of Hegel leads to a new basis for a view of reality wherein God is present in the universe, but particularly in Jesus Christ. Küng should have added this dimension to the historical-critical method.

Küng's functional christology should therefore be evaluated in the light of his use of Hegel's concept of "becoming", given a new direction as interpreted by process theology. Process thought would thus supplement the historical-critical method, in keeping with a current re-statement of Hegel's premise of "becoming".

Küng's views are criticized, firstly because he relies on Hegel's obscure pre-scientific era philosophy to counter the static forms of Chalcedon. Secondly, he uses a secular method involving modern historiography, but combined with an approach contrary to the findings of the historical-critical method, the resurrection. Such a purely secular approach requires the addition of faith, thus involving an inconsistency. As stated in the thesis, Küng's approach does not move beyond a prolegomenon to a future christology, requiring the correction of the concept of "becoming" in process philosophy.

Thus, while Küng is innovative he nonetheless provides no suitable alternative to Chalcedon. He highlights

problems but does not supply answers, hence my
re-direction of Kung towards process thought.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Title Page	i
Preface	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Abstract	v
Table of Contents	viii
 A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE CHRISTOLOGY OF HANS KÜNG	
INTRODUCTION	1
GENERAL DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM OF KÜNG'S CHRISTOLOGY	6
SPECIFIC DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM OF KÜNG'S CHRISTOLOGY	7
 CHAPTER ONE : HEGEL AS A POINT OF DEPARTURE FOR KÜNG'S CHRISTOLOGY	20
1.1 INTRODUCTION TO KÜNG VIA HEGEL	20
1.1.1 THE PROBLEM OF INTERPRETING HEGEL	20
1.1.2 A SYNOPSIS OF HEGEL'S CHRISTOLOGY THE SIGNIFICANCE OF <u>VORSTELLUNG</u>	23
1.2 THE PLACE OF SPIRIT IN HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY AS EXPOUNDED BY KÜNG	32
1.3 HEGEL AND UNITY : KÜNG'S INTERPRETATION	33
1.4 THE CONCEPT OF TRINITY IN HEGEL APPLIED BY KÜNG TO CHRISTOLOGY	36
1.5 KÜNG'S THESIS OF THE DYNAMIC IN HEGEL IN RELATION TO STATIC CHALCEDONIAN IDEAS	38
1.6. HEGEL'S CONCEPT OF INCARNATION AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR KÜNG	47
1.7 CHRIST'S INCARNATION IN HISTORY ACCORDING TO HEGEL AND THE CONSEQUENCE THEREOF FOR KÜNG	48
1.8 CONCLUSION	59
 CHAPTER TWO : THE BACKGROUND TO HANS KÜNG'S RECONSTRUCTION OF JESUS	61
2.1 INTRODUCTION	61

2.2	THE AIM OF KÜNG'S CHRISTOLOGY	62
2.2.1	The Inadequacy of Humanism	63
2.2.2	The Inadequacy of World Religions	65
2.3	KÜNG'S POINT OF DEPARTURE : A CHRISTOLOGY FROM BELOW	73
2.4.	THE HISTORICAL-CRITICAL METHOD AS UNDERSTOOD BY KÜNG	76
2.4.1	Küng's Application of the Historical- Critical Method	79
2.4.2	The Kerygmatic Element Discovered by the Historical-Critical Method	81
2.5	THE PLACE OF CHRIST'S MIRACLES ACCORDING TO THE HISTORICAL-CRITICAL METHOD	83
2.5.1	Hans Küng and the Place of Miracles in the Light of the Historical-Critical Method	86
2.6	THE PROBLEM OF CHRIST'S TITLES AND THE HISTORICAL-CRITICAL METHOD	93
2.6.1	Hans Küng and the Problem of Christ's Titles in the Light of the Historical- Critical Method	99
2.7	CONCLUSION	102
CHAPTER THREE : KÜNG'S PORTRAIT OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS, LOCATED BY THE NEW QUEST AND EXPLAINED THROUGH THE NEW HERMENEUTIC		104
3.1	A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE NEW QUEST AND THE NEW HERMENEUTIC	106
3.1.1	The New Hermeneutic as a Part of the New Quest	112
3.2	KÜNG'S PORTRAIT OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS AND ITS MODERN RELEVANCE	117
3.2.1	Jesus the Man: He is Different from All Other Men	120
3.2.2	Jesus Fits No Picture	124
3.3	THE MESSAGE OF JESUS	131
3.3.1	The Kingdom of God	131
3.3.2	God's Cause Equals Man's Cause	137
3.3.3	The Claim Jesus Made : Their Legitimacy for His Person	145

	Page
3.4 THE FINAL OUTCOME OF JESUS' MESSAGE	156
3.4.1 K��ng's Hermeneutics	162
CHAPTER FOUR : SPECIFIC EMPHASES IN K��NG'S CHRISTOLOGY	175
4.1 THE CONCEPT OF RESURRECTION IN K��NG	176
4.1.1 The Significance of the Resurrection for Jesus	185
4.1.2 Resurrection as Vindication for Jesus	189
4.1.3 The Significance of the Resurrection for an understanding of God	192
4.1.4 The Significance of the Resurrection for the Disciples	198
4.1.5 The Significance of the Resurrection for Humanity	201
4.1.6 The Significance of the Resurrection Today	204
4.2 CHRIST'S PRE-EXISTENCE, INCARNATION AND VIRGIN BIRTH	206
4.3 K��NG'S UNDERSTANDING OF ATONEMENT	216
4.3.1 K��ng's Interpretation of Christ's Atonement	217
4.4 IS JESUS DIVINE?	223
4.4.1 Scripture: The Norma Normans. Tradition: The Norma Normata	230
CHAPTER FIVE : A CRITIQUE OF HANS K��NG'S CHRISTOLOGY	233
5.1 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS	234
5.2 THE HISTORICITY OF GOD	238
5.2.1 The Dialectic in God	238
5.2.2 Becoming in God	239
5.2.3 The Suffering of God	240
5.3 GOD AS HISTORICALLY PRESENT IN JESUS	244
5.3.1 An Evaluation of K��ng's Picture of the Historical Jesus	252
5.4 K��NG'S HERMENEUTIC: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HISTORY AND FAITH	256
5.5 K��NG'S POSITION ON THE CHRISTOLOGICAL SPECTRUM	270

Page

5.6	PROTESTANT THEOLOGIANS	271
5.6.1	The Functionalist-Ontological Debate	271
5.6.1.1	Pannenberg and History : A Comparison with Küng	274
5.6.2	Moltmann, Jüngel and the Suffering God	277
5.7	CATHOLIC THEOLOGIANS	282
5.8	SPECIFIC CRITICISMS OF KÜNG'S METHODOLOGY	288
5.8.1	Reactions to Küng's Use of the Historical- Critical Method	290
5.8.2	Departure from Below and the Critics of Küng	292
5.9	THE CRITICS' FINDINGS AS THEY RELATE TO KÜNG'S DEPICTION OF JESUS	293
5.9.1	Küng's Christology Lacks an Ontological Dimension	293
5.9.2	Küng's Christology is Functional and Therefore Reductionistic	295
5.10	KÜNG'S RESPONSE TO HIS CRITICS	298
	CHAPTER SIX: PROCESS THEOLOGY: A LOGICAL CONCLUSION TO KÜNG'S CHRISTOLOGY	310
6.1	INTRODUCTION	310
6.2	KÜNG'S REACTION TO PROCESS THOUGHT	312
6.3	THE METHOD OF PROCESS CHRISTOLOGY	313
6.3.1	Process Christology, Evolution and Evil	317
6.3.2	Persuasion and the Person of Jesus Christ	322
6.4	THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN JESUS CHRIST AS REFLECTED IN PROCESS THEOLOGY	325
6.5	AN EVALUATION OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST IN PROCESS THOUGHT	331
6.6	PROCESS CHRISTOLOGY: A VIABLE DIRECTION FOR KÜNG'S CHRISTOLOGY	334
	CONCLUSION	342
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	347

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE CHRISTOLOGY OF HANS KÜNG

INTRODUCTION¹

Küng attempts an introduction to the person of Jesus via ideas taken from Hegel. Because he believes that all questions and responses regarding the person of Jesus are always provisional, Küng's work is a prolegomenon. People today find first century Christianity remote. Küng's object, therefore, is to steer christology in a new direction without supplying final answers. Since there are none, Christianity cannot be limited to a creed which by its very nature must be time-bound as a purportedly definitive statement about Jesus.

It is at this stage of the discussion about the person of Jesus that Küng enters the theological debate. How is Jesus to be understood? Can he be known and is there some method of identifying him? Did he suddenly appear on the scene some 2000 years ago proclaiming a message about the irruption of the Kingdom of God? Was he a revolutionary enthusiast bent on establishing a new world order? Has the church so distorted the picture of the simple rabbi from Nazareth as to make the original unrecognizable? Did he see himself as very God and very man invested with divine authority to save the world by his atoning death? Can the dead rise from the grave and is there evidence for the resurrection of Jesus?

¹ For a bibliography of Küng's works, see: Hermann Häring and Karl-Josef Kuschel, Hans Küng: His Work and His Way, (Glasgow: Collins, 1979), pp.12-30. Also pp.185-241. For a detailed biography see: Robert Nowell, A Passion for Truth - Hans Küng: A Biography, (London: Collins, 1981.)

The above questions form the basis for Küng's christology which is the topic of this investigation. Answers to them will become clearer as Küng's christology is expounded and evaluated. One must not lose sight of his essential purpose: to be relevant by presenting a picture of Christ that makes sense to scientifically orientated modern persons. Most of such persons, Küng assumes, are alienated from the church and from Christianity in particular.²

In attempting this, Küng is addressing European thinkers rather than North Americans since the latter are much more church-bound, as many editions of Christianity Today emphasize. The question arises whether Küng's apologetic is applicable to South Africans where a vast majority of blacks and whites have some church affiliation.³

The purpose of this investigation, however, is confined to understanding and evaluating Küng's christology within the German context. It is German Protestant New Testament thought that influences his christology. The evaluation, however, will include Anglo-American process thought since it brings with it a logical conclusion to Küng's use of both Hegel and the historical-critical method.

In contrast to unfair criticisms levelled at him by those who do not understand historical-critical exegesis, a critique will be offered indicating a direction open to Küng, namely process theology. Küng's starting point for a prolegomena to a future christology based on his interpretation of Hegel and linked by the

² Hans Küng, Existiert Gott?, Zürich: Piper & Co., 1978, p.766. Hereinafter cited as E.G.

³ B.Goba, My Reflexions on Kung's Chicago Lectures: A Discussion, 1992.

historical-critical method, features prominently in the chapters ahead.

Küng moves rapidly from Hegel as a point of departure aimed at grounding christology in the historical Jesus of whose identity Strauss had set forth the guidelines. He achieves his purpose by adhering closely to modern German Protestant New Testament studies beginning with a christology from below. From there it proceeds via the New Quest for the historical Jesus as interpreted by the New Hermeneutic.

Küng's christological conclusions ultimately lead him to accept Christ as God's personal representative who fully reveals the character of God. Jesus stands in God's place, manifesting God's ultimate concern for the well-being of humanity. What distinguishes Jesus from other great religious leaders, however, according to Küng is his portrayal of God as one who loves outcasts and sinners as well as the good.

For Küng, therefore, identifying the historical Jesus is the essential clue to God's person and character, since Jesus acts towards individuals precisely as God does. Küng's findings mean that God cannot be separated from the person of Jesus. These themes will be developed in what follows.

The foregoing implies that specific doctrines such as the pre-existence, atonement and resurrection of Jesus will therefore also receive attention, since the historical-critical method compels the researcher to re-interpret these basic doctrines by giving them a meaning different from the presentation of historic Christianity. Later chapters dealing with these aspects will clarify this observation.

Küng is attempting to develop a dynamic christology, one that does not limit action to a specific time-frame, nor to a statement from a particular era such as a creed. A creed may address adequately the question confronting it -- the question of "who is Jesus?" -- but it does so within the thought patterns of its own time. The Nicene Creed is an example. It attempts to explain the person of Jesus as one who is the Father's very "substance," a word that presents a problem of re-interpretation to modern persons, as do many other terms. The Chalcedonian creed elaborates on this by adding that he is also one with humanity, thus truly God and truly man, the two natures theory.

As will be seen, Küng regards the creeds as static, tending to become absolutized, complex and abstract, often superimposed on scripture. If Küng is correct in this he is obliged to present an alternative, which he does in parallel with Hegel's dynamic christology that prepares the way for the New Quest and the associated christological concepts outlined in chapters 1-4.

For Küng the resolution of this problem would answer the question "Who is Jesus?" If it were asked whether the original Jesus would be recognizable today Küng would answer, yes, by means of the historical-critical method linked to the New Quest through the New Hermeneutic.

I shall endeavour to underscore this point in my examination of his christology and, in order to ensure that Küng's thought should be allowed to address a wider audience than Germanic scholarship, the final chapter of this thesis will deal with process christology in its Anglo-American theological context.

That chapter will attempt to show that process thought is not contrary to a Hegelian standpoint while at the same

time it gives due respect to the historical-critical method. Process thinking (see chapter six) corrects Küng's reflection on dogmatic theology by re-directing his criticism of process thought. Process thought provides an acceptable modern methodology for doing christology.

Because a minority of systematic theologians seem to have grasped the historical-critical method of exegesis, Küng speaks of "the misery of contemporary dogmatic theology...."⁴ In his view the inability of dogmaticians to grasp the above method led to his condemnation by the German Catholic Bishops who held tenaciously to dogma and the creeds of Nicaea and of Chalcedon. Concerning this group Küng asserts:

Nicht so die Deutsche Bischofskonferenz. Ihre schon zweite Presse-Erklärung zu "Christ sein" vom 3. März 1977 unterstellt dem Verfasser, für ihn sei Jesus Christus "nur ein vorbildlicher Mensch" und "nur Gottes Sprecher und Sachverwalter (sic!)." Dies weise ich als eine mir unbegreifliche Verfälschung meiner Gedanken zurück. Dasselbe gilt für die faktische Unterstellung, ich hätte christologische Aussagen des nizänischen Glaubensbekenntnisses geleugnet.⁵

In the same document Küng accuses the episcopal body of treating his concepts with contempt in order deliberately to misrepresent him.⁶ Whether the German Catholic Bishops are right in rejecting his christology is a question whose answer requires close scrutiny and clarification of Küng's position.

The problem of Küng's christology is now examined, first in general terms, then specifically.

⁴ Hans Küng, Theology for the Third Millenium, (London: Collins, 1991) p.85.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

A GENERAL DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM OF KÜNG'S CHRISTOLOGY

Küng's answer to "Who is Jesus?" is not the Jesus of the creeds but the person identified through the historical-critical method. On this main point he and his church are at variance.⁷ Küng believes our present theological climate, influenced by modern technology, makes the definitions supplied by Nicaea and Chalcedon (here considered as a unit) incomprehensible.

In his view the doctrine of the two natures -- Christ as both God and man -- has been interpreted statically along Greek lines. Ultimately, such an outlook also influences one's perspective on God and the Trinity. On the other hand, Hegel holds a dynamic view of God acting in history through Christ. This dynamic concept, in Küng's opinion, is one modern persons can grasp. He makes an attempt to show how a God who acts in history manifests divinity within history. Consequently, for Küng, since God acts in Jesus Christ understood by means of the pattern supplied by Hegel, a viable, dynamic christology becomes possible.

The concept of a dynamic Hegelian model for christology has been missed by Küng's critics because, as noted below, Küng's transition from the history of God in the world to that of the historical Jesus is not always clear. This point will be underscored at a later stage of the discussion. Indeed, Küng has perhaps unnecessarily faced harsh criticism. It is possible that the gap between his christology from above, seen in Hegel, contrasted with his christology from below, in his later works such as Christ-Sein, is more apparent than real.

⁷ Die Welt, Samstag, 15 Dezember 1979, p.7, cols.1-6

An effort will be made to undergird this proposition, showing that Menschwerdung Gottes, Christ-Sein and Existiert Gott? do not contradict but complement one another. The three works should therefore be read as a whole.

Küng's christology must be examined from the viewpoint of the current German perspective, one that puts minimal emphasis on pre-existence, incarnation in the classical sense and the atonement as the central point of the drama of redemption. The two natures of Christ, as in Chalcedon, is a doctrine of little value to Küng whose christology focuses on Christ as God's representative attested by the resurrection.

The Anglo-Saxon works on christology, as reflected in the bibliography, have, almost without exception, proved unhelpful in interpreting Küng as the historical-critical method is not prominent in their conclusions. Rather, their emphasis is on the classical doctrine of incarnation and attempts to reinterpret it.⁸

A SPECIFIC DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM OF KÜNG'S CHRISTOLOGY

Such a specific definition of Küng's problem demands the use of theological terms. Theological language and its meaning for modern persons, therefore, becomes vital in elucidating the concept of Christ as very God and very man.

⁸ Georg Newlands, "Christology", A New Dictionary of Christian Theology, (eds) Alan Richardson and John Bowden, (London: SCM Press, 1985), pp.105-106

Küng strives for relevance in his theology. He emphasizes:

Aber wer wollte leugnen, dass die traditionellen Glaubensaussagen bezüglich der Gottheit Christi heute vielen Menschen Schwierigkeiten bereiten und Fragen aufgeben.⁹

Obviously then, there is difficulty in relating to material beyond experience since one is conditioned by one's situation. The Chaledonian definition is a good example of the problem.

Normally the mind thinks in terms of analogies. How then can one grasp ideas that do not correspond to present thought patterns? Küng believes a restatement is necessary. He is persuaded that Hegel presents a good model for a future christology. Thus before one examines Küng's use of Hegelian ideas, the teaching of Chalcedon must be considered.

The concept of one person who has two natures is alien to modern persons since no model exists by which one can interpret it. This is further complicated when we speak of one God in three persons while denying tritheism. One may assume that the Fathers were familiar with the content of their statements, but for many people today their language is difficult to comprehend. Words have changed their meaning over the centuries, so involving problems of thought forms and translation into contemporary language.

The text of Chalcedon confronts us here. Examination of it becomes unavoidable. Küng endeavours to bridge the gap between past and present so that Chalcedon can be heard today. About the problem of Chalcedon he states:

⁹ Die Welt, Dezember 15, 1979, p.7, col.1.

Aber hier ganz kurz: Auf die Frage was für mich Gottheit Jesus oder Gottessohnschaft bedeutet (und Sie gestatten mir sicher, in diesem wichtigen Punkt zur Abwehr der gegenwärtigen Diffamierungskampagne das wörtlich zu zitieren was ich geschrieben habe): 'In Jesus - der uns Menschen als Gott, Sachwalter und Platzhalter, Repräsentant und Stellvertreter erscheint und der, als der Gekreuzigte zum Leben erweckt, von Gott bestätigt wurde - ist für mich der menschenfreundliche Gott selber nahe und am Werk; durch ihn hat Gott selbst gesprochen, gehandelt, sich endgültig geoffenbart.¹⁰

Briefly then, one must try to ascertain the meaning of Chalcedon and examine to what extent Küng portrays its intent. Using the historical-critical method, Jesus' action and proclamation must be the norm for Küng's christology as the statement cited above shows. One raises the question as to whether it is easier to rethink oneself into the New Testament period than it is to enter the world of Chalcedon or even - for that matter - the world of Hegel. An attempted answer to this forms part of the critique offered in the latter part of this thesis.

As to the specific problem concerning the language of Chalcedon, an attempt must be made to define it. The dilemma of language is compounded by Chalcedon's use of both Greek and Latin terms. The Greek with Latin equivalents is often confusing to the contemporary mind. The following guide will assist in finding and defining the synonyms required for clarity. The list given here should be a reliable rule. One may accept that

¹⁰ Ibid., col.2.

1) Prosopon = Persona = Hypostasis = the word "Person" for the purpose of definition. Furthermore, a similar relationship applies to the following terms:

2) Ousia = Essentia = Substantia = Physis = the words "Essence" or "Nature" or "Substance".¹¹

The first group is relational in meaning in the sense that a son is related to his father, while the second is ontological, referring to attributes or properties. One now knows which words are related to "person" and which apply to "nature" or "substance". It should be clear that the idea of "person" has nothing to do with the essential nature or being of anything; rather, it is a relational term.

Since "substance" is so often used in conjunction with "person", the difference must be noted for these words constantly appear in discussions about Jesus as well as the Trinity. There is a certain amount of confusion about these expressions because Boethius defined "person" as an individual substance of a rational nature. This is very close to the modern concept of "person" as an individual, thus almost ignoring the relational aspect.

"Person" is often confused with "nature" or "substance". Statements like "he is a nice person", or "he has an attractive personality", or "he is good natured" are very common. Such designations show why Chalcedon is an enigma; with the passing of time words have changed their meaning.

¹¹ Reinhold Seeberg, The History of Doctrines, 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1958), p.229. See also p.256.

It becomes necessary to explain the meaning Chalcedon gives to "substance", "essence" or "nature". Fortman defines nature as "the Quiddity of a being, that which makes it what it is".¹² This, clearly, is also a term for essence. While "person" is relational, "nature" is an intrinsic ontological quality pertaining to "person".

With this attempt to define "person" and "nature" comes the necessity of relating them to the doctrine of the person of Christ as well as the doctrine of the Trinity, since it can be assumed that the doctrines are interlinked, both of them addressing the question of Christ's connection with God.

If Jesus is the eternal Son, he is such because of a trinitarian relationship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, participating together in the work of salvation while retaining the divine unity. After defining the Son's place in the Trinity one must still inquire into his relationship with humanity. Orthodox or classical theology will not question the doctrines of the Trinity and the two natures of Christ, regarding them as essential to true faith "because (they are) divinely revealed and proposed by the church to be believed".¹³

In the light of the foregoing it is not difficult to sympathize with Küng's statement:

kann man auch in katholischen Kirchen öfters
entweder eine kaum verständliche Erklärung der
traditionellen Lehre hören oder beredtes Schweigen.
¹⁴

¹² Edmund J. Fortman, The Triune God, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press), 1972, p.361.

¹³ Ibid., p.365

¹⁴ Frankfurter Rundschau, Januar 9, 1980, p.14, col 6

Should one care to work through the many volumes of historical theology this silence can be appreciated. If the church has an article of faith, in K  ng's view, it must be explicable. Indeed it is for this reason that his christology claims attention through its exposition.

An examination of the two natures logically precedes a consideration of the Trinity. The Chalcedon settlement set out a formal confession, partly in the following terms:

one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, made known in two natures without confusion, without change, without division, without separation, the difference of the natures being by no means removed because of the union, but the property of each nature being preserved and coalescing in one 'prosopon' and one 'hupostasis' - not parted or divided into two 'prosopa'....¹⁵

Consequently, the divine "nature" and the human "nature" remain distinct in one "person", that is, the "person" of Christ. The point of unity in Christ, therefore, is not in the "natures", but in his "person". This means in the "person" the "nature" of God and the "nature" of man is present. As united in this one person, the divine and human "natures" are not to be confused, but are to remain distinct. According to Gregory of Nazianzus, "It is plain that not the person ... but the nature ... is ... God".¹⁶

The Cappadocians, furthermore, contend that "the humanity weeps at the grave of Lazarus, but the deity calls him to life".¹⁷ To use modern language, it would appear as if Jesus has a split personality. Regarding Christ's

¹⁵ J.N.D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, (London: Harper and Row, 1960), pp. 339-340.

¹⁶ Seeberg, History of Doctrines, p.231

¹⁷ Ibid., p.251.

suffering during his life and death, Hilary, in the West, continues the above pattern of thought when he affirms: "The divine nature (of Christ) could not and did not feel ... suffering"¹⁸

Here a static view of Christ's divinity is suggested: the divine cannot suffer. By this view human nature can indeed suffer but the divine nature is untouched by Christ's plight, for God is beyond the mundane; he is unchangeable in terms of his attributes. Consequently, it was not Jesus as a total person who suffered and died on the cross, only a part of Jesus was involved, namely his human nature. As this study will indicate, Küng rejects such an idea.

An obvious question that now arises concerns the manner in which God is conceived to be connected with the human nature of Jesus. Rahner defines this hypostatic union in the following terms:

The Hypostatic Union implies the self-communication of the absolute Being of God - such as subsists in the Logos - to the human nature of Christ which thereby becomes a nature hypostatically supported by the Logos.¹⁹

Rahner asserts that the hypostatic union "involves an ontological assumption of the human nature by the person of the Logos".²⁰ The Logos is not changed through the hypostatic union. The human nature, however, is subsumed in the divine while retaining its human properties.

Rahner's argument involves two further concepts: of anhypostasias, on the one hand, and enhypostasias on the other. These terms require definition. Indeed, while

¹⁸ Ibid., p.256.

¹⁹ Karl Rahner, Theological Investigations, V (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1963) p.205.

²⁰ Ibid., pp.206-207.

the Fathers possibly knew the relevance of them, their significance is currently in doubt. Certainly, therefore, a restatement is necessary, particularly in the light of some existing definitions concerning Christ's "nature".

Schillebeeckx has this to say about enhypostasis in relating the divine and human in Christ:

Enhypostasis ... signifies ... that the human non-personal nature is nevertheless personalized by the divine person. the anhypostasis is in that case the consequence of the enhypostasis in the divine word. (The human nature in Christ does not have a human centre, but is located in the divine person, thus only does it become personalized). In current christology an attempt is made (in diverse ways) to explain the enhypostasis without an anhypostasis: that is Jesus suffers no deprivation of human 'personal' being and yet is one with the Son of God.²¹

Consequently, the human nature is personalized, not in itself but by the divine. A contrast with anhypostasis must now be drawn. It is Schillebeeckx who elaborates on this:

(anhypostasis) indicates a condition from which being - a human person - is absent; it is implied that Jesus does indeed have a human nature and (in that sense) is a human being but that his being 'qua' person is constituted by the divine person, with the result that Christ is not a human person.²²

Thus he is a divine person with no human personalized centre; his humanity, therefore, is united to a human nature without a human person. Küng thinks these concepts are beyond the reach of men and women today. Therefore they need to be restated in patterns modern persons can understand.

²¹ Edward Schillebeeckx, Jesus: An Experiment in Christology, (London: Collins, 1979), p.746.

²² Ibid.

A further instance of remoteness from modernity, if not of actual obscurity, occurs through the church Fathers' statement declaring Christ to be of the same substance as the Father, for Christ is indeed homousios and not merely homoiousios (of similar substance). Although one may assume these terms were clear to the Fathers, their contemporary limited comprehension by men and women, and thus their value, may well be in doubt.

Obviously certain present-day theologians have attempted to grasp and restate the dilemma as to whether Chalcedon "squares the circle". John McIntyre, however, accepts the validity of Chalcedonian language and argues for its retention. He contends for a background formulated by Aristotle, using the ideas of primary and secondary substance. To illustrate his point he affirms: " 'Tom Jones is human'. Here Tom Jones is the primary substance. Humanity is predicated of him"²³

Let us pursue McIntyre's argument. Tom Jones then exists in his own right; he is Tom Jones and no one else. On the other hand, secondary substance is predicated of something else; Tom Jones is human, or is a man, thus the primary substance, that is, Tom Jones, belongs to the secondary substance - man; for, according to this view all "primary substances belong to secondary substances, either genera or species".²⁴

To abbreviate the argument, one finds that the second person of the Trinity, who is a "divine person" in relation to the other members of the Trinity, has his own characteristics as "primary substance". The use of the word "substance" as "primary" refers, not to "substance"

²³ John McIntyre, The Shape of Christology, (London: SCM Press, 1966), p.87.

²⁴ Ibid.

as used up to this point, but to hypostasis, which in this case belongs to the secondary substance, physis, or the "divine nature" through the hypostatic union. "Substance" here does not have its Chalcedonian meaning.

In the incarnation Christ retains the "divine primary substance" or hypostases as fused with the human "person", but now adds to his divine physis or "nature" his human physis or "nature" as well. Thus his "personhood" is related to the divine hypostasis. Consequently, he is a divine/human person for the divine and human person are fused. He has a divine "nature" to which the human "nature" is united. The divine and human natures cannot therefore be confused. The persons, however, are relationally fused as seen in McIntyre's statement cited below.

The second person of the Trinity combines with the "person" or "primary substance" of Jesus relationally in total harmony. He is thus one person with two natures. Hence, he lives and dies as a total person who cannot be separated into a human and divine "person". Consequently, he suffers and dies as a total person. The point McIntyre is making shows, therefore, that the divine can suffer in Christ for he is not a split personality. Obviously, care needs to be taken not to lose the thread of the argument, which in itself shows the need for a re-statement. McIntyre acknowledges his debt to Ephraim of Antioch who accepts that

the two natures as such are not confused or compounded one with the other, the two hypostases are. Accordingly the hypostasis of Jesus Christ is a fusion of the human and divine hypostasis²⁵

²⁵ Ibid; p.110.

It is extremely difficult to translate the above statement into modern thought forms because people today do not think in these categories.

I must now examine the idea of the trinitarian language and its relevance for today. Strictly speaking one has to concede that the doctrine of the Trinity is not a part of Chalcedon; yet, because it is intrinsically bound up with christology it demands our attention. Furthermore, as noted earlier, both doctrines have influenced each other as they attempted to answer the question about the person of Jesus in relation to God and humanity.

As to trinitarian language and the phrase "one 'ousia' in three 'huypostasois' . . . ,"²⁶ Athanasius maintains that

We worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in unity; we distinguish among the persons, but we do not divide their substance. (Father, Son and Holy Spirit are distinct persons, still they have one divinity)
²⁷

Indeed, the whole undivided essence belongs to all three persons eternally so that the one God eternally exists as three persons. In the above definitions one is confronted by either modalism or tritheism; neither was acceptable to the church; yet the definitions, though incomprehensible, remain as part of the church's doctrine that must be believed. The silence to which Küng referred resulted from an inability to fathom the meaning of the language used. Küng believes the outdated and obscure language needs reformulation if it is to be

²⁶ J.N.D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, (London: Harper and Row, 1960), p.264. Tillich quotes the above phrase from Tertullian in Latin "Una substantia, tres personae" found in: Paul Tillich, A History of Christian Thought, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968), p.143.

²⁷ Edmund J. Fortman, The Triune God, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), p.159.

understood today. The aim of the Fathers was to explain doctrine in terms acceptable to their generation. Furthermore, they were intent on preserving the doctrine of Christ as the world's saviour. To achieve this end, the Fathers were persuaded that Christ had to be both God and man so that his sacrifice on the cross could be effective for humanity's salvation. Secondly, if Christ were God he must be God in such a way that there is no confusion between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Accepting the three-fold relationship, the Fathers attempted to retain the unity of God, resulting in the emergence of language acceptable to their generation, but problematic for today. On the other hand some would ask:

Why did the Fathers of Chalcedon say what they did? And the answer is that the Bible and the Church tradition persuaded them ... in other words there is basic continuity between Chalcedon and the New Testament.²⁸

It would appear, however, that Chalcedon replaced a functional New Testament approach with an ontological doctrine.²⁹ Should that be the case, how can one re-phrase the functional outlook of the New Testament in a manner acceptable for today? Küng attempts to find a solution to this problem.

The above section indicates the extent of the effort required and the problem involved in unravelling obscure language, historically remote thought and non-analogous categories. For the Fathers the goal was clear: to maintain, in the language of their period, a definite link with the thought of the New Testament as they understood it and to preserve a continuity within the

²⁸ D.S. Watson, "Why Chalcedon?", (Unpublished paper, 1980), p.2.

²⁹ O. Cullmann, The Christology of the New Testament, (Westminster, 1964). (The entire work attempts to replace ontology with functionalism.)

tradition and worship of the church. They attempted to expound relationships in the Trinity as well as explicate the connection between the divinity and humanity of Christ; all this in terms acceptable to their generation.

In addition, their task involved relating Christ to the Logos. Theirs was an attempt to propound doctrine so as to preserve the status of Christ as saviour. The many councils with their numerous anathemas give some indication of the Fathers' limited success in finding a solution, hence the need for a current re-statement.

For Küng, the church must face the difficulties encountered in traditional theology. If one is to present the Christian faith to men and women today, clarity is required. Küng, as will be seen in the next chapter, develops his argument by using Hegel as his main source for a prolegomenon to a future christology.

Thus Küng desires a vehicle for christology whereby modern persons can grasp the concept of Christ's two natures, one as very God and the other as truly man, in thought forms intelligible to themselves. He turns to Hegel for essential support as he endeavours to move from what he perceives to be the incomprehensible, static form of Chalcedon, to a restatement of christology along dynamic lines. Hegel's model of God as active in history presents an acceptable basis for a future christology, according to Küng.

It now becomes necessary to investigate Küng's application of Hegel's ideas to christology.

CHAPTER ONE

HEGEL AS A POINT OF DEPARTURE FOR KÜNG'S CHRISTOLOGY

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO KÜNG VIA HEGEL

As a background to the christology of Hans Küng, it is of vital importance that one make the attempt to grasp the thought pattern of Hegel because Küng contends that Hegel is a necessary platform for any future christology. According to Küng, Hegel linked his philosophical idea of God to the biblical message as a God who acts continuously in history, thus knowledge is an ongoing dynamic process, involving constant interaction with the biblical texts, hence Küng's emphasis on the new hermeneutic as it relates to history.¹ These issues receive full attention in later chapters as reflected in the table of contents.

One is now obliged to ask exactly what Hegel teaches about christology and that in itself provides a problem as shown below.

1.1.1. The Problem of Interpreting Hegel.

Even though Hegel's accumulated works comprise some forty volumes, it is accepted generally that he was directly responsible for only four books. The rest are lectures, letters, and incomplete immature works published posthumously by his editors.² Frederick Weiss, who makes the above statement, then goes on to say that the

¹ Hans Küng, The Incarnation of God, An Introduction to Hegel's Theological Thought as Prolegomena to a Future Christology trans., J. Stephenson, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), p. xii.

² Frederick G. Weiss, Hegel: The Essential Writings (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), p. xvi.

understanding of Hegel, particularly his Logic, "is extremely difficult if not impossible."³

In an attempt to grasp Hegel's thinking, it is with interest that one hears his claim: "Only one man has really understood me, and even he has not"⁴ Clearly Hegel is referring to himself. MacIntyre is therefore correct when he writes as follows: "Many strange and different views have been ascribed to him."⁵ MacIntyre further contends regarding Hegel's Phenomenology that the work is obscure, impenetrable and unclear; thus, the "commentator is therefore liable to feel a certain liberty in reconstructing Hegel's intentions...."⁶

J.N. Findlay, in an article on Hegel, asserts that in Anglo-Saxon countries Hegel has been "very imperfectly understood."⁷ Kaufmann is of the opinion that "Revolts against Hegelianism dominate English and American philosophy of the twentieth century."⁸ The dominant antagonists were Royce and Russell. Kaufmann writes as follows regarding both Hegel's supporters and opponents: "Very few indeed have read as many as two of the four books that Hegel published."⁹ Furthermore, it appears to Kaufmann that continental scholars have not understood

³ Ibid., p.89.

⁴ Ibid., p.16.

⁵ Alasdair MacIntyre (ed.), Hegel: A collection of Critical Essays (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 1976), title page.

⁶ Ibid., p.219.

⁷ J.L. Findlay, "The Contemporary Relevance of Hegel," Hegel, ed. A. MacIntyre, p.2.

⁸ Walter Kaufmann, "The Hegel Myth and Its Method." Ibid., p.22.

⁹ Ibid.

Hegel either, asserting that Popper, for example, has confused Hegel with Jaspers and Heidegger.¹⁰

Continuing the above discussion on Hegel, R.C. Solomon examines what most commentators consider as the central point of Hegel's system, the concept of Geist. What exactly is the meaning of this word? Nobody knows because Hegel at no time defines the term.¹¹ The point that emerges distinctly is that Hegel is very difficult to understand and that most efforts to interpret him even by experts like Findlay are "unsatisfactory because [they underplay] the theoretical claims made by Hegel."¹² Findlay does not offer any elaboration on this criticism.

It must be emphasized that my main concern is with K  ng and not Hegel. The exposition of Hegel will therefore, deal only with what is necessary for my treatment of K  ng, giving a concise account of his ideas, for K  ng sees Hegel as a prolegomenon to a future christology. G.D. O' Brien in his contribution to Michael Inwood's edited articles on Hegel, points out that "the textual problems ... are notorious"¹³ Hegel's works in some instances have gone through five editions in German, each of which is different".¹⁴ However, O' Brien continues: "A careful comparison of various texts in English and German persuades me that only nuances of meaning are

¹⁰ Ibid., p.30.

¹¹ R.C. Solomon, "Hegel's Concept of Geist", Ibid., p.132.

¹² Klaus Hartmann, "Hegel: A Non-metaphysical View," Ibid., p.103.

¹³ G.D. O' Brien, "Does Hegel Have a Philosophy of History?", Hegel, ed., Michael Inwood, (Hong Kong: OUP, 1985) p.180

¹⁴ Ibid

involved..."¹⁵ Since Hegel is so obscure, and acknowledging that my thesis involves Küng primarily, my references to Hegel generally are from the English.

1.1.2. A Synopsis of Hegel's Christology.
The Significance of *Vorstellung*.

It is widely accepted that the idea of Spirit is central to Hegel's thinking. Furthermore, Solomon asserts that for Hegel there is "a universal consciousness which is the underlying unifying principal of all consciousness".¹⁶ He believes the above statement is an adequate definition of Spirit since Hegel affirms: "Spirit itself...is the infinite history of God."¹⁷ Additionally, Spirit is God eternally active in the world for the purpose of reconciliation by means of love that operates through the process "of unity, separated opposites, reunion."¹⁸

The above activity in God implies that the idea of God limited to Being is too static in giving rise to movement

¹⁵ Ibid., p.181.

¹⁶ Solomon, p.148.

¹⁷ G.W.F. Hegel, Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy, III, trans., E.S. Haldane and F.H. Simpson (New York: Humanities Press, 1963), 16. Hereafter cited as L.H.P.

G.W.F. Hegel, Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie, (Berlin: Dunker und Humblot, 1840-1848), Sämtliche Werke, Vol. 15:100. Hereafter cited as V.G.P.

¹⁸ G.W.F. Hegel, Early Theological Writings, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p.308. Hereafter cited as E.T.W.

G.W.F. Hegel, Hegels theologische Jugendschriften, (Tübingen: Mohr, 1907), p.301. Hereafter cited as H.J.

within the divine. Hegel can consequently assert: "The truth of Being and of Nothing is accordingly the unity of the two."¹⁹ This concept is the thrust of Part Three of Hegel's Logic where he affirms: "And this unity is Becoming."²⁰ Hegel wants a philosophy of history wherein the divine is dynamic acting in the world's history by uniting separated opposites as explained above. This is his understanding of "Becoming". It involves dynamic movement and action.

The question has to be asked of Hegel as to how the divine acts dynamically in history. The answer lies in the notion of Vorstellung. Although this word has numerous English equivalents, perhaps the best translation is "representation" in the sense that God can be represented by metaphors or examples.²¹ The view to which I have just referred is extremely important for K  ng's christology wherein Jesus acts as God's representative. The understanding of the place and person of Jesus as he relates to God and to humanity revolves around this idea as will be seen in the following chapters.

While Spirit moves through and in history by the process of "Becoming", this action of the Absolute causes persons

¹⁹ G.W.F. Hegel, "Dialectic and the Science of Logic," Hegel: The Essential Writings, ed. F.G. Weiss (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), pp.115-119.

²⁰ Ibid., p.119.

²¹ G.W.F. Hegel, Lectures on Philosophy of Religion, I, trans., E.B. Spiers and J.B. Sanderson (New York: Humanities Press, 1962), 23-24. Hereafter cited as L.P.R.

G.W.F. Hegel, Vorlesungen   ber die Philosophie der Religion, (Berlin: Dunker und Humblot, 1840-1848), S  mtliche Werke, Vol. 11:23-24. Hereafter cited as V.P.R.

to probe beyond the immediate features of the world seeking solutions to history as the human nous responds to the Absolute. The reason for humanity exploring behind historical occurrences in an attempt to find meaning, lies in the fact that each human mind is in part an expression of the Absolute mind. However, since the mind operates through the logic of example, persons use illustrations and experiences that are readily available. Hegel can thus state that consciousness including religious consciousness finds "a way of thinking by means of relationships derived from nature"²² But at this point, humanity in terms of Hegel's "Dialectic" referred to above can only experience estrangement. Why? because nature does not supply a unity for the meaning of history. For Hegel, Nature is a sphere in which Spirit reveals itself, but only in terms of estrangement: "Nature is Spirit estranged from itself.... Nature is the son of God, but not as the Son, but as abiding in otherness.... Nature is Spirit estranged from itself.... God reveals Himself in two different ways: as Nature and as Spirit."²³ Nature can never provide a clear icon for the human spirit although as stated earlier it may give a useful direction. That which lies behind nature directing it to its goal is Mind therefore the human being is led beyond nature by mind to that which is all-encompassing, that is, Absolute Mind. But where is the ultimate point of contact if it must be located beyond nature? It must reside in a clear Vorstellung wherein God is posited as the other in a form that humanity can recognize. Historically speaking, that action occurs as God is revealed in the Son, thus the process of Becoming is set in motion for here one is dealing with Geist as God's Vorstellung in Jesus. Consequently, it is only when

²² Ibid.

²³ G.W.F. Hegel, "Nature and Spirit", Weiss, pp.191. & 211.

God as Spirit posits the other in the form of His Son that he is truly subject in the process of becoming for at this point there is a real encounter of Geist and geist²⁴ in history. According to Hegel the encounter is recognizable in Jesus as the supreme example.

Regarding the historical Jesus, Hegel accepts that he taught real uprightness and a true worship of God.²⁵ It was his rejection of the narrow legalism of Judaism and his broader concept of God that put him on a collision course with the leaders of his day,²⁶ leading to his ultimate fate.

Hegel accepts that the historical Jesus is the representation/Vorstellung of God who is present in him. The true union between God and Jesus, however, lies in the fact that Jesus personified the love of God in his dealings with persons.²⁷ Jesus' unity with God is therefore relational in terms of personified love as expressed in his attitude to outcasts. Jesus relates God's love to humanity. This very important point lies at the heart of Küng's christology, influencing his functional or relational christology. The issue will clarify itself when I develop Küng's thought in the later chapters.

Accordingly, Hegel affirms that God is present and represents Himself in all religions as Spirit.²⁸ The Christian religion, however, is final as the divine's

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ G.W.F. Hegel, H.J., p.87.

²⁶ Hegel, E.T.W., p.233. Ibid., p.284.

²⁷ Hegel, E.T.W., p.304. Ibid., p.336.

²⁸ Hegel, L.P.R., I. 263-268. V.P.R., Vol. II:263-268.

Vorstellung, according to Hegel, because Jesus is the ultimate disclosure of God's love,²⁹ through his deeds and teachings. The relational aspect of Vorstellung is thus paramount for Jesus shows what God is like by showing forth God's love in action. Jesus presents and represents God's love to humanity. If one should miss this aspect of Hegel's teaching, the direction of Küng's christology will be lost as well.

For Hegel, the high-point of the Christian religion is not the historical Jesus; rather, it is the "speculative" Christ.³⁰ Hegel uses the word "speculative" because the historical scene is a representation of his system wherein the divine goes out from itself into the other, the negative, and returns to itself having gathered the negative into itself to form a union through reconciliation in the process of becoming fulfilled. The historical Jesus is the final revelation of Hegel's system. To put it another way or to restate the above so that the reader obtains clarity, when one considers the paradigm of the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ, one observes Spirit moving out from itself towards the other, the estranged, and then a returning to itself. That action, for Hegel, is the means by which the Spirit mirrors the eternal divine reconciliation, for in this act the divine gathers the estranged opposite into itself as will be explained below.

²⁹ Hegel, E.T.W., pp.311-313. H.J., pp. 347-348.

³⁰ Hegel, L.H.P., I:81. V.G.P., Vol. II:80.

Consequently, Hegel accepts a Trinitarian Vorstellung as the vehicle for his philosophy.³¹ To clarify the above statement the un-Hegelian terms of thesis, antithesis and synthesis are used. The eternal concept of "Becoming" has its counterpart in space and time; for in the world's history, the divine takes into itself the suffering in the world through the death in the eternal as seen in God's disclosure in the historical Christ event which points beyond itself to an eternal dialectic of the suffering and reconciling love of God.³² As a result of the cypher of suffering, death, and resurrection, disclosed in Christ, the negative is taken up and abolished in "the eternal reconciliation."³³ The historical realm of space and time is seen as the area through which the Absolute moves as it strives for harmony within itself. Hegel can thus assert that the history of Jesus Christ, "is the Begriff, the idea of Spirit itself...is the infinite history of God."³⁴ (The incomplete sentence is the work of Hegel.)

All the major commentators agree on the difficulty of interpreting Hegel's system, acknowledging as do MacIntyre and Solomon that a certain liberty is permissible in reconstructing Hegel's intentions. K  ng too, I believe, falls into this group of commentators. The problem with Hegel's thought is its obscurity. On the

³¹ G.W.F. Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of History, trans., J. Sibree (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), p.416.

G.W.F. Hegel, Vorlesungen   ber die Philosophie der Geschichte, (Berlin: Dunker und Humblot, 1840-1848) S  mtliche Werke, Vol. 11:523.

³² Hegel, L.H.P., III. 4-5. V.G.P., Vol. 15:86-88.

³³ Hegel, L.P.R., III, 69. V.P.R., Vol. 12:279.

³⁴ Hegel, L.H.P., III, 16. V.G.P., Vol. 15:100.

other hand, perhaps obscurity is Hegel's strength; one can use his thought with a certain amount of freedom.

Again, I must emphasise that my main concern is not Hegel, but the christology of Küng, who attempts to give concrete expression to the speculative philosophy of Hegel in the historical Jesus.

If God is dynamic, Godself cannot be limited to human creeds, says Hegel. The divinity is not time-bound, consequently, the creeds of the church are historically limited.³⁵ Küng is in full agreement with Hegel's concept of the place of a creed as my further investigation will show.

For the sake of clarity, one should remember that Hegel was a Lutheran, therefore, his concept of "substance" must be interpreted within the framework of the Lutheran tradition wherein one sees that "God's essence is his loving will, not some obscure 'substance' behind this will"³⁶ as explained below. The religious intention of the creeds is lost when a "physical unity"³⁷ replaces a disposition of heart. In short, Christ's unity with the Father is functional in that the divine love is manifested through his work and deeds. The Roman doctrine of transubstantiation is an example of the difference between Lutherans and the Council of Trent regarding substance. Following Aquinas, Trent taught that in the Eucharist the substance of the bread and wine is changed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ. Here the emphasis is on a physical unity which is quite different from Aulén's explanation of substance referred

³⁵ Hegel, L.P.R., I. 40-42. V.P.R., Vol. 11:39-41.

³⁶ Gustaf Aulén, The Faith of the Christian Church (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), p.188.

³⁷ Ibid. pp. 187-189.

to above. Because Küng's view of substance approximates to that of Aulén, Rahner stigmatized Küng as a Lutheran theologian.³⁸ The above material on Vorstellung should help clarify any obscurities that exist.

In the following section, I shall attempt to relate Küng's christology to that of Hegel in order to ascertain Küng's direction. Hans Küng uses Hegel as his foundation for a future christology because Hegel, Küng believes, gives meaning to the concept of a God who, acting in history, is present in the world. The view of Hegel, Küng maintains, is in keeping with a dynamic view of God manifested in the world through the history of Israel, which ultimately finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ.³⁹ Claude Welch comes to the same conclusion about the value of Hegel. He declares:

[Hegel] offered an attractive possibility for surmounting some of the problems raised by the older rationalists.... Hegel's program seemed to provide a means for preserving many of the basic concepts of the trinity and of the Incarnation.⁴⁰

Theology at present is disenchanted with the "wholly other God" of Barth and, to a lesser extent, Brunner. Theology today wants a God who is involved with the world and humanity. It is at this point that the philosophy of Hegel provides insights into the belief in God's participation in the world's history.⁴¹

³⁸ Time Magazine, July, 1976, p.64.

³⁹ Hans Küng, Menschwerdung Gottes: Eine Einführung in Hegels Theologisches Denken als Prolegomena zu einer künftigen Christologie. (Freiburg: Ökumenische Forschungen, Herder, 1970), p.560. Hereafter cited as M.G.

⁴⁰ Claude Welch, In This Name, (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1952), pp.60-61.

⁴¹ M.G., pp.5-6.

Unlike the God who is "the wholly other", Hegel's idea of God is the "diesseitige Gott".⁴² Hans Küng comments: "Als Denkmodell dient hier zunächst vor allem die Philosophie Hegels...."⁴³ Hegel's philosophy is important to Küng since it clarifies the problem of God's involvement in history. Hegel's thought, involving a dynamic idea of God, moves beyond the static terms of Chalcedon with its emphasis upon concepts such as "nature" and "essence"; for these formulas are difficult to reconcile with a dynamic God. Indeed, the church's problem is that it identified with static past concepts, resulting in an inability to convey its message concerning Christ in patterns recognizable today.⁴⁴

Küng emphasizes the dangers involved in the failure to communicate theology adequately in an understandable way. Theology then becomes other-worldly. He draws, for example upon the rise of pietism with its emphasis on the inward expression of a subjective faith. Experience becomes the norm for biblical interpretation. Furthermore, one's feelings or experiences lead to a type of contemplation on the personal sufferings of Christ which may result in a distortion of his deeds and fate.⁴⁵

Küng disclaims a complete analysis of Hegel's system; this effort he leaves to the philosophers. Küng's task, therefore, is limited to a suitable application of Hegel's system for a future christology: one that takes seriously a dynamic view of God's self-revelation in the

⁴² Ibid., p.557.

⁴³ E.G., p.157.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p.102.

⁴⁵ E.G., p.162, 167-168.

world whereby God unites the human with the divine self.⁴⁶

1.2 THE PLACE OF SPIRIT IN HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY AS EXPOUNDED BY KÜNG

According to Hegel as Küng understands him, the ultimate force in persons is spirit or mind. While for Hegel the Absolute Spirit and the human spirit are inseparable, existentially there is an alienation between the human and the Absolute Spirit or the divine that the Absolute seeks to overcome. In order for the Absolute Spirit to manifest itself in history, it must unite itself with its opposite, the world, so that there can be unity, for the universal has no meaning except through its differentiation.⁴⁷ Therefore, Absolute Spirit must absorb the negative expressed by death into itself, emptying the negative of its content through the process of resurrection, otherwise both Absolute Spirit and spirit, the world and history, remain incomplete.⁴⁸ The explanation is given below. Hegel's system, therefore, attempts through the dialectic in God to reconcile the opposite, the non-absolute, or the part, with the whole. God, who is in the process of becoming whole therefore has to externalize Godself in the alienated world, overcoming that alienation through the process of negation and in this way the Absolute, which by itself has no meaning, through the act of externalization, incorporates the differentiated part, thus finding fulfilment. The part derives its meaning from the whole

⁴⁶ M.G., p.5 ff.

⁴⁷ E.G., p.191.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.192.

and the whole from its parts. As separate entities they have no significance.⁴⁹

Küng states:

Von diesem Gott her sind alle Gegensätze der Welt und der Gesellschaft in ihrer Zusammengehörigkeit und in Notwendigkeit ungreifbar. Von diesem Gott her lässt sich die tragische, unglückliche Aufspaltung der Wirklichkeit auf ihrer verschiedenen Ebenen durch Negation versöhnend aufheben.⁵⁰

A disrupted reality is thus healed through the negation of negation, resulting in the reconciliation of the infinite and finite: the world and God. Thus the scene is now set for Küng's use of Hegel's christological motif whereby God who is in the process of history, reveals himself at a specific point in that history. It is consequently necessary to investigate Hegel's theory of unity closely since this is the basis of Küng's christology whereby he unites the dynamic concept of God with that of the historical Jesus.

1.3 HEGEL AND UNITY : KÜNG'S INTERPRETATION

Hegel contends that a unity must, of necessity, include opposites since it gathers the negative into itself in order to overcome the reality of disharmony through re-uniting the negative both in and with the Absolute.⁵¹ Accordingly, one observes an attempt to lay the foundation for a christology by uniting Spirit and spirit: the transcendent with the immanent. Humanity is thus required to unite with animating Spirit of which it is the opposite in order to overcome such opposition in a

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp.176-179.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.178.

⁵¹ Hegel, E.T.W., p.308. H.J., p.301.

drive for harmony.⁵² However, should the opposite not be negated, the Absolute is impaired; for it is deprived of totality; hence, of necessity, the Absolute draws this estrangement into itself, with a view to attaining concord within the divine.⁵³ Consequently, there can be no God who is the "wholly other" for "Gott ist in dieser Welt und die Welt in diesem Gott".⁵⁴ God is thus never without the world, nor is the world without God.

It appears that there is a dialectic in God that necessitates a process of development in which

Dieser Gott in der Entwicklung, in der Geschichte, entäussert sich zur Welt und führt die Welt als Natur und endlich als Geist durch alle Stufen zu sich und zu seiner Unendlichkeit und Göttlichkeit empor.⁵⁵

However, the world should not be confused with God; rather, the world is God in the process of development as the divine externalizes itself with a view to encompassing the world in an all-embracing unity.

Küng elaborates as follows on the inner dialectic in God:

Die Gottheit umfasst alles, ohne dass die Differenz übergangen wird. Ganz im Gegenteil: die Differenz wird schon in Gott selbst gesehen. Das Leben Gottes besteht geradezu im Kampf mit dem Gegensatz: eine Auseinandersetzung Gottes mit sich selbst, in deren Lauf es zur Welt aus Gott und zur Versöhnung der Welt in Gott kommt.⁵⁶

⁵² Hegel, E.T.W., pp.311-312. H.J., p.347-348.

⁵³ Hegel, L.P.R., III. 99-100. V.P.R., Vol. 12:307-308.

⁵⁴ M.G., p.558.

⁵⁵ E.G., p.177.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Consequently, alienation is discarded in favour of the unity of God and world in dialectical tension.

A quotation from Kaufmann sums up the above section. He contends that Spirit

alludes to the Holy Spirit: God the Father becomes God the Son - he becomes something other for himself - but then this otherhood is concealed and yet preserved in the Holy Spirit. Spirit is that which is not static nor unstained self-identity; on the contrary, it is of its very essence that it is dynamic, is development, is sublimated otherhood.⁵⁷

This movement of God in uniting the world to Godself through Spirit, therefore, involves a theological dimension in Hegel: one that K  ng attempts to exploit. K  ng believes Hegel sees a unity between Absolute Spirit and spirit since Absolute Spirit is able to absorb the other into itself thus sublimating or annulling the differences. The importance, therefore, of the concept of unity within Spirit must be linked to the idea of Trinity, to ascertain both Hegel's method of operation and K  ng's use thereof. Unity within the Absolute takes place on the basis of Trinity as expressed in the idea (Gedanke) of resolving the tension between the Infinite and finite.

I shall now examine Hegel's reflection on the trinity propounded by K  ng in an effort to formulate a future christology as an alternative to Chalcedon.

⁵⁷ Walter Kaufmann, Hegel (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1965), p.413. Kaufmann offers a retranslation and commentary.

1.4 THE CONCEPT OF TRINITY IN HEGEL APPLIED BY KÜNG TO CHRISTOLOGY

A statement from Barth about Hegel's understanding of Trinity is of value since it expounds the idea of movement in God. Barth sums up Hegel's view of Spirit returning to itself as unity in the following way: "This means for Hegel... God is the Three in One, the eternal process, which consists in something distinguishing its parts, separating them, and absorbing them into itself again."⁵⁸ Hegel contends that God posits the other. While this other is different from God, it behoves the divine, by its very nature, to re-assert its drive towards unity so that the difference is taken into the unity and thus cancelled without the other losing its identity. Consequently, within this trinitarian dialectic, christology becomes the centre as the point of reconciliation in the divine move to a unity with the alienated finite. This trinitarian action for Küng is objectively grounded in the history of Jesus of Nazareth.⁵⁹

Küng understands Hegel to have a clear concept of the trinity. He affirms:

Seine Trinitätslehre ist keine wirklichkeitsferne Begriffsarithmetik, sondern eine zur Weltgeschichte in Bezug gesetzte trinitarische Heilsgeschichte.⁶⁰

Küng then continues by making the point that creation is grounded in the nature of God;⁶¹ for God is a God who goes out into the world, creating through a process of

⁵⁸ Karl Barth, Protestant Thought from Rousseau to Ritschl, (New York: Harper Brothers 1959), p.269.

⁵⁹ Hegel, L.P.R., II. 335. V.P.R., Vol. 12:397.

⁶⁰ E.G., p.189.

⁶¹ Ibid.

evolution, which is Spirit in action; thereafter, returning, having gathered the opposite, into the divine. The divine Trinitarian dialectic finds expression (Vorstellung) at the central point (Mittelpunkt) of christology.⁶² Consequently, Küng can deduce an idea of the trinity from Hegel's thought that is particularly related to christology.

On the subject of Hegel's philosophy of religion, Küng argues:

die absolute ewige Idee ist: an und für sich, Gott in seiner Ewigkeit, auf dem Boden des Denkens: Reich des Vaters (Dreieinigkeit); in der Trennung und Erschaffung der Welt, in der Sphäre der Entäusserung und Vorstellung: Reich des Sohnes (die Schöpfung und das Böse); in die Aufhebung der Trennung, im Prozess der Versöhnung: Reich des Geistes (Tod und Leben des Gottmenschen, Geist und Kirche).⁶³

It can thus be seen from the above quotation that the Trinitarian doctrine is found in Hegel. Furthermore, the doctrine cannot be abstracted, ultimately, from that of christology. The trinitarian movement in Hegel involves God positing the other in order to take this other into the eternal movement, thus effectively uniting dissimilarities in the whole with the intention of overcoming opposites.

It is evident that a basis for christology exists, evidenced by Hegel's concepts of Spirit, unity and trinity. Küng convincingly asserts: "Auch bei Hegel ist Gott trinitarisch verstanden als Voraussetzung der Schöpfung; ..." ⁶⁴ Küng then shows how this idea is

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., p.187.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.202.

expressed through incarnation and resurrection.⁶⁵
 Indeed, Küng confidently asserts regarding Hegel's system:

[Hegel] spricht mit Vorliebe von Gott als vom Geist: 'Geist' drückt aus, dass Gott ein werdender Gott, ein sich entwickelender, ein dialektischer sich entäussernder und aus der Entfremdung zu sich selbst kommender Gott ist.⁶⁶

Hegel's three-fold system of a trinity, for Küng, leads to Hegel's contribution to christology, serving as a platform for Küng's future christology. This thought will be developed under christology in the second chapter.

1.5 KÜNG'S THESIS OF THE DYNAMIC IN HEGEL IN RELATION TO STATIC CHALCEDONIAN IDEAS

In the light of the above it now becomes necessary to expound the dynamic dimension of Hegel's concept of God as interpreted by Küng since God is trinity in movement; God, therefore, is dynamic: a God in action.

Regarding Hegel, Barth declares: "The truth is God ... is God only 'in actu'".⁶⁷ Barth contends that truth is located solely in history; hence, God, as truth, is limited to history. It is at this point that God is always recognised and discovered. The point Barth makes is that "truth" is an ongoing process in history, constantly in need of a fresh discovery. Küng fully accepts this idea by rejecting a static idea of God in favour of a dynamic concept. The early Fathers were influenced by static categories that arose from their

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp.177-178.

⁶⁷ Barth, Rousseau to Ritschl, pp.297-299.

Hellenistic background as expressed by Chalcedon. Küng reasons:

Schon der Gedanke eines Schöpfergottes, der als lebendiger Gott direkt und unmittelbar in Sein und Werden der Welt (und der Materie!) eingreift, der die Welt und ihre Geschichte möglich macht und lenkt, erkennt, liebt und gut sein lässt, stand in scharfem Widerspruch zur griechischen Auffassung von der starren Transzendenz eines unveränderlichen Gottes.⁶⁸

Indeed, Chalcedon taught that Christ's suffering was limited to his human nature since it was not possible for the divine to suffer. Suffering in Greek thinking is an indication of deficiency. Because God is complete, suffering is excluded. God or the divine is, therefore, static in being according to Hellenistic thought; the dynamic aspect of God's involvement in the world and its suffering is consequently neglected. Hence, Küng's rejection of the Chalcedonian static formula in favour of a God who through dynamic movement reconciles the world to himself.⁶⁹

In discussing God's attributes, Küng emphasizes:

Im Sinne der griechischen Metaphysik lässt sich von der Welt auf Gott zurückschliessen - per modum affirmationis, negationis et supereminetiae, wie man später entwickelt hat -, und dann lässt sich sagen: Gott ist Gott, d.h., er ist einer und einfach, unveränderlich und unermesslich, allgegenwärtig, allwissend und allmächtig, ewig, geistig und gut... Er ist also die absolute Vollkommenheit und bedarf niemandes, weder des Menschen noch seiner Welt. Gott ist Gott. Er braucht nichts.⁷⁰

Ultimately, God, because of the perfection of attributes, needs nothing according to Greek metaphysics. This is

⁶⁸ M.G., p.531.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p.540.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.543.

the God portrayed through Christ's divine nature in terms of Chalcedon: a view that Küng holds to be inadequate, hence his attempts at a dynamic restatement of static patterns.

The sphere of God's dynamic action is, in Hegel's thought, creation and its consequential history. Hegel replaced the Greek static concept of God underlying Chalcedon with the concept of a God active in history. Küng believes Hegel to affirm: "Denn: Gott selbst ist in der Geschichte!".⁷¹ God, according to Hegel, as Küng interprets him, can no longer be a distant uninvolved being; rather, God now becomes active in the history of the world, a history separate from God yet absorbed into the divine. This concept refers back to the unity in God while pointing forward towards incarnation. The point made means it is not possible to separate God from the world's history.⁷² For Hegel, God is not a static unmoved mover; rather, God enters into history while, at the same time, passing through history. It should be remembered, however, that world history is estranged from God, causing incompleteness in the divine; the divine consequently takes the negative estrangement into itself in order for the divine to attain wholeness through overcoming the estranged negative.⁷³ This reconciliation is the work of the divine or Holy Spirit according to Hegel.⁷⁴

⁷¹ E.G., p.184.

⁷² Hegel, L.H.P., III, 16. V.G.P., Vol 15:100.

⁷³ Hegel, L.P.R., III, 99-100. V.P.R., Vol. 12:307-308. It should be noted that Hegel uses the verb, "aufheben" and its noun, "Aufhebung". The words have the meaning of "cancelling" of comprehension and "preserving", hence they can involve a problem - for Anglo-Saxons. See Inwood, Hegel, p.2 for definitions of "aufheben."

⁷⁴ Ibid.

It is clear to Küng that there can be no doctrine of God that fails to take notice of Hegel's idea of the transcendent and immanent in history. Hegel was the watershed for theology's understanding of God; Hegel's dynamic concept became the Copernican revolution regarding a doctrine of God. Indeed, his view of God is the only viable way for a future christology according to Küng.⁷⁵

Hegel's view of God's place in history is acceptable to Küng, for Hegel, unlike Spinoza, holds transcendence and immanence in differentiation. While

Spinozas Gott lebt nicht getrennt vom Universum: Gott ist in der Welt und die Welt in Gott. Die Natur ist eine bestimmte Weise, in der Gott selbst existiert....⁷⁶

For Spinoza, all existence is only a modification of the divine. Hegel, on the other hand, contends for differentiation between the transcendent and the immanent. Küng observes:

Nirgendwo deutlicher aber als bei Hegel sollten freilich auch die Schwierigkeiten jenes Gottesverständnisses offenbar werden, welches die Welt und all ihr Elend in Gott aufgenommen hat.⁷⁷

Hegel, therefore, attempts to show how a dynamic God acting in history deals with the problem of human wretchedness, not an apparent but a real misery that is resolved in the divine. Consequently, it should become clear that Küng will ultimately link the dynamic God in history with Christ: a theme that is expanded under Hegel's christology. Küng believes a God who is historical and has a history in this world must, at some point be revealed in history, otherwise, God's history

⁷⁵ E.G., p.193.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.161.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.162.

remains a charade.⁷⁸ Such a God is not simply timeless and static but a dynamic God in history.⁷⁹ This God is a God who acts on behalf of the world. God is never without the world, nor the world without God.⁸⁰

Küng implies that Chalcedon does not take God's movement in history seriously, for Chalcedon uses terms such as "nature", "person", and hypostasis. God for Chalcedon is a God of being instead of a God who acts. Küng expands this point in "Die Geschichlichkeit Gottes."⁸¹

In this section of Menschwerdung Gottes, Küng demonstrates that most references to God's attributes in traditional theology are limited to static terms. Indeed, God in traditional theology is involved in history, but in an abstract way for God cannot be touched by the plight of human suffering. This static view is, for Küng, imposed upon the doctrine of the two natures of Christ wherein he could suffer in his human nature but not in his divine nature. Hegel, therefore, has forced theology through his philosophy into a realistic appraisal of a God who does suffer in history. Küng cogently asks: "Müsste man unter diesen Umständen nicht entweder die eigene christologische Position oder aber die Kritik an Hegel modifizieren?"⁸² Hegel's philosophy, therefore, gives content to a future christology, particularly as he expounds his view of history. This view, with its christological emphasis, will be fully considered in chapter two.

⁷⁸ M.G., pp.512-515.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.467.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.558.

⁸¹ M.G., pp.522-557.

⁸² Ibid., p.523.

Küng constantly wishes to present a theology acceptable to modern thinking about God and the world. It is for this reason that he chooses the model of Hegel as the innovator of a dynamic concept of God. Consequently, regarding humanity, Küng makes the following observation:

Von dieser Weltlichkeit Gottes her lässt sich die biblische Botschaft von einem Gott, der ja keineswegs von der Welt getrennt west, sondern inmitten der Welt handelt, besser verstehen als von der klassischen griechischen oder mittelalterlichen Metaphysik her.⁸³

In contending for a dynamic view of God, Küng points out that the anthropomorphic and static views of a God beyond the world are the ideas Hegel attempted to demolish. God, for Hegel, is not an "überirdisches Wesen über den Wolken"⁸⁴ nor is God an "ausserirdisches Wesen jenseits der Sterne."⁸⁵

God is thus neither in a physical nor a metaphysical heaven; rather "Gott ist in dieser Welt und dieser Welt in Gott."⁸⁶ This is precisely why God can enter into a relationship with the world. Furthermore, God can only truly be God by acting in the world. A static God cannot be God at all for such a notion precludes historical action.⁸⁷

Humanity requires a God who is relevant to meet its needs. This is a point that Küng underscores. Assuredly, he appreciates Hegel's attempt to move beyond both traditional christology and Greek metaphysics to a point

⁸³ E.G., p.216.

⁸⁴ Ibid., pp.216-219.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

where the suffering of God with creation in history can be taken seriously. Küng believes the Hegelian dialectic achieves this end, for God who is in process of becoming takes the world through history into the divine.⁸⁸

As Hegel attempted to speak directly to his era, so too, Küng makes the effort to speak clearly for today. According to both these thinkers, the Christian message since Chalcedon has been seduced by the categories of pure being, thereby forfeiting the active role of God in history. God, in terms of a Chalcedonian pattern, remains the unaffected and unmoved being as portrayed in the two nature theory; therefore, Christ's suffering is limited to his human nature. Ultimately, for both Küng and Hegel, the historicity of God is not displayed in the terms of Chalcedon, but in God's dialectic, which is distinctly related to suffering and becoming in God.⁸⁹ For this reason, Küng declares that, "Der Gott Israels und Jesu ist anders als die ferne Gottheit der klassischen griechischen Philosophie".⁹⁰ On the same topic Küng states:

Aber der Gott Israels und Jesu ist doch in aller Unterschiedenheit auch nicht getrennt von der Welt wie die Gottheit der klassischen griechischen Philosophie, die die christliche Theologie so stark prägte.⁹¹

Thus for theology, God is distinct but not separated from the world as is the case in Greek philosophy. Clearly, Küng is directing thought away from Chalcedon via Hegel to what he believes is a new, valid approach to

⁸⁸ M.G., pp.553-554.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Hans Küng, Christ sein, (Munich: Piper, 1974), p.294.
Hereafter cited as Christ sein.

⁹¹ Ibid.

christology. Assuredly, behind the theme of the councils, there appears the passionless image of Plato, hence, Küng affirms:

Die ganze sogenannte Zwei-Naturen-Lehre ist eine hellenistischen Sprache und Begrifflichkeit formulierte Interpretation dessen, was dieser Jesus Christus eigentlich bedeutet!.... Aber andererseits dürfte auch nicht der Eindruck aufkommen, als ob die Botschaft von Christus heute nur mit Hilfe dieser damals unvermeidlichen, aber ungenügenden griechischen Kategorien, nur mit Hilfe der Chalcedonischen Zwei-Naturen-Lehre, nur mit Hilfe also der sogenannten klassischen Christologie ausgesagt werden konnte oder dürfte.⁹²

The language of Chalcedon is beyond the grasp of the average Christian today. Küng contends that Karl Rahner saw this problem, and thus considered that Chalcedon "muss ... mehr als Anfang denn als Ende gesehen werden."⁹³

Rahner wants theology not to see Chalcedon as the last word on christology; he believes that Chalcedon, as a beginning, points in the right direction for future thought. Although Rahner at no time criticized Küng's christology, it would appear that Küng goes further than Rahner for the former asserts: "Die Zwei-Naturen-Lehre ist keineswegs identisch mit der ursprünglichen Christosbotschaft des Neuen Testament...."⁹⁴ For Küng, the original message of the New Testament means God enters the realm of the world's history, taking up the suffering world into the divine.⁹⁵ Küng declares that a God who cannot suffer is contrary to the view Scripture

⁹² Ibid., p.103.

⁹³ Ibid., p.123. (See K. Rahner. Probleme der Christologie von heute in: Schriften Bd. I (1954) s. 169f.

⁹⁴ M.G., p.566.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p.564. See also Hans Küng, Gott und das Leid, (Einsiedeln: Benzinger, 1967), p.55.

presents of God. Such a God belongs rather to Plato and Greek philosophy than to the Bible;⁹⁶ for the Biblical God is "ein Gott, der seinen Gegensatz nicht ausschliesst, sondern einschliesst."⁹⁷ This aspect of God involves God's suffering. Chalcedon excludes such a God because of this static terminology. Before making a study of the incarnation the following statement from K  ng is vital for it sums up his use of Hegel and the scriptures.

K  ng judges:

Hegels Anliegen, in welchem sich das spezifisch Theologische mit dem Christologischen kreuzt, ist die dynamische Einheit in der lebendigen Gottheit. Der lebendige Gott ist ... f  r ihn der, der sich bewegt, ver  ndert, eine Geschichte durchmacht. Der nicht starr bleibt was er ist, sondern wird, was er ist. Und es ist der Gott, der nicht erhaben   ber der Welt in sich selbst verharret sondern der, aus sich heraustretend, sich ent  ussert: durch die Weltwerdung, die ihren H  hepunkt hat in der Menschwerdung Gottes selbst. Dieser Gott ist nach Hegel der wahre christliche Gott.⁹⁸

Hegel's dynamic action in God thus supplies the basis for an understanding of incarnation. Considering the above quotation, Hegel's dialectic, in which he unites God and humanity dynamically in Absolute Spirit by maintaining a harmony of opposites, finite and infinite, leads to the concept of Menschwerdung Gottes. Since God is not known in the divine being but in divine action, a concept of incarnation is possible in world history.⁹⁹ The concept

⁹⁶ M.G., p.631.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.548.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p.526. See also pp.557-559 where K  ng again emphasizes this idea, indicating the value of the Hegelian dialectic for incarnation and resurrection.

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp.548-549.

of incarnation in Hegel must now be discussed as part of his understanding of God in history.

1.6 HEGEL'S CONCEPT OF INCARNATION AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR KÜNG

As a prelude to Küng's christology, I shall investigate the concept of revelation, stated in Hegelian terms. Hegel believes that in Jesus the highest evidence of the divine and human unity is manifested.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, all persons share in the divine nous, but it is particularly in Jesus that one sees the ultimate manifestation thereof. This mind or idea, which belongs to all humanity as well as the Absolute, must have a point of contact in history. This Jesus provides, for in him, according to Hegel, the negation of subject and object is cancelled, uniting the nous of humanity with that of the divine, thus completing the eternal movement in the divine.¹⁰¹ Jesus reflects best the unity that should occur between the divine reason in a person with the divine reason of the Absolute; for, Jesus the man shows fully what the rest of humanity mirrors partially.¹⁰² Tillich clearly gets to the heart of Hegel, stating:

Jesus ... gave impression to that which is universal and which is potentially and essentially true of every human being.... He is the self manifestation of the Absolute Mind.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Hegel, L.P.R., I.25. V.P.R., Vol. 11:25.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p.33. See also: G.W.F. Hegel, Philosophy of Mind trans., A.V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p.228. See further, Hegel, L.P.R., II.335. V.P.R., Vol. 12:197.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Paul Tillich, A History of Christian Thought, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968), p.431.

Hegel, because of his attempt to unite the finite into his system of the all embracing Absolute, is obliged to introduce a doctrine of incarnation, according to K  ng, otherwise Hegel's concept of history cannot be related to the world, a world that is the opposite of God in that it includes the negative. In order to deal seriously with the negative in history, God is obliged to enter into history; hence, for Hegel as interpreted by K  ng, the incarnation becomes a distinct possibility. Should God fail to enter the historical arena, there would be no possibility of uniting the opposite and overcoming it. If God did not enter history the negative could not be reconciled. Consequently, the incarnation becomes for Hegel the centre of reference.¹⁰⁴ A consideration of Hegel's christology and its relevance for K  ng is now required. The next step then, involves an examination of Hegel's contention of God's presence through Christ in history, followed by an exposition of K  ng's use of this concept.

1.7 CHRIST'S INCARNATION IN HISTORY ACCORDING TO HEGEL AND THE CONSEQUENCES THEREOF FOR K  NG

Hegel contends for a doctrine of incarnation, believing that the idea of spirit is best exemplified in Christ.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, spirit, present in humanity, serves as the area of union for the infinite and finite.¹⁰⁶ Accepting Hegel's contention, K  ng argues that theology and christology can no longer afford to make statements apart from the new dynamic emphasis introduced by Hegel since Hegel is seen as having instituted a Copernican revolution for christology through his dynamic concept of God by presenting a view of God as the God of history in

¹⁰⁴ M.G., p.296. See also page 578.

¹⁰⁵ Hegel, L.P.R., III.2. V.P.R., Vol. 12:211.

¹⁰⁶ Hegel, L.P.R., I.33. V.P.R., Vol. 11:34.

Jesus Christ.¹⁰⁷ Küng believes that in Christ, God manifests divine historicity in the world through dynamic action.¹⁰⁸ Küng assumes that theology today requires a God from this side, a "diesseitigen Gott", thus theology is joined to christology.¹⁰⁹ It is not clear, however, exactly in what way the God in history is linked to the Christ of history in Küng's thought. Küng assumes the transition without attempting or offering proof. This issue will be evaluated when the problems regarding Küng's use of Hegel are considered. Consequently, Küng believes a study of the incarnation in Hegel is appropriate for today since Hegel resolves the tension between transcendence in immanence.¹¹⁰

Küng clearly states that he offers no final christology; unmistakably, his work is but a pointer to a future christology wherein Hegel provides the method.¹¹¹ Küng at no stage presents his christology as complete. Furthermore, Küng is not really concerned with a critique of Hegel. That consideration he contends is the domain of philosophy.¹¹² The above limitations must act as a guide to Küng's use of Hegel, as seen below.

Küng uses Hegel's concept of incarnation not to support traditional christology in which Jesus has a divine and a human nature; rather, Küng's effort portrays the belief that the divine externalizes itself into humanity as

¹⁰⁷ E.G., p.193.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p.167.

¹⁰⁹ M.G., pp.5-6.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.296.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p.503.

¹¹² Ibid., pp.6-7

represented in Christ.¹¹³ In fact, Küng appears to hold to an identification of God with Jesus Christ concerning intent or goal rather than nature. Incarnation thus incorporates a dimension different from that of traditional christology in that it involves the belief that the divine manifests itself in union with humanity, a union particularly revealed in Christ. Küng states: "Gott identifiziert sich mit diesem Menschen, offenbart sich im 'Fleisch'".¹¹⁴

Küng contends that Hegel's view regarding God's presence in history must logically lead to a doctrine of the incarnation of God in terms of a dynamic involvement in history.¹¹⁵ It is precisely because God is the Absolute only in the process of becoming that He can enter into a relationship with humanity and the world through history expressed in incarnation.¹¹⁶ Certainly, on this point the traditional view of incarnation bears little resemblance to that of Hegel as espoused by Küng. However, Küng does underscore the dynamic presence of God as active in history. The direct link, moreover, between God in history and a specific incarnation of the divine in Christ is not, however, easily discernible.

God as the Absolute mind (that is reason, or to use the Greek term, Logos) externalizes itself in the other. As reason or Logos, the divine is the God of action, a God in movement. Thus,

dieser Logos kennt keine Statik; die Dynamik, Evolution, Dialektik ist sein Wesen.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Ibid., p.467.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp.548-549.

¹¹⁵ E.G., p.187.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p.216.

¹¹⁷ M.G., p.321.

Küng then continues his argument, pointing out that if God enters into history, God cannot be boundless, for historicity implies limitation; hence, God identifies with the other, that is humanity. Indeed, God identifies at a particular point in history: Christ. Consequently the incarnation becomes a distinct possibility as a manifestation of the divine movement outwards with the intention of overcoming the negative.¹¹⁸ Küng does not explain how the negation occurs, nor does he attempt to show how the negation is related precisely to incarnation, he assumes the link is axiomatic for Hegel and therefore for his own future christology.¹¹⁹ Küng is fully aware of the problem relating to the subject and object in Hegel, yet it is not Küng's intention to find the solution. He limits himself to using Hegel for a future christology; for, Hegel assumes the divine maintains itself through its opposite, thus creating a possibility for incarnation. Küng assumes that Hegel's system underscores this point.¹²⁰ Moreover, when Küng sets out his purpose for writing Menschwerdung Gottes, he states it to be an exposition of the incarnation in Hegelian terms.¹²¹ Becoming flesh, or incarnation, is therefore a constant movement outwards in God, fully revealed in Christ as the object of God's action. Obviously, Küng is obliged to reject the static, traditional view reflected in the Chalcedonian two nature, divine and human theory in favour of a dynamic concept of incarnation, indicative of divine action rather than being.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p.323 ff.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., pp.534-538.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p.559.

¹²¹ Ibid., p.37.

Not only is the incarnation explained in dynamic terms, but the crucifixion as well. Biblical concepts are neatly tailored by K  ng to fit the Hegelian model in K  ng's drive for relevance today. In the Hegelian system the divine and human spirit are inseparable although existentially alienated. The divine seeks to overcome the separation by uniting with the human spirit in history to restore harmony.¹²² Alienation includes the negative, which is emptiness, manifested by death. Death must be deprived of its content, the power of nothingness, for unity to prevail.¹²³ Consequently, the Absolute Spirit must experience the power of the negative in history to remove its potency.¹²⁴

The death of Christ is, therefore, important for K  ng's use of Hegel since in that death God acts dynamically in the world's history by absorbing suffering caused by the negative in history into the divine. Additionally, God is the transcendent in history, that is, in transcendence the divine is immanent too. As the Absolute evolves in history and through history, the Absolute experiences suffering, resulting from its encounter with the negative, manifested through the Good Friday (Karfreitag) drama of Jesus, in which Absolute Spirit overcomes the negative by enduring the opposite in itself.

K  ng believes that Hegel emphasizes:

Der Satz 'Gott ist tot' - Zitat aus einem Lutherlied im Zusammenhang des Kreuzestodes Christi! - ist f  r ihn keine fromme Redensart auf orthodoxem theologischem Hintergrund, sondern eine harte geschichtliche Erfahrung: ein 'unendlicher Schmerz'. Seine klarsichtige Wachheit hat den geschichtlichen Kontext genau erkannt, in welchem dieses Grundgef  hl

¹²² E.G., p.191.

¹²³ Ibid., p.192.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

der Religion der Neuzeit, dass Gott tot sei, zu sehen ist.¹²⁵

Indeed, the death of God in history is important for Hegel, indicating the infinite pain God experiences as the divine externalizes itself in history, disclosing the dynamic aspect of God's involvement through the movement of history. The reality of godlessness or godforsakenness, the opposite and the negative, is part of God's involvement with reality. Hegel, thus, has a clear idea of the suffering God (an important aspect of Moltmann's theology) revealed in Christ. (see footnote 128). The transition from Chalcedonian language to dynamic language is clear.

As Küng understands him, Hegel sees Christ's death as the death of God. Küng states:

"In ihm ist nach christlicher Auffassung Gott selbst gestorben...."¹²⁶

Assuredly, Good Friday re-enacts in the divine the harsh reality of godlessness that the divine experiences in the history of the world. In the death of Christ one sees the seriousness of godlessness: the divine separated from itself. Such is the horror of godforsakenness.¹²⁷ Thus Küng, quoting Hegel states:

Erst diese christologische Interpretation lässt den 'ganzen Ernst' und den 'tiefsten Grund' der Gottlosigkeit sichtbar werden.¹²⁸

These thought patterns from Hegel are of great importance, leading Küng to comment: "So wird die atheistische Gott-verlassenheit der Welt von Jesu

¹²⁵ Ibid., p.167.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p.169.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

Gottverlassenheit her - verstanden als Gottverlassenheit Gottes selbst."¹²⁹

Certainly, the death of Christ, according to Hegel, has deep implications for God, for, "Der Gottesbegriff schliesst damit das Negative als Moment in Gott und seine Entwicklung ein: den Ernst, den Schmerz, die Geduld und die Arbeit des Negativen."¹³⁰ One may therefore deduce that the Good Friday event in time is a reproduction of what occurs eternally in the divine.¹³¹

Inevitably, the cross gives a new meaning to human existence, for God, taking human suffering into the divine, negates the effect of suffering by striving to overcome it.¹³² Thus Küng says: "Im Kreuz hat Gott mit der Menschlichkeit gehandelt und das Leid zum Leben gewandelt."¹³³ God has, therefore, fully identified with humanity through history to restore harmony in the world. The concept of suffering involves God in the totality of the divine; hence, God cannot be impassible.¹³⁴ Can the existence of suffering in the world be justified? Can a God who does nothing about suffering justify his or her right to exist as the Absolute? The answer, for Küng found in Hegel, is a clear "yes". God, in a personal

¹²⁹ Ibid., p.170.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p.176.

¹³¹ Ibid., p.169.
Moltmann makes much of just such a view; indeed, in forms the basis of the "sorrow of God" as reflected in his very moving christology.
See: Jurgen Moltmann, The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, SCM press, 1981, pp.32-47.

¹³² M.G., pp.540-543.

¹³³ Küng, Gott und das Leid, p.51. See too note 57.

¹³⁴ M.G., p.540.

passage through world history, takes all the negative and sinful into the divine since world history is the "Schädelstätte des absoluten Geistes."¹³⁵ In the cross, God encounters and transforms suffering through self-suffering in total identification with the world's plight, thus justifying the divine existence.¹³⁶

Humanity, therefore, has a Kairos because of the cross, an opportune moment in history, a moment to rise above the wretchedness overcome by the divine through the cross. Therefore humanity too can overcome the negative; for, in reality, evil is deprived of its power. Humanity can consequently act positively.¹³⁷ Once more, all static forms of God's actions in Christ are rejected in favour of a dynamic presentation.¹³⁸ Hegel's thought lays the basis for just such a dynamic presentation.

With certainty Küng affirms:

Das Negative, Sünde, Leid und Tod werden nicht von einer überzeitlich-abstrakten Theodizee bagatellisiert, sondern von einer Theologie des Todes Gottes in konkreter Rechtfertigung Gottes und des Menschen als von Gott selbst in der Geschichte schmerzvoll-sieghaft überwunden dargestellt.¹³⁹

Hegel's concept of God, revealed in Christ as the victor over suffering through the self-suffering of the cross, cannot be trivialized nor easily rejected. God's suffering in Christ expressed through the cross as an historical event indicates God's involvement in creaturely suffering.

¹³⁵ E.G., p.184.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid. See also, Gott und das Leid, pp.52-57.

¹³⁸ M.G., p.543 and p.631.

¹³⁹ E.G., p.189.

Following on the cross, Hegel then develops the idea of a harmony restored in Christ. Harmony occurs in resurrection; for, in overcoming evil, the divine unites all aspects of the world's history to itself. Totality is thus regained and maintained since the history of the creator and the creature are united.

Küng contends that resurrection is the logical point at which Hegel completes his system. The argument assumes the following: death forms part of the negation of existence. If it is to be emptied of its content, it must lead to resurrection, otherwise, both spirit and Absolute Spirit are empty and remain so.¹⁴⁰ Certainly, the invisible Spirit must unite itself with the visible so that there can be a totality.¹⁴¹ The horror of the cross finds its fulfillment in the resurrection: death, in its opposite, life.

Hegel, in the light of the foregoing, believes that in Christ, God not only died but arose. In the death and resurrection of God in history expressed by Christ, the difference between finite and infinite is cancelled, thus the death of God involves a death in God, a death that transforms the negative into a new life through the resurrection.¹⁴² The divine transcends the opposite by encompassing it within itself. The divine rises out of the abyss of godforsakenness in order to become Absolute by absorbing the negative into itself, indicating that death is not the end.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p.192.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p.191.

¹⁴² Ibid., p.169.
Moltmann, movingly develops this thought in Hegel.
See, Jurgen Moltmann, The Crucified God (London: SCM Press, 1974), p.277 ff.

¹⁴³ E.G., p.170.

Certainly, for Küng:

Der 'Tod Gottes' ist das Ende nicht... Gerade weil es der Tod Gottes ist, folgt aus dem Karfreitag die Auferstehung ... Weil es das Absolute selbst ist, kann und muss es aus dem Abgrund des Nichts, gleichsam sich selbst überbietend, als die höchste Totalität in ihrem ganzen Ernst und aus ihrem tiefsten Grunde, zugleich allumfassend und in die heiterste Freiheit ihrer Gestalt auferstehen. So wird die atheistische Gottverlassenheit der Welt von Jesu Gottverlassenheit her-verstanden als Gottverlassenheit Gottes selbst - umfassen aber damit auch gewendet und überstiegen.¹⁴⁴

According to Küng's understanding of Hegel, the godforsakenness of God, fulfilled in the godforsakenness of Christ, is turned about by God rising beyond such godforsakenness, by a concept of resurrection.¹⁴⁵

The pattern followed by theology has generally emphasized incarnation and redemption. In fact, the emphasis on the two natures of Christ with its static connotations, has virtually displaced the importance of a dynamic union of God with Christ in which the latter manifests the dynamic presence of God through the resurrection. In Küng's thought the direction resulting from Hegel's new emphasis upon a dynamic union, should move towards the concept of resurrection rather than incarnation.¹⁴⁶

Hegel's work, therefore, leads to a rejection of the static, and that includes Chalcedon, moving, rather, towards a dynamic God, uniting all of creation in the cross and resurrection, wherein, once again, Absolute and spirit are united.¹⁴⁷ Ultimately then, the

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p.170.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., pp.170-172.

¹⁴⁶ M.G., pp.532-533.

¹⁴⁷ E.G., p.176.

reconciliation of the world occurs in God through the cross followed by the resurrection.¹⁴⁸

At this point, it should again be emphasised that Küng's task is not to evaluate Hegel's philosophy; Küng's purpose aims at giving a new, dynamic direction to christology. Certainly, there may well be problems regarding Hegel; Küng's interest, however, is limited to the avenues opened by a dynamic concept in christology, leading to a re-evaluation of terms like incarnation, death, and resurrection. Indeed, Küng intends to use Hegel's philosophy only in so far as it confirms and is confirmed by the Scriptures, for God is not limited to any system. On the other hand, Hegel may well provide a vehicle for reformulating a concept of a dynamic christology.

Certainly, Küng states, christology must seriously consider Hegel's contribution since there can be no return to a naive anthropomorphic view of God.¹⁴⁹ For him, Hegel is the watershed for modern christology in relation to the divine. However, Küng affirms that God cannot be limited to a human system including that of Hegel. He transcends all systems.¹⁵⁰ Assuredly, Hegel shows that a christology of the future must begin with a God who is with the world and a world that is with God. God is a God who acts in the world. God is not limited by static concepts, including those of Chalcedon.¹⁵¹ However, the God of history is revealed in history by Israel and Jesus Christ.¹⁵² It should be clear,

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p.177.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p.195 112 Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ M.G., p.558.

¹⁵² Ibid., p.560.

therefore, that while Hegel needs biblical correction, christology, on the other hand, requires Hegel's corrective. Küng thus criticizes the static, two nature doctrine of Christ and the impassability of God behind Chalcedon from Hegel's point of view, as well as submitting Hegel to a biblical evaluation.¹⁵³ Küng believes no theology nor christology desiring to be relevant can disregard Hegel.¹⁵⁴ One must accept Hegel's concept of the dynamic while disregarding certain non-biblical, pantheistic ideas stemming from Hegel.¹⁵⁵ Beyond doubt, Hegel's emphasis on a dynamic concept of God in Christ remains of great importance, and this for Küng is the aspect of Hegel which he stresses.

1.8 CONCLUSION

It should already be clear that Küng's work does not comprise a complete christology. He contends that it is no more than a preliminary endeavour, using Hegel as a basis for a new, dynamic, christological approach. Thereby Küng intends to establish a comprehensible christology from below, acceptable to modern persons.¹⁵⁶ Küng's desire is to pioneer a method whereby Chalcedon with its static, Greek background of a God who cannot suffer, is replaced by one which is expressed through Christ in history by means of incarnation, cross, and resurrection. Having shown the possibility of Christ dynamically and not through a static, two-nature concept revealing God in history, Küng then concentrates on this Christ as the starting point for a new understanding of God's action in history: a theology from below. Thus Küng

¹⁵³ Ibid., pp.512-513.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p.296, 482.

¹⁵⁵ E.G., p.212.

¹⁵⁶ M.G., p.503.

acknowledges that one requires a new method to deal with the person of Christ as God's vehicle. One should, therefore, begin with the life of Jesus, technically a method known as a christology from below, introduced by Strauss according to Küng, but coherently developed by modern methods of hermeneutics.¹⁵⁷ This concept will be the subject of the next chapter where we attempt an investigation of the person of Jesus in history: a method referred to in technical language as the New Quest for the historical Jesus.

If Chalcedon is inadequate, and if new concepts are needed, then Küng assumes that the dynamic christology of Hegel must be joined to the Jesus of history: the Jesus who lived at a point in historical time. It is only if Jesus is a real and not merely a mythological person that salvation is grounded in God's reality. Having seen Küng's use of Hegel as an alternative to Chalcedon, an investigation into Küng's exegesis becomes necessary.

God's action in history as manifested in Christ is, for Küng, the future direction christology should take.¹⁵⁸ This explains his emphasis upon the historical Jesus as developed by the historical-critical method. In an attempt to portray the historical Jesus, the implications of the historical-critical method must be investigated since this method is vital to Küng's approach, as will be seen in the next chapter.

¹⁵⁷ Christ sein, p.439.

¹⁵⁸ E.G., p.157. See M.G., p.54.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BACKGROUND TO HANS KÜNG'S RECONSTRUCTION OF JESUS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

At this point it is clear that Küng uses Hegel as a means to an end. Küng has prepared the way for his christology by showing that a future christology must move away from static forms reflected by Chalcedon to a dynamic christology as outlined by Hegel. Indeed, Küng believes that Hegel has opened the road to a new understanding of Jesus, acceptable to modern persons. However, Hegel's christology as expounded by Küng needs a concrete manifestation; hence, Küng must move from the christology of Hegel to the historical Jesus for it was always Hegel's intention to hold that God should be manifested in history. Küng's procedure, therefore, is to consolidate his christology in the historical person of Jesus, moving rapidly from Hegel to the life-of-Jesus movement epitomized by Strauss.

Küng can say of Hegel's system: "Christus erscheint also auf dem Höhepunkt der Entwicklung des Geistes mitten im innersten sanctissimum dieses mächtigen Systems."¹ Christ is thus the centre of a mighty system for Hegel as interpreted by Küng. Since God is the one who acts in history, it becomes necessary for the divine to reveal itself in relation to the centre who, as Küng understands Hegel, is Jesus Christ.² Assuredly, while Hegel forms the philosophical basis for Küng's future christology, just as surely the historical counterpart to Hegel's philosophy is Strauss' life-of-Jesus research, for it was Strauss who raised the question of God, Jesus, and

¹ M.G., p.345.

² Ibid., pp.558-559.

historicity in response to Hegel.³ Strauss, like Hegel, remains a watershed in that as Hegel related God to history through Christ, so too, Strauss attempted an investigation into the historical Jesus, giving rise to the avenue to the modern historical-critical method.⁴ However, it is necessary for christology to move beyond Chalcedon, Hegel and Strauss, while taking cognizance of their approach, to the proclamation, acts, and destiny of the Jesus of history, if one is to attempt a christology based upon modern historical-critical investigation.

This chapter will examine Küng's basis for a future christology with particular emphasis on his reliance upon the historical-critical method, involving a christology from below as a background attempt to discover the historical Jesus. Chapter three, on the other hand, will reflect Küng's findings and conclusions regarding the historical Jesus. Terms such as a christology from below and the historical Jesus will be explained as they arise.

2.2 THE AIM OF KÜNG'S CHRISTOLOGY

Küng judges that the ideologies holding sway presently are all inadequate to meet the needs of modern persons. Küng is convinced that the modern person's alienation can be overcome by a relevant presentation of Jesus Christ. It is Jesus, in Küng's opinion, who best presents God's alternative to human alienation. The reasons for Küng's above assertion are given below.

³ Ibid., pp.504-507.

⁴ Ibid., pp.562-567.

2.2.1 The Inadequacy of Humanism

Küng acknowledges: "Erschüttert scheint die Ideologie einer von selbst zur Humanität führenden technologischen Evolution."⁵ Humanity has discovered that progress can be detrimental as shown, for example, in the arms race with the very real possibility of humanity's total destruction through superpower confrontation.⁶ Although the East/West confrontation is now past, current occurrences in the Balkans and other parts of the world still give rise to concern. Obviously then, humanity lives under turbulent conditions leading to fear and the breakdown of law and order. Progress has not proved a complete answer to humanity's plight. Küng is not asking for the abandonment of technology; rather, he declares: "Aufzugeben ist nur der Wissenschaftsglaube als Totalerklärung der Wirklichkeit (Weltanschauung), die Technokratie als allesheilende Ersatzreligion."⁷ Humanity has turned technology into an idol, resulting in the consequent alienation. Is this progress? Unquestionably, there must be progress, but blind faith in scientific advancement forms the basis of an alternative religion poised on a shaky foundation, according to Küng.

Admittedly, the New Left, spear-headed by Marcuse, Adorno, and Habermas, has raised its voice of protest against the turning of technology into an idol without giving an alternative. Küng states concerning the New Left: "Sie verstand gut zu bezeichnen, was in der Gesellschaft geändert werden, aber nicht ebensogut, was erhalten bleiben soll. Auch blieb die Zielbestimmung der

⁵ Christ sein, p.30.

⁶ Ibid., pp.30-31.

⁷ Ibid., p.34.

Veränderung vage."⁸ The students were not content with the vague meanderings of Marcuse and company, they wanted directives and answers. When none was given a dehumanizing revolution resulted with the leaders of the New Left distancing themselves from the students.⁹ Total disenchantment was the outcome, creating a vacuum in the lives of those espousing such high expectations. Their hope (the revolution) caused so many deaths that it ended rather in a dehumanizing of persons instead of their advancement.¹⁰

According to Küng, positivistic humanism is therefore not the answer to humanity's problems. Küng uses the example of the humanism presented by current Marxism. The classless society of communism does not exist. He states: "Soviet communism appears as a new alienation of man with a 'new class' of managers...."¹¹ Thus in Küng's view alienation between classes is, beyond doubt, a consistent feature of Soviet society. In China too, Küng contends, there is no attempt (except for overseas consumption) to promote the basic idea of a person's worth as a free being. In fact, there are death zones erected to keep people in the "workers paradise" from fleeing to the West.¹²

Küng seems to equate humanism with communism, whereas I would understand the term from a wider perspective as including all human endeavours leading to the greater welfare of humanity. On the other hand, Küng may be

⁸ Ibid., p.39.

⁹ Ibid., p.39.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.40.

¹¹ Hans Küng, The Christian Challenge, (London: Collins, 1979), p.29.

¹² Ibid.

directing his attack against much of humanism's disdain for religion. However, the point then is that Küng's definition is flimsy and unclear. Limiting his example of humanism to Marxism, Küng feels that it has proved inadequate to fulfill humanity's needs as seen above.

In the light of such a massive perceived failure on the part of humanism, Küng asks: "Has not the Christian in particular something to contribute to this?"¹³ It should be clear moreover as to where Küng intends to lead his readers; his aim is to show that grasping Christ in a new way is the answer.

Küng not only believes that humanism offers an inadequate alternative to Christianity, but that the other worldly religions also prove deficient as answers to humanity's basic questions as seen below.

2.2.2 The Inadequacy of World Religions

The purpose of this thesis is not to evaluate Küng's position on world religions; rather, the point is to see where he considers them deficient, thus indicating the necessity for a modern christology to fill the vacuum allegedly created by the world religions.

Certainly, Cyprian's dictum, Extra ecclesiam nulla salus, remains a constant problem for the Roman Catholic church since Rome has, until fairly recently, applied it in an exclusive sense. Vatican II, on the other hand, accepts non-members of the church, including atheists, as able to obtain salvation, a position espoused by Küng.

¹³ Ibid., p.33.

Vatican II taught that all people were in some way forced to recognise their insufficiency due to the existence of essential forces prior to and greater than themselves. The concept that persons can do good acts and thus are brought into the sphere of Christ's salvation, even if only in a limited way, is strongly upheld as a fact evident "from ancient times down to the present."¹⁴ The "limited way" referred to above involves the similarities that the world's religions bear to Christianity, but excludes their differences.¹⁵

Cyprian's dictum, that there is no salvation outside of the church, is totally unacceptable to Küng, who believes the church should repudiate and discard it if the latter is truthful.¹⁶ He contends: "Zum erstenmal in der Weltgeschichte kann heute keine Religion mehr in einer 'splendid isolation' leben und die anderen Religionen ignorieren."¹⁷ Christian theologians can, therefore, no longer afford the luxury of doing theology in isolation from the surrounding religions; for both Christianity and the world religions recognise humanity's alienation, bondage, and the basic need for salvation from anxiety and self-centredness. Furthermore, Küng holds that all religions accept the fact of God's goodness, kindness, and mercy, involving God's call for revival through his spokespersons.¹⁸ Simply put, God addresses human needs as the divine sees fit.

¹⁴ Walter M. Abbott (ed.), The Documents of Vatican II, (New York: Guild Press, 1966), p.34.

¹⁵ Anonymous, A New Catechism, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), p.33.

¹⁶ Hans Küng, Wahrhaftigkeit: Zur Zukunft der Kirche, (Basel: Herder, 1971), p.183.

¹⁷ Christ sein, p.81.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.84.

Küng, in my opinion, seems to generalize. The Buddha had no wish to teach people to submit to the powers of existence. His aim was to show how people could control existence even to the point of negating it. Küng should perhaps show caution, for he could be accused of setting up men of straw in that his view of humanism and world religions seem to me limited. Furthermore, avowed atheists whom he included within the broad spectrum of candidates for salvation would not accede to Küng's progression of thought reflected above and below wherein he refers to God's spokespersons and a divine law written on the heart.

All religions, including Christianity, according to Küng, share common factors, in that the law of God is written upon the heart of humanity; consequently, God judges human motives above mere ceremonial actions.¹⁹

Inevitably, there are those who exclude themselves from God's salvation through deliberate evil intent. For such, there is no salvation.²⁰ Certainly, God would not damn the vast majority of humankind simply because of a lack of opportunity to hear the gospel.²¹

Humanity then, has the possibility of salvation, not just because certain people in all religions may have pure motives, but because God has elected to save persons in Christ, "and the election of all mankind in him...."²² It is because of humanity's election in Christ that God accepts good deeds, arising from pure motives, as salvific in value.

¹⁹ Hans Küng, That the World May Believe, (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963), pp.116-117.

²⁰ Ibid., p.100.

²¹ Ibid., pp.109-110.

²² Hans Küng, The Church, (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967), p.238.

Küng, however, rejects Rahner's concept of "Anonymous Christianity", considering the term an insult to the world religions. It is pure arrogance in his opinion to admit persons to the soul of the church merely because of their intent, for, in this way, the church then assumes to itself the salvific role of Christ; it, as the church, becomes the dispenser of salvation, a function that belongs to God alone. The church's purpose, for Küng, is to point to Christ and not to itself. Would Christians like to be called anonymous Buddhists?²³ The church, furthermore, must recognise errors and deficiencies in the world religions; for, despite the fact that they are on the right course, they are actually pre-Christian since they have not grasped that Christ is "the Truth".²⁴ Küng sounds as patronizing as Rahner when he plainly states: "Despite whatever truth they may possess concerning God, the world religions are at the same time in error."²⁵ They may well have access to light and truth but are estranged from the one who is "the Light [and] ... the Truth."²⁶ Hence, they should not renounce what is true in their religion, but certainly what is false, impure, and unlovely, from the stand-point of Jesus Christ.

The world religions are inadequate because they do not know

whence they come, where they now stand, where they are going, what the ultimate situation is between

²³ Christ sein, pp.89-90.

²⁴ Hans Küng, "The World Religions in God's Plan of Salvation," Christian Revelation and World Religions, ed. Joseph Neuner (London: Burns and Oates, 1967), p.53.

²⁵ Ibid., p.51.

²⁶ Ibid.

God and man and wherein lies their own true salvation and damnation.²⁷

In the light of the above, the church has a missionary calling to act responsibly to world religions. It is the church that exists for God in the world; thus, it exists for all people and their religions; the church is not called to exist for itself; it is called out from the religions of the world "in order to be sent back again to the world religions."²⁸ It is clearly the church's task then to represent Christ to all religions, for the church is God's representative to those who do not realize that God has redeemed them in Christ for they "know nothing of what God has done for them [in Christ]"²⁹

Although Küng offers a serious corrective to world religions from the viewpoint of their perceived deficiency, he is committed to salvation outside of the church, but not salvation apart from Jesus Christ, whom

... revelation to humanity's
ann heute von der christlichen
is alle Menschen, auch die in
et werden können, so bedeutet
is gleich wahr ist."³⁰ Küng is
ons offer salvation (he does
because of, but despite their
man offerings, nature worship,
n. (See the footnote 31)
ot be confused for the former
superfluous. Christianity
, not salvation, but truth -

UNIVERSITY OF NATAL LIBRARY

PIETERMARITZBURG

Donation accepted for stock.
Please input as an order and
forward for accessioning and
receipting.

Supplier DONATN

Vote *RELS*

SAPSE number *18*

Provenance

9410 / 6860

Special bookplate
required?

Any other instructions

om, pp.152-153.

World Religions", p.64.

5.

truth found fully in Christ.³¹ Our purpose is not to engage Küng on his understanding of world religions, except to point out that his assumptions often sound like generalizations which could lead to an accusation of distortion on his part. His cavalier attitude towards humanism and world religions raises questions for us about the depth of his research method which could have an effect upon the validity of his christological conclusions in that the intellectual seriousness of his scholarship could be called in question. Küng should be more judicious, perhaps even cautious, or face the consequences of what some may consider to be hasty, undigested christological assumptions. It can thus be seen that Küng gives Christ not only a superior position within the sphere of the history of religions, but the final place. It is not the church which has priority for Küng, but Jesus Christ as the final vehicle of God's redemption.

As seen above, Küng accepts that there is truth in all religions, but what is the exact nature of this truth? Küng affirms that everything in a religion aimed at the humane and truly human, and which by its nature is true and good, "can with reason invoke 'the divine'".³² Obviously in all religions, what is not directed at humane, human advancement is false.³³ Küng unambiguously sees in Jesus, God's "anointed envoy, the deciding regulative factor" for truth.³⁴ The Sermon on the Mount, Küng believes, is the noblest means of achieving "true

³¹ Ibid.

³² Hans Küng, Theology for the Third Millennium: An Ecumenical View (London: Collins, 1991), p.244. This way of thinking by Küng is a re-statement of his 1993 work on Christianity and the World Religions, (London:SCM., 1993) p.128.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., p.251.

humanity...[in] the fellowship of solidarity even with one's opponent."³⁵

The church in dialogue with world religions has, therefore, a positive contribution to make. In fact, it is a clear missionary challenge that Christ offers through his church to the world religions. How does Christ's challenge through the church operate? Küng considers the following procedure: "In dialektischer Einheit also von Anerkennung und Ablehnung soll das Christentum unter den Weltreligionen seinen Dienst leisten."³⁶ He further adds "In solcher Perspektive hätte christliche Mission einen Sinn."³⁷ It is clear that Christian mission has not lost its purpose: it challenges, confronts, and, where possible, agrees with the world religions. Jesus Christ proclaimed as God's final word is the purpose of mission. Küng believes the church has a responsibility to convert others to Christ. Küng certainly has a high regard for all religions, but the final point in assessing a religion is always from the viewpoint of the Christian outlook of the place of Christ. Accepting that Jews, Muslims and Christians have much in common: one God and one father in Abraham; Christians must still enter "into dialogue in such a way as to preserve the identity of the Christian faith while showing the utmost possible ecumenical openness"³⁸.

That identity is preserved when Jesus is seen as God's final envoy, and that is the abiding paradigm for

³⁵ Ibid., p.252.

³⁶ Christ sein, p.104.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Hans Küng, Judaism : The Religious Situation of Our Time, (London: SCM, 1992), p. 372.

Christians in ecumenical discussions.³⁹ Küng's dogmatic approach leaves very little room for inter-faith dialogue. Since Küng does not accept any challenge to Christ's supremacy advocating his finality as God's revelation he seems to me to be as rigid as his opponents on Christ's divinity. I am confused by what he understands as "ecumenical openness".

Küng understands his christology as a challenge to traditional christology reflected by Chalcedon as well as the corrective to the alienation seen in humanism and world religions. However, his aim is not to propound a novel gospel; rather, he intends: "Kein anderes Evangelium, doch dasselbe alte Evangelium für heute neu entdeckt!"⁴⁰ His attempt is a current presentation of the gospel story, for present day consumption by all peoples. Küng would address all concerning Christ, be they atheists, Christians, humanists, or of whatever other ideology. He believes his presentation of the gospel will attract modern persons of all persuasions.⁴¹

Having examined Küng's intention, it is necessary to investigate not only the Christ he presents (the subject

³⁹ Ibid., p. 482. See also, Hans Küng and David Tracy, Paradigm Change in Theology, (New York: Crossroad, 1991), p. 33. From pages 3-33 Küng defines what he means by a paradigm shift showing the abiding and transcendent aspects of a paradigm change. The abiding aspect for Christianity is Jesus as God's ultimate spokesman.

⁴⁰ Christ sein, p.14.

For Jesus as God's final spokesperson, see H. Küng et al, Christianity and the World Religions: Paths to Dialogue with Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, (New York: 1986). See further, H. Küng, "Was ist die wahre Religion? Versuche einer ökumenischen Kriteriologie" Festschrift für Jürgen Moltmann, (Munich: 1986), pp.536-558.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp.13-14.

of the next chapter), but also to see how he arrives at a picture of this Christ. This is done in the next section.

2.3 KÜNG'S POINT OF DEPARTURE : A CHRISTOLOGY FROM BELOW

Küng starts his christology from below, a procedure that uses the historical-critical method of interpretation, reflected in the New Hermeneutic. These terms used in this chapter are explained as they arise. The New Hermeneutic receives consideration in chapter three. A christology from below confines itself to a historical investigation of the Synoptic Gospels and their sources. The remainder of the New Testament is considered as kerygma, or a reflection upon the historical Jesus of the Synoptics.

Küng feels that it is unacceptable to start a christology by dealing with such concepts as the Trinity or the incarnation as reflected by traditional christology. Modern persons, as claimed in the introduction, do not understand the definitions of the classical period for they are beyond experience and current usage. Küng contends that christology has nothing to gain by starting with concepts such as the divinity of Christ, the doctrine of two natures in which the Logos unites itself to human nature, becoming a divine-human being, having, at the same time, become truly human, or man, as orthodox theology propounds. Christology, following such a pattern, frequently places emphasis on incarnation, explained in the traditional Chalcedonian way, thus neglecting the concepts of the cross and resurrection by making them appendages to the incarnation. Can modern persons grasp a Christ who though human is at the same time very God? Küng insists that modern christology must begin where the New Testament starts, that is, with the real, human Jesus. Indeed, this is exactly where the

first disciples began their assessment of the person of Jesus, emphasising his claims, life, and destiny. It was from such a position that they then went on to ask about his relationship to the Father and his unity with God. So much stress is attached to the doctrine of the metaphysical Son of God, with the resultant eclipse of his humanity, that the Christ of the New Testament is unrecognisable today. Küng sums up his above thoughts by asking:

weniger auf klassische Manier eine Christologie spekulativ oder dogmatisch 'von oben', sondern, ohne die Legitimität der alten Christologie zu bestreiten, eine dem heutigen Menschen mehr entsprechende geschichtliche Christologie 'von unten': vom konkreten geschichtlichen Jesus her?⁴²

In the light of the historical Jesus it is certainly better to start with a christology from below: an idea that is not necessarily foreign to persons today. At the present time one assesses a person from the point of view of actions, deeds, and words. This is the approach of the disciples and is an acceptable current method wherein what one says must be substantiated by what one does.

The above method is employed by continental systematic theologians, for example in the work of Wolfhart Pannenberg. Pannenberg affirms that a christology from above always begins with the idea of incarnation as central. Conversely, instead of presupposing the divinity of Jesus, christology should start by examining the deeds and fate of Jesus of Nazareth, in the light of his historicity, and thereafter it should evaluate his person. The concept of Trinity expressed through the Logos by the two-nature doctrine is essential to a christology from above. On the other hand, through the process of examination and not assumption, a christology

⁴²

Ibid., pp.124-125.

from below arrives at a doctrine of Christ by means of evaluation in the light of a historical situation and not philosophical speculation.⁴³ A christology from below is the opposite of the speculative Chalcedonian christology, for it begins with history. Clearly then, in such a perspective, a dynamic christology emphasizing action through word, deed, and destiny must replace the static, classical formulations of Chalcedon.

Küng intends a christology from below as a starting point for christology; it is not the total content of his christology for he then develops christological doctrine from the above-mentioned platform: a christology from below⁴⁴ He contends that he is not only faithful to the method of the New Testament in beginning from below, but he is also true to modern exegesis as spawned by Strauss, who gave impetus to the study of a christology from below on historical lines. Strauss laid weight upon the humanity of Jesus, taking Hegel's dynamic christology to its logical conclusion.⁴⁵

In accurately defining his christology, Küng affirms:

Methodisch wurde möglichst konsequent immer wieder neu der Ausgang 'von unten' gesucht, von den nächsten Fragen des Menschen, von der menschlichen Erfahrung her. Alles im Hinblick auf eine rationale Verantwortung des Glaubens heute.⁴⁶

Küng thus begins from human experience, believing he can rationally justify faith today.

⁴³ Wolfgang Pannenberg, Jesus - God and Man (London: SCM Press, 1968), pp.34-35.

⁴⁴ Christ sein, p.125.

⁴⁵ M.G., pp.567-568.

⁴⁶ Christ sein, p.75.

In order to discover the true picture revealed by a christology from below, Küng commits himself to the historical-critical method in order to provoke faith in the historical Jesus.⁴⁷

2.4 THE HISTORICAL-CRITICAL METHOD AS UNDERSTOOD BY KÜNG

The reason why Küng uses the historical-critical method is very important. He is not merely showing his familiarity with modern exegesis; rather, his purpose aims to reveal the true person of the historical Jesus as the final message of God for an alienated world. The Jesus who emerges and the application of his claims for today in terms of the New Hermeneutic will be the topic of chapter three. Küng leaves no stone unturned trying to locate the historical Jesus, and therefore he commits himself to a modern understanding of historiography so that modern persons can truly evaluate Jesus for themselves, finding the true purpose of life through him. Modern historiography then, will form part of the next chapter.

Küng asserts that because of the historical-critical method, theologians today present a precise picture of Jesus, far more clearly than ever before. He puts it this way:

Mit der historisch-kritischen Methode in diesem umfassendsten Sinn ist der Theologie ein Instrument in die Hände gegeben mit dem in einer Weise nach dem wahren, wirklichen, geschichtlichen Christus gefragt werden kann, wie dies in früheren Jahrhunderten einfach nicht möglich war.⁴⁸

Today, as a result of the historical-critical method, theologians need no longer conjure up a picture of Jesus.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp.147-148.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.148.

Inevitably, due to the work of exegetes using this method, a comprehensive, transparent account of Jesus is possible according to Küng. Ultimately, according to Küng, theology has discovered the method to present an accurate picture of Jesus for the consideration of humanity. He can now be recognised clearly by the present generation: a possibility that former generations did not have.⁴⁹ These ultimate methods sound presumptuous to me. Every age seems guilty of its particular form of arrogance, since there is no general agreement about this picture except in broad outline.

One must now see what Küng means by the historical-critical method and thereafter one must observe how it operates. It is an attempt to discover logically the various strata underlying the witness to Jesus by working back through the material, much of which is interpretation, via the theology of the early church and the gospel writers (that is the interpretation), back to actual words of Jesus, his acts, and his destiny.

Some of the following approaches are used by Küng to achieve his goal. The historical-critical method, for Küng, includes: Textual criticism: an attempt, as far as possible, to locate the oldest reliable texts by weighing available and accurately conjectured manuscripts to ascertain the best possible text. Literary criticism separates the original text from later accretions. Of form and source criticism, Küng says:

Sie hat die Frage nach dem Sitz in Leben der Gemeinde und des Einzelnen, nach der literarischen Gattung, nach dem Rahmen der kleinen literarischen Einheiten, nach der ursprünglichen Form gestellt und

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.153.

hat so die historische Verlässlichkeit wie den
Traditionsgehalt neu zu bestimmen versucht.⁵⁰

It thus attempts to establish the source's reliability by isolating the smaller units in which the message originally circulated, observing how they were edited into the later kerygma. Then there is the history of tradition, which attempts to investigate the historical factors behind the church's origin before the literary period.⁵¹

Against Barth and to a lesser extent Bultmann, Küng believes theologians in forming their christology should consult the works of the New Questers (a term explained in the next chapter) all of whom are experts in the historical-critical method. While Barth and Bultmann generally placed their emphasis on the Christ of faith, theologians like Käsemann, Bornkamm, Jeremias and Conzelmann sought an answer for christology in historicity, emphasizing the historical Jesus rather than the Christ of faith. Moreover, their procedure included a christology from below, scientifically applied by means of the historical-critical method. Consequently, by applying that method, an accurate picture of Jesus emerges as seen in the work of James M. Robinson according to Küng.⁵² (Robinson's contribution is evaluated in the next chapter.) Indeed, the above-mentioned theologians, fully committed to the historical-critical method, ended the distinction between the Christ of faith and the Christ of history, according to Küng, so trying to make belief in Jesus plausible for modern persons.⁵³ Furthermore, the present picture of

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.147.

⁵¹ Ibid., pp.147-148.

⁵² M.G., p.580.

⁵³ Ibid., pp.587-590.

the historical Jesus was enhanced by Marxsen's addition to the historical-critical method according to Küng. He gave a slightly new emphasis, but fully in keeping with the historical-critical method, through his idea of Redaction criticism. He showed that the writers of the New Testament, particularly the Synoptists, were theological editors as well as theologians, in that they arranged the words of Jesus and the proclamation of the early church into theological and christological categories for their own specific ends. Interpretation of their particular theological emphasis clearly uncovers the picture of Jesus, showing how the synoptists interpreted Jesus.⁵⁴ Certainly, a transparent, intelligible representation of Jesus is, according to Küng, now a reality, resulting from the historical-critical method. He is certainly optimistic. It is obvious why Küng is not prepared to begin with the pre-suppositions of Chalcedon. The foundations of Catholic christology, for Küng, lie in a philosophical type of speculation that must be abandoned. In evaluating Catholic theology he explains:

Solange man sich ... der Mühe der systematischen Aufarbeitung der historischen Jesus-Forschung entzieht, so lange dürfte auch die mit verschiedenen philosophischen, psychologischen, soziologischen oder andern Mitteln auflackierte christologische Spekulation und auch das unter Katholiken so beliebte evolutive Weltverständnis die Grundlagenkrise der traditionellen Christologie zwar sichten, aber kaum beseitigen.⁵⁵

2.4.1 Küng's Application of the Historical-Critical Method

Certainly, while a biography of Jesus is not possible, the historical-critical method aims at getting behind the text in order to establish its original intent. "By

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.580.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp.595-596.

scraping away the paint,"⁵⁶ Küng believes we can find the original picture of Jesus through the historical-critical method. There are three levels that must be worked through before arriving at the original Jesus. Firstly, the evangelists, it should be remembered, were redactors; thus, one must ascertain their goal in writing their gospels in a particular way. Secondly, one should locate interpretive and explanatory material produced by the post-easter community for explaining the words and actions of Jesus. Thirdly, one should attempt to identify the pre-easter sayings, reflecting thus the Jewish and therefore typical sayings of Jesus.

Küng is persuaded that much of the New Testament material is for the purpose of proclamation. Its goal then, is to lead persons to a distinct commitment to Jesus Christ; hence, situations are created for the purpose of effecting the desired decision or commitment to faith in Jesus.⁵⁷ Küng is clear on this issue when he affirms: "Ein vom Evangelisten Jesus in dem Mund gelegtes, also 'unechtes' Wort kann ebenso echt den echten Jesus wiedergeben wie ein von Jesus selber wirklich gesprochenes, also 'echtes'".⁵⁸ A saying is put into Jesus' mouth: something perhaps that he never uttered; yet, from the evangelist's statement about what Jesus allegedly said, one reads into and behind the text or proclamation, for it gives a clue about the actual, historical Jesus.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.150.

⁵⁷ M.G., p.580.

⁵⁸ Christ sein, p.151.

2.4.2 The Kerygmatic Element Discovered by the Historical-Critical Method

An example of where words are placed into the mouth of Jesus is located in the passion narratives. Küng believes the passion story was written for literary purposes, thus it is not from the outset historical. He adds, "Dass Jesus nur nach Jerusalem ging, um dort zu sterben, dürfte nachträgliche Interpretation sein".⁵⁹ Küng draws the same conclusion concerning the passion narratives when related to the resurrection. They are definitely an example of redaction, showing Jesus' foreknowledge in relation to God's plan of salvation fulfilled by Jesus in terms of the Scriptures. Thus Küng can clearly assert: "Im Stil der jüdischen Apokalyptic vaticinie ex eventu: Weissagungen gestaltet aufgrund des Eingetroffenseins formuliert nach und gemäss den Ereignissen."⁶⁰ Such narratives are a help in the proclamation of the kerygma, indicating that Jesus' suffering was not simply the result of fate; rather, his death was encompassed in the will of God for the world's salvation.⁶¹

Additionally, "Sie sind nicht scharfsichtige Prognosen Jesu selbst, sondern Passionsdeutungen der nachösterlichen Christenheit."⁶² They are not then the result of Jesus' sharp-sighted discernment, but are the post-easter communities' work of clarification, focussing on Jesus and his deeds. Even the account of Jesus'

⁵⁹ Ibid., p.309.

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp.309-310.

⁶¹ Ibid.,. P.310.

⁶² Ibid.

substitutionary death on humanity's behalf, is post-easter.⁶³

Indeed, the post-easter community's work is also apparent in Jesus' lineage despite clear contradictions. The accounts centre in his descent from David thus fulfilling the aspect of hope in Scripture. The stories of his birth and childhood intend to show that his beginning lies with God, giving added weight to his person. The transfiguration story was invented by the early church to show Jesus' eschatological motif. Küng continues in this view, emphasizing, while there are more than likely some historical elements, they are difficult to trace.⁶⁴ However, that particular difficulty of the stories is not the issue; it is their theological goal that is important.

The scriptures, according to Küng, are not a biography of Jesus but principles aimed at producing faith.⁶⁵ They are thus theological documents that aid in reconstructing the historical Jesus. In chapter three the historical aspect of the sources will be considered. Furthermore, in applying the historical-critical method Küng finds:

the gospels are not neutral historical chronicles, but committed and committing testimonies of faith. They are not written from the perspective of Jesus before his resurrection, but from that of the Church after the resurrection."⁶⁶

One is dealing here with the evangelists' impressions redacted for purposes of faith.

⁶³ Ibid., p.314.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.277-279.

⁶⁵ M.G., pp.578-579.

⁶⁶ Hans Küng, The Church, p.44.

Küng, using the historical-critical method, carefully works out the full implications of the method when he discusses the miracles and titles of Jesus.

At this point it should again be clearly emphasized what Küng hopes to achieve. He believes that humanity lives an alienated existence. In order to fill the vacuum, Küng believes that God has spoken finally, not in humanism, nor in world religions, but in Jesus Christ. This message concerning Christ as classically formulated, Küng believes is not comprehensible to modern society, consequently, it must be restated in terms modern humanity can grasp. His method then is to use the historical-critical approach directed at presenting an acceptable picture of Jesus comprehensible to modern persons.

Having restated Küng's theme, one can now consider how he clearly applies his method to the miracles and titles of Jesus. These two aspects are underlined because Küng places great stress on them for the historical-critical method and its implications. Küng, as stated earlier, shares the views and the method of Bornkamm, Käsemann, Conzelmann, Jeremias, Tödt and Hahn among others.⁶⁷ Thus he draws similar conclusions on the above topics.

2.5 THE PLACE OF CHRIST'S MIRACLES ACCORDING TO THE HISTORICAL-CRITICAL METHOD

Bultmann states his case regarding miracles as follows:

Now that the forces and the laws of nature have been discovered, we can no longer believe in spirits The miracles of the New Testament have ceased to be miraculous, and to defend their historicity by recourse to nervous disorders or hypnotic effects only serves to underline the fact It is impossible to use electric light and wireless and to

⁶⁷ M.G., pp.587-590.

avail ourselves of modern medical and surgical discoveries, and at the same time to believe in the New Testament world of spirits and miracles.⁶⁸

As a result of the discoveries of modern science, the New Testament world view is now seen by many as inaccurate and unscientific. Regarding miracles, Käsemann believes one cannot accept the New Testament concept "of a supernatural breach of the laws of causality."⁶⁹ What then is a miracle? It is something that Käsemann believes takes hold of one. It is proclaimed for the purpose of encounter and "Only one who is involved in such an encounter, not the neutral observer, can understand its significance."⁷⁰ Consequently, he continues: "we are being summoned to make a decision which may express itself either in faith or in unfaith (hardness of heart)".⁷¹ The purpose of a miracle then, is to call to decision by an act of power performed by a special person. The emphasis is not on the person, but on the content of the challenge issued by that special person. (A theme that will become clearer as this section develops.) The example of the darkness that engulfed the area on the death of Jesus and the tearing of the temple curtain "must not be taken as fragments of a historical record...."⁷² They are, rather, signs founding the new order. One should, therefore, not concentrate on the miracle for it is, in fact, a sign

⁶⁸ Rudolf Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology," Kerygma and Myth, ed. H.W. Bartsch (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), pp.4-5.

⁶⁹ Ernst Käsemann, "Is the Gospel Objective?" Essays of New Testament Themes (London: SCM Press, 1964), p.51.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.52.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Gunther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1960), p.167.

pointing beyond itself.⁷³ If one interprets a miracle in this manner, one is not involved in scientific controversy; that is not the purpose of the miracle.

Jeremias states that many of the miracle stories are reproductions of fables with which the Jews were familiar and "the material in the miracle stories dwindles considerably when it is subjected to a critical literary and linguistic investigation."⁷⁴ He continues: "I have, in fact, to distinguish between the Hellenistic additions and the Jewish original regarding the miracle stories. The Hellenistic addition is aimed at Jesus the wonder-worker, the work of the early community; whereas, the Jewish version points beyond the miracle, emphasizing authority."⁷⁵ It is important to note, Jeremias believes, "even when strict critical standards have been applied to the miracle stories, a demonstrably historical nucleus remains."⁷⁶ This statement is important, for Küng comes to the same conclusion.

Miracles are thus not scientific in their goal. They point beyond themselves as mere works of wonder to decisive commitment to a cause or person. At the same time, they are not just fables, but have some foundation in history. Küng, as will be seen below, follows the same pattern.

⁷³ Hans Conzelmann, An Outline of the theology of the New Testament, (London: SCM, 1969), p.138, see pp.345-356.

⁷⁴ Joachim Jeremias, New Testament Theology, (London: SCM, 1972), p.88.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.91.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.92.

2.5.1 Hans Küng and the Place of Miracles in the Light of the Historical-Critical Method

One should not lose sight of the point Küng is making: he attempts to present a christology acceptable to the modern mind with its scientific world-view. Modern persons are sceptics is Küng's point. Hence, he removes by the historical-critical method all obstacles in the path of his goal. The miracles, obstructing a clear picture of Jesus, are part of the problem Küng faces. He thus reacts to the miracles in the same way as the theologians mentioned in the previous section.

Jesus was not simply a speaker or preacher, he was a person of action. Modern persons can easily accept Jesus' teachings; it is his reputed miracles that present a problem. Küng asserts: "Das Wunder - nach Goethe 'des Glaubens liebstes Kind' - ist im naturwissenschaftlich - technologischen Zeitalter zu des Glaubens Sorgenkind geworden."⁷⁷ There is a tension between faith and science; people can accept miracles perhaps as belonging to a past era, but not for the present. Küng then adds: "Aber darin zeigt sich nur die Verlegenheit gegenüber dem Wunder überhaupt".⁷⁸ Indeed, they confuse the issue of Christ's person in a modern scientific world-view. Küng pointedly asks: "Was sagt die kritische Geschichtswissenschaft zu dem, was für die Naturwissenschaft unmöglich scheint?"⁷⁹ Sceptical people today no longer accept that natural laws can be suspended, thus rejecting miracles. The above concept is very important for Küng's interpretation of the resurrection event on which we will elaborate in chapter four, which includes "specific doctrines" where the

⁷⁷ Christ sein, p.217.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., pp.217-218.

findings of the historical-critical method will be specifically applied.

Küng insists that miracles were a definite part of people's thinking at the time of the writing of the Scriptures; miracles in antiquity were, therefore, taken for granted. Any great or mighty deed was regarded as a miracle, an act of intervention in nature on the part of the divine. On the part of the evangelists, a miracle is meant to point beyond the mere act, its aim is to produce awe before God in the minds of the observers. Thus Küng feels: "Vielmehr wird der Glaube an Gott erwartet, der in dem Menschen, der solches tut, am Werke ist und für dessen Wirken die Wundertaten Zeichen sind."⁸⁰ Consequently, miracles do not point to the person performing them; rather, they aim at producing trust in God.

A problem regarding miracles arises when humanity today fails to grasp the ancient world-view, where all inexplicable experiences were attributed to powers beyond the human, irrespective of whether these forces were good or bad. The point Küng makes means that a primitive outlook cannot be imposed on people now; it will only foster more scepticism. Having stated that much, however, Küng points out that the writers of scripture do not attempt to diagnose illness, they magnify the event to point to the larger spectrum: the divine itself.⁸¹ To put it another way: if they are not medical, psychological, or scientific reports what is their purpose? They are popular stories, evoking faith and as Küng believes: "Als solche stehen sie völlig im Dienst der Christusverkündigung."⁸²

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.219.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid., p.220.

On the other hand, it is noteworthy that the historical-critical method does not reject all historicity in the miracle stories. Küng thus contends: "Der Kurzschluss resultiert daraus, dass man alle Wundergeschichten auf dieselbe Ebene stellt."⁸³ Their historical value manifests itself on three levels. Firstly, Küng contends: "Es müssen Heilungen von verschiedenartigen Kranken ereignet haben, die für die Menschen zumindest der damaligen Zeit erstaunlich waren."⁸⁴ While some miracles "stood out" in the above sense, one must remember that there are illnesses recognised by modern medicine as psychosomatic in origin. Such illnesses, even today, may be suddenly cured apart from medical treatment. Certainly, psychological influences were at work because where Jesus found no faith, cures were not possible. Jesus' miracles, Küng believes, have nothing to do with sorcery; rather, they result from faith and then produce greater faith. Küng feels that the psychogenetic miracle-cures, such as leprosy and the cures performed on the sabbath are historically based. Without amplifying, he states:

Der vielfach gegen Jesus erhobene und wegen seine Anstössigkeit in den Evangelien nicht frei erfundene Vorwurf der Magie ... war nur denkbar aufgrund von echten Ereignissen, ... Auch die historisch unbestreitbaren Sabbaton-konflikte waren mit Heilungen verbunden. Das therapeutische Element würde ohne jeden Grund aus der Überlieferung gestrichen.⁸⁵

These miracles causing offence must obviously have a historical basis, for historically speaking one usually refers to the positive effects of an action, that is, one is selective. However, the gospel writers do the exact opposite, thus giving the stories historical credibility.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

Küng is thorough in his use of the historical-critical method regarding miracles. He adds:

Sie sind vielmehr ein Aufruf zum Glauben, der manchmal sogar als das eigentliche Wunder erscheint, dem gegenüber die Heilung sekundär ist. Die Heilungsgeschichten des Neuen Testaments müssen als Glaubensgeschichten verstanden werden.⁸⁶

The primary emphasis on a miracle is its power to produce faith. The miracle itself, as Küng reflects, is secondary.

Exorcisms, too, as a result of people's belief in the power of evil ascribed to Satan in times of antiquity, are historically based. They are founded in history because these exorcisms of demons from possessed persons are totally unlike the usual methods used in that period. Jesus does not use special magical formulas and incantations as was usual among ancient faith-healers. Jesus' actions therefore, could have had an historical setting; for, once again, the miracle points beyond the miracle-worker, Jesus, to the wonder of God. Küng explains: "Er predigt die Frohbotschaft von der Gottesherrschaft und nicht die Drohbotschaft von der Satansherrschaft."⁸⁷ Jesus at no time speculates about the person of the demons or the nature of devils, he is concerned with the message of God's power to overcome evil, thus inviting people to participate in the full liberation God offers, established by Jesus' message. Therefore, Küng accepts these miracles as having an historical background.

Thirdly, Küng judges as follows: "Schliesslich können auch andere Wundergeschichten zumindest einen

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.221.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p.221. See also page 222.

geschichtlichen Anlass gehabt haben."⁸⁸ A good example of the above is the coin in the fish's mouth: Jesus may well have asked the disciples to catch a fish to pay the temple levy. Such a miracle actually has its source in an historical fact although the real situation cannot be reconstructed. The aim of the miracle however, is clear: Jesus is the Christ of God; consequently, persons must urgently accept God's message proclaimed by his messenger.

Küng does not doubt that the New Testament miracles were exaggerated for effect. Realizing Jesus' authority, the miracles are embroidered to emphasize that authority, either by the addition of extra-Christian material, or simply by amplification. Küng gives numerous such examples for historical-critical purposes.⁸⁹ Often then, a simple action has the risen Lord retroactively injected into it to produce positive faith in the minds of the readers or hearers. However, that faith is not empty, based solely on fable; it has a historical premise as mentioned above.⁹⁰ The goal of both the evangelists and the early Christian community was aimed at producing faith in God through the actions (historical or embellished) of Jesus.

Having examined the concept of miracle, Küng would like to discard the word, replacing it by the term "signs", Küng says:

Besser wird man - wiederum im Anschluss an das Neue Testament, und besonders Johannes - von 'Zeichen' oder 'Zeichentaten' reden."⁹¹

⁸⁸ Ibid., p.222.

⁸⁹ Ibid., pp.222-224.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., pp.224-225.

The scriptures make no attempt to use the term sign as a suspension of natural laws. In every instance they show God's power as breaking into the world. Thus Küng asserts concerning miracles or signs: "Sie standen im Dienst der Verkündigung des Gottesreiches".⁹² Miracles or signs point beyond themselves to a new dispensation for humanity, occurring in the witness of Jesus by his deeds. Signs point to the inevitable action of God. Thus Küng states: "Sie geschehen beispielhaft, zeichenhaft - schon beginnt Gott den Fluch des menschlichen Daseins in Segen zu wandeln."⁹³ Humanity's experience is now changed from one of a curse to a blessing: that is the point of a sign.

The acts of Jesus therefore points beyond themselves to the coming Kingdom of God. The next chapter will attempt to show how these miracles point beyond Jesus himself to God who is the object of all Jesus' acts. Consequently, Küng says: "Es ist also nicht so, dass die Historizität von Wundern die Gretchenfrage des christlichen Glaubens wäre."⁹⁴ Küng then states that the crucial question for faith is not the miracle; the miracle forces us to ask first about Christ, but ultimately about God. Indeed, plainly put, a miracle means: "Er selber, der das Reich Gottes in Wort und Tat ankündigt, ist im Grunde selber das einzige Zeichen des kommenden Gottesreiches, das den Menschen gegeben wird."⁹⁵ In miracles then, Jesus is proclaiming God's coming Kingdom; the scientific question is of secondary importance. One is not called to believe in miracles, but in Jesus and the One to whom he points.

⁹² Ibid., p.225.

⁹³ Ibid., p.226.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p.227.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p.228.

The miracles point to the finality of Jesus as God's revealer of the coming Kingdom.⁹⁶

Historical-criticism thus reveals the place of miracles as signs. Persons today are not required to accept the miracles as absolute scientific facts involving a suspension of the laws of nature, for at no time do the Scriptures attempt to explain them in that way. Unlike the Hellenistic faith-healers and other wonder-workers, the Bible paints a different picture. The word miracle, then, is inadequate. In fact, these miracles should really have the designation of signs pointing through and beyond Jesus to God as stated above. Certainly, in Küng's thought, no modern person should halt at faith in Christ because of miracles. One should rather see them in their historical context as aids to faith. If evaluated along these lines, miracles do not become a hindrance for they are not a superimposition by the divine upon the natural order. The goal of a sign is faith. It is symbolic in that the power is not in the symbol alone since a symbolic act is one that has its goal, not in itself, but in something else. This idea is very important for Küng as the symbol is an indication of God's presence in the world. The emphasis should not be placed on the vehicle, that is, the miracle. The emphasis should be placed on God's impending reign revealed through Christ.

It should be clear, then, that historical-criticism when properly applied has stripped away the unnecessary layers, revealing the original aim of the evangelists as well as the early communities' intent. Their goal is to evoke faith in Christ, and that is what emerges when the method is used, for all the extraneous material is disposed of in favour of the absolutely essential.

⁹⁶ Ibid., pp.228-229.

Modern persons should find no hindrance to faith if the application of the historical-critical method is followed. The Bible is not a scientific text-book, but aims at promoting faith in the Christ of God. Thus Küng believes he has adequately removed a certain barrier to modern persons' faith: the problem of miracles.

Küng is clearly building his case against a traditional interpretation of the miracles. In conservative theology, miracles indicate Christ as more than human in that he is actually God disguised as a man, performing these marvellous works. Again, there is a circular argument: Jesus is God because of the miracles he performs. On the other hand, the miracles prove Jesus' divine nature for such miracles are beyond human ability. Küng attempts to overcome two problems: the scientific non-verification of miracles today coupled with a rejection of Christ's implied human and divine nature adduced from the miracles.

The further problem Küng highlights is the difficulty created by the orthodox interpretation of the titles attributed to Christ as explained through a Chalcedonian model.

2.6 THE PROBLEM OF CHRIST'S TITLES AND THE HISTORICAL-CRITICAL METHOD

One may well ask why the titles of Christ present a problem. The answer is found in the fact that certain of the titles like the "Son of God" for example are given an ontological significance by traditional theology. The "Son of God" title is interpreted along the lines of Chalcedon, wherein Christ by nature is both divine and human, with the Son of God idea referring to the divine nature. The title "Son of Man", however, refers, in terms of the two nature theory to Christ's humanity. In

this line of argument, the static Chalcedonian notions are taken as a norm and superimposed upon the person of Jesus. The argument is thus a circular one, beginning with the theory of Chalcedon and then reading the New Testament in the light of Chalcedon's conclusions.

If one then assumes that Christ is very God and also man, deducing such from his titles, Küng believes one places an unnecessary burden on the credibility of Christ in the eyes of modern persons, erecting therefore a barrier where, in fact, there is none.

The authors mentioned in the previous section will consequently be examined again since their work forms the basis of Küng's historical-critical conclusions.⁹⁷

Bornkamm states plainly:

For this is the truly amazing thing, that there is in fact not one single certain proof of Jesus claiming for himself one of the Messianic titles which tradition has ascribed to him.⁹⁸

Any attempt to localize the titles in a historical kernel is done "as a rule, at the expense of cheating oneself out of the real meaning of the text."⁹⁹ As far as the titles Jesus is reputed to have used are concerned, beyond a doubt "they received the form in which they appear in the tradition from the faith of the church, which faith had been awakened by the resurrection."¹⁰⁰ Bultmann too, is clear; the titles, as well as nearly all

⁹⁷ See footnote 66.

⁹⁸ Bornkamm, Jesus, p.172. Emphasis mine.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p.173.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

of the New Testament, belong not to Jesus, but to the environment of Hellenistic Christianity.¹⁰¹

Kümmel, in his excellent analysis of the titles of Jesus, says of the "Son of Man" title:

Since the faith of the community was especially interested in Jesus' foreknowledge of the sufferings, it is not surprising that many of these sayings can clearly be recognized as constructions of the community....¹⁰²

Apparently, where a title was ascribed to the historical Jesus, Jesus himself rejected such.¹⁰³ The titles were therefore either the work of the evangelist or the work of the early community. A good example of redaction by the evangelists is found in the passion scene as recorded by Matthew where he puts words into the mouths of the persons before the cross to create his (Matthew's) desired effect.¹⁰⁴ Kümmel does not clarify Matthew's intent.

Conzelmann declares that the titles in the New Testament originate either in the primitive Jewish Christian community, or, on the other hand, are the work of the Hellenistic community. At a later stage, the ideas of the two communities combined, resulting in a new christology, incorporating the backgrounds of both

¹⁰¹ Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, 1 (New York: Scribners, 1951), p.131. See pages 121.133.

¹⁰² W.G. Kümmel, The Theology of the New Testament, (London: SCM, 1974), p.88.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p.73. For a clear understanding of the titles of Jesus along historical-critical lines, see pages 65-90.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p.74.

groups.¹⁰⁵ However, Jeremias, in speaking of Jesus' titles, is prepared to concede "that some of the earliest stratum must in essentials go back to Jesus himself."¹⁰⁶ Jeremias, considered conservative by German scholars, maintains his view despite the objections of Käsemann and Conzelmann.¹⁰⁷ Käsemann affirms: "that mythological elements begin to appear in christology after Easter, in Jewish Christianity as much as in the Hellenistic community."¹⁰⁸ These mythological elements arose when the early community no longer concerned itself with the historical figure of Jesus.¹⁰⁹ It should be clear that the titles and in many instances even Jesus' sayings are the redaction work of either the community or the evangelists.

Both Tödt and Hahn provide a source for Küng's christological understanding of the titles. Their respective approaches are similar and for all practical purposes may be considered together.¹¹⁰ Perrin believes that Tödt's historical-critical approach invalidates all references to the use of titles in the Synoptics. There are scholars who accept that Jesus did use the "Son of Man" title. Cullmann is an example. However, according to Perrin, Tödt's book "immediately renders out of date any [such] work".¹¹¹ Perrin is referring in particular

¹⁰⁵ Conzelmann, Theology of the New Testament, p.82. See pages 72-86.

¹⁰⁶ Jeremias, New Testament Theology, p.267.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. See pages 257-276 for Jeremias' views and use of the historical-critical method.

¹⁰⁸ Ernst Käsemann, New Testament Questions of Today, (Philadelphia: Fortress press, 1969), p.60.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Norman Perrin, Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus, (London: SCM, 1967), p.259.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

to the Son of Man tradition. Tödt's book, The Son of Man in the Synoptic Tradition, appeared in 1965¹¹² and was followed by Hahn's book in 1969.

Hahn believes that the prophecies concerning Jesus' passion were not originally the words of Jesus; they were in all likelihood invented by Mark after the resurrection.¹¹³ Indeed, the texts that associate Jesus with Is. 53 "only gradually acquired significance in early Christianity"¹¹⁴ Hahn does not accept that the term Lord as applied to Jesus had anything to do with divinity in its early usage, but because of the early church's embellishment, the term gradually received this meaning.¹¹⁵ Regarding the term Messiah or Christ, Hahn firmly believes the designation was created within "the apocalyptic framework of the early church and adapted to the coming Son of Man...."¹¹⁶ The whole argument centers in the idea that Jesus did not identify himself with the Son of Man, who as a future figure was a different person from Jesus, yet one to whom Jesus referred. The early church then united these two concepts, applying them to Jesus. Even the idea of a suffering Messiah, including references to Is. 53 as mentioned above, is held by Hahn to be an innovation of the Christian community.¹¹⁷ Further, Hahn states Peter's confession of Christ is the creation of Mark for his theological purposes.¹¹⁸

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ferdinand Hahn, The Titles of Jesus in Christology: Their History in Early Christianity, (London: Lutterworth Press, 1969), pp.37-41.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p.63.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p.114.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 168.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p.118.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p.226.

Indeed, the evangelists attempt by their theological method to harmonize Christ's life as the one who fulfills Old Testament prophecy, hence their reference to Jesus as the "Son of David."¹¹⁹

Beyond a doubt, any reference to Jesus as the Son of God is late, having its foundation in the theology of the early community. Thus Hahn states: "The transference to the earthly Jesus of the conceptual divine sonship took place within the sphere of Hellenistic Jewish Christianity."¹²⁰ There is therefore a move in christology from Jesus as a man who has innate authority to an individual qualitatively different from others. Thus there develops the "Hellenized Son of God concept."¹²¹

Historical-criticism shows the development within the Christian tradition regarding the titles of Jesus. The conclusion that one must draw indicates that much of the material surrounding Jesus is an edited attempt by both the evangelists and the early communities, Jewish and Greek, to interpret Jesus for their situation. Küng believes it is the task of the theologian, using the historical-critical method, to make Christianity relevant today; thus Küng applies the conclusions of the above theologians to his investigation of Jesus' titles.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p.246.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p.298.

¹²¹ Ibid., p.340.

2.6.1 Hans Küng and the Problem of Christ's Titles in the light of the Historical-Critical Method

Küng, using the conclusions of the historical-critical method states: "Manchen Christen erscheint die Aussage 'Jesus ist Gottes Sohn' als das Zentrum des christlichen Glaubens."¹²² Yet, in fact, Jesus placed the concept of the Kingdom at the centre of his preaching and not his own dignity. Küng declares:

"Es bestreitet niemand, dass die nachösterliche Gemeinde an die volle Menschlichkeit Jesu von Nazaret stets energisch festhaltend, diesen Menschen als 'Christus', 'Messias', 'Davidsohn', 'Gottessohn' titulierte hat."¹²³

What the community actually did was take the highest titles with which they were familiar and attribute these to Jesus. While these titles must be seen in the light of their cultural background, the goal of the titles must not be missed. Their goal is to generate faith, therefore one should not, in the light of the sources, presume that Jesus assumed these titles. Assuredly, for Küng, the gospels are not pure history; rather, they are directed at faith. The historian must now decide what is interpretation of history and what occurred historically. One must differentiate between pre-easter statements and post-easter understanding. The redaction work of the evangelists and the Christian communities influenced their statements, not only of the risen Lord, but of the earthly Jesus also. This applies to Christ's christological statements about himself in particular.¹²⁴ Küng adds: "Wir hörten es: Die wahre Kritik zerstört den Glauben nicht, der wahre Glaube hindert nicht die

¹²² Christ sein, p.276.

¹²³ Ibid., pp.276-277.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

Kritik."¹²⁵ True criticism then, is the handmaiden of faith.

Küng affirms: "Dass sich Glaube und Theologie der Urchristenheit besonders bei dem messianischen Titeln ausgewirkt hat, wird heute von jedem ernsthaften Exegeten herausgestellt."¹²⁶ The titles were certainly not used by Jesus.

Küng continues his argument by pointing out that the title of "Messiah" is completely overlooked in the Q sources. Passages in the Synoptics that reflect Jesus' Messianic office are additions made by the later community or the evangelists themselves for purposes of proclamation whereby the church bestowed upon Christ the office of Messiah. Examples of Messianic additions are found in Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ and the high priests' accusation at Jesus' trial. All references to the "Son" are redactions as is the term "Son of God"; they are a later theological assumption imposed onto the text. Küng believes that Jesus was interpreted in the light of Easter, thus causing a theological reflection to be added to his earlier pre-easter actions. Consequently, Küng recognizes:

Auch die Redaktoren der Evangelien schauen zurück und reden aus österlichem Glauben, für den die Messianität - jetzt ganz anders verstanden - keine Frage ist. Vorher aber war sie eine Frage, eine echte Frage.¹²⁷

Hence the titles, as well as the other messianic concepts, were interpreted through post-easter eyes. In this way the messianic problem of Jesus' person was solved.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p.227.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p.278.

¹²⁷ Ibid., pp.278-279.

Indeed, even the detached manner in which Jesus uses the title "Son of Man" (the only title that could possibly be authentic based on Daniel) is fraught with difficulties. Summing up the arguments for and against Jesus using this title, Küng states: "Die Frage dürfte noch nicht ausdiskutiert sein".¹²⁸ Thus further evidence of Jesus' use of the title is needed before one can draw a conclusion.

Despite the fact that the titles were the product of the post-easter community, Küng claims: "Denn offensichtlich fällt sein Anspruch nicht mit seinen Titelen, ... zusammen."¹²⁹ Jesus' authority, for Küng, does not rest on a critical assessment of his titles added by the post-easter community. His authority lies rather in the fact that he provokes a decision.¹³⁰

Even though the evidence concerning the titles could well lead to a negative assessment of Jesus' person, yet the call to faith is not limited to titles created by the post-easter community, or even the evangelists for that matter. The issue then centres in Jesus' actions as God's advocate.¹³¹ It is here, at this point, that faith becomes the issue; it is not the titles, therefore, that are central, but faith arising from decision. Jesus' authority resides in his actions, not in titles derived from a two-nature theory as seen below.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p.279.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p.280.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p.281.

¹³¹ Ibid., p.308.

2.7 CONCLUSION

In this section I have examined Küng's view of the problem that modern persons face: it is the problem of alienation that neither humanism nor the world religions can answer. Küng believes that Christianity can provide the solution, but it must be a Christianity stripped of all that leads to scepticism on the part of modern persons. The miracles and the titles of Christ, Küng contends, arouse such problems. The miracles infer that God directly intervenes in the laws of nature: an unacceptable assertion. The miracles should thus be seen as secondary, for their primary purpose is not to make Christ some wonder-worker; they point rather to the in-breaking of God's Kingdom, thus calling people to a decision about God as revealed by Christ. Ultimately, according to Küng, such a view leads to a new assessment of miracles, removing the problem created by traditional theology.

Both the miracles and the titles given to Christ present problems in that they give the impression that Christ was God dressed as a man. Hence they basically support an incarnational theology along Chalcedonian lines. Consequently, it is clear to Küng that even the titles of Christ are not acceptable, for they too undergird a christology from above that is Chalcedonian at heart. The titles thus detract from the person of Jesus if they are not submitted to historical-critical analysis since they portray, not the real Jesus, but the Jesus created by redaction. Indeed, both miracles and titles are attempts to point beyond themselves to Jesus' relation to the in-breaking Kingdom of God.

In fact, Küng maintains that an emphasis upon the miracles and titles obscures Jesus for faith today. Moreover, a christology from above is not acceptable for

it does not easily lead to faith in Christ, but to scepticism. According to Küng, christology must begin from below, using the historical-critical method to establish the reality of the historical Jesus in order that alienated, modern persons should find faith in Christ who alone is held to be the solution to the estrangement of modern persons since Jesus is God's final revelation.

Having disposed of some of the negative aspects hindering faith, such as Chalcedonian thought reflected in the miracles and titles of Christ, Küng asserts the positive side by attempting to locate the historical Jesus. For ultimately, it is this person who must lead humanity through a decision either to faith or even to unfaith, because it is Jesus who fully manifests God's will for humanity, according to Küng.

CHAPTER THREE

KÜNG'S PORTRAIT OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS, LOCATED BY THE
NEW QUEST AND EXPLAINED THROUGH THE NEW HERMENEUTIC

As was observed in the last chapter, Küng begins his christology from below, emphasizing the words, deeds and destiny of Jesus to reveal his relationship with God, rather than positing an ontological unity with God as a starting point for revelation. The human Jesus is consequently given prominence. In order to obtain a clear portrait of Jesus, relevant for modern persons, Küng employs the historical-critical method to remove all later additions that distort the picture of what he believes to be the original concept of Jesus. Such distortions he considers to be the titles attributed to Jesus in the Synoptics, which are later additions, as well as the miracles. Both the titles and the miracles are, in fact, for Küng later deductions that arose from the early communities' interpretation of Jesus based on the proclamation of his resurrection.

The important issue therefore, as Küng sees it, is to present a relevant picture of Jesus for modern persons. The titles, such as "Son of God", underscoring his divinity, and "Son of Man", emphasizing his humanity, cloud the issue of the person of Jesus.

In order to show his modern picture of Jesus, Küng is obliged to use modern methods involving a new approach to history,¹ resulting in his use of the New Quest² for the historical Jesus, presented through the New Hermeneutic. All of these terms are explained in this chapter. An

¹ Van A. Harvey, The Historian and the Believer, (London: SCM Press, 1967).

² James M. Robinson, A New Quest of the Historical Jesus, (London: SCM Press, 1971), p.66.

authentic picture of Jesus, according to Küng, is a possibility, one that does not detract from but enhances one's knowledge about Jesus.

The need for a New Quest for the historical Jesus arises from the inability of Schweitzer's Old Quest to present an understanding of Jesus acceptable to modern historical methods. To all intents and purposes, one may accept that the New Quest is simply an application of a modern historical approach to the problem of the life of Jesus. In order to facilitate an understanding of the section immediately below, one may assume that the historians of the nineteenth century limited themselves to facts, names and dates. Modern historians, on the other hand, are committed to grasping the intention and meaning lying behind the original writer's narration of the external events in order to discern his underlying motives and presuppositions. The next section below is not a repetition but an expansion and exposition of the above brief definition, thus leading from the New Quest to the New Hermeneutic, two interrelated terms. The New Hermeneutic as it relates to a historical study of Jesus is not concerned with either the chain of outward events chronologically related, nor is it concerned with the psychology of Jesus' inner state of mind. The intent of the method first, is to relate Jesus' deeds and words as a means of understanding his relationship to God and secondly, to attempt to reproduce and transpose this understanding that Jesus had of God into our modern situation. A brief though slightly more detailed exposition than the one given above now follows.

3.1 A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE NEW QUEST AND THE NEW HERMENEUTIC

Küng is not at all concerned with nineteenth century historiography except to reject it outrightly as will be seen in this chapter.

James M. Robinson, whom Küng considers an able exponent of the New Quest,³ in describing the approach of the New Quest, states:

Historicism is gone as the ideological core of historiography, and with it has gone the centrality of the chronicle. 'Psychologism' is gone as the ideological core of biography.... Consequently the kind of history and biography attempted unsuccessfully for Jesus by the nineteenth century is now seen to be based on a false understanding of the nature of history and of the self.⁴

Robinson asserts that historians today need to write "the kind of history or biography of Jesus consistent with our modern understanding of history and human existence".⁵ Robinson believes the Old Quest was concerned just with names, dates, places, and cause and effect as the full significance of historical method.⁶ The old quest's approach to history can be summarized in von Ranke's famous phrase: "Er will bloss zeigen, wie es eigentlich gewesen ist."⁷ The problem is obvious: How can persons today interpret an event in the past when existentially their situation is totally unrelated?

³ M.G., p.587.

⁴ Robinson, A New Quest, pp.66-67.

⁵ Ibid., p.67.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ I. Howard Marshall, I Believe in the Historical Jesus, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), p.52.

The old historiography employed the supposed approach of an objective scientist arriving at the exact facts in a situation. The old positivistic history emphasized detachment as the main idea of history whereas the new historiography emphasizes a dialogue between the text and the current historian's context, an involvement in which the historian's selfhood is included in the conclusion. This does not imply that facts are neglected, avoided, or twisted to suit the historian's aim; it means rather that the "culmination of historical understanding comes when one grasps the possibilities of existence which have come to expression in the past and which are repeatable in the present and the future."⁸ The above statement is extremely important for both the New Quest and the New Hermeneutic since it succinctly portrays their intention to discover the person and the original message of Jesus in order to present both the person and message in an existentially acceptable manner today.

Thus scholarship has been involved in a New Quest for the historical Jesus and a New Hermeneutic for a presentation of the findings of the New Quest.⁹ An important point to note at this stage is the fact that, "The possibility of a New Quest rests on 'a new hermeneutic', a new theory of historical interpretation and of the self...."¹⁰

Clearly, the New Quest and the New Hermeneutic are closely associated, and furthermore, both are intimately linked to the historical-critical method of German theology in an attempt to make it relevant as seen below.

As a logical conclusion to the historical-critical method, "The aim will be to eliminate the kerygmatic 'coloring of the facts' and to test whether the Jesus of

⁸ Harvey, The Historian and the Believer, p.171.

⁹ Robinson, A New Quest, p.67.

¹⁰ Harvey, The Historian and the Believer, p.170.

the kerygma is the same as the Jesus of the new historian."¹¹ This is a clear attempt to distinguish the historical Jesus from the Christ of faith. Unlike Bultmann, who showed little concern for the historical Jesus, concentrating on the Christ of faith only, the New Questers, while following Bultmann's method closely, have, however, attempted to combine Bultmann's existentialism with research into the historical Jesus. The historical Jesus has again become important for theology, therefore Jesus must be seen as a historical figure over against Bultmann's idea of the kerygmatic Christ.

The New Quest, consequently, rejects the historiography of the nineteenth century as well as Bultmann's emphasis on the lack of historicity in the Synoptic gospels. There is evidently a rejection of the Old Quest based upon what the New Questers consider an inadequate view of history. Furthermore, the New Questers distance themselves from Bultmann's denial of the necessity for a historical Jesus. However, it should be made absolutely clear that by no means have they rejected his existential hermeneutic.¹²

Since the Old Quest has, according to the New Questers, proved inadequate, they must attempt to dispose of Bultmann's attitude to the historical Jesus, wherein he rejects the necessity of the historical dimension of Jesus' action.

Bultmann affirms that should one wish to encounter Jesus, one is obliged to rely on certain historical documents, but such documents are of little if any value in locating

¹¹ Ibid., p.173.

¹² Perrin, Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus, p.228.

the Jesus of history. He then states: "I am deliberately renouncing any form of an encounter with a phenomenon of past history, including an encounter with Christ after the flesh...."¹³ In fact, Bultmann refers his readers to his book Jesus and the Word in the above section.¹⁴ For Bultmann, the history of Jesus is of incidental concern. After rejecting the picture of Jesus formulated by the Old Quest along the lines of their attempt to psychologize Jesus by centering their effort in an exposition of his feelings and personality, Bultmann presents his brief outline of Jesus: there is basically no real presentation of the historical Jesus in the gospels; they portray the post-easter faith of the early church's understanding of Jesus. In the kerygma one hears the call to decision, which in turn achieves authentic existence and being. The kerygma involves an apocalyptic, future dimension that encounters persons in the present; the emphasis is thus placed on the "now" as a call to decision concerning one's relationship to God. Therefore, Bultmann states that "The message of Jesus is a presupposition for the theology of the New Testament rather than a part of that theology itself."¹⁵ The most one can say about Jesus, according to Bultmann, is perhaps that he was an authoritative teacher, showing the characteristics of a messianic prophet and a rabbi, performing some miracles of healing and exorcism and, in this way, calling persons to decision concerning the rule of God. His association with the rejects of society set him apart from the religion of his day, leading to confrontation with the authorities, for Jesus centred authority in himself. Furthermore, Bultmann believes it is possible that Jesus went to Jerusalem, where he died.

¹³ Bartsch, Kerygma and Myth, p.117.

¹⁴ Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958).

¹⁵ Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, p.3.

His journey to Jerusalem, for Bultmann, was an action resulting from Jesus' intention to provoke a decision concerning his proclamation about the coming Kingdom of God.¹⁶ Ultimately, Bultmann can say:

I do indeed think that we can know almost nothing concerning the life and personality of Jesus, since the early Christian sources show no interest in either, are moreover fragmentary and often legendary; and other sources about Jesus do not exist.¹⁷

However, despite the New Questers rejection of what they see as Bultmann's failure to come to grips with the historical Jesus, they follow his outline of Jesus' actions very closely indeed. It appears that the Old Quest, rejected because of its misunderstanding of history, is not totally dead; it has emerged, but on this occasion, as the New Quest based on a reformulation of history along existential lines. Bultmann, while rejected by the New Questers because of his lack of history, has had a profound influence on the New Quest. He is thus the bridge between the Old Quest and the new. While the Old Quest emphasized the biographical and psychological aspects of Jesus' life, the New Quest,

moved beyond a recognition of the validity of much of Bultmann's position, to argue that since something can be known about the historical Jesus, we must concern ourselves with working it out, if we do not wish ultimately to find ourselves committed to a mythological Lord.¹⁸

Robinson has underscored the problem resulting from Bultmann's existential method to the historical Jesus.

¹⁶ Bultmann, Jesus and the Word. This is Bultmann's theme in the above work.

¹⁷ Rudolf Bultmann, The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ, (New York: Abingdon, 1964), p.17.

¹⁸ Robinson, A New Quest, p.12.

The difficulty is,

whether the proclamation of the exalted Lord through the Church is in some kind of recognizable continuity with the preaching of the historical Jesus, and consequently whether the exalted Lord is in continuity with the Jesus of Nazareth.¹⁹

It is at the above point that Küng and the Protestant New Questers make their contribution by attempting to identify the historical Jesus.

Käsemann ended Bultmann's theological supremacy through a return to the historical Jesus in his now famous lecture of 1953 entitled "The Problem of the Historical Jesus", published in Käsemann's Essays on New Testament Themes.²⁰ Käsemann contends that the search for the historical Jesus is both possible and valid. He objects to the substitution of a myth as the focus of belief instead of the historical Jesus. Käsemann is concerned by the lack of historical continuity between Jesus of Nazareth and Jesus the Christ as seen in Bultmann's theology. As a corrective to both the Old Quest and Bultmann, Käsemann, by using the conclusion supplied by current historiography, aims at correcting past defects. He believes he has, by the historical-critical method, located the historical Jesus lying beneath the surface of the kerygma.

The outline and approach of all the New Questers is strikingly similar; this includes the direction taken by Küng as well. The reason for the similarity arises from Bultmann's sketch of Jesus. Thus all the New Questers use Bultmann's outline, which can be summarized as the life, deeds and fate of Jesus. This outline supplies the

¹⁹ Ibid., p.13.

²⁰ Ernst Käsemann, Essays on New Testament Themes, (London: SCM Press, 1964), pp.15-47.

blueprint for all the New Questers. As proof for the above statement one may choose any of the New Questers, including Küng, and compare their picture of Jesus with that offered by Bultmann. Obviously, the New Questers insert a great amount of historical material into Bultmann's silhouette.

A study of Käsemann, Fuchs, Bornkamm, Zahrnt, and Küng, just to give a few examples, underscores the above deduction.²¹ The outline of any one of "their lives of Jesus," with few exceptions, can be super-imposed upon the other. These authors all have similar outlines for the life of Jesus, corresponding closely to that of Bultmann (see footnote 13), but in addition, add a historical dimension to Bultmann's existentialism.

3.1.1 The New Hermeneutic as a part of the New Quest

Furthermore, the New Quest cannot be separated from the New Hermeneutic, since the latter forms a part of the New Questers' method. It is not my purpose, however, to give a detailed account of either the New Quest or the New Hermeneutic, except to show the extent that Küng is influenced by the New Quest for the historical Jesus, and the New Hermeneutic. It would indeed be of great interest if one were to trace the influence of Schleiermacher on the above concepts. In many ways theology after Barth seems to be a refined return to Schleiermacher though it may claim other origins. It appears that Barth's belief that Schleiermacher would re-assert himself has resulted in the existentialism of the New Hermeneutic. A great deal of modern hermeneutics

²¹ (1) Ernst Käsemann, Essays on New Testament Themes, (London: SCM Press, 1964), pp.15-47.
 (2) Günter Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1960).
 (3) Heinz Zahrnt, The Historical Jesus, (London: Collins, 1963).

concerning Jesus and the problem of interpretation seems to have troubled Schleiermacher as much as modern theologians. The solutions too, are similar, for Schleiermacher asserted that interpretation "arises out of the religious consciousness itself and its direct expression"²² The problem touched upon by Schleiermacher is an obvious one: How can an event that occurred 2000 years ago speak to persons now?

On the other hand, Robinson affirms, regarding the New Hermeneutic, "that Jesus is sought, not as an object of research, but as a subject who gives authenticity to our existence".²³ In the earlier periods of interpretation under the influence of a nineteenth century approach, the investigator aimed solely at objectivity; now the method has changed, there can be no objective interpretation that does not involve the subjective existential experience of the investigator. For "selfhood is constituted by commitment to a context, from which commitment to one's existence arises."²⁴ Ramm outlines the method of the New Hermeneutic in the following way:

The preacher is to come to the text and pose certain questions to the text. These are not thought of willy-nilly, but are prescribed by existential considerations. The text in turn questions the interpreter. Thus in addition to the scientific investigation of the text there must be an existential encounter with the text. Only after this is the preacher prepared to preach."²⁵

²² Friedrich Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, 1 (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p.92.

²³ Robinson, A New Quest, p.68.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Bernard L. Ramm and others, Hermeneutics, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), p.138. See also: James M. Robinson and John B. Cobb, The New Hermeneutic New Frontiers in Theology, 11 (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), pp.23-28.

The above quotation is based upon a modern approach to history, therefore it applies to the theologian and historian, for neither the historian, nor theologian, nor preacher, can be relevant by reading only the text or evidence, he or she must apply the evidence to the receivers by means of the hermeneutic outlined above, which is "the historical and cultural situation of the congregation."²⁶

Regarding the New Hermeneutic, Ebeling states:

Words produce understanding by appealing to experience and leading to experience. Only where word has already taken place can word take place. Only where there is already previous understanding can understanding take place.²⁷

Ebeling further affirms: "So we do not get at the nature of words by asking what they contain, but by asking what they effect, what they set going, what future they disclose."²⁸ Consequently, Ebeling can make the important statement that "The content of the word and the fulfilling of the word, its reaching its goal, are identical."²⁹ It is clear then, that Ebeling interprets God's word and God's deed as one. One is thus not involved in abstract ontological reflection, for thought and action are not separable.

Fuchs comes to the same conclusion as Ebeling concerning the New Hermeneutic. Using the example of Jesus' custom whereby he taught through the medium of parables, Fuchs shows how Jesus used a situation in which both he and his

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ G. Ebeling, Word and Faith, (London: SCM Press, 1963), p.320.

²⁸ G. Ebeling, The Nature of Faith, (London: Collins, 1966), p.187.

²⁹ Ibid., p.87.

hearers shared, giving those situation-parables a new meaning that led to the re-shaping of the hearers' attitudes towards God.³⁰ Jesus challenges the accepted conclusions of the hearers, inviting his hearers to allow the parables now, at that moment, to speak anew. Despite their common understanding, Jesus forces the hearers to listen to the parables in a new way, a way in which they hear God's word addressed directly to them.

Jesus, therefore, leads his hearers into making a new response to God, so that both he and they may be led into a new relationship to God.³¹ Moreover, today, the purpose of this hermeneutics is to force the hearer to "actually [echo] the original decision which Jesus had made."³² There are, therefore, three aspects to the above event: The decision of Jesus regarding God is re-enacted from a common perspective; thereafter, it is actualized by the hearers who then make a decision regarding God along the lines of Jesus' response to the Father; whereafter, these hearers existentialize the proclamation according to their context and immediately act thereon. Perrin does not disagree with the above hermeneutic; he does, however, point out that,

As a product of an Anglo-Saxon liberal Baptist tradition we have been taught to 'believe in Jesus' What gives this faith-image validity is the fact that it grows out of experience and is capable of mediating religious experience. [It is] a proclamation arising out of a Christian experience of the risen Lord.³³

³⁰ E. Fuchs, Studies in the Historical Jesus, (London: SCM Press, 1964), p.97 f.

³¹ Ibid., pp.36-38.

³² Perrin, Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus, p.228.

³³ Ibid., p.244.

The point Perrin makes is that within certain Anglo-Saxon churches, the New Hermeneutic is not an innovation; it is the usual method of proclamation, often practised unconsciously.

A good, current example of the New Hermeneutic is found in the modern Jewish-Zionist presentation of the holocaust wherein the experiences of the death-camp survivors are represented in such a manner that a present-day Jew is confronted with the horror of the past. He/she then internalizes his/her existential encounter with the past which then provides a basis for his future actions (see footnote 28). One may contest the historicity of certain aspects of the holocaust but its impact upon certain Jews in the present is beyond dispute.

History therefore cannot simply involve an objective review of facts. Facts only have significance within the subjective interrelation of the present historian, who, in experiencing and internalizing of the facts, presents them through his or her personality, giving them a new direction imposed upon the information by himself. With this method and goal in view, Küng attempts his portrait of the historical Jesus.

Having briefly examined the search for the New Quest for the historical Jesus as expressed through the New Hermeneutic, I will now examine Küng's positive findings concerning Jesus as well as their present hermeneutical relevance.

3.2 KÜNG'S PORTRAIT OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS AND ITS MODERN RELEVANCE

Küng believes that his christology is in keeping with the approach of the New Questers and the New Hermeneutic, particularly as portrayed in the thought of Ernst Käsemann. Küng believed Käsemann's method was

to go back once again to the pre-easter Jesus, to the Jesus of history, and to bring him before the eyes of contemporary men and women as a living person as far as this is possible, in his historical setting and in his relevance for the course of human history.³⁴

Since Küng has committed himself to the New Questers' approach, his portrait in many ways resembles theirs,³⁵ hence Küng affirms: "[Jesus] makes possible in the concrete a new basic orientation and basic attitude, new motivations, dispositions, projects, a new background of meaning and a new objective."³⁶ The spirit of Jesus' actions thus gives a new impetus to present situations by recreating in the life of a person the attitude of Jesus within that person's existential situation.³⁷ It should be clear that Küng does not desire to present a novel gospel; his aim is to present the old gospel in today's language for people today. Küng comments:

³⁴ Hermann Häring and Karl-Josef Kuschel, "An Interview with Hans Küng," Hans Küng : His Work and His Way, eds. Häring and Kuschel (London: Collins, 1979) p.161.

³⁵ M.G., pp.587-590.

³⁶ Hans Küng, "Twenty Propositions," The Christian Challenge, (London: Collins, 1979). p. 311. Hereafter referred to as "Twenty Propositions". The above "Twenty Propositions" are also reflected in: "Twenty Theses," Signposts for the Future, (New York: Doubleday, 1978).

³⁷ Küng, "Twenty Propositions," p.339.

Kein anderes Evangelium, doch dasselbe Evangelium für heute neu entdeckt.³⁸

Küng contends that modern persons desire today to be truly human and he therefore attempts to contend for a faith that is not based on fantasy. He declares:

Kein blinder, sondern ein verantworteter Glaube: Der Mensch soll nicht geistig vergewaltigt, sondern mit Gründen überzeugt werden, damit er eine verantwortete Glaubensentscheidung fällen kann.³⁹

All statements about God should, for Küng, be tested within the realm of reality through the present context of human experience.⁴⁰ As was seen in chapter two, Küng, once more, faces up to the challenge presented to Christianity by humanism and world religions. Again, Küng assumes that the world religions indicate humanity's desire for redemption resulting from alienation. Certainly he affirms that non-christian humanism can develop much that is good and noble in people, inculcating values much needed by humankind. The point at issue for Küng then centres in the distinctive feature of the Christian faith. Küng believes that the definitive issue facing humanity is the person of Christ, whom Küng attempts to show is God's full and final representative to men and women.⁴¹ The finality of Jesus lies in his absolute claim to be the final advocate of both God and persons; consequently, in his actions he evoked a final decision about God.⁴²

³⁸ Christ sein, p.14.

³⁹ Ibid., p.56.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp.113-115.

⁴² "Twenty Propositions", p.322.

Küng then expounds his understanding of Jesus as a definite historical person with a distinct role in the plan of God, a plan that impinges on humanity's present existential situation. Christians, for Küng, are obliged when in dialogue with persons today, irrespective of whether they are Muslims, Hindus, or atheists, to present Christ as God's final call to humanity. "[Christians] must speak of what is their own, bring it home, make it effective."⁴³

Yet if one asks the question as to the person of this Christ, Küng clearly shows that it is not the Christ of Chalcedon nor is it the Old Quest's portrayal of Christ. There is but one sketch of Jesus acceptable today; it is the Christ of the historical-critical method of Biblical study displayed in a way acceptable to modern persons.⁴⁴ Küng should perhaps refer to his intellectual German audience rather than modern persons for his method does not enjoy a wide acceptance in other theological spheres.

At the Brussels conference held in 1970 to ascertain the essence of the Christian message Küng emphasized:

The Christian message is this: In the light of the power of Jesus we are able in the world of today, to live, to act, to suffer and to die in a truly human way ... totally dependent on God and totally committed to our fellow human beings.⁴⁵

Therefore, the Christian faith is not grounded on Chalcedon, nor on Jesus as a wonder-worker relying upon miracles to establish his authority. Furthermore, Christianity does not centre in the titles given to Christ by the post-easter community, titles such as "Son

⁴³ Küng, The Christian Challenge, p.54.

⁴⁴ M.G., p.564.

⁴⁵ Hans Küng, "What is the Christian Message?" Catholic Mind, 68 (1970): 29.

of God" or "Son of Man"; rather, it is the person of Jesus presented through the historical-critical method who is Christianity's foundation. Küng comments: "Even if Christian ideals are retained, a Christianity without faith in the person of Jesus has lost its foundation."⁴⁶ This theme will be developed at the end of this chapter.

Küng's approach to Jesus, closely following the outline of the New Questers, can be divided into three distinct patterns: Jesus the man; his message; and his fate. At this point I will discuss Küng's conception of Jesus the man.

3.2.1 Jesus the Man: He is Different from All Other Men

According to Küng, Jesus does not see himself as a reformer or a prophet. His status far surpasses these limited categories of description.⁴⁷ Thus Küng declares: Jesus ist anders! Bei allen Parallelen im einzelnen erweist sich der geschichtliche Jesus als im ganzen völlig unverwechselbar - damals und heute.⁴⁸ Jesus, therefore, is totally different from, and, consequently, cannot be compared with others according to Küng. While there may well be similarities between Jesus and other great religious leaders such as Buddha or Mohamed, it is his difference from such that distinguishes him.⁴⁹ That difference will be elaborated upon when Jesus' message is considered below.

⁴⁶ Christ sein, p. 203.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

In Küng's opinion, any question concerning Jesus must answer the question as to which Christ is under consideration. The Christ of the church is often an inaccurate reproduction, resulting in a Christ of dogma, or of the enthusiasts. The Christ of dogma is the product of Chalcedon. The Christ of the enthusiasts also involves a shaping of his person and actions to suit particular ideals. Küng is therefore emphatic that the only Christ of whom one can speak accurately is the Jesus of history, the Jesus shaped and produced by Küng's historical-critical method. It is he alone whom Küng finds superior to all other religious leaders.⁵⁰ This Jesus is a historical person with a distinctive role, indicative of his absolute relationship to the Father.⁵¹ This Christ, for Küng, "is no other than the historical Jesus of Nazareth."⁵² The church, proclaiming this Christ to be different from all others, cannot naively interpret a claim of such magnitude without definitively locating this Jesus by means of a sound method of investigation.⁵³ All past theories of Jesus are in need of a vital re-statement if this Jesus is to be relevant today.⁵⁴ It seems to me that the picture of Jesus changes according to one's application of a method. Any change in the method results in a changed portrait.

Küng makes an unequalled claim for Jesus the man, saying that "He himself is the key to the meaning of history; He himself ... sets Christianity apart."⁵⁵ What is it that has held Christianity together in the past? It is "Jesus

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp.119-136.

⁵¹ "Twenty Propositions", p.309.

⁵² Ibid., p.317.

⁵³ Christ sein, p.119.

⁵⁴ M.G., p.564-566.

⁵⁵ Küng, "What is the Christian Message?" pp.28-34.

as the Christ."⁵⁶ However, if Christ is to continue to cement Christianity, he must be a Christ acceptable to modern humanity, a Christ set free from all that hinders the belief of modern persons. The church must proclaim the original message of Jesus the Christ, adapted to the modern world, thus assisting to reshape a new understanding of the man Jesus for today.⁵⁷ As indicated above, Küng's purpose is to show Jesus' uniqueness for modern men and women in a language that is immediately grasped.

Certainly, it is because of Christ that a church exists today; hence, Küng is emphatic about his uniqueness, but the church for Küng must always return to the historical Jesus in order to proclaim him as the Christ of faith for today.⁵⁸ Küng insists: "Der christliche Glaube redet von Jesus, aber auch die Geschichtsschreibung redet von ihm. Der christliche Glaube ist an Jesus als dem 'Christus' der Christen interessiert. Die Geschichtsschreibung an Jesus als geschichtliche Figur."⁵⁹ If Christians are to continue their claim regarding the uniqueness of Jesus, they have to prove their case historically. This, for Küng, is precisely what the modern historian attempts to achieve.⁶⁰ Beyond doubt, Küng is inclined to generalize, a point upon which I will elaborate in the critique found in chapter five. The following statement serves as an example. Küng declares:

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.29. See also: Hans Küng, The Church, (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967), pp.3-54.

⁵⁷ M.G., p.515.

⁵⁸ The Church, pp.43-44.

⁵⁹ Christ sein, p.142.

⁶⁰ The Christian Challenge, pp.62-63.

None of the great founders of religion lived in so restricted an area. None lived for such a terribly short time. None died so young. And yet how great his influence has been.⁶¹

Certainly, for Küng there is something unique about a man whose life divides the world into two ages: B.C. and A.D.⁶² Küng affirms that it is correct to state that no biography of Jesus is feasible; yet, notwithstanding such a problem, the historical-critical method unveils a Jesus the contours of whose life Küng regards as truly unique, clearly indicating his preaching activity and fate.⁶³ Küng is emphatic that by the historical-critical method of starting with a christology from below, one can distinctly indicate that Jesus is without peers, for in him God and humanity meet, thus the challenge to faith today is the person of Jesus. Having, expounded the historical-critical method, Küng explains:

Auch und gerade eine Christologie 'von unten' ist an Jesus interessiert, wie er uns heute im Horizont von Welt, Menschheit und Gott begegnet als die Herausforderung zum Glauben, die er in Person ist.⁶⁴

There is an intrinsic challenge, for Küng, in the uniqueness of Jesus' person established through modern historiography.⁶⁵ Jesus is the centre of God's plan for humanity, therefore Küng can state that the church today is founded upon the uniqueness of the historical Jesus.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Ibid., p.63.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Christ sein, pp.148-149.

⁶⁴ M.G., p.591.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ The Church, pp.72 f.

Unquestionably then, Küng states concerning Jesus, "Er ist von anderem Rang."⁶⁷ This statement made by Küng is extremely important for it leads one to ascertain Küng's positive picture of the historical Jesus. It is an assertion about Jesus, Küng contends, that unveils the centre of Christianity's distinctiveness. He states: "Nach dem Zeugnis des Anfangs und der gesamten Tradition ist die Besondere wieder dieser Jesus selbst...."⁶⁸ Because of Jesus' distinctiveness Küng maintains: "He is provocative on all sides."⁶⁹ Küng therefore asks the question as to why Jesus is different from all others. The answer Küng gives, which forms the basis of what follows below, is that he is unique because of his goal.⁷⁰ It is at this point that Küng's christology stands or falls. Furthermore, it is on the above issue that his christology must be finally assessed: an issue that will be elaborated upon in the final critique in chapter five. Jesus, Küng affirms, is unique because he cannot be contained by any human scheme. Küng asserts that Jesus is God's final, decisive representative.⁷¹ I must now ascertain how Küng arrives at such a conclusion by means of his historical re-construction of Jesus.

3.2.2 Jesus Fits No Picture

As has already been noted, Küng, like the New Questers, divides the life of Jesus into basically three categories: the man, his message, and his fate. From this vantage point he now attempts to underscore the uniqueness of Jesus by showing that he is totally unlike

⁶⁷ Christ sein, p.203.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p.115.

⁶⁹ "Twenty Propositions", p.309.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.318. Underscoring mine.

⁷¹ Christ sein, p.113-115.

any other human being. Should one accept uncritically K  ng's conclusion regarding Jesus' uniqueness as a person, one is thereafter forced to ask pertinent questions about his relationship to God, not in terms of Chalcedon or his miracles, but in relation to his person as discovered through the historical-critical method. In answering the question of Jesus' person in respect of God, one is then able to consider the question of faith. However, the faith-question does not involve Jesus' divinity, but is related to the clear picture that Jesus portrays of God. It is this matter that is at the heart of K  ng's portrayal of Jesus in that Jesus alone is the person who gives the full picture of what God is actually like. One should not miss the vitally important statement K  ng makes, emphasizing that Jesus' message did not centre in himself, but in God.⁷² This issue will be clarified later in this present chapter when Jesus' message is considered. The crucial consideration that must be clarified in the final chapter requires a response to the following question: if Jesus is God's final decisive envoy,⁷³ as K  ng claims, what then are the implications for christology? Obviously, K  ng's claim concerning Jesus' uniqueness must be discovered to establish the value of K  ng's understanding of the person of Jesus.

Positively, by means of the historical-critical method, one may establish that Jesus as the man "who fits no scheme"⁷⁴ was certainly neither a priest, nor a

⁷² Hans K  ng, "What is the Christian Message?" pp.28-34.

⁷³ Christ sein, p.108 f.

⁷⁴ Hans K  ng, "What is the Christian Message?" pp.28-34. In fact the above lecture contains all of K  ng's later christology in summary form, reflected in his book Christ sein some two years after he delivered the above lecture in Brussels.

revolutionary, nor a monk, nor a moralist. Each one of these types of person will receive attention below.

Küng, in declaring that Jesus was not a priest, means that Jesus did not belong to the ruling party of the Sadducees, but was in fact a layman.⁷⁵ Küng clearly underscores the above point, declaring:

Der Jesus der Geschichte war - die nachträgliche, nachösterliche Interpretation des Hebräerbriefes von Jesus als dem 'Ewigen Hohepriester' darf hier nicht täuschen - kein Priester. Er war gewöhnlicher 'Laie'⁷⁶

Indeed, he was, for Küng, the "ringleader of a lay-movement."⁷⁷ He was no theologian, forming an elaborate system for the elite and learned to interpret, but a layman, appealing to laypersons, calling laypeople to follow him,⁷⁸ by means of simple "stories and parables".⁷⁹

Furthermore, Küng believes that Jesus was not a revolutionary in the modern sense of the word. Küng emphasizes: "There was a revolutionary party at that time (Zealots), and many - for instance, in South America - see Jesus in this light."⁸⁰ However, Küng then suggests that "Jesu Botschaft war zweifellos revolutionär, wenn

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Christ sein, p.170.

⁷⁷ "Twenty Propositions", p.317.

⁷⁸ M.G., pp.600-602.

⁷⁹ "Twenty Propositions," p.317.

⁸⁰ Ibid. For a view which asserts that the Zealots only came into being after 70 A.D., see Morton Smith, "The Zealots and Sicarii", Harvard Theological Review, 1971, pp.1-19. See also S. Zeitlin, "Zealots and Sicarii", Journal of Biblical Literature LXXXI (4), 1962, pp.359-398.

mit Revolution eine grundlegende Umgestaltung eines bestehenden Umstandes oder Zustandes gemeint ist."⁸¹

Despite the fact that his message involved basic transformation, Küng feels that,

Die Frage ist präzise zu stellen: Wollte Jesus einen gewaltsamen plötzlichen Umsturz (re-volvere = umstürzen) der gesellschaftlichen Ordnung, ihrer Werte und Repräsentanten? Das ist Revolution im strengen Sinn (die Französische Revolution, die Oktoberrevolution usw.), sie komme von links oder rechts.⁸²

One does Jesus a grave injustice, according to Küng, should one make of him a guerrilla, rebel, or freedom fighter, for his message of God's kingdom was not one that involved socio-political action. The historical-critical method, Küng believes, clarifies this issue.⁸³ Küng asserts: "Wie kein Mann des Systems, so war er auch kein sozialpolitischer Revolutionär."⁸⁴ Küng then underscores the above point by stating:

He was not in any case a political or social revolutionary. If he had only carried out an agricultural reform or - as happened in the Jerusalem revolution after his death - had set on fire the bonds on the Jerusalem archives and organized a revolt against the Roman occupying power, he would have been forgotten long ago. But he proclaimed non-violence and love of enemies.⁸⁵

Indeed, Jesus did anticipate a radical change of the world's present order; furthermore, he did confront the authorities, but that does not mean that he attempted a political coup in any form; consequently, he refused

⁸¹ Christ sein, p.175.

⁸² Ibid., p.175.

⁸³ Ibid., pp.178-179.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p.179.

⁸⁵ "Twenty Propositions", p.317.

titles such as "Son of David" or "Messiah", titles that in themselves were obviously inflammatory.⁸⁶ What emerges positively concerning Jesus is that he believed in "changing society by radically changing the individual."⁸⁷ Moreover, it was for this very reason that Jesus refused to align his cause with that of the Zealots, finding himself unacceptable to this group.⁸⁸ Jesus was no Che Guevara, nor was he a Camillo Torres.⁸⁹ Jesus had requested that Caesar be given his due tax. At no time did Jesus propagate the class struggle; he did not advocate the abolition of law for the sake of the revolution.⁹⁰

If he was neither a Sadduccee nor Zealot, was he then an ascetic Essene, a monk? Was he an other-worldly pietist? Küng puts it as follows:

Wenn dem allen so ist, dann allerdings stellt sich die Frage: Ist dieser Jesus nicht letztlich doch der Vertreter eines Rückzugs oder einer Abkapselung von der Welt, einer weltabgewandten Frömmigkeit, einer weltfernen Innerlichkeit, eines mönchischen Asketismus und Absentismus?⁹¹

Assuredly, one knows that this attitude prevailed amongst the Essenes and the monks of Qumran. Monks through the centuries have invoked Jesus as an example of their way of life. In fact Jesus clearly took the opposite attitude to that of the ascetics. He at no time cut himself off from the world, nor did he advise others to do so. He never advised those seeking perfection to join

⁸⁶ Christ sein, pp.178-179.

⁸⁷ "Twenty propositions," p.321.

⁸⁸ Christ sein, p.178.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp.181-182.

⁹¹ Ibid., p.183.

an Essene monastery. "He never founded an order with its rule, vows, ascetic precepts, special clothing, and traditions."⁹²

In contrast to Qumran, Jesus' behaviour can be considered the opposite of such pietism. He at no time advocated withdrawal from the world, the rejection of material possessions and celibacy as did the Essenes. Unlike the latter Jesus rejected the esoteric ideas of the sons of light and freely entered into open association with all who were willing to receive him irrespective of their station or standing in life.⁹³

Furthermore, for Küng, it can be established with certainty by the historical-critical method that Jesus was no moralist, in that he did not subscribe to the tenets of the Pharisees.

Küng is extremely negative in his summary of the Pharisees. The Pharisees were beyond doubt moral and upright, stressing the place of prayer and righteous living. Unfortunately, the Pharisees added to the law of God by creating their own laws to ensure that they did not sin. The purpose of their additional laws, Küng maintains, was no more than an ancient attempt to develop a thesaurus of merit attained through works of supererogation. Their complicated casuistry, ably interpreted by the scribes, enabled them to cope with their own guilt, but placed an unnecessary burden on the poor individuals who lacked access to the finer interpretations of the scribes. The Pharisees thus added to the burdens of the average Jew while they themselves found intricate ways to circumvent God's law involving

⁹² "Twenty Propositions," p.318.

⁹³ Christ sein, p.191.

care for one's fellow being.⁹⁴ Jesus obviously came into direct conflict with such a group for, "he was not interested in questions of legal interpretation. He proclaimed a new freedom from legalism: love without limits."⁹⁵

Regarding Jesus and his relationship to the Pharisees, Küng asserts:

Jesus schien den Pharisäern nahe und war ihnen doch unendlich fern. Auch er verschärfte das Gesetz, wie die Antithesen der Bergpredigt beweisen: schon Zorn bedeutet Mord, schon ehebrecherisches Begehren Ehebruch. Aber meinte er damit Kasuistik?⁹⁶

The answer to the above question is important for Küng. Indeed, Jesus directs a parable at the Pharisees in which he undermines all their moral uprightness when he shows that in fact the prodigal son is better off than the so-called elder brother.

Certainly, the stories of a lost sheep, a lost coin, and a lost son told against the Pharisees were offensive to them as upright moral individuals in their own eyes.⁹⁷ Jesus, to answer the question of casuistry above, indicated that lust was as bad as the act of adultery; hence, the Pharisees could not escape the accusing finger of Christ by their manipulation of the law to suit their own ends. Like the sheep, coin and prodigal son, they too were lost.⁹⁸ Conflict with the Pharisees was therefore inevitable; and Küng affirms: "Mit den

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp.192-195.

⁹⁵ "Twenty Propositions", p.318.

⁹⁶ Christ sein, p. 197.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Pharisäern musste sich der Konflikt besonders zuspitzen, ..."⁹⁹

At this point it is important to ascertain K ng's reasons for accepting Jesus as a unique individual. One should note that he was not a Sadducee, a Zealot, an Essene, nor a Pharisee; he really belonged to no important group; yet, he exerted a profound influence upon history. Why? It is because Jesus fitted no category; he did not belong to any of the above-mentioned groups, yet his person remains of unparalleled importance. Therefore, K ng concludes that Jesus' action in rejecting all that was considered important for his day becomes the context for evaluating his message.¹⁰⁰ At this stage we must now consider the message of Jesus as established by the historical-critical method. What is it that is unique, not only concerning the man, but also concerning his proclamation?

3.3 THE MESSAGE OF JESUS

3.3.1 The Kingdom of God

K ng in his book on The Church indicates that the church today is a fellowship of committed believers. A fellowship that has existed for many hundreds of years must have had its origin in someone who continues to hold this fellowship together. One should remember (accepting that K ng is a New Quester who believes in the historical Jesus) that this present day church had its origin in a historical person, namely, Jesus Christ. He states: "this believing church must be a fellowship of believers in Christ. What does this mean?"¹⁰¹ It means that the

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ M.G., p.601.

¹⁰¹ The Church, p. 39.

church has not received "legend and speculation, but living experiences and impressions, truthful reports handed down about the living Jesus of Nazareth. If not directly, at least through the evangelists' testimonies of faith we can hear Jesus himself speaking."¹⁰² Despite material that is "historically dubious",¹⁰³ one may still hear the documents of the New Testament "speak to us with the original words of Jesus."¹⁰⁴ What exactly does this statement mean for Küng? It means that Jesus proclaimed "the kingdom of God"¹⁰⁵

Once more Küng acknowledges the influence of the New Questers upon his method.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, he makes clear that the starting point of Jesus' proclamation begins with the kingdom of God. The parables Jesus often told substantiate the fact that the kingdom of God was the centre of Jesus' message.¹⁰⁷ Küng plainly states regarding the kingdom of God as the heart of Jesus' message:

all exegetes are agreed that this fact is at the very heart of Jesus' preaching, that this approaching kingdom of God is the centre and the horizon of his preaching and teaching, whatever the precise interpretation put on the idea of nearness may be.¹⁰⁸

Regarding this reign of God, Küng affirms that it is not a human achievement, "it appears as a powerful sovereign

¹⁰² Ibid., p.44.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p.45.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp.44-45.

¹⁰⁷ Christ sein, p.208.

¹⁰⁸ The Church, p.45.

act of God himself."¹⁰⁹ Certainly, it is not an earthly nor national kingdom as was anticipated by the leaders of Israel at the time of Jesus; rather, it involves the invasion, or the irruption of the eschatological end time upon the present. Therefore, his proclamation of God's kingdom agreed with neither the Rabbis, nor the Zealots.¹¹⁰ It was a kingdom specially prepared by God for the poor, the down-trodden, and the misfits of society. Thus, unlike the Essenes, Jesus did not heap judgement upon the outcasts of society, but mercy, indicating that he had a different view concerning the kingdom than that of his contemporaries.¹¹¹ However, if one should ask Küng for an exact definition of the kingdom of God, he affirms: "Nicht ein Territorium, ein Herrschaftsgebiet ist mit diesem 'Reich' gemeint. Sondern das Regiment Gottes, die Herrscher Tätigkeit, die er ergreifen wird: die 'Gottesherrschaft.' So wird Gottesreich 'zum Kennwort für die Sache Gottes.'"¹¹² It should be noted that Küng believes that Jesus' idea of the kingdom does not involve a territory, or a sphere of dominion; rather, God's kingdom is a description of the cause of God. It is that very cause which Jesus proclaims and evinces in his ministry. Küng describes the kingdom of Jesus' proclamation as follows:

Ein Reich also ... der vollen Gerechtigkeit, der unüberbietbaren Freiheit, der ungebrochenen Liebe, der universalen Versöhnung, des ewigen Friedens. In diesem Sinne also die Zeit des Heiles, der Erfüllung, der Vollendung, der Gegenwart Gottes: die absolute Zukunft. Gott gehört dieser Zukunft.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p.48.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.49.

¹¹¹ Ibid., pp.48-51.

¹¹² Christ sein, pp.205-206.

¹¹³ Ibid., p.206.

Indeed, it will be a future of great joy. In defining and describing this future, Küng quotes Käsemann's understanding of Paul approvingly. Regarding this kingdom, Käsemann states concerning Paul: "but he sees the final epoch of time as having already begun ... Paul in fact takes up the presentist eschatology of the enthusiasts, but unlike them he anchors and limits it apocalyptically."¹¹⁴

The theme mentioned above is one that continually re-occurs in Küng's exposition.¹¹⁵ This kingdom involves the future, which belongs to God, breaking into the present with "glad tidings of God's infinite goodness and unconditional grace, particularly for the abandoned and destitute."¹¹⁶

It should be noted that Küng's intention is to show that Jesus did not preach about himself; God and his cause were the aim of his proclamation, for God's cause, according to Küng, implies a kingdom yet to come, but now present in Jesus' salvific words and deeds.¹¹⁷

The tension between present and future with relation to the kingdom of God is an aspect that is not particularly clear in Küng's presentation of the subject. Küng is lucid, however, when he presents Jesus' present understanding of the kingdom. Jesus expected God's kingdom to arrive in the very near future. It could occur, as far as Jesus was concerned, during his lifetime or perhaps soon after his death, but it is more likely

¹¹⁴ The Church, p.65. See E. Käsemann, Exegetische Versuche II, pp. 127f and 130

¹¹⁵ Christ sein, p.206.

¹¹⁶ "Twenty propositions", p.319.

¹¹⁷ M.G., p.575. See also p.600 ff.

that Jesus expected God's kingdom to arrive during his lifetime.¹¹⁸

If such were the case, Küng asks: "War er nicht in einer Illusion befangen? Kurz: hat er sich nicht geirrt?"¹¹⁹ The concept of Jesus' limitations and mistakes will be dealt with in the next chapter. It is sufficient to note Küng's view that, "Im Sinne des kosmischen Wissens war es ein Irrtum."¹²⁰ Of course such a reply is fraught with problems, problems that will be dealt with in the next chapter, and analyzed in the last chapter.

I must now return to the issue of the tension between the present and the future where I accused Küng of a lack of clarity. Regarding the kingdom of God as present, Küng believes: "Er selber ist der Anfang von Ende. Mit ihm ist die Weltvollendung, die absolute Zukunft Gottes schon im Anbruch - schon jetzt! Mit ihm ist Gott nahe."¹²¹ However, Küng wishes to disassociate Jesus from an apocalyptic soothe-sayer concerning the future, hence he emphasizes: "Die absolute Zukunft Gottes verweist den Menschen auf die Gegenwart: Keine Isolierung der Zukunft auf Kosten der Gegenwart!"¹²² Certainly, Küng maintains: "Nicht eine Belehrung über das Ende wollte Jesus geben, sondern einen Aufruf erlassen für die Gegenwart angesichts des Endes".¹²³ The present and future are, therefore, intimately linked in the proclamation of the kingdom of God by Jesus, since, "Die Gegenwart weist den Menschen auf die absolute Zukunft Gottes: Keine

¹¹⁸ Christ sein, pp.208-210.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p.208.

¹²⁰ Ibid., pp.208-209.

¹²¹ Ibid., p.212.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

Verabsolutierung unserer Gegenwart auf Kosten der Zukunft!"¹²⁴ Thus Küng can go on to say: "Was mit Jesus begonnen wurde, soll auch mit Jesus vollendet werden. Die Nah-Erwartung wurde nicht erfüllt. Aber deshalb wird nicht die Erwartung überhaupt ausgeschaltet".¹²⁵ Not only does the future guide the present but the present time cannot afford to dispense with the future that is fulfilled in Christ now. Küng plays with words as seen above. It is the future hope of God's kingdom that directs men towards a future for their present by giving sense and meaning to humanity now.

Küng's confusing exposition is meant to show that in Jesus' preaching, the kingdom of God means: "God's cause (= God's will), which will prevail and which is identical with man's cause (= man's well-being)".¹²⁶ Consequently, Jesus in preaching the gospel of the kingdom indicates that God's future, namely, his will, is fulfilled now by establishing humanity's well-being. This concept will be discussed below.

The point that Küng has made above¹²⁷ concerning the present and the future aspects of the kingdom has little to do with the traditional idea of eschatology in its emphasis upon the last judgement and last things. His stress is upon the future that arrives in the preaching of Jesus, a future that impinges on a person's present, while remaining future. Küng's eschatology is thus the open-ended type of modern theology.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ "Twenty Propositions", p.318.

¹²⁷ See footnote 125 and 126.

Jesus' message is the proclamation of the kingdom of God. It is a message that did not centre in Jesus, but in God. Despite the fact that Jesus could well have expected the kingdom's fulfillment either during his life time, or shortly thereafter, and even if He were mistaken, yet the tension of present and future as outlined by Küng is the heart of Jesus' message. That proclamation means that "God's cause = man's cause."¹²⁸ What does such a statement mean? The answer is found below.

3.3.2 God's cause Equals Man's Cause

This matter is of the utmost importance to Küng. Küng has already explained above that Jesus did not preach about himself, but God's will. Küng then continues:

Und was ist die Sache? Mit einem Satz lässt sich sagen: Die Sache Jesu ist die Sache Gottes in der Welt. Es ist heute Mode herauszustellen, dass es Jesus ganz und gar um den Menschen geht. Keine Frage. Aber Jesus geht es ganz und gar um den Menschen, weil es ihm zunächst ganz und gar um Gott geht.¹²⁹

While it remains true that Jesus is wholly concerned about humanity, it is also true to say he is wholly concerned with persons because he is totally given to the cause of God. This is the reason why Küng states with certainty that "Vielmehr tritt seine Person zurück hinter der Sache, die er vertritt."¹³⁰ Jesus represents the cause of God and the cause of people.

God's will for humanity assumes the utmost importance for Jesus. He demands a radical change in one's life, a

¹²⁸ "Twenty Propositions", p.320.

¹²⁹ Christ sein, p.205.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

change in which one submits oneself entirely to God's claim upon the individual. It is an action of this nature on a person's part that leads to his or her "humanization."¹³¹ Consequently, Küng declares: "Jesus erwartet einen anderen, neuen Menschen: ein radikales Bewusstsein, eine grundsätzlich andere Haltung, eine völlig neue Orientierung im Denken und Handeln."¹³² A person's whole lifestyle is therefore challenged should he or she submit to God's will, and the goal thereof is a person's well-being.

Indeed, Küng plainly affirms concerning what God wills:

Der Wille Gottes ist nicht zweifelhaft. Er ist nicht manipulierbar. Aus all dem bis her Gesagten, aus den konkreten Forderungen Jesu selbst sollte bereits deutlich geworden sein: Gott will nichts für sich, nichts zu seinem Vorteil, nichts für seine grössere Ehre. Gott will nichts anderes als den Vorteil des Menschen, seine wahre Grösse, seine letzte Würde. Also das ist der Wille Gottes: das Wohl des Menschen.¹³³

Thus it would appear that God is more concerned about human dignity than his own glory, and that glory is defined as human well-being.

How exactly does Küng define this concept of well-being? Küng elaborates:

Gottes Wille ist helfender, heilender, befreiender Heilswille. Gott will das Leben, die Freude, die Freiheit, den Frieden, das Heil, das letzte grosse Glück des Menschen: des Einzelnen wie der Gesamtheit.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Ibid., p.239.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid., p.241.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

In fact, God only wills what is good for humanity; that, is human well-being. However, Küng asserts:

What kind of well-being and what individual person is meant here cannot be precisely established in principle or in a legal sense. In constantly varying situations it is always a question of the very definite well-being of anyone who needs me here and now, my neighbour at any particular moment.¹³⁵

Küng then asks regarding the question of neighbourliness: "What does this mean in the concrete according to Jesus?"¹³⁶

It appears from Küng's assessment, that all concepts of God are interpreted in terms of human well-being. One cannot, therefore, speak of either God or Christ in ontological terms. In speaking of the divine, Küng appears to underscore anthropocentric notions. A particularly clear demonstration of the above idea emerges when one observes that Jesus reveals God in the fact that he, Jesus, identifies himself with the abandoned as does God.¹³⁷

Küng states: "Man kann es nicht wegdiskutieren: Jesus war parteiisch für die Armen, Weinenden, Hungernden, für die Erfolglosen, Machtlosen, Bedeutungslosen".¹³⁸ However, Küng cautions that at no time did Jesus believe in expropriating the wealth of the rich.¹³⁹ Neither did Jesus make an idol out of poverty.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ "Twenty Propositions", p.320.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Christ sein, p.255.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p.258.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p.259.

Küng then defines the poor specifically, by referring to Isaiah:

Schon bei Jesaja, den Jesus in seiner Antwort an den Täufer zitiert, sind die 'Armen' (anawim) die Niedergedrückten im umfassenden Sinn: die Bedrängten, Zerschlagenen, Versätzten, Elenden. Und Vorlorenen in äusserer Not (Lukas) oder innerer Bedrängnis (Mattäus), eben alle, die müheselig und beladen sind, auch die Schulbeladenen, ruft Jesus zu sich.¹⁴¹

The above list is all-inclusive; no one is omitted. Küng must therefore assert: "Kurz: jeder Mensch steht immer wieder vor Gott und den Menschen als 'armer Sünder.'" ¹⁴²

However, the point Küng makes is that God stands with those who recognise their poverty before Him. Jesus is the representative of all these people.¹⁴³ Having stated this fact, Küng is at pains to return to Jesus' identification with the actual poor as unrecognised, down-and-out individuals. Hence he states:

Therefore to the scandal of the devout, he identifies himself with all the poor, the wretched, the 'poor devils': the heretics and schismatic (Samaritans), the immoral (prostitutes and adulterers), .. those outside and neglected by society (lepers, sick, destitute), the weak (women and children), on the whole with the common people (who do not know what is really involved).¹⁴⁴

He identified to such an extent with the poor and the breakers of the law that he even shared meals with them. To an oriental, sharing meals had a special significance; it signified more than politeness or friendship. Therefore, Küng says: "Tischgemeinschaft bedeutet

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p.260.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ "Twenty Propositions", p.321.

Frieden, Vertrauen, Versöhnung, Bruderschaft ... nicht nur vor den Augen Gottes."¹⁴⁵ The important aspect to note at this point, one that will receive attention when we discuss Jesus as God's advocate, is that Jesus behaves towards sinful people in exactly the same way as God does. The example is found in the parables of the lost sheep, coin, and the lost prodigal son. In the latter parable God is like the waiting father, ever seeking the lost son. As God seeks the lost, so too does Jesus for he acts as the Father does by seeking and waiting for the sinner to return. The Pharisees, on the other hand, are like the elder brother, ever ready to point an accusing finger at Jesus' association with sinners, an action which is in keeping with God's love for the lost.¹⁴⁶ Certainly, it is a love that identifies with the plight of humanity. "Jesus is in deed the friend of sinners: prostitutes, tax collectors, and Samaritans."¹⁴⁷ Jesus sees in his action and proclamation God's "saving event for sinners."¹⁴⁸

If God's cause equals humanity's cause then that fact is clearly manifested in Christ, for in him one encounters God's unconditional love. This love is unconditional as seen in the parables of the lost sheep and son as mentioned above.

God, in identifying himself with the causes of humanity through Jesus Christ, proves that he is a radical God, for he is the opposite of all human expectations. God, in his relationship to humanity as Father, is the God

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p.263.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., pp.263-264.

¹⁴⁷ M.G., pp.601-602. See especially p.603 where Küng re-iterates his ideas found in Christ sein almost word for word.

¹⁴⁸ The Church, p.51.

of the beatitudes, the God who cares for the unwanted by identifying himself with the proclamation of Jesus regarding their cause.¹⁴⁹ (This issue will receive further attention below.) To love God then, means to care for one's fellow being, to seek his or her highest good, and that is what Jesus did. "God wills men's well-being."¹⁵⁰

Well-being in this context means salvation. Worship of God implies services for one's fellows.¹⁵¹ Küng strongly asserts: "Die Versöhnung und der alletägliche Dienst am Mit-menschen haben die Priorität vor dem Gottesdienst...."¹⁵²

Consequently, Jesus can demand that one not only love one's neighbour but one's enemies.¹⁵³ Reconciliation and forgiveness thus have no limits.¹⁵⁴ It is small wonder then, that Jesus required persons to forgive without limit as an expression of love. Küng affirms: "Charakteristisch für Jesus ist die Vergebungsbereitschaft ohne Grenzen: nicht siebenmal, sondern sieben und siebenzigmal - also immer wieder, endlos und jeden, ohne Ausnahme."¹⁵⁵ Love truly knows no bounds. Love, for Jesus as interpreted by Küng, means service.¹⁵⁶ Service for God means service to the other

¹⁴⁹ Christ sein, pp.255-260.

¹⁵⁰ "Twenty Propositions", p.320.

¹⁵¹ Christ sein, p.243.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ "Twenty Propositions", p.321.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. See also Christ sein, pp.242-245.

¹⁵⁵ Christ sein, p.253.

¹⁵⁶ The Church, p.392.

regardless of his or her status in life.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, Küng recognizes: "Charakteristisch für Jesus ist der freiwillige Verzicht ohne Gegenleistung."¹⁵⁸ Love expects no recompense according to Küng. Love for the other irrespective of whether he or she be an enemy, neighbour, or friend is limitless - without limit!

Implicit within Jesus' message concerning the kingdom of God, in which Jesus shows that the well-being of humanity is God's will, is a new attitude toward the law and the commandments. Such an attitude is necessary since God's will, reflected in the law, is basically, "For the sake of men's well-being."¹⁵⁹ Since this is the situation, Küng explains:

In solcher Sicht erscheinen sogar die zehn Gebote des alttestamentlichen Dekalog im dreifachen hegelischen Sinn des Wortes 'aufgehoben', fallengelassen und doch bewahrt, weil auf eine höhere Ebene gehoben durch die von Jesus verkündete radikale 'bessere Gerechtigkeit' der Bergpredigt.¹⁶⁰

The above statement by Küng means that "Jesus effectively relativized sacred institutions, law, and cult."¹⁶¹ This he did for humanity's sake, for God's will is human well-being.¹⁶² Furthermore, in instances where the law impeded humanity's well-being, Jesus acted in a manner contrary to the law, thus relativizing the law. Jesus did not reject the law, what he did, however, was to replace it as the final court of appeal, particularly,

¹⁵⁷ Christ sein, p.253.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., pp.253-254.

¹⁵⁹ "Twenty Propositions", p.309.

¹⁶⁰ Christ sein, p.254.

¹⁶¹ "Twenty Propositions", p.320.

¹⁶² Christ sein, p.241.

for example, regarding observance of the Sabbath.¹⁶³ He rejected oral tradition too, as the supreme norm by disregarding the ritual taboos such as the special washing of the hands as well as the types of fasting insisted upon by the Pharisees. A typical example is found in Jesus' statement that the Sabbath was made for man.¹⁶⁴ Regarding ritual taboos Jesus stated that what came from without could not defile a person's heart. Neither was he an ascetic, for now was the time for joy resulting from his message and the freedom it generated.¹⁶⁵

Jesus did not hesitate to relativize the temple cult, when the so-called will of God was fulfilled at human expense.¹⁶⁶ He mixed with the very people who were considered to defile the temple, for example, publicans and prostitutes.¹⁶⁷ In view of the coming kingdom, Jesus believed that temple-worship also was relativized to caring for one's fellow person; there was no worship for worship's sake. It was not the letter of the law, reverence for the temple, or any other institution that was important for Jesus. All that mattered was fulfilling God's will, involving oneself in his cause by taking others seriously, that was God's norm.¹⁶⁸

Küng, in his understanding of Christ, underscores that God's cause means more than human well-being; hence, Jesus' attack on all that would dehumanize. God, Küng

¹⁶³ Christ sein, pp.198-199.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ M.G., pp.601-602.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., pp.601-603. See also Christ sein, p. 241 ff.

believes, judges a person by one's care and love manifested towards others. Consequently, the concept of the Kingdom of God involves the will of God as humanity's highest good, namely, human well-being.

Because Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God, in the sense outlined above, a sense in which all law, cults, and institutions were relativized, he made certain further claims.

3.3.3 The Claims Jesus Made : Their Legitimacy for His Person

Küng, having identified the historical Jesus by means of the historical-critical method, indicates what can be stated positively about Jesus, quite apart from Chalcedon, his titles and his miracles.

Jesus, Küng believes, speaks with authority. He does so because he sees himself as standing in God's place before humanity.¹⁶⁹ Once more Küng is at pains to prove that Jesus' authority does not lie in his titles, or the divine nature attributed by means of titles or miracles. His claims must be evaluated in the light of his proclamation concerning God and humanity.¹⁷⁰ Jesus dares to speak for God as God's spokesman.¹⁷¹ Küng believes that "Jesus ... asserted a claim to be advocate of God and men."¹⁷² Yet, at the same time, Jesus did not centre his message in himself, in all instances he turned people's thoughts to the God whom he served. Thus Küng states: "Gewiss, auf Gott beruft er sich für all sein Tun

¹⁶⁹ M.G., p.601.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p.601.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., pp.602-603.

¹⁷² "Twenty Propositions", p.322.

und Reden.... Um Gott selbst geht letztlich der ganze Streit."¹⁷³

Küng now returns to Hegel's concept of God as present in history. God is not a God who acts in salvation history; rather, he is the God who is transcendent yet immanent in history. Therefore, Küng implies: "Kein Handeln Gottes neben der Weltgeschichte, sondern in der Geschichte der Welt und des handelnden Menschen."¹⁷⁴ Küng then pertinently asks: "Sollte vor einem solchen neuzeitlichen Horizont nicht auch der Gott Jesu verstanden werden können? Sollte das von Jesus her Entscheidende nicht auch vor diesem Horizont zum Tragen kommen können?"¹⁷⁵ The issue before us is settled by the fact that God does act in history through Christ.

Hegel is important for understanding the interplay between God's horizon and that of humanity. Hegel is also important for the pattern from which humanity can attempt to understand God. It is at this point that Küng should have developed his position on christology found in Menschwerdung Gottes, but he failed to elaborate on this avenue by not linking the above book clearly with his views presented in Christ sein. These books should be read together and Küng should have made his transition clearer. More will be said on this subject in the final chapter.

Küng then asserts that he is not attempting a new picture of God; rather, the picture of God that Küng attempts to portray, he believes, is totally in keeping with the Scriptures. Küng illustrates what he means: "Er verkündet keinen anderen Gott als den nicht gerade

¹⁷³ Christ sein, p.284.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p.285.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

bequemen Gott des Alten Testaments. Jesus wollte überhaupt keine neue Religion stiften, keinen neuen Gott verkünden".¹⁷⁶ Assuredly, when Jesus speaks of God he means the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.¹⁷⁷ This God was the God who acted in history; a God very close to his people. God was not a far off impersonal being in the eyes of either Jesus or the Old Testament; he was the God who was near as was manifested in his deeds. He is actually the God for Jesus and Israel who is an "I", who makes of humanity a "Thou".¹⁷⁸ God, as presented by Jesus and the Old Testament, is not the distant God of Plato, he is in the midst of Israel as the God whom Küng asserts is present in the proclamation of Jesus.¹⁷⁹

In a brief but startling statement in Christ sein, Küng suddenly affirms in an almost unconnected way that against Barth and Kierkegaard Catholic theology has identified the God of the Old Testament with God as set forth by Hegel, represented in Christ. Küng declares that Catholic theology portrays a relevant God in history for today.¹⁸⁰ The statement is startling because one does not expect a sudden break at this point in Küng's thought, a break in which he refers back to Hegel and history.¹⁸¹ One would have wished that Küng would have elaborated on this thought at some other point, but he fails to do so. Should he have indicated that link precisely in Catholic theology, Küng would truly have made a great contribution for a modern view of God. However, the point at issue for Küng is the God whom

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p.286.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p.287.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p.294.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p.295.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p.299.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

Jesus proclaims. He is the God who acts in history and is therefore, no different from the God of the Old Testament.¹⁸² Küng leaves one with a feeling of disappointment at not developing his christology along Hegelian lines. Obviously, it would appear that he considers his engagement with Hegel complete for the time being, thus continuing with the Jesus of history. However, Küng returns to Hegel on the subject of the resurrection.

After the above interlude, Küng then asserts: "Jesus does not invoke a new God. He invokes the God of Israel - understood in a new way as Father of the abandoned, whom he addresses quite personally as his Father."¹⁸³ The concept of God as Jesus' Father will be developed below. It suffices now merely to state that according to Küng, Jesus proclaimed the God of the patriarchs in a new way.

Küng, in a sweeping statement, declares that in a manner different from the Judaism of his day, Jesus makes persons the measure of the law. The God whom Jesus proclaims is not limited by the Torah or any other laws. He accepts and does not reject sinners. He even justifies them apart from the law Judaism held so dear. Jesus therefore makes claims about God that impinge upon the heart of Judaism; righteousness is consequently brought into question because Jesus as God's advocate claims that God is different from preconceived notions of right and wrong. Like God, Jesus claims he is on the side of the sinful.¹⁸⁴ If Küng appears repetitive, he has a purpose in mind. He is attempting to prove that Jesus is God's advocate through his deeds and actions

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ "Twenty Propositions", pp.309-310.

¹⁸⁴ Christ sein, pp.302-303.

that ultimately resulted in his fate. Jesus claims to represent a God of grace not of law. Therefore, Küng emphasizes:

Das wäre doch ein neuer Gott: ein Gott, der sich von seinem eigenen Gesetz gelöst hat, ein Gott nicht der Gesetzesfrommen, sondern der Gesetzbrecher, ja - so zugespitzt muss es gesagt sein, um die Widersprüchlichkeit und Anstossigkeit deutlich zu machen - ein Gott nicht der Gottesfürchtigen, sondern ein Gott der Gottlosen!? Eine wahrhaft unerhörte Revolution im Gottesverständnis!?¹⁸⁵

How then can God tolerate an advocate as radical as the picture Jesus paints of God outlined above? The answer lies in the fact that God is known in the manner mentioned above only in Jesus Christ.¹⁸⁶ No other religion claims God as the sinners' friend, neither does any other prophet, hence the importance of Jesus' claim. In fact, God is

a God not of the devout observers of the law but of the lawbreakers ... not a God of God-fearers, but a God of the godless ... a truly unparalleled revolution in the understanding of God.¹⁸⁷

The God who acts in history is thus the God who is not just the Father of Israel or of the King of Israel, for in Jesus, and in him alone, one sees this Father as the Father of all his creatures.¹⁸⁸ There is therefore something distinctive about the God whom Jesus proclaims.

Consequently, certain sayings of Jesus that can be substantiated as historical through the historical-critical method must now receive examination.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., pp.303-304.

¹⁸⁷ "Twenty Propositions", p.324.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

These sayings involve the idea of God as Father (Abba); Jesus' I claims; the meaning of Amen, and Jesus' audacity to forgive sins in God's place.

It is important to remember the aim of Küng's argument. He rejected the two nature theory of Chalcedon as a definition of Jesus' divinity, arguing that Greek philosophy and not biblical reflection led to such an understanding. Chalcedon was thus the product of an age that is incomprehensible to persons today. Küng then showed that the later additions to the Synoptics located by the historical-critical method, for example, the titles and miracles of Jesus, were unacceptable today as proofs of Jesus' divinity. Jesus' claims, therefore, are evaluated on the direct access one has to Jesus made possible by the historical-critical method, assuming of course that such access is possible. This point Küng accepts without proof.

Positively, it can be established that Jesus was not a man of rank in the Jewish hierarchy. He proclaimed the kingdom of God, a kingdom wherein God was the centre as the God of the abandoned. God's will was humanity's well-being, therefore, Jesus identified with the outcasts, thus showing God's nature, in that Jesus acted in God's place; he acted as God did.

It appears that Jesus saw himself in a special relationship to God; hence, he makes striking claims, namely, that God is his Father in a particular way. He has a right to make this claim, Küng believes, because no one else, either before or since, has revealed God as the Father caring for, not just the good, but the dregs of humanity as well.

Because Jesus revealed God so intimately and accurately, he dares to call God Abba. This saying was unique to

Jesus. It is in the light of the above that Jesus' significance must be ascertained.

Küng explains what he means in the following statement involving Abba:

Wie soll man das erklären? Bisher, fand man nur die Erklärung: 'Abba' - ganz ähnlich dem deutschen 'Papa' - ist seinem Ursprung nach ein Lalwort des Kindes, zur Zeit Jesu freilich auch gebraucht zur Vater-Anrede erwachsene Söhne und Töchter und als Höflichkeitsausdruck gegenüber älteren Respektpersonen. Aber diesen so gar nicht männlichen Ausdruck der Kindersprache, der Zärtlichkeit, diesen Alltags - und Höflichkeitsausdruck zur Anrede Gottes zu gebrauchen, musste den Zeitgenossen so unehrerbietig und so ärgerlich familiär, vorkommen, wie, wenn wir Gott mit 'Papa' oder 'Väterchen' ansprächen.¹⁸⁹

Jesus uses a tender expression for God taken from the words of children for parents or elders, nevertheless, words implying the utmost respect. Now the point is that Jesus uses just such an expression for God, and furthermore, teaches his disciples to use the same expression and have the same attitude to God.¹⁹⁰

However, an important difference between Jesus and his disciples emerges for Küng: Jesus speaks of my Father and your Father, but nowhere does he accept the word our Father as a composite term for God that both the disciples and he may use. At this point, he distances himself from his disciples; it is Jesus' peculiar usage.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ Christ sein, p.305.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p.306.

What then does such usage have to say about Jesus, Küng asks?¹⁹² Despite all the positive deductions as to Jesus' divinity one may attempt to draw from the above, Küng warns: "Jesus selber hat sich wohl nie einfach als 'der Sohn' bezeichnet."¹⁹³ Strictly speaking, Küng asserts that Jesus rejected divinity, believing God alone to be good. Küng elaborates:

Ja, er hat eine direkte Identifikation mit Gott, eine Vergötterung, in aller Ausdrücklichkeit abgelehnt: 'Was nennst du mich gut? Niemand ist gut als Gott allein.'¹⁹⁴

What then are the implications of Abba for Jesus? Küng often appears to us as evasive in his answers, adopting the "yes ... but"¹⁹⁵ approach, making matters difficult for himself.

Küng appears to us to be at pains to try and show that the post-easter titles arose out of Jesus' understanding of the concept of Abba,¹⁹⁶ followed by the post-paschal reflection thereon. Consequently, in the post-easter period it became impossible to speak of God as Father without reference to Jesus.¹⁹⁷ Küng affirms:

Wie man mit Jesus umging, entschied darüber, wie man zu Gott steht, wofür man Gott hält, welchen Gott man hat. Im Namen und in der Kraft des einen Gottes Israels hat Jesus gesprochen und gehandelt.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., pp.306-307.

¹⁹⁵ Eric Berne, Games People Play, (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1967), pp.115-122.

¹⁹⁶ Christ sein, p.308

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

There can be no doubt then, for Küng, that Jesus was God's personal advocate.¹⁹⁹ At present we are dealing with the claims of Jesus, but in the next chapter we will see how God proves and approves of Jesus as his personal advocate before humanity.

Jesus, by calling God Father shows God is not a distant being, but is near enough to reveal his face in Christ as the God who cares for the rejected. This certainly is an aspect of God clarified only by Christ. It is Jesus who gives God the appearance of, as Küng puts it "Der Gott mit menschlichem Antlitz."²⁰⁰ In the Old Testament, God is the Father of the nation, Israel, never of the individual.

Küng further underscores his point concerning Jesus' use of Abba stating: "Schon der irdische, geschichtliche Jesus von Nazaret trat, indem er Gottes Reich und Willen in Wort und Tat proklamierte, als öffentlicher Sachwalter Gottes auf."²⁰¹ Küng further states:

Ohne Titel und Ämter erscheint er in seinem ganzen Tun und Reden als ein Sachwalter im ganz existentiellen Sinn: als persönlicher Botschafter, Treuhänder, ja Vertrauter und Freund Gottes. Er lebte, litt und kämpfte aus einer letztlich unerklärlichen Gotteserfahrung, Gottesgegenwart, Gottesgewissheit, ja aus einer eigentümlichen Einheit mit Gott heraus, die ihn Gott als seinen Vater anreden liess.²⁰²

As seen above, Jesus, therefore, experienced the presence of God as Father, inexplicably in his existence, allowing him to proclaim God in the way he did. Jesus

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., pp.281-284.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p.290.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p.380.

²⁰² Ibid. Küng does not explain what he means by the underscored terms.

experienced God in such a way that he interpreted God as with him in a mysterious, unfathomable manner.²⁰³ Consequently, the early church, in reflecting upon Jesus' experience of God as Father, honoured Jesus with the title of "The Son."²⁰⁴

Because Jesus saw himself as God's advocate, he set himself at times even against the law. Jesus clearly implies that on occasions he acts contrary to the law. "The law says, but I say to you,"²⁰⁵ frequently appears on Jesus' lips. Jesus does not claim as do the prophets that this is what God says, or that he speaks God's word, Jesus uses the term "I".²⁰⁶ One is confronted by his absolute authority. Of Jesus' claim that "I say", Küng says that

Jesus appears here as the end of the law and the prophets, an idea which is made clear and concrete in the antitheses of the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus both aligns and contrasts himself with Moses.²⁰⁷

Jesus believed himself to be above the law in the same way as his Father was not limited to the law.

In the above context, one should note too Jesus' use of the word "Amen" at the beginning of his statements. He used this term to authenticate his sayings about the kingdom of God. Jesus emphasized his kingdom statements by asserting: "Truly I say unto you...."²⁰⁸

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., pp.380-381.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p.283.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., pp.306-307.

²⁰⁷ The Church, p.57.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., p.60.

Moreover, Jesus claims the right to forgive sins. Küng declares: "Er hat es gewagt, wie auch kritischste Exegeten als historisch annehmen, die Vergebung direkt dem einzelnen Schuldiggewordenen zuzusprechen."²⁰⁹ Jesus took this act of forgiveness on himself as God's representative.²¹⁰ Jesus can thus forgive because his message about God's kingdom is "a saving event for sinners."²¹¹

Since Jesus sees in his proclamation God's final act of redemption through the coming kingdom, Jesus acts as if he is God's final revelation. Küng thus concludes: "Hier trat einer auf mit dem faktischen Anspruch, mehr als Moses, Salomon und Jonas, mehr als das Gesetz, der Tempel und die Propheten zu sein"²¹² Jesus thus believed that he had no equal, declaring that he was greater than all the persons and institutions the Jews held to be of the utmost importance.

Jesus therefore demands that persons hear his message and repent.²¹³ His is a clear call to decision since God's final rule is at hand.²¹⁴ Jesus' message involves a demand for "a radical decision for God."²¹⁵

Ultimately, it is not a decision about two natures as in Chalcedon, or a question of titles; it is Jesus' authority by which he sets himself above the law,

²⁰⁹ Christ sein, p.266.

²¹⁰ M.G., pp.600-603.

²¹¹ The Church, pp.50-51.

²¹² M.G., p.603.

²¹³ Ibid., p.601.

²¹⁴ The Church, pp.47-49. See also, Christ sein, p.208. See further, M.G., pp.603-604.

²¹⁵ The Church, p.57.

prophets, temple, in fact, above all persons that evoke decisions. Jesus puts his claim on humanity as equal in content and condition to the claim of God. His picture of God was a completely new development; he brought God near, calling him Abba; he, as God did, made final demands. Truly, Jesus believed and demonstrated that one's future position with God depended on how one related to himself and his message in the "now".

As a result of Jesus' demands and claims he was killed. Since he placed himself above Moses, he became in the eyes of the Jewish teachers, a heretic and pseudo-prophet. By claiming to forgive sins in God's stead he became a blasphemer as forgiveness was God's alone to dispense. Beyond doubt, he seduced the people by offering God's salvation in a manner contrary to Judaism's interpretation of the Old Testament.²¹⁶ Hence, for his message, claims and call to decision, he could no longer be accommodated by Judaism; he had to die for claiming that he alone was God's advocate and that through his message alone humanity could find its well-being.

3.4 THE FINAL OUTCOME OF JESUS' MESSAGE

A person making the claims that Jesus did, for example that he was greater than Moses, the law and the temple, was bound to enter into direct conflict with the establishment, particularly when he emphasized his authority by forgiving sins. The result of his message led to this death. Küng adds that Jesus could not have been sentenced to death for claiming messiahship, since the historical-critical method has proved that these titles were not part of his vocabulary. Furthermore, there were many claiming the right to messiahship during

²¹⁶ "Twenty Propositions", p.323. See also, Christ sein, p.284.

the time of Jesus, yet they were not killed.²¹⁷ The reason for death then lies in his confrontational claim and display of authority in that, "Er forderte eine letzte Entscheidung heraus ... Jesus forderte eine letzte Entscheidung für die Sache Gottes und des Menschen."²¹⁸ It was this final demand in Jesus' message and person that led to his death. This act of authority by which Jesus demanded a decision concerning himself and his message about God as Father led to his end.²¹⁹ Küng states: "Jesu gewaltsames Ende lag in der Logik seiner Verkündigung und seines Verhaltens."²²⁰ His message and actions were unacceptable to Judaism for the God he proclaimed appeared in a new light as the God who cared about sinful people.

Küng accepts that Jesus provoked his fate, not directly, but indirectly, by continuing with his proclamation about God despite hierarchical objections. Küng elaborates:

Aber er lebte angesichts des Todes. Und er hat den Tod frei - in jener grossen Freiheit, die Treue zu sich selbst und Treue zum Auftrag zu Selbstverantwortung und Gehorsam vereint - auf sich genommen, weil er darin den Willen Gottes erkannte: Er war nicht nur ein Erleiden des Todes, sondern eine Hergabe und Hingabe des Lebens.²²¹

Jesus therefore freely accepted his death as within God's will for him, resulting from what Jesus considered as his God-given mandate.

²¹⁷ Ibid., pp.280-281.

²¹⁸ Ibid., pp.280-281.

²¹⁹ Ibid., pp.282-283.

²²⁰ Ibid., pp.311-312.

²²¹ Ibid., pp.311-312.

The outcome of his proclamation ended in Jesus being charged falsely as one seeking political power. Küng asserts:

Aber die politische Anklage, dass Jesus nach politischer Macht gestrebt, zur Verweigerung der Steuerzahlung an die Besatzungsmacht und zum Aufruhr aufgerufen, sich als politischer Messias - König der Juden verstanden habe, war eine falsche Anklage.²²²

Küng believes that the political charge was a disguise for the Jewish leaders' contempt arising out of jealousy.²²³ He challenged Judaism with his claims that God's love was above the law, reaching all people, but particularly the transgressors of the law. Judaism at the time of Jesus was not equipped to accommodate his radical relativization of all that they considered sacred.²²⁴ Küng therefore recognizes: "Jesus' violent end was the logical consequence of this approach of his to God and man."²²⁵

It would appear that Jesus knew that the message he proclaimed would result in death, yet he continued with his mandate, consequently provoking his fate. Anyone who confronted the Jewish hierarchy in the way Jesus did would have to contend with the possibility of rejection and death, a fact of which Jesus was well aware.²²⁶ Thus, Jesus did not require any supernatural powers to foresee his inevitable fate.²²⁷

²²² Ibid., p.326.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ "Twenty Propositions", p.325.

²²⁶ Ibid., pp.310-311.

²²⁷ Ibid.

Küng is not convinced that the sacrificial passion predictions as well as references to the resurrection are pre-easter. He rather inclines to the opinion that these events are post-easter, superimposed by the early community upon the life of Jesus.²²⁸ This leads to Jesus' Eucharistic sayings receiving little attention as a pointer to Christ's representative death on the part of humanity. However, Jesus did see that his death was the supreme sacrifice that he would have to pay as an individual who remained wholly committed to God's cause.²²⁹

Regarding Jesus's death as a sacrifice for humanity, Küng insists:

Dies dürfte selbstverständlich sein: Man kann nicht ohne weiteres Jesus selber zuschreiben, was sie später die Urgemeinde, die hellenistischen Gemeinden oder gar die nachherige kirchliche Dogmatik unter dem Abendmahl Jesu vorgestellt haben.²³⁰

The last supper must be interpreted, Küng believes, along the lines of a normal Jewish meal. Furthermore, Küng affirms that the last supper may have links with the Jewish passover although this is uncertain.²³¹ This matter is unimportant. On the other hand, what is of significance is the meaning of a Jewish meal at the time of Jesus in which the head of the household shared himself in fellowship with his household, an act wherein the family and visitors were included within the orbit of fellowship.²³² Jesus' words relating to his body and blood mean that the fellowship is one of total committal

²²⁸ Ibid., pp.309-310.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid., p.313.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid.

to his disciples as objects, like himself, of God's grace. Concerning Jesus' act of blessing and fellowship, Küng explains: "So werden die Jünger in Jesu Schicksal hineingenommen".²³³ Küng has dispensed with the concept of Christ's sacrifice on behalf of others by interpreting the last supper as a fellowship meal. Küng therefore asserts:

Dass schon Jesus sein Sterben als sühnende Stellvertretung für die vielen verstanden hat, im Sinne also des unschuldigen, geduldig getragenen, freiwilligen, von Gott gewollten und darum stellvertretenden sühnenden Leidens und Sterbens des Gottesknechtes von Jesaja 53, dürfte nachösterliche Deutung sein.²³⁴

Küng once more dismisses a sacrificial, representative death as post-easter. All Christ therefore expects of his disciples is that they remain true to one another and to God's cause as Jesus did even perhaps to the extent of sharing his fate.²³⁵

Küng is expounding on the historical Jesus, whom he disassociates from a soothsayer; hence, it is imperative that Küng denies the idea of sacrifice on behalf of others in Jesus' sayings. They are post-easter for Küng. Jesus' knowledge of future events was consequently deducible from a clear, human grasp of his predicament. There was nothing supernatural involved.

It would appear from Jesus' fate that his cause was a fruitless venture. Küng continues: "Für damals bedeutete der Tod Jesu: Das Gesetz hat gesiegt!"²³⁶

²³³ Ibid., p.314.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid., pp.314-315.

²³⁶ Ibid., p.328.

Küng dramatically paints the picture of Jesus' death by showing that the very law which Jesus disclaimed triumphed over him in that Jesus who believed that God sided with and was near to the ungodly died abandoned by that same God, one whom he dared to call Father. So the Father of the abandoned, renounced his advocate by failing to identify with him in his hour of need.²³⁷

Küng adds: "Als Gekreuzigter ist er ein Gottverfluchter: Sein Kreuzestod war der Vollzug des Fluches des Gesetzes."²³⁸ It appeared that Jesus was not only cursed by God but by humanity also since he was abandoned by all.²³⁹ The cause for which he fought was linked to his person, a cause that to all intents and purposes ended in vain.²⁴⁰ Alone! That is what makes his death so terrible. At this point, death is not the beautiful death of Socrates; it is a total rejection. He dies forsaken by men and God as the godless one.²⁴¹

Küng has completed his work on the historical Jesus, a work in which he attempted to show that Jesus was unique since in his message he equated God's cause and his own with humanity's well-being, resulting in his demise at the hands of the authorities and his forsakeness by God and persons. How after such a disastrous climax can one still speak confidently of Jesus and his cause?

²³⁷ "Twenty Propositions", p.325.

²³⁸ Ibid., pp.328-329.

²³⁹ "Twenty Propositions", p.325.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., p.326.

²⁴¹ Christ sein, p.331. See M.G., pp.602-605, where the same theme is repeated almost verbatim. See also, Küng, "What is the Christian Message?" pp.28-34. This lecture given at Brussels in 1970 forms the basis of his later christology, namely, his works that appeared after Menschwerdung Gottes, which was also published in 1970, having taken Küng about a decade to complete.

I will now briefly deal with the problem of hermeneutics.

3.4.1 Küng's Hermeneutics

Küng as a New Quester accepts the New Hermeneutic, as seen in the following question:

Wie kam es nach solchem katastrophalen Ende zu einem neuen Anfang? ... Wie zu einer Gemeinschaft, die sich gerade auf den Namen eines Gekreuzigten bezieht, zur bildung einer Gemeinde, einer christlichen 'Kirche'?²⁴²

How did the rejected Jesus become the accepted Lord? That is the hermeneutical issue which Küng attempts to answer relevantly for today. Küng accepts a christology from below, emphasizing the human, historical Jesus,²⁴³ his proclamation, acts, and fate as revealed by the historical-critical method.²⁴⁴ Küng thus takes a modern anti-positivistic approach to history, showing that the evangelists were interpreters who never attempted a biography of Jesus.²⁴⁵ The purpose then of the historical-critical method with its rejection of nineteenth century historical methods is to make Jesus relevant for today, realizing that von Ranke was wrong in trying to ascertain history as it actually is ("wie es eigentlich gewesen ist").²⁴⁶

Küng contends: "Es ist dringend zu unterscheiden zwischen dem Verstehens - oder Vorstellungsrahmen und der gemeinten und neu verstehenden Sache."²⁴⁷ The whole

²⁴² Christ sein, p.333.

²⁴³ Ibid., pp.147-148.

²⁴⁴ M.G., p. 566 ff.

²⁴⁵ Christ sein, pp.142, 147-148.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., p.405.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., p.210.

purpose of the hermeneutics of the historical-critical method, which is applied demythologization, is further outlined by Küng as an interpretation of the Scriptural message transposed into our present situation in terms of current understanding of reality so that it may be existentially re-interpreted today. Jesus' life and teaching must be experienced by persons now.²⁴⁸ Persons in this age are required to interpret Jesus' proclamation from their own existential horizon.²⁴⁹ Küng is attempting a dialogue with Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom of God.²⁵⁰ The parables are still relevant now as they reveal that wherever there is pain, suffering, anguish, and death, God is near.²⁵¹ Thus God's future in the parables must be translated, not only into the now of Jesus' day, but must be experienced as continually present.²⁵² Küng therefore judges: "Kein Reden also künftigen Gottesreich ohne Konsequenzen für die gegenwärtige Gesellschaft."²⁵³ However, one's present is always determined by the fact that, "Gott ist voraus."²⁵⁴ Consequently, the message of Jesus about God as the goal to which humanity is directed through Jesus' proclamation becomes continuously relevant. God's kingdom, to which humanity is moving, is here today as God's future impinging on the present.²⁵⁵

²⁴⁸ Ibid., pp.210-211.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., p.211.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., p.212.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid., p.213.

²⁵³ Ibid., p.212.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., p.214.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., pp.214-216.

In Küng's exposition of his hermeneutic one encounters the concept of the merging of the two horizons wherein the past merges with the present on the basis of one's experience. God is always involved with the reality that encounters a person as one questions reality and in turn is questioned by that same reality that one encounters in one's present. Ebeling states: "God is experienced as a question in the context of the reality that encounters me."²⁵⁶ God is experienced in this manner, for Jesus has made the God of the future, present for humanity in his proclamation of God's future kingdom as here, now, to persons.²⁵⁷ The existential importance of one's situation is evident in those who propound the New Hermeneutic. Küng quotes Gadamer with approval when he attempts to show Jesus's message, proclaimed in the past, as relevant now through the merging of the two horizons.²⁵⁸

Küng elaborates on his hermeneutic with the following statement:

Hier ist zu bedenken: Wahrheit ist nicht gleich Faktizität, ist insbesondere nicht gleich historischer Wahrheit. Wie es verschiedene Weisen und Schichten der Wirklichkeit gibt, so gibt es verschiedene Weisen der Wahrheit: und oft in der einen und selben Erzählung verschiedene Schichten der Wahrheit.²⁵⁹

An event derives its significance from the interpreter. For example, a factual story, Küng believes, can leave one unmoved, whereas a novel can stir one to tears. One may read in the newspaper of a man attacked on the road

²⁵⁶ Ebeling, The Nature of Faith, p.108.

²⁵⁷ Fuchs, "The New Testament and the Hermeneutical Problem," p. 130.

²⁵⁸ M.G., p.322.

²⁵⁹ Christ sein, p.405.

to Jericho without emotion. On the other hand, the story of the good Samaritan may evoke a sympathetic response despite its fictitious basis. Therefore, an event's value lies in the existential response it provokes. It is thus "eine für mich bedeutsame Wahrheit, eine für meine Existenz relevante ('existentielle') Wahrheit."²⁶⁰ The result means that the historians', "true or false?"²⁶¹ is irrelevant for hermeneutics. Küng elaborates: "Die Bibel ist primär nicht an der historischen Wahrheit, sondern an der für unser Wohl, unser Heil relevanten Wahrheit, an der 'Heilswahrheit' interessiert."²⁶² Küng believes that the Bible is therefore a record of Israel's and the community's personal response to certain events attributed to God.²⁶³ Küng, following the New Hermeneutic, believes the existential re-action as chronicled in Scripture now evokes an answer from modern persons within their situation to the original response of the Biblical writers.²⁶⁴ For purposes of clarification, one may use the story of William Tell, a person whose historical existence is dubious, yet the "acts" of this individual led to the unification of Switzerland. Now this is exactly Bultmann's position as I see it. The New Questers, however, attempt to ascertain the historicity of the situation, if any should exist, but their hermeneutics is completely existential in that they have not moved beyond Bultmann's hermeneutics despite their rejection of his lack of historicity. This aspect is evident from what follows.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., p.405.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid., p.406.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

Jesus had a particular view of the kingdom, an outlook that failed to materialize. Does that fact therefore place his whole idea in question? Existentially Küng believes not, for it is the existential content of truth that assumes importance. He states that the interpretation of the Scriptures for today requires a comprehensive understanding of our situation in order to allow the text, from its situation, to enter into dialogue with the present. Küng uses similar terms to Fuchs and Ebeling: ("die Botschaft zur Sprache zu bringen.")²⁶⁵ The message of Jesus thus has a power to unite the past and future to the present as seen in the methodology of the New Hermeneutic. As Jesus related his message to the here and now of his day, so the New Hermeneutic of Küng attempts to reproduce, not just to make relevant, Jesus' message now.²⁶⁶

The original message of Jesus, established by the historical-critical method in relation to the historicity of his person by means of the New Hermeneutic, is re-enacted, or reproduced in our present situation. Such an action occurs as the message of the historical Jesus is actualized in the present existential situation (see previous pages).

It appears that the New Questers, using the New Hermeneutic, want the best of both worlds. They accept a historical Jesus, but apply Bultmann's non-historical existential hermeneutics to make Jesus relevant.

Is the method not self-defeating in that it tries to harmonize contradictory elements such as historicity and existentialism?²⁶⁷ Clearly there are no facts, but

²⁶⁵ Ibid., p.404.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., p.214.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., p.405.

interpretations from the historian's present situation of what may have occurred.

None of the above reflections on the message of Jesus involves a doctrine of inspiration, the Holy Spirit, or even the resurrection. The method is therefore considered as scientific research apart from supernatural aids. The same can be said for the approach to the historical Jesus, an approach using a modern, scientifically established historiography.

The concept of Jesus suitable for modern persons is portrayed by the historical-critical method. He is a person who at no time claimed messiahship by using titles such as the "Son of God". He never claimed to be divine. The title, "Son of God", does not refer to a two-nature theory, wherein he is truly God and truly man, it is a later addition of the post-easter community as are all Jesus' titles. Neither was he a wonder-worker, a magician performing miracles, his emphasis was rather upon the kingdom of God of whom God was the centre, showing that God's will was humanity's well-being, their salvation. God, through Jesus, manifested his nature as the Father of the sinful and abandoned. Consequently, Jesus' importance lies in his revelation of God's care towards his creatures. Jesus alone reveals God as the God of the outcasts, the poor, and the suffering. By such an action on the part of Jesus, he who reveals God's deepest concern for humanity remains the full and final revealer of God as seen in Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom. The message that Jesus' preaching of God's will as the well-being of humanity is reproduced existentially today through the New Hermeneutic.

According to Küng, Chalcedon, like the titles and miracles, is inadequate to portray Jesus as God's revealer today. It is a hindrance more than a help to

faith since it is incomprehensible to modern persons. Yet Jesus can be known by the modern historical-critical method. Jesus is presented as the unique revealer of God, by means of a picture sufficiently clear to be grasped today wherein humanity's dependence upon God is not hindered but advanced by the omission of unnecessary obstacles such as Chalcedon, titles and miracles. The issue of Jesus' abandonment by God, resulting in his apparent failure, is not addressed here, but in the next chapter.

At this point one may well ask if what Tom Wright sees as a Third Quest²⁶⁸ for the historical Jesus, or Robin Scroggs' Social Scientific Theory²⁶⁹ adds in any way to Küng's picture of Jesus depicted thus far. Will these methods force Küng to change any of his emphases in chapter four? I believe not as noted from the following discussion. Wright affirms that the Third Quest is established from the writings of Ben Meyer, Anthony Harvey, Marcus Borg, and E.P. Sanders²⁷⁰. I shall deal briefly with the Third Quest and then with the Social Scientific theory to ascertain whether Küng's New Quest christology has anything to gain from the above approaches.

The Third Quest school of thought while it is diverse in its conclusions, affirms that first century Judaism with its strong emphasis on monotheism forms the matrix for

²⁶⁸ Stephen Neill and Tom Wright, The Interpretation of the New Testament, 1861-1986, (Oxford: OUP, 1988), p.363.

²⁶⁹ Robin Scroggs, "The Sociological Interpretation of the New Testament: The Present State of Research", New Testament Studies, 26:164-179, 1980.

²⁷⁰ Neill and Wright, Interpretation of N.T., pp.381-396.

Jesus research.²⁷¹ Both Jesus and the early community with whom he was associated cannot be located and interpreted apart from this milieu, and that was the fault of all previous quests²⁷². There is thus a sense in which the Third Quest attempts to correct previous efforts to find the historical Jesus. Whereas the New Quest emphasized the principle of dissimilarity the Third Quest stresses a direct continuity between the actions of Jesus and their interpretation by the earliest community which formed around the actual person of Jesus. Rather than re-creating the words and actions of Jesus to suit a particular situation as is the case with the New Quest, the Third Quest, by comparison, sees Jesus as a Jew surrounded by a faithful Jewish community created through allegiance to him. Historical reliability is thus gained via a source consisting of persons who were part of Jesus' community. How does the Third Quest understand Jesus' relationship to this community? Assuming that Jesus was an itinerant rabbi, it is not unlikely that he acted as other rabbis in Palestine in the first century, drawing communities around himself through whom he could disseminate his teaching²⁷³. Although Theissen belongs to the second group who employ sociological methods for uncovering the picture of Jesus in the Palestinean situation, Wright includes him as part of the Third Quest.²⁷⁴ Wright accepts Theissen's idea wherein Jesus functions as a rabbi whose teachings formed the nucleus of the community's understanding of Jesus' person, but goes on to assert that it is not the sayings of Jesus

²⁷¹ Ibid., p.371.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ G. Theissen, Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), pp.58-61.

²⁷⁴ Neill and Wright, Interpretation of N.T., p.400.

that are of paramount importance. He focuses instead on Jesus' actions²⁷⁵ in keeping with Sander's thinking²⁷⁶. However, that aspect has received constant attention throughout my exposition and critique of Küng.

What does the Third Quest add to scholarship's present knowledge about Jesus? The following statement is enlightening: "In fact, we cannot say that a single one of the things known about Jesus is unique: neither his miracles, non-violence, eschatological hope or promise to the outcasts."²⁷⁷ The uniqueness of Jesus involves the impact of his life upon others. It resulted in the foundation of a movement that endured. In similar vein Sanders continues:

That is as far as I can go in looking for an explanation of the one thing that sets Christianity apart from other 'renewal movements'. The disciples were prepared for something. What they received inspired them and improved them. It is the what that is unique.²⁷⁸

It seems to me that it is the movement that lays claim to a unique status. As for Jesus, one must accept that he was a Jew within a Jewish context. Hence one may assume "that no Jew would have thought of himself or anyone else as God incarnate"²⁷⁹. On examining the Third Quest's understanding of the crucifixion, what emerges is simply that Jesus' call for the sinners' repentance was transformed by the early church "into the belief that he

²⁷⁵ Ibid., p.392.

²⁷⁶ E.P. Sanders, Jesus and Judaism, (London: SCM., 1985), p.8.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., p.319.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., p.320.

²⁷⁹ Wright, The Interpretation of the New Testament, p.393.

died to save sinners from sin and to make them upright."²⁸⁰ The resurrection concept is also extremely limited in the Third Quest. Wright clearly affirms that the resurrection "as yet has hardly been addressed within the Third Quest"²⁸¹. Concepts such as crucifixion and resurrection do require a full explanation. Küng's contribution is reflected in the next chapter, but as for the Third Quest so-called it is really too early to evaluate its true worth. Its ultimate conclusions in my opinion are in line with the New Quest for the historical Jesus. The sayings and actions of Jesus are not seen in isolation from their interpreters. In a sense the Third Quest moves hastily from the person of Jesus to Paul's interpretation of his actions. Consequently, I am not convinced it is legitimate to see it as a Third Quest in its current form.

Regarding the second group referred to, the exponents of Social Scientific Theory, Theissen's very important contribution relates to Jesus and his disciples, who called into existence, not local communities, but wandering charismatics. These in turn re-directed their reflexions upon Jesus to form the basis for the earliest strands of the Jesus tradition²⁸². Theissen examines the social attitudes in the wandering prophets, then relates his findings to what he believes he already knows about the social structures of Judaism.²⁸³ In fact Jesus is not in conflict with the true inner core of Judaism, rather his desire is to reform Judaism, so that it may

²⁸⁰ Sanders, Jesus and Judaism, p.322.

²⁸¹ Wright, The Interpretation of the New Testament, p.400.

²⁸² Theissen, Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity, pp.58-61.

²⁸³ Ibid., p.1.

grasp its true spiritual heritage²⁸⁴. Jesus must therefore be interpreted from that particular, sociological milieu. Jesus' intention is only new in as far as the religion of Israel has departed from its source and his intended aim at a true restoration wherein the service of God is paramount as reflected in care for the lowly hopeless and helpless.²⁸⁵ Jesus' aim thus was a re-constitution of what he and his followers considered as the essence of Judaism.

Without giving a clear source for his understanding of Cullmann, Gager indicates that in 1925, Cullmann had already called for aid from the social sciences to assist the findings of the form critics.²⁸⁶ Theological scholarship needs all the assistance it can get from all the sciences even when forced to question its basic premises. On the other hand theology is a discipline in its own right and must make a theological assessment of the material concerned. For example, do the sociological findings by showing the background in which Jesus' statements were made prove conclusively that Jesus' only intention was to revive Israel? At this point a theological judgement is required. It would appear to me that Jesus was in conflict with the very heart of Judaism: the law and the temple. The early community in my opinion saw Jesus as dispensing with these important aspects of Judaism by defining a new centre for worship, Jesus himself. Here is a theological conclusion arising from an interpretation of the same sociological information.

²⁸⁴ Jerome Negrey, "The Idea of Purity in Mark's Gospel", Semeia, 35:91-128, 1986.

²⁸⁵ Bruce Malina, "Jesus as Charismatic Leader, Biblical Theology Bulletin, 14:55-62, 1984.

²⁸⁶ John Gager, "Shall We Marry Our Enemies?" Interpretation, 37:256-265, 1982.

Küng is not unaware of sociological trends and acknowledges that Jesus travelled with his disciples up and down the countryside proclaiming a message for all wherein grace was paramount. Poverty, oppression, sickness and death would be overcome. God was about to bring forth new hope, a hope that by-passed the restriction of temple and law.²⁸⁷

The methods outlined at the beginning of this section show promise for future studies but for the moment their results should be categorised as interesting with future potential.²⁸⁸ At their present developmental stage I remain unconvinced not of the value of the above-mentioned studies but of their worth for Küng's christology. They do not add to his findings on the historical Jesus. To place Jesus in a Jewish context is all well and good. One must explain his death by crucifixion and that fact requires a better explanation than a conflict with Judaism that rose from no more than a confrontation as to the nature of what true Judaism is.²⁸⁹ It appears more likely to me that he

²⁸⁷ Christ sein, pp.171-172.

²⁸⁸ Wright, The Interpretation of the New Testament, p.397.

²⁸⁹ I am indebted to Prof. P.J. Maartens of the New Testament Department at the University of Durban-Westville and Prof. J. Draper of the School of Theology at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, for their assistance and valuable insights in the above section. Their views differ and I too, do not draw the same conclusions that they do.

See: (1) P.J. Maartens, "Interpretation and Meaning in a Conflict Parable", Linguistica Biblica, 67:61-82, 1992.

(2) J.A. Draper, "Jesus and the Renewal of Local Community in Galilee : Challenge to a Communitarian Christology". Unpublished paper given at the Congress of the Theological Society of Southern Africa, Cape Town, 1993.

threatened the whole basic religious structure and therefore the authorities, unable to contain his radical views, were obliged to dispose of Jesus. He emphasized a new centre of worship, himself.

In the next chapter I shall examine certain specific christological doctrines to which Küng refers.

CHAPTER FOUR

SPECIFIC EMPHASES IN KÜNG'S CHRISTOLOGY

In the present chapter I will reflect upon Küng's reinterpretation of certain christological doctrines arising from his methodology. In particular, I will note the influence of Hegel and the historical-critical method on basic christological concepts such as the resurrection, pre-existence, incarnation and the virgin birth, atonement, the divinity of Christ and scripture as a witness to Christ. The resurrection, which is so vital to Küng and to modern German theology, will thus receive particular attention. Here Küng's Hegelian basis will be noted.

A significant trend in modern German theology is to place the emphasis on the resurrection. (See section 5.3.1). The incarnation, which will receive separate treatment later in this chapter, is considered as mythology. Incarnation, as expounded by traditional christology, is held to be of no value as a clue to the interpretation of Jesus' person. The resurrection has replaced the incarnation as the significant factor for christology today for many German theologians.¹ Küng too develops his christology along these lines.

¹ Wolfhart Pannenberg, Jesus - God and Man, (London: SCM, 1968), pp.150-151. It is the resurrection that indicates Jesus' significance. The incarnation is considered as clarified by the resurrection. This issue is important for Küng's christology also. Pannenberg refers to Käsemann, Bornkamm, Bultmann and Colpe. See also Reginald H. Fuller, The New Testament in Current Study, (London: Birchall & Sons, 1963), p. 95.

4.1 THE CONCEPT OF RESURRECTION IN KÜNG

There is a centre to the Christian message which Küng considers as: "Jesus der Gekreuzigte lebt, und er wurde als der Lebendige erfahren Jesus, der als der Gottverlassene gestorben ist, lebt mit Gott, als der von Gott 'Erhöhte', 'Verherrlichte'".² Küng then emphasizes that the risen Christ is none other than the earthly Jesus.³ As the risen one, Küng believes: "Der Gekreuzigte lebt für immer bei Gott als Verpflichtung und Hoffnung für uns."⁴ Unmistakably, "The Crucified is living forever with God, as our hope."⁵ The resurrection is, beyond doubt, at the core of faith.

In dealing with the origin of the resurrection concept, Küng shows that the idea begins with humanity's ideal projection of existence now into the future since persons cannot accept that death is the ultimate cessation of all life. Consequently, some form of life, people believe, lies beyond death, resulting from one's experience of circumstances now. If one believes that God exists, then one can speak of a "knowledge of eternal life related to experience."⁶ Though a view of this nature cannot be empirically demonstrated, the human experience of life is "an indirect verification criterion which does not overlook the subjectivity of human experience but does not make it the sole standard of truth."⁷ By this statement, Küng implies that people believe in an

² M.G., pp.605-606.

³ Ibid., p.606.

⁴ Christ sein, p.345.

⁵ "Twenty Propositions", p.326.

⁶ Hans Küng, Eternal Life? (London: Collins, 1984), p.100.

⁷ Ibid., p.101.

"ultimate meaning of reality ... the eternal God."⁸ The point made means that if one asks questions about life, one is asking questions about the ultimate significance of the meaning of one's existence. Such questions involve an inquiry about God, death, and life hereafter.⁹ It should be noted, however, that the question does not automatically ensure the answer.

Accepting the ultimate reality of God, could Jesus' death then be the end? In the light of God's faithfulness, Küng believes not, for,

Wie kam es dazu, dass dieser verurteilte Irrlehrer zum Messias Israels, also zum 'Christus', dass dieser entlarvte Volksverführer zum 'Erlöser', dieser verworfene Gotteslästerer zum 'Gottessohn' wurde.¹⁰

The riddle, for Küng, is the explanation of the rise of Christianity. Küng gives his answer:

Jene Passionsgeschichte mit katastrophalem Ausgang - warum hätte sie schon in das Gedächtnis der Menschheit eingehen sollen? - wurde nur überliefert, weil es zugleich eine Ostergeschichte gab, welche die Passionsgeschichte (und die dahinter stehende Aktionsgeschichte) in einem völlig anderen Licht erscheinen liess.¹¹

Easter therefore, explains the passion narrative. Jesus arose, because God is. Human experience of God thus makes the Easter story intelligible.

However, should one seek a historical origin for the idea of resurrection, Küng, without elaborating, points one to

⁸ Ibid., p.103.

⁹ Christ sein, p.332.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.333.

¹¹ Ibid., p.334.

Persian influence.¹² Moreover, it was during the Babylonian exile under Persian rule that the ideas present in the Old Testament received a clearer presentation. The Jews now questioned the perception of rewards and punishments as limited to this life, for the wicked, they noticed, seemed to prosper, leading to the idea of rewards and punishments being transferred to the hereafter.¹³

One cannot neglect the foundation of the Old Testament itself for an understanding of resurrection. On the other hand, one ought not to read the Old Testament from the standpoint of the New regarding the topic. While the Israelites believed in Sheol or the non-land, a closed space beneath the earth's disc, they did not have an idea of heaven. The Israelites accepted that all the patriarchs entered the place of shadows, without construing from this idea an act of resurrection. References to resurrection-ideas in Hosea, Ezekiel, or Isaiah are only metaphorical language of a re-awakening to life of the nation Israel.¹⁴

A change occurs in the idea of resurrection with the writing of the book of Daniel. Here, the dead return to life "as complete human beings (not merely as souls), ... to glory or endless shame."¹⁵ There is in Daniel no idea of the immortality of the soul, rather one deals here with a resurrected body, the distinguishing factor of later Judaism.

¹² Ibid., p.345.

¹³ Küng, Eternal Life? pp.110-111.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp.109-111.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.112.

Since the book of Daniel, according to Küng, dates from the Maccabean period with its "apocalyptic views of the resurrection and the last judgement,"¹⁶ it forms an important bridge between the Old Testament and the views represented by Jesus. Yet, despite the similarities between the apocalyptic writings and the sayings of Jesus, Jesus unlike Daniel, does not establish a precise formula by which to judge forthcoming events.¹⁷ Having stated his position on Daniel, Küng makes the following observation: "We might make it easier for ourselves and follow the general practice of assuming a continuous progress from the resurrection-narratives of Maccabean times to those of Jesus of Nazareth."¹⁸ He believes there is a direct link located here,¹⁹ for both Maccabees and Jesus give a new impetus to resurrection. Küng asserts that the apocalyptic ideas, while present, undergo modification. He states: "Vielmehr die Durchsetzung der Sache Gottes für das Volk und den Einzelnen in dieser so wenig gerechten Welt: Auferweckung im Dienst der Selbstrechtfertigung Gottes, der Theodizee."²⁰ The emphasis is thus more on God's self-justification than on a programme outlining the end times.

Küng has briefly traced the origin of the resurrection belief, indicating the point of contact between Jesus and the Old Testament. The association, Küng believes, is found in the books of the Maccabees, as a corrective to the mathematical formulas given in the book of Daniel for purposes of end-time calculations. The idea of

¹⁶ Ibid., p.115.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.117.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.119.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Christ sein, p.346.

resurrection is metaphorical in the Old Testament where it refers to the restoration of Israel. During the Persian period, however, and later in Daniel and the Maccabean times in particular, resurrection received a refinement in emphasis, placing God in the centre, an idea that Jesus elaborated upon.

A point to note is that the resurrection of the body is not in any way associated with Greek belief in the immortality of the soul, nor the transmigration of souls. The soul does not rise on the last day but the whole person. More will be said on this matter when the topic of a definition of resurrection is discussed below.

Resurrection, for Küng, is not a supernatural act beyond the laws of nature; it is not some miraculous event wherein God terminates all natural law. Küng plainly affirms: "Auferweckung meint ja nicht ein Naturgesetze durchbrechendes, innerweltlich konstatierbares Mirakel, nicht einen lozierbaren und datierbaren supranaturalistischen Eingriff in Raum und Zeit."²¹

What then is resurrection for Küng? He maintains that it is an image or symbol taken from the metaphor of sleep, an idea which both clarifies and obscures the meaning of resurrection. It is not just an awakening followed by a return to life. Thus Küng comments on the topic as follows: "Vielmehr die radikale Verwandlung in einen ganz verschiedenen Zustand, in ein anderes, neues, unerhörtes, endgültiges, unsterbliches Leben: totaliter aliter, ganz anderes."²² Furthermore, resurrection is beyond human understanding. One should not try to grasp the idea of resurrection, for, "Auf die immer wieder gern gestellte Frage, wie man sich dieses so ganz andere Leben

²¹ Ibid, p.339.

²² Ibid.

vorstellen soll, ist schlicht zu antworten: überhaupt nicht! Hier gibt es nichts auszumalen, vorzustellen, zu objektivieren."²³ When the Scriptures speak of the crucified as living, they by no means infer a return to space and time for Jesus. His resurrection is not the resuscitation of a corpse. For Jesus, resurrection means: "He has entered into a wholly different 'heavenly' life: into the life of God, for which very diverse expressions and ideas were used in the New Testament."²⁴ Therefore, if resurrection is not the quickening of a dead body, it implies, "Der Tod wird nicht rückgängig gemacht, sondern definitiv überwunden."²⁵ Resurrection thus means, "a new life, beyond the dimension of space and time, in God's invisible, imperishable, incomprehensible domain."²⁶ Since resurrection is beyond earthly dimensions, Küng declares: "Schon die Rede von 'nach' dem Tod ist irreführend: die Ewigkeit ist nicht bestimmt durch Vor und Nach."²⁷ Küng clarifies the issue by elaborating as follows on the topic: "Definitiv bei Gott ein und das endgültige Leben haben, das ist gemeint!"²⁸ Küng then clearly defines his terms by stating that, "Er ist im Tod und aus dem Tod in jene unfassbare und umfassende letzte Wirklichkeit hineingestorben, von ihr aufgenommen worden, die wir mit dem Namen Gott bezeichnen."²⁹

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Küng, Eternal Life?, p.145.

²⁵ Christ sein, p.347.

²⁶ Küng, Eternal Life?, p.145.

²⁷ Christ sein, p.347.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., p.348.

Küng then continues by relating death to man's "eschaton, the absolutely final point in his life, ..." ³⁰ Death is therefore a "passing into God, is a homecoming into God's seclusion, is assumption into his glory." ³¹ From the human side, death means the breaking off of all relationships, but from God's standpoint, death involves resurrection, and eternal life whereby a totally new relationship is established between God and persons. ³² Therefore, resurrection brings the power of death to an end. Küng speaks as one who has already experienced the resurrected state!

Küng does not differentiate between the resurrection of Christ and resurrection as the ultimate goal of humanity. However, Küng does indicate that humanity believes in the resurrection because of God's act in Christ. ³³ Christ's resurrection now becomes the basis upon which one may accept that all of humanity is destined to this end. Küng therefore acknowledges: "Und deshalb - und nicht als supranaturalistischer 'Eingriff' gegen die Naturgesetze - ein echtes Geschenk und wahres Wunder." ³⁴

Resurrection, Küng affirms, means a death in which one is united by God with himself in that, "Die Auferweckung geschieht mit dem Tod, im Tod, aus dem Tod." ³⁵ Küng does not closely define what he means by dying into God, but the following passage may shed some light on the subject. Küng elaborates on the subject of death and resurrection saying:

³⁰ Küng, Eternal Life?, p.145.

³¹ Ibid., p.145.

³² Ibid., p.146.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Christ sein, p.349.

³⁵ Ibid.

The believer knows that death is transition to God, retreat into God's hiddenness, into that domain which surpasses all imagination, which no human eye has ever seen, eluding our grasp, comprehension, reflection or imagination.³⁶

There is the possibility that Küng wishes to contrast God's hiddenness with his continual presence, however, Küng does not clarify his position, indicating perhaps that one should show caution in describing a state that one has not experienced.

Although death and resurrection must be seen as objectively distinct, subjectively they are not separated in time: One's moment of death is the moment of resurrection, while on the other hand, resurrection is the victory over death by means of entry into God's life.³⁷

Küng believes that resurrection means a bodily resurrection, both for humanity and for Christ. He explains.

Leibliche Auferweckung? Ja und Nein, wenn ich mich auf ein persönliches Gespräch mit Rudolf Bultmann beziehen darf. Nein, wenn 'Leib' naiv den physiologisch identischen Körper meint. Ja, wenn 'Leib' im Sinn des neutestamentlichen 'Soma', die identische personale Wirklichkeit, dasselbe Ich mit seiner ganzen Geschichte meint.³⁸

In this light, one does not merely mean that Jesus' cause continues. It is unlike the cause of Mr. Eiffel which continues through his tower, though he is dead.³⁹ Küng explains: "Es geht vielmehr um des lebendigen Jesu Person

³⁶ "Twenty Propositions", p.327.

³⁷ Christ sein, pp.348-349.

³⁸ Ibid., p.340.

³⁹ Ibid., p.341.

und deshalb Sache."⁴⁰ The difference is not in the degree of influence, but in the fact that Jesus' cause continues because he lives.

One is not dealing with an immortal soul but the

immortality ... of the personal relationships with God ... this affects man in the totality of his mental-bodily existence. It is not a question of the 'soul', but of the person as a living unity of corporeal-mental being founded by God's call.⁴¹

Resurrection therefore involves "the same self with its entire history, ..." ⁴² One cannot separate a person into body and soul for one is a total being. Küng therefore contends:

Resurrection means that a person's life-history and all the relationship established in the course of this history enter together into the consummation and finally belong to the risen person.⁴³

It is in the above sense that one may speak of the bodily resurrection of both Christ and persons.

Consequently, Christ arose bodily into God (to use Küng's term), an event awaiting humanity as well. Küng, having based his argument on both human existential expectation, and the development of this hope as displayed in the belief in a risen Christ, grounds his assumption on the faithfulness of God. This topic will be investigated in the section on the significance of the resurrection for God.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Küng, Eternal Life?, p.141.

⁴² Ibid., p.143.

⁴³ Ibid., p.143.

Since resurrection is defined by Küng as "The crucified is living forever with God...",⁴⁴ the significance of the resurrection will now be examined.

4.1.1 The Significance of the Resurrection for Jesus

Before drawing conclusions about the significance of the resurrection for Jesus, Küng deals with certain difficulties. In the first place, the whole account, Küng believes, is enveloped by legends. Küng plainly states: "Die Geschichte der Auferweckungsüberlieferung lässt problematische Erweiterungen und Ausgestaltungen, eventuell auch Lücken, sichtbar werden."⁴⁵ In fact neither Paul nor Mark mentions the empty tomb. However, the other Synoptists make reference to it partially for apologetic reasons. There are embellishments and contradictions in that the accounts appear as conflicting reports. Furthermore, John adds his own motifs by referring to Thomas and Mary Magdalene.⁴⁶

Despite the difficulties, Küng feels:

Das Entscheidende ist das von allen Zeugen bejahte neue Leben Jesu aus dem Tod durch Gott und mit Gott, Gottes Leben, das alle Aussagen und Vorstellungen, Bilder, Ausmalungen und Legenden übersteigt.⁴⁷

Thus the conflicting legends, ideas, and motifs point beyond the immediate situation to God.

⁴⁴ "Twenty Propositions", p.326.

⁴⁵ Christ sein, p.351.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp.351-352.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p.352.

Paul, Küng judges, is an important witness, speaking independently of the Gospel narratives and he, Küng explains, never mentions the empty tomb, nor does he make mention of the witnesses to the event.⁴⁸ Küng elaborates:

The Easter stories of the evangelists show a clear trend to legendary embellishments (tales told to astonished listeners). Paul's testimony sounds like a profession of faith; it may have been a summary in catechism form, possibly to be learned by heart in the course of a catechesis.⁴⁹

Paul may have believed that Jesus' body remained in the tomb.⁵⁰ To him the matter is not important. Küng does admit though that, "Even critical exegetes allow for the possibility that the tomb might have been empty."⁵¹ According to Küng, a woman's evidence at the time of Christ was inadmissible at law, yet the testimony of women was accepted by certain gospel writers, consequently, the stories do not appear as female innovation but have a ring of truth about them.⁵² However, Küng sharply concludes: "Das leere Grab hat auch nach dem Neuen Testament niemanden zum Glauben an den Auferweckten geführt."⁵³ Certainly, there were no witnesses present, hence the idea is never used for evangelistic purposes by any New Testament writer.⁵⁴ What then is the meaning of the empty tomb since faith in Christ is quite independent of the story? Küng answers saying: "Das Ostergeschehen wird durch das leere Grab

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.353.

⁴⁹ Küng, Eternal Life?, p.134.

⁵⁰ Christ sein, p.353.

⁵¹ Küng, Eternal Life?, p.135.

⁵² Christ sein, p.354.

⁵³ Ibid., p.355.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

nicht bedingt, sondern bestenfalls erleuchtet."⁵⁵ The empty tomb is therefore an illustration, or sign of the resurrection. It is not an article of faith.

Paul, on the other hand, does make reference to the "appearances,"⁵⁶ of Jesus, which for Paul, are open to verification.⁵⁷ Küng then continues:

It was not the empty tomb, but by the 'appearances' or 'revelations' - probably objective or subjective visions or hearings, in any case calls to proclamation akin to those of the prophets - that Jesus's disciples came to believe in his resurrection to eternal life. The controversy over the empty tomb is therefore an unreal controversy.⁵⁸

It would appear then, that "neither Jesus' resurrection nor ours is dependent on an empty tomb."⁵⁹ Thus "The reanimation of a corpse is not a precondition for rising to eternal life."⁶⁰

The point at issue, for Küng, is the dismissal of anything supernatural that acts as a hindrance to the faith of modern persons.

The historicity of the resurrection is now placed in question by Küng. Since the act of resurrection is construed by Küng as an event that does not contravene the laws of nature by a supernatural intervention, he claims:

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.353.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Küng, Eternal Life? pp.134-135.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p.135.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Weil es nach neutestamentlichem Glauben in der Auferweckung um ein Handeln Gottes in den Dimensionen Gottes geht, kann es nicht um ein im strengen Sinn historisches, das heisst von der historischen Wissenschaft mit historischer Methode feststellbares Geschehen handeln.... Die historische Wissenschaft ... dürfte hier überfragt sein, weil sie aufgrund ihrer eigenen Prämissen gerade jene Wirklichkeit bewusst ausschliesst, die für eine Auferweckung ebenso wie für Schöpfung und Vollendung allein in Frage kommt: die Wirklichkeit Gottes!⁶¹

The resurrection therefore, cannot be considered as historical based upon the scientific premises of history. Küng thus adds: "It is not, then, an historical but certainly a real event."⁶² However, it is only a real event "for someone who is not a neutral observer but who commits himself to it in faith. What happened bursts through and transcends the limits of history."⁶³ Christ's resurrection is not an object of historical verification; it is a call to faith, and from this vantage point alone can one begin to grasp the resurrection of Jesus.⁶⁴

The resurrection of Jesus is thus beyond human historical method. Yet this fact should not dissuade one from accepting the reality of Jesus' resurrection for that act calls for more than history, it calls for faith. This faith is not based on observable facts such as the empty tomb or the quickening of a corpse; rather, the idea of resurrection makes God the centre, for it is he who acts and is the centre of resurrection. Küng therefore

⁶¹ Christ sein, pp.338-339.

⁶² Küng, Eternal Life? p.136.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Christ sein, p.339.

affirms: "Bei 'Auferwekkung' (sic) wird ganz Gottes Tun an Jesus in den Mittelpunkt gestellt."⁶⁵

As seen below, the above quotation leads Küng to draw certain conclusions about Jesus arising from his understanding of the resurrection.

4.1.2 Resurrection as Vindication for Jesus

The resurrection proclamation reveals that Jesus in his struggle against certain aspects of Judaism was correct in that he rightly equated God's cause with that of human well-being.⁶⁶ Küng explains:

Die Auferweckungsbotschaft nämlich macht es offenbar, was so gar nicht zu erwarten war: dass dieser Gekreuzigte trotz allem recht hatte! Gott ergriff Partei für den, der sich ganz auf ihn eingelassen hatte, der sein Leben für die Sache Gottes und der Menschen hingegeben hat. Zu ihm bekannte er sich und nicht zur jüdischen Hierarchie. Er sagte Ja zu seiner Verkündigung, seinem Verhalten, seinem Geschick.⁶⁷

God, therefore, placed his stamp of approval upon Jesus in the resurrection. Consequently, Jesus is proclaimed with confidence by the church since it recognises God's presence through Jesus' actions. He is proclaimed because he lives as the righteous one, as the one who showed God's righteousness by identifying with the outcasts of society. Because Jesus rightly identified God's cause, he is with God as humanity's hope. Küng concludes: "Der Gekreuzigte lebt für immer bei Gott als Verpflichtung und Hoffnung für uns!"⁶⁸ It was due to Jesus' utter faithfulness to God that he experienced

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.338 (Misspelling Küng's).

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.372.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.372.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p.345

God's vindication.⁶⁹ Jesus' vindication says that he was right to identify with the weak, and that he was right, too, when he demanded endless forgiveness. Jesus was correct when he saw God's will as the supreme norm and not the law. Because Jesus was right when he showed that God does not demand, but gives out of his sheer grace, "He has received his definitive vindication."⁷⁰

Consequently, the proclaimer now becomes the proclaimed,⁷¹ for people can see God in a light hitherto unknown before. Moreover, God's vindication of Jesus is, in reality, God's self-vindication. Jesus' cause is none other than God's cause involving humanity's well-being as salvation. It is only in the manner outlined above that "the shameful gallows could be understood as a sign of victory."⁷²

Küng then declares that "without the raising of Jesus from the dead, Christian preaching and Christian faith is futile... the church is meaningless."⁷³ However, because Jesus has been vindicated, a new community has been brought into existence, the church.⁷⁴ Unmistakably Jesus is vindicated by God and the church is the living proof thereof.

Küng does not divide the various stages of Christ's exaltation into resurrection, ascension, and parousia. Although they may be separated in time from the human

⁶⁹ Küng, Eternal Life? p.126.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.148.

⁷¹ "Twenty Propositions", p.328.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ The Church, p.79.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.80.

stand-point, they are, in fact, various aspects of the resurrection, forming a unity with God as the centre.⁷⁵ Each one of the above-mentioned doctrines is but another aspect of resurrection, indicating that Jesus is always with God. Küng re-iterates: "Der Gekreuzigte lebt für immer bei Gott...."⁷⁶ and it is from this point that these doctrines are interpreted by Küng.

Küng indicates that the ascension is not a journey into space for

in the early Church there was a broad tradition of a resurrection of Jesus which was understood as an exaltation into God; but there was little or no tradition of an ascension of Jesus in the sight of his disciples.⁷⁷

Luke is an exception, but he was not an eye-witness, writing his gospel at a very late stage.⁷⁸ The New Testament emphasizes Christ's disappearance from the earth, "in which the narrative element 'cloud' stands for both the closeness and the unapproachability of God."⁷⁹ Luke, according to Küng, offers a theological interpretation whereby he attempts to correct the still widely accepted expectation of an imminent parousia. Luke, by means of a picture of the angels, asks: "Why are you men from Galilee looking up into the sky?"⁸⁰ Despite the rest of what the angels are purported to have said, for "Luke, then, only those who do not gaze up into the sky but bear witness to Jesus in the world have

⁷⁵ Christ sein, pp.341-342.

⁷⁶ Christ sein, p.345.

⁷⁷ Küng, Eternal Life? p.154.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.155.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.156.

understood the meaning of Easter."⁸¹ Consequently, when the disciples in Acts ask about the restoration of Israel, Luke makes Jesus avoid an answer that initiates an expectation of an imminent return. Jesus points out that his concern for them is not the parousia but an enabling, empowering them to be witnesses of the kingdom.⁸²

When the scriptures speak of Christ at the right hand of God, they imply that he who was crucified and raised was exalted into the presence of God where "he shares in God's gracious rule and glory and so can make his universal claim to rule prevail for man."⁸³ Thus Jesus, for Küng, shares God's dignity.⁸⁴ Küng considers that the ideas of resurrection, exaltation, and rule "are one and the same thing in the New Testament,"⁸⁵ for God's definitive rule "has already begun."⁸⁶

The fact of the resurrection of Christ is, for Küng, centred in God; consequently, I must now relate Christ's resurrection to God so that I can see in what way God and Christ are associated by means of the resurrection.

4.1.3 The Significance of the Resurrection for an Understanding of God

Küng uses the masculine form for God and so as not to cloud his argument I shall follow his language. The

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid., p.157.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

resurrection points to God as the one who is faithful to his cause which is humanity's well-being. Küng suggests:

Der Glaube der Juden und der Christen beruht darauf, dass für sie der lebendige Gott der unerschütterlich treue Gott ist, wie er aus der Geschichte Israels beständig entgegentritt. Er ist der Schöpfer, der seinem Geschöpf und Partner, komme, was da kommen mag, die Treue hält. Der sein Ja zum Leben nicht zurücknimmt, sondern gerade an der entscheidenden Grenze erneut Ja zu seinem Ja sagt: Treue im Tod über den Tod hinaus.⁸⁷

God is unshakably faithful for he never breaks his covenant. Neither death nor what is beyond it can break God's covenant.

Küng then enlarges on absolute trust in God. He states: "Ein Glaube, in welchem sich der Mensch ohne strikt rationalen Beweis, wohl aber in durchaus vernünftigen Vertrauen darauf verlässt, dass der Gott des Anfangs auch der Gott des Endes ist,..."⁸⁸ One thus relies upon God's utter faithfulness from beginning to end without proof, yet with a trust that involves understanding. The point that Küng makes is that God can be trusted because he is beyond doubt trustworthy, for both Israel and Jesus found God to be faithful. It is not simply a matter of one having the ability to trust God, one trusts God because he has shown himself as the faithful one.⁸⁹ Since God has been found faithful, one may therefore believe that with Jesus' resurrection the new age has been inaugurated. Küng states his position regarding God, and Christ's resurrection, as follows: "Das neue, ewige Leben des Einen als Herausforderung und reale Hoffnung für alle."⁹⁰ Since God is faithful, in Christ's

⁸⁷ Christ sein, p.346.

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp.349-350.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p.345.

resurrection there is hope, for all as humanity is faced with this new eternal aspect to life. Certainly, God is faithful to himself, that is, his character as the faithful one.

The resurrection therefore shows God's character, not in terms of an ontological being, but as one who acts in the world. Küng believes that God can be faithful to himself for, in Hegelian terms, he is in history. Küng returns to Hegel by stating: "Heutiges Gottesverständnis muss, wie früher ausgeführt, von einem einheitlichen Wirklichkeitsverständnis ausgehen: Gott in dieser Welt und diese Welt in Gott".⁹¹ The problem one faces is what is meant by a coherent concept or understanding of reality? Such an idea is beyond proof even if there is such a thing. Küng then elaborates on the above statement indicating that God is not the infinite who has a finite alongside him, he is the one who is hidden yet close, transcendent but immanent. He is

im Menschen und in der Menschheitsgeschichte. Gott wirkend nicht nur in irgendwelchen übernatürlichen Räumen oder exklusiv 'heilsgeschichtlichen' Zeiten.⁹²

God is not, for Küng, the God of the gaps (Lückenbüsser) in the cosmos, a God upon whom humanity draws when it has no answer, but then rejects when finding the solution to the problem. Küng rejects the above outlook. He declares: "Nein, Gott als die wirklichste Wirklichkeit wirkend in der ganzen Wirklichkeit.... Kein Handeln Gottes neben der Weltgeschichte sondern in der Geschichte der Welt und des handelnden Menschen."⁹³ These statements are the heart of Küng's christology. Accepting what Küng says above, there is no need to speak

⁹¹ Ibid., p.285.

⁹² Ibid., Underlining mine.

⁹³ Ibid.

in terms of a supernatural intervention by God; he is already present in history, a history that is also present to him. Consequently, Küng can explain his christology in terms of Hegel. God can thus be faithful to himself in Christ's resurrection without acting supernaturally, for the resurrection shows God as present in history. (Incidentally, this form of thought permeates Küng's view of the pre-existence of Christ, too, as will be seen later in this chapter.) On the other hand, the resurrection shows that history is present to God.⁹⁴

With the above background from Hegel, Küng discusses God as the creator acting in history, a subject closely related to resurrection. Küng indicates that since God is in history, one may therefore assume that a history that begins in God also ends in God as will be seen below. Küng makes it clear that the God of the beginning of history is also the goal of history. Küng affirms: "Weil Gott das Alpha ist, ist er auch das Omega, der allmächtige Schöpfer, der aus dem Nichtsein ins Sein ruft, vermag auch aus dem Tod ins Leben zu rufen."⁹⁵ As the creator he gives meaning to emptiness, hence the feasibility of Christ's resurrection as well as that of humanity. Death is therefore not the end, God is! The one who creates out of nothing is the one who gives meaning to nothingness. God as the creator cannot be uninvolved in the fulfilment of his own history since God is the centre of all history including the resurrection.⁹⁶

It is interesting to note that Küng begins with Hegel, moving through Strauss and the New Questers to the

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid., pp.349-350.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.338.

historical Jesus as the one in whom God's historicity is manifested, then returns once more to Hegel when dealing with the resurrection. Küng thus appears to have two levels of history, one based on Hegel and the other on modern historiography. This issue is important for the concluding chapter.

Regarding God in relation to Jesus' resurrection Küng states: "Der Auferweckungsglaube ist nicht ein Zusatz zum Gottesglauben, sondern eine Radikalisierung des Gottesglaubens".⁹⁷ Resurrection then is a logical premise and not an addition to faith in God as the creator. Küng continues: "Auferweckung meint die reale Überwindung des Todes durch den Schöpfergott, dem der Glaubende alles, auch das Letzte, auch die Überwindung des Todes, zutraut."⁹⁸ Therefore one may deduce that the creator is the completer. The logical conclusion to the argument centres in the fact that God as creator can be the fulfiller of his history and creation.⁹⁹ Consequently, Küng draws the conclusion that, "Der christliche Glaube an den auferweckten Jesus ist sinnvoll nur als Glaube an Gott den Schöpfer und Erhalter des Lebens."¹⁰⁰ God's resurrection power is closely linked to his role as creator. The God in whom Christians believe is the one who raised Jesus from the dead.¹⁰¹ This is the distinctive aspect of the Christian God, for in the resurrection of Jesus God acts once again as creator.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.349.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p.350.

⁹⁹ "Twenty Propositions", p.328.

¹⁰⁰ Christ sein, p.350.

¹⁰¹ M.G., p.606.

¹⁰² Ibid.

Believing in God as creator and conserver, means therefore, that one believes in one's own resurrection and eternal life.¹⁰³ Because Jesus lives again through God I shall live, too.¹⁰⁴ Küng thus continually puts God's action at the centre of resurrection, which is history's goal. Küng confirms this view stating: "Bei 'Auferweckung' wird ganz Gottes Tun an Jesus in den Mittelpunkt gestellt."¹⁰⁵

The repetition of the quotation above indicates that the resurrection's significance for Jesus is identified with God is at its centre.

In the resurrection act one is confronted not by an apathetic, distant God of Greek philosophy, but with a God who is involved in history,¹⁰⁶ a God who is really "Father."¹⁰⁷

Ultimately, through the resurrection of Jesus by God, humanity knows it will reach God's goal for itself since God's will is humanity's complete well-being, "his eschaton, the absolutely final point in his life ... assumption into [God's] glory."¹⁰⁸ The above idea regarding humanity will receive further attention in this chapter.

The resurrection not only vindicates Jesus as the faithful one, it is also a vindication of God's faithfulness to his own cause, human well-being.

¹⁰³ Küng, Eternal Life?, p.147.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p.137.

¹⁰⁵ Christ sein, p.338. See footnote 65.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp.295-299.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p.348.

¹⁰⁸ Küng, Eternal Life?, p.145.

I have shown that the resurrection signifies that Jesus and his cause were vindicated by God, according to Küng. Furthermore, regarding God, the resurrection shows him as the one who is faithful to his promises made to Israel and fulfilled in Jesus, implying that God has the final say over his creation as the God who acts in history. I shall now consider the significance of the resurrection for the disciples.

4.1.4 The Significance of the Resurrection for the Disciples

Küng contends that the "genuine"¹⁰⁹ canonical writings are quite different from the apocryphal gospels. For example, the Gospel of Peter where Jesus' corpse becomes alive, climbs out of the grave and ascends into heaven¹¹⁰ is just such an apocryphal example. However, "The 'genuine' canonical writings are quite different. They never describe the resurrection of Jesus itself, but only what happened to the believing witnesses after the resurrection."¹¹¹ The "appearances"¹¹² of Jesus have to be taken seriously and must be explained.

The "appearances" do not have their background in the Inter-Testamental period for the picture of that Messiah is of one who is victorious over his enemies. Furthermore, Jesus did not rise in the faith of the disciples, to use Bultmann's phrase, for they were astounded by his "appearance". The disciples proclaimed Jesus because he "appeared" to them, not in dreams, but

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p.128.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.127.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p.128.

¹¹² Christ sein, see pages 360-371 for the full discussion. A paraphrase is presented below.

while they were awake. The resurrection message, according to Küng, was not the product of faith; rather, it was the message that led to faith. The basis of faith was, for Küng, the experience that the disciples had of the risen Lord (Erfahrungen mit Jesus),¹¹³ who was raised from the dead. The "appearances" form the basis of the disciples' new call to mission. They are thus not neutral observers of an objective historical fact, but persons who are witnesses to Jesus "appearance", an appearance, however, to be interpreted along the lines of the call extended by God to the prophets. (Refer to footnote 113).

Are these appearances then supernatural, the result of divine intervention? Küng believes not and he returns to Hegel to support his assertion. Küng explains his position in the following manner:

Alles wird davon abhängen, dass man sich Gottes Berufung nicht im supranaturalistischen Schema als ein Eingreifen Gottes von oben oder von aussen vorstellt. Wenn Gott die unfassbar unfassende, letzte Wirklichkeit ist, wenn der Mensch in Gott ist und Gott im Menschen, wenn die Geschichte des Menschen in der Geschichte Gottes aufgehoben ist und die Geschichte Gottes in der Geschichte des Menschen zur Auswirkung kommt, dann gibt es im Wort der Sendung oder Berufung eine Möglichkeit der Aktion und Interaktion, ein ständiges Ineinander von Gott und Mensch, von schenkender und geschenkter Freiheit, das die Naturgesetze in keiner Weise verletzt und das doch an Wirklichkeit nicht zu überbieten ist.¹¹⁴

Küng contends that since humanity's history is taken up into God, and God's history works itself out in human history, there is no need for any supernatural "appearance" of Jesus, for God's call to vocation is possible without the supernatural since God is present

¹¹³ Ibid., p.365.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p.367.

already in history. The involved argument is Hegelian in emphasis and must be grasped not from modern historiography but from K  ng's Menschwerdung Gottes where he reaches the above conclusion.

As modern historiography excludes God, K  ng disclaims its ability either to verify or deny his Hegelian position. History by its own definition excludes itself from judging either the resurrection or the "appearances" of Jesus. Since God's action is beyond history, some other standard is required. Faith now becomes the criterion. K  ng does not define faith; he assumes one knows what he means.

K  ng accepts that faith did not begin with the disciples but with God.¹¹⁵ It is God's action in history through Christ that the disciples rightly interpret. Their responses are

Testimonies - it must be noted - are not simply reports. The Easter stories each and all are not non-partisan documentary accounts by disinterested observers, but moving testimonies of devotion to Jesus' party by highly interested and committed persons.¹¹⁶

One need not infer that because people are committed that their testimonies are ipso facto reliable. The disciples are witnesses to God's resurrection action through the "appearance" of the risen Lord.

The significance of the resurrection for Jesus' disciples is an act on God's part that leads to the faith of the disciples to whom the Lord "appears" in history, but whose verification lies beyond history. It involves belief in a God who acts in history as its

¹¹⁵ Ibid., .P.360.

¹¹⁶ K  ng, Eternal Life?, p.130.

presupposition. Of course such a presupposition need not be valid.

4.1.5 The Significance of the Resurrection for Humanity

Resurrection means that those who are the abandoned and the outcasts of society can now have hope: "Der Gekreuzigte lebt für immer bei Gott - als Verpflichtung und Hoffnung für uns."¹¹⁷ Humanity has a future, for God has demonstrated that his cause is intrinsically linked to human well-being expressed as salvation.¹¹⁸

Clearly then, "Jesus' new life has broken the universal rule of death, ..." ¹¹⁹ This means for humanity that God has defeated all that would desecrate or destroy persons. Resurrection also means that enslaved, alienated humanity experiences liberation in the present¹²⁰ because Christ the liberator has been vindicated by God. Humanity, therefore, lives in hope.¹²¹ Christ declared his victory by entering hell itself according to the messianic drama, thus emptying it of its content by leading captivity captive.¹²² Küng accepts the above ideas as figurative language, indicating Christ's victory on humanity's behalf.¹²³ Küng states further that, "Jesu Wirken im Neuen Testament wird ganz allgemein gesehen im mythologischen Rahmen einer siegreichen Schlacht gegen

¹¹⁷ Christ sein, p.345.

¹¹⁸ "Twenty Propositions", p.320.

¹¹⁹ Küng, Eternal Life?, p.149.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid., p.123.

¹²² Ibid., p.162.

¹²³ Ibid.

die bösen Geister."¹²⁴ It is in this mythological language that the drama of Christ's victory over Satan's enslavement of humanity is played.¹²⁵

Certainly Christ has emptied hell of its content and power by rising beyond its power in victory, for hell is but an extension of death which Küng believes has been defeated. He goes on to accept that God is over all, consequently hell has no authority to hold that which God has liberated. Ultimately, there can be nothing "contrary to the will of an all-merciful and almighty God."¹²⁶ How can God condemn to hell when the purpose of the resurrection is to set men free from enslavement?¹²⁷

Küng, however, believes that the concept of hell offers a serious warning. He states that the pictures of hell "are meant to bring vividly before us here and now the absolute seriousness of God's claim and the urgency of conversion in the present life. This life is the emergency [that] we have to face."¹²⁸

In the light of God's action whereby he resurrected Jesus from the dead, it is clear that "the torments of hell are no longer eternal. Nor are they the last thing. 'Death is swallowed up in victory. Hell, where is your sting' Hell is open. I can freely go through it."¹²⁹

In the light of the above hope, persons are called upon by God through Christ's proclamation to live in freedom

¹²⁴ Christ sein, pp.358-359.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Küng, Eternal Life?, p.173.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p.171.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p.179.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

by "working for the elimination of the hells existing here and now."¹³⁰ Resurrection manifests itself through hope as "a protest against a society in which, without this hope, death would be misused for the maintenance of unjust structures."¹³¹

As a result of the resurrection, Christians are now called upon to live in the new order instituted by the resurrection. The fact that Christ lives in God means that he lives for our well-being, our salvation, implying that one's present vocation is to live for God now since one's future in God with Christ through the resurrection impinges on the present. Küng further states that, "the absolute future throws man back on the present."¹³²

Küng thus sees the power of the future as the force one should use to overcome all injustices by siding now with the poor and rejected.

Eschatology is open-ended, in that there is no emphasis on parousia in the form of Christ's descent from heaven with his saints wherein he comes to judge the quick and the dead. One's moment of death is therefore one's resurrection because at that moment one enters through Christ's resurrection into God's presence.

I shall now conclude this sub-section by specifically emphasising the relevance of the resurrection for today as Küng sees it.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid., p.151.

¹³² "Twenty Propositions', p.319.

4.1.6 The Significance of the Resurrection Today

Christians believe in the living Jesus because of the testimony of the early witnesses. Küng explains: "Wir sind auf das Zeugnis der ersten grundlegenden Zeugen angewiesen das uns, ... mit grösster Eindeutigkeit sagt: Der Gekreuzigte ist nicht tot, sondern er lebt und herrscht für immerdurch und mit Gott."¹³³ Christians must return to this proclamation as their basis for trust since faith is directed to the living Jesus himself.¹³⁴

Küng makes the point that in the resurrection, Jesus' person is totally linked to his cause in that one cannot, for Küng, accept the person of Jesus yet deny his cause, substantiated by the resurrection.¹³⁵ Faith in Jesus is more than a mere acceptance of the historical Jesus; it means commitment to the one who lived, died, but rose into the presence of God also. To be a Christian today involves commitment to the resurrected Christ. He makes a significant statement by saying that "Niemand glaubt an Jesus, der sich nicht in der Nachfolge zu seiner Sache bekennt."¹³⁶ Küng then underscores his point, maintaining that to be a follower of Jesus today is to walk in the light of his resurrection.¹³⁷ It is the resurrection that becomes one's strength through life, so persons are called by Jesus to follow him through life and death into the resurrection of God, by faithfully walking in one's Christian vocation.¹³⁸

¹³³ Christ sein, p.369.

¹³⁴ Ibid., pp.360-361.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p.370.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid., pp.370-371.

Küng follows with some practical suggestions for Christians today. He says that since the resurrection was for us¹³⁹ Christians live with hope as an obligation.¹⁴⁰ In accepting the cause of Christ, which is one's salvation or well-being, means "initiation into the discipleship of the One who binds me absolutely to follow my path, my own path, in accordance with his guidance."¹⁴¹ Moreover, "resurrection involves a daily struggle against death,"¹⁴² in that the Christian is obliged to live in the power of the resurrection now. Küng notes that as a Christian, one must consider Dorothee Sölle's statement identifying resurrection with liberation now.¹⁴³ Clearly then, a Christian cannot tolerate any unjust structures in society, for the Christian dies to the old, selfish life, now living, through Christ's resurrection, a life of service to God by serving one's fellow. Indeed, the word love as service is a Christian concept, based upon God's act in the proclamation of the Christ who died and rose for us.¹⁴⁴ Therefore, a Christian opposes all that desecrates, injures, and destroys in this life because he believes and acts in the knowledge of the resurrection.

In this chapter resurrection is seen as entry into the presence of God, that is, becoming one with God. (Küng does not define exactly what he means by entry into the life of God following in a lack of precision in his statements and thus opening himself to criticism. One observes a Hegelian motif in his presentation, resulting

¹³⁹ Ibid., p.368.

¹⁴⁰ Küng, Eternal Life?, p. 138.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p.148.

¹⁴² Christ sein, p.368.

¹⁴³ Küng, Eternal Life?, p.149.

¹⁴⁴ Christ sein, p.368

from his position reflected by Menschwerdung Gottes, as seen in the concept of God's presence in history. He accepts a bodily resurrection but rejects the concept of the empty tomb as legendary. However, resurrection is a real though not a historical event, one in which Christ's person and cause are vindicated.

Resurrection shows that God is faithful to himself; therefore humanity can trust the God who raises the dead, an act wherein God acts again as the creator.

The disciples responded to God's resurrection of Christ as part of their experience of God's act, one that was not supernatural, for God was present to them in his history, which is human history.

One may state with assurance that the God who liberates by the resurrection calls humanity to a new vocation in which that new humanity lives through the power of the one who died and rose into the presence of God. Consequently, all unjust structures must be removed.

I have dealt at length with the resurrection because it is the centre of Küng's thought concerning the faith of the community and the faithfulness of God.

Having shown what Küng sees as the goal of humanity in the resurrection, I shall now examine God's plan for humanity shown in Christ's pre-existence and incarnation.

4.2 CHRIST'S PRE-EXISTENCE, INCARNATION AND VIRGIN BIRTH

Clearly Küng in developing his christology places his final emphasis, not on Christ, but on God. Küng's christology, whether in Christ sein or in Menschwerdung Gottes centres in God who acts in history, a history that

in turn is fulfilled in God in accordance with K  ng's Hegelian pattern. The emphasis in the previous section reflects God as the creator, which means, for K  ng, that by the resurrection of Christ, God, who is the beginning of history is also its end. History is therefore complete in God, for God is in history, but history is also in God as the goal of history.

God, as the centre of history now reveals his centrality in his advocate as the one who represents God's cause. Since K  ng deduces from his Hegelian principles that history is always present to God as the now without beginning or end, the pre-existence of Christ is not a real problem. The pre-existence of Christ, his incarnation, life and death, and his resurrection, are in God as all of history is in God.

It is interesting to note that none of K  ng's critics, either positive or negative, appears to have grappled with K  ng's over-arching method, in which history is in God as God is in history.

K  ng effectively combines his ideas on the God in history with the historical Jesus who is the midpoint of God's historical action as proved by his resurrection.¹⁴⁵ The resurrection as a real though not an historical event is questionable and will receive attention in the chapter five.

K  ng indicates that pre-existence cannot be "set in opposition to the historical sphere ... as though it

¹⁴⁵

Christ sein, p.338. See footnotes 105 and 65.

existed so to speak behind all history in a timeless sphere,"¹⁴⁶ for God is in history as it is in God.

Küng explains his concept of eternity in the following way:

When we reason from the viewpoint of God's eternal manner of existence, we must abandon transitory and temporal conceptions. God has time in its fullness without end; His time is not fragmented into a sequence of present, past and future. Rather it is the unity of the before, the now, and the hereafter - of beginning, middle and end. This is His eternity.¹⁴⁷

Hence neither the pre-existence, incarnation, nor resurrection present a problem if one understands Küng's system, for he accepts that all history is present to God as a unity. While persons fragment events within history, God views existence as a totality. The reasons lies in the presence of history in God as his history. Therefore, it follows that "all created things can be spoken of as present in God's eternity, that is, God's eternal act of creation."¹⁴⁸ Küng, to illustrate his point, cites de Finance who echoes Thomas Aquinas on the antichrist. Küng uses the following inane example:

Although the Antichrist does not yet exist, has not yet been created, in a certain sense we can say that God creates him provided we strip this verb of all temporal connotation. In relation to us the Antichrist is future. In relation to God he is

¹⁴⁶ Hans Küng, Justification: The Doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic Reflection, (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1964), p.287. Underscoring mine. Hereafter, referred to as Justification. See further, Oscar Cullmann, Christ and Time, (London: SCM Press Ltd.), pp.52-68 and particularly p.82.

¹⁴⁷ Justification, p.291.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p.289.

present, but the now of his presence is not the temporal now from which we are speaking.¹⁴⁹

Küng has made his point that as God is in history, so all history is present to God.

It then follows that for Küng neither pre-existence, incarnation, death and resurrection are supernatural events, but are God present in a history that cannot be separated from his eternity. Küng believes he has now solved the problem of texts that refer to the "'Lamb slain from the foundation of the world' (Rev. 13.8 KJV), ..."¹⁵⁰ The answer lies in history's presence in God. Küng is therefore of the opinion that the purpose of the pre-existence and incarnational statements is to show that redemption is God's act from start to finish.¹⁵¹ They are human ways of describing the divine act of salvation. One saw in the chapter on Hegel that God goes out of the divine, into the other, returning to himself once more. God thus takes up the opposite, that is, God's manifestation of himself in the history of Christ, whom he then unites to himself in order that history should be complete in the Absolute.

Küng states: "Der lebendige Gott ist für ihn der, der sich bewegt, verändert, eine Geschichte durchmacht. Der nicht starr bleibt, was er ist, sondern wird, was er

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p.293.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p.128. Küng links pre-existence and incarnation. His basis is the Hegelian concept of God in history and history in God. Küng's view is modified by his use of Cullmann as seen in this chapter since Cullmann supplies a biblical framework for the time and eternity concepts. See pages 285-301 for his association of pre-existence and incarnation.

ist".¹⁵² Küng having showed from Hegel that God is not static, not beyond history, but in history, indicates that the highpoint of God's history is manifested in the incarnation.¹⁵³ Küng then concludes: "Dieser Gott ist nach Hegel der wahre, ist der christliche Gott."¹⁵⁴ God is the coincidenta oppositorum, the infinite in unity with the opposite, the finite, and can thus be both God and humanity. This dialectical approach of Hegel's is fulfilled in Absolute Spirit.¹⁵⁵ He is the God who, though the living God, can suffer and change.¹⁵⁶ A God present in history as the God who suffers in his opposite by making the opposite's history his own is important for understanding christology. Küng judges: "Für Christologie ist ja wesentlich, dass Gott gerade als geschichtlich Seiender auch als geschichtlich Handelnder, geschichtlich Offenbarer, geschichtlich Sprechender verstanden werden kann."¹⁵⁷

Küng further states that it is in the light of the resurrection that one must interpret pre-existence, incarnation, and the cross. It is the resurrection that sheds new light on God in history manifested through Jesus; from the standpoint of resurrection, history is given meaning as the history of God who acts. The resurrection thus becomes the "victorious anticipation"¹⁵⁸ of all of history, as both its beginning and goal. Küng judges:

¹⁵² M.G., p.526.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., pp.558-559.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p.606.

Es liess sich vielmehr in neuer Weise das von Anfang an Entscheidende deutlich machen, dass der geschichtliche Jesus gerade als Bruder der Menschen und Mensch für Andere - biblisch gesprochen - wirklich der Christus ist: in allerletzter Unableitbarkeit ('Präexistenz') und bleibender Bedeutsamkeit ('Postexistenz') das Wort Gottes, der Sohn Gottes, der Herr, dass also in Jesus der Glaube Anhalt und Grund hat zu erkennen, dass wir es in ihm, seinem Leben, Lehren, Sterben und neuem Leben, mit Gott selbst zu tun haben, dass sich also in dieser Person das vere homo und das vere Deus treffen, dass sich in ihm die Menschlichkeit unseres Gottes offenbart, dass in ihm gerade als dem Worte Gottes die wahre Menschwerdung Gottes um der Menschwerdung des Menschen willen geschehen ist.¹⁵⁹

It is thus from the point of resurrection that Jesus receives his titles of authority from the post-easter community. Furthermore, as an outcome of the resurrection the post-easter community re-interpreted Christ's role by the use of ideas expressing salvation as an act of God from start to finish. Hence the use of terms involving pre-existence, incarnation, and eschatology.

The purpose of designations like those mentioned above is further explained as follows:

The incarnation becomes reality in a specific space-time point of our history yet in the eternity of God the incarnation of the Son, is, ..fixed in God's decree where no shadow of alteration exists. Thus in His eternity, God decrees Himself in His Son to be man. So the pre-existent Jesus is indeed identical with the Redeemer.¹⁶⁰

The history of redemption then, is a unity from the aspect of God's eternity. Yet in terms of time, from the human point of view, history has a past, present and a future. Küng again explains his intention:

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. ,pp.606-610.

¹⁶⁰ Justification, p.293.

Jesus Christ in his pre-existence, does not stand alone in the Father's sight ... He stands before the Father together with the Church and, in fact, together with mankind. Then too, we men were chosen in God's eternity with and in Jesus Christ.¹⁶¹

Küng adds: "This unity of ours with Jesus Christ stands therefore, before the foundation of the world, as God's one eternal decree and plan of salvation."¹⁶² In Christ then, God expresses his history as human history. History is in God, expressed in Jesus Christ, as the history of God, using terms like pre-existence and incarnation.¹⁶³ Humans speak from

transitory and temporal conceptions. [But] God has time in its fullness without end; His time is not fragmented into a sequence of present, past and future. Rather it is the unity of the before, the now and the hereafter [as] His eternity.¹⁶⁴

Thus, for Küng terms such as "pre"¹⁶⁵ are misleading when speaking of God's history.

Pre-existence and incarnation are therefore understood from the goal of salvation manifested in the resurrection. Küng believes that because of the resurrection of Jesus, and the fulfillment of God's plan for humanity in him, the early church was obliged to interpret Jesus' relationship to God in the way that they did in the scriptures.

It was just such a reflection that led to an idea of pre-existence, an apocalyptic concept prevalent in that

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p.130.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p.290.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., pp.291-292.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

era.¹⁶⁶ Küng believes that the early church as the outcome of the resurrection asked an important question: "War also der, der Ziel der Schöpfung und der Geschichte ist, nicht schon immer in Gottes ewigem Schöpfungs - und Heilsplan."¹⁶⁷ He then adds: "Selbverständlich ist auch hier nicht vom Anfang zum Ende, sondern vom Ende zum Anfang hin gedacht worden."¹⁶⁸ If he was the Son of God by the resurrection, then how was he to be viewed within God's eternal plan? Times may change, but Jesus is the same, yesterday, today, forever.¹⁶⁹ The important aspect for pre-existence then is that God's history can never be separated from Jesus and that history is always linked to the cross and resurrection.¹⁷⁰ It would be wrong to say that pre-existence and incarnation existed only in God's thought as an ideal, as history is always present in God.

It is important to note that any reflection on pre-existence or incarnation in Christ Sein should be read in conjunction with Menschwerdung Gottes to ascertain Küng's method.

Pre-existence and incarnation then mean that "Es gibt von Ewigkeit keinen anderen Gott, der sich in Jesus manifestiert hat: Das Gesicht, das er in Jesus gezeigt hat, ist wirklich sein wahres und einziges Gesicht."¹⁷¹ It is thus in Jesus that persons are confronted with the presence and claims of God. God's salvation for humanity was, therefore, always a part of his eternal plan,

¹⁶⁶ Christ sein, p.335.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p.436.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p.435.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p.456.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., pp.436-437.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p.437.

grounded in his being as God.¹⁷² Moreover, God's salvation could never be separated from Christ, in whom it is made universal.¹⁷³ Pre-existence and incarnation tell the Christian that what happened in and to Jesus was not the result of chance, but was always within the scope of God's history.¹⁷⁴

Pre-existence and incarnation, from the perspective of the resurrection, have a further message for humanity. They call persons to see the present from the perspective of ultimate reality, realizing that, "In Jesus ruft der eine wahre Gott selbst auf den Weg."¹⁷⁵

Pre-existence and incarnation confirm that God is involved in history. God's history in the world is revealed in Jesus. Consequently, humanity is called to trust in Jesus, which in turn means trusting God.

How do the above concepts affect Christ's birth from a virgin, a story limited to Matthew and Luke? Küng states:

Heute wird es freilich auch von katholischen Exegeten zugegeben: Es handelt sich bei diesen Geschichten um historisch weithin ungesicherte, unter sich widersprüchliche, stark legendäre und letztlich theologisch motivierte Erzählungen eigener Prägung.¹⁷⁶

They are thus contradictory legends, attempting retroactively to highlight Jesus' Messiahship as son of David and the new Moses. For example, as Moses was

¹⁷² Ibid., pp.436-437.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p.438.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p.441.

rescued from Pharoah so Jesus was rescued from Herod.¹⁷⁷ Thus the evangelists are not narrating historical facts, but are presenting theological creations for faith purposes.¹⁷⁸

In the stories of the virgin birth, the evangelists' accounts portray the end of the covenant of law, replaced by that of the Spirit of Christ, hence their emphasis upon the Spirit creating Christ ex nihilo. The creation account of Jesus is similar to that in Genesis. Therefore in Jesus, God's new beginning has begun, a beginning that was always in God's history as pre-existence, manifested in the incarnation, and verified by the resurrection.¹⁷⁹ The virgin birth is a legendary way of portraying the importance of Jesus for God's salvation plan. He is the new beginning bringing in the new age.

Thus it can be said, while pre-existence and incarnation show God as faithful to his eternal plan attested by the resurrection, the virgin birth attempts through legends to portray a similar theological truth, that is, that a new beginning for humanity was always within the orbit of God's history for humanity. A picture is presented of God who is in the creation as a part of its history by means of the story of the virgin birth.

I shall now examine Küng's soteriology in the light of the historical-critical method that he employs. As noted earlier in this chapter, the emphasis in German theology generally is on the resurrection; hence, all other doctrines including the atonement are viewed from the stand-point of the resurrection. (See footnote 1)

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p.446.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., pp.446-447.

4.3 KÜNG'S UNDERSTANDING OF ATONEMENT

In the light of the resurrection, what may be positively stated concerning the death of Jesus? One saw in Küng's picture of the historical Jesus that he provoked his death by siding with the outcasts of society against the establishment. He did so by identifying God's cause with his own proclamation of the Kingdom of God in which God showed himself to be on the side of the down-trodden. God's will was thus for humanity's well-being, or salvation.

Because Jesus saw himself as related to God in a special way, calling him Father, setting himself above Moses and claiming the authority to forgive sins, he ultimately provoked his death. In death, Küng believes, Jesus died abandoned by God and humanity; thus, to all purposes, his claim to act in God's place as his advocate had ended on the gallows as an empty endeavour. It is to this point and no further that the historical-critical method leads the investigator of the historical Jesus.

Yet, between the historical Jesus who died rejected and the faith of the community, one finds Jesus' resurrection, an event that leads to a re-interpretation of the cross, giving it a new significance. By his historical-critical method Küng shows how the hermeneutics of the post-easter community, aided by the redactional work of the evangelists led to a reinterpretation of the atonement. The post-easter era gives rise to the titles of Jesus, the legend of the virgin birth, and a new understanding of the action of God in history expressed by pre-existence and incarnation.

It is therefore from the aspect of the resurrection that the death of Jesus as an act of atonement will be investigated.

4.3.1 Küng's Interpretation of Christ's Atonement

Küng contends that the resurrection is central to the death of Christ, for, "Without faith in the risen Christ, faith in the crucified Jesus lacks confirmation and authorization."¹⁸⁰ The cross, Küng believes, gives Christianity its "great distinctive reality,"¹⁸¹ in that the cross separates belief in Christ from mere superstition. Jesus is unlike the exalted gods or "deified founders of religions"¹⁸² because of the cross. In the cross God's advocate is faced with his terrible, ultimate ordeal. It is the cross that separates the Christian faith from unbelief and superstition, for how could such tragedy strike God's personal advocate? Certainly, Küng adds, one must see the cross "in the light of the resurrection, but also the resurrection in the shadow of the cross."¹⁸³ At this point Christianity, for Küng, becomes distinctive. In the light of the resurrection, how should one then interpret atonement?

Küng indicates the indignity of the cross by using direct, harsh language. He affirms: 'Das Kreuz Jesu musste einem gebildeten Griechen als barbarische Torheit, einem römischen Bürger als Schande schlechthin, einem gläubigen Juden aber als Gottesfluch vorkommen.'¹⁸⁴ However, Küng finds a vital new significance injected

¹⁸⁰ "Twenty Propositions", p.329.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p.387.

into the life of the early community. He continues: "Die Gemeinde der Glaubenden kann deshalb nie vergessen, dass der Auferstandene identisch ist und bleibt mit dem Gekreuzigten."¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, the community was reminded through the experience of the resurrection that God put his stamp of approval upon Christ's message and person since, "Er sagte Ja zu seiner Verkündigung, seinem Verhalten, seinem Geschick."¹⁸⁶ As a result of the resurrection of the crucified, the one who called persons into faith, in turn, becomes the content of that faith.¹⁸⁷ Thus, "The ultimate distinctive feature of Christianity - the definitive answer can now be given - is quite literally according to Paul 'this Jesus Christ, Jesus, Christ crucified (1. Cor. 2:2).'"¹⁸⁸ The crucified one is now therefore the risen Lord.¹⁸⁹

The early community and the evangelists, acting as redactors for their own theological purposes, interpreted the cross as a historic action of God in a new way. The post-easter community, therefore, developed a theology from their Easter experience. Küng affirms:

An die Stelle der anfänglichen Trostlosigkeit und Sprachlosigkeit war im Licht der Ostererfahrung zunächst einfach die schlichte Überzeugung getreten, dass sich alles doch nach Gottes Ratschluss abgespielt haben muss, dass Jesus nach Gottes Willen diesen Weg gehen 'müsste'.¹⁹⁰

The cross for the community now becomes part of God's will and decree. Jesus therefore had to walk this path

¹⁸⁵ M.G., p.606.

¹⁸⁶ Christ sein, p.372.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p.373.

¹⁸⁸ "Twenty Propositions", p.329.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Christ sein, p.387.

to the cross. Examples were taken from the Old Testament, showing how Christ's death as the suffering servant of Isaiah was within God's plan for human salvation.¹⁹¹

Paul in his reaction to the Judaizers referred to in the Galatian epistle indicates that Christ puts an end to the law as a way of salvation; thus the Jesus who was destroyed by the law has shown the deficiency of the law. The curse upon Christ has been removed and, against the claims of the law, Christ's proclamation is vindicated by God.¹⁹²

The opposite of a salvation by works of law is now salvation through grace. Küng explains "Was für Paulus zeitlebens 'Gnade' als die völlig unverdiente Freundlichkeit Gottes bedeutet, gründet in dieser lebendigen Erfahrung des Gekreuzigten, der sich ihm als der Lebendige, der eigentliche Herr offenbarte."¹⁹³ Paul consequently rejects salvation "and"¹⁹⁴ for it is Christ alone who saves. There is no idea of Jesus plus. Such an idea is contrary to grace.¹⁹⁵ Grace excludes works. The death of Jesus for humanity's well-being or salvation is grounded in God's decree expressed through Old Testament terminology with a firm basis in Paul's understanding of grace.

Küng believes that neither the New Testament nor the Fathers provide for just a single theory of atonement, there is diversity in interpretation. Furthermore, some

¹⁹¹ Ibid., pp.387-388.

¹⁹² Ibid., pp.390-392.

¹⁹³ Ibid., p.395.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

of the biblical interpretations are not intelligible today.¹⁹⁶ Does a modern person grasp the meaning, for instance, of "sacrifice"?¹⁹⁷ Küng believes that the Old Testament picture of a sacrifice should now be replaced by emphasizing reconciliation, liberation or representation.¹⁹⁸ Küng insists: "Die für die Judenchristen damals so verständliche Vorstellung vom Kreuzestod als einem Sühnopfer ist nur eines und keineswegs das zentrale Interpretationsmodell des Kreuzestodes."¹⁹⁹ The idea of expiation and sacrifice results from doctrines of total depravity and original sin, which leads to Anselm's idea of atonement where it is expressed in legal terms, requiring a satisfaction of God's outraged honour by humanity's sin. Through his sacrifice Christ pays the debt owed by man to God, hence the injustice done to God is addressed.²⁰⁰ Küng not only rejects the ransom theory but also the idea of sacrifice as a propitiation that removes God's wrath.²⁰¹

Küng then presents his own view, outlining the necessity for retaining the fact that Christ died "for us".²⁰² Christ then did not basically come to remove sin in terms of a sacrifice, but he is for us in the presence of God where he continually seeks humanity's well-being on salvation.²⁰³ One should then replace the idea of sin with enslavement and alienation for purposes of a modern

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p.410.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., p.411.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p.416.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., pp.415-416.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p.411.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p.410.

²⁰² Ibid., p.416.

²⁰³ Ibid.

understanding. In the light of humanity's problems today, the risen Christ continues to seek the well-being of persons.²⁰⁴

From this understanding of atonement, Küng inclines towards the Christus Victor theory. He affirms: "Jesus hatte also doch recht, er, nicht seine Gegner, ist der Sieger."²⁰⁵ The one therefore who died defeated by the powers that enslave is none other than the resurrected earthly Jesus who rose in victory.²⁰⁶ Consequently, Küng rejects also the moral influence theory stating: "Das Kreuz ist nicht ... Beispiel und Modell, sondern Grund und Urbild christlichen Glaubens."²⁰⁷ The early church added a sacrificial dimension to Christ's death, an expiatory aspect wherein he overcame the evil powers on humanity's behalf. Küng concedes, however, that sacrificial terms are meaningless today.²⁰⁸ It is a moot point to say that sacrificial terms are beyond the grasp of people now, particularly since one often hears of black parents sacrificing their health and possessions to give their children an education. Küng overstates his case in my opinion.

Christ therefore died (sacrificed himself) for humanity's well-being, and as the resurrected one he continues to identify God's cause with that of humanity. God's aim is "to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth (Eph. 1:9-10)."²⁰⁹

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ M.G., p.606.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Justification, p.225. Küng refers his readers to chapters 21-25.

Jesus did not therefore die primarily to remove sin in the atonement, but to represent the cause of sinners as law-breakers and outlaws before God. It is persons of this nature that Jesus defends, therefore "he is the representative of sinners in the worst sense of the word."²¹⁰ The object of Jesus' death was not sin, but the sinner. Sacrifice by Christ means the giving of himself for the cause of others in terms of the New Testament post-easter interpretation of his death.²¹¹

The idea of Christ as humanity's representative and of the cross as victory is prominent in Küng's thought. The cause of God is justified in that God raised the crucified who in his death identified God's cause with humanity's well-being.

In the light of Küng's concept of resurrection, pre-existence, incarnation, and atonement, can one speak today of Christ as divine? What is the meaning today of the term divine? Küng does not give precise definitions, he only provides pointers for a future christology. Yet questions of Jesus' divinity are vital for dialogue between religions and for ecumenical purposes. Therefore questions about Jesus do involve concepts of divinity that require interpretation.

²¹⁰ Ibid., p.229.

²¹¹ The Church, p.215. Here Küng appears to be at variance with what he says in his later works. He accepts that reconciliation is affected by "removing the real basis of enmity between God and man, which is sin." This seems to differ from his request in Christ sein for the abandonment of a sacrifice for sin. See pages 414-417.

4.4 IS JESUS DIVINE?

Küng concedes that Jesus viewed himself in a special relationship with God as seen in the way he addressed God as his Father, the I passages and the fact that he set himself above Moses, even forgiving sins. Indeed, according to Küng, Jesus saw himself as God's final advocate.²¹²

However, Küng then focuses attention on Christ's suffering in the garden and concludes that the one suffering and tempted to doubt, fearful, and anxious, is no "Superperson," (Übermensch)²¹³ Jesus did not see his death as a supernatural atonement as manifested in his cry of despair on the cross. This cry on the cross leads Küng to ask: "Ist es der Schrei eines vertrauensvoll Betenden oder eines an Gott Verzweifelten?"²¹⁴ This is the shriek of desperation, a cry of helplessness. Küng accepts, beyond doubt, the humanity of Jesus.

In addition, Jesus was not supernaturally aware of his death, but understood it as a logical outcome of his proclamation.²¹⁵ Küng continues: "Jesu gewaltsames Ende lag in der Logik seiner Verkündigung und seines Verhaltens."²¹⁶ His death was the conclusion to his proclamation.

Moreover, Jesus could err since he expected the kingdom of God to arrive in the very near future, which leads to the question: "War er nicht in einer Illusion befangen?"

²¹² Christ sein, p.380.

²¹³ Ibid., p.319.

²¹⁴ Ibid., p.330.

²¹⁵ Ibid., pp.311-314.

²¹⁶ Ibid., p.325.

Kurz: hat er sich nicht geirrt?"²¹⁷ Küng responds: "Irren ist menschlich. Und wenn Jesus von Nazaret wahrhaft Mensch war, konnte er auch irren."²¹⁸ If Jesus erred concerning the time of the kingdom's arrival, he did not err concerning its content. He erred at the level of cosmic knowledge but not with regard to the meaning of the kingdom existentially²¹⁹ as expressing God's concern for the outcasts of society and their needs. The error is limited to the language and symbols of the day, and one must therefore distinguish between the time-limited language and the real content of Jesus' proclamation.²²⁰ Error is a relative term. One must rather see Jesus' self understanding in the light of his proclamation in that, "Er selber ist der Anfang vom Ende.... Mit ihm ist Gott nahe."²²¹ It then follows that the I and Amen sayings and his calling of God Father are decisive for establishing his identity.²²² Moreover, one's acceptance or rejection of his proclamation determined one's destiny before God.²²³ Thus one can establish that Jesus saw his relationship to God as unique in terms of the historical Jesus. One should note that Küng does not attempt to show that Christ is omniscient or absolutely perfect. He makes no reference to traditional terms attributed to Jesus. He limits himself to terms that are relational.

²¹⁷ Ibid., p.208.

²¹⁸ Ibid., pp.208-209.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid., pp.210-211.

²²¹ Ibid., p.212.

²²² Ibid., pp.304-308.

²²³ Ibid., p.203.

Küng does not settle the question of Jesus' divinity on the basis of the historical Jesus; he is obliged to draw upon the resources found in the resurrection. It is this act of God's vindication that gives meaning to Jesus' person. With the resurrection, God's unity with Jesus' proclamation is seen. The process of rejection, culminating in the cross, is reversed; therefore Küng says: "Damit sind Botschaft und Botschafter, sind das 'Evangelium Jesu' und das 'Evangelium von Jesus Christus' zu einer Einheit geworden."²²⁴ It was in such a unity that the community interpreted Jesus' relationship to God.²²⁵ The resurrection therefore gives significance to Jesus' person and his atonement on the cross.²²⁶

In the light of the above, God accepts Jesus as his advocate and humanity's representative. What significance then does the preceding section have for revealing Jesus' divinity? It is as a result of the cross and resurrection that Jesus' sonship is understood,²²⁷ in keeping with the early community's method of working backwards from the resurrection in order to determine his person.

Küng now attempts to decipher the nature of Jesus' divinity, believing it to be not ontological, but functional. Küng contends that the earlier christology was the two-stage christology of exaltation. However, this christology from below was superseded by an incarnational christology from above, leading to ontological ways of expressing christology. Therefore Küng acknowledges: "Es geht weniger um die Funktion als

²²⁴ Ibid., p.373.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid., p.388.

²²⁷ Ibid.

um die Wesen. Begriffe wie Wesen, Natur, Substanz, Hypothese, Person, Union, sollten eine wachsende Bedeutung bekommen."²²⁸ The emphasis shifted from function to being, an emphasis that was not in keeping with the christology of the New Testament nor the earlier church Fathers. In the later Fathers, Jesus becomes a superhuman person, of divine origin, who pre-existed with God but in the fullness of time takes a human form in Jesus.²²⁹ In John's Gospel, Jesus is designated as God, but this gospel is of a late origin, and shows Hellenistic influence.²³⁰ The point I believe that Küng is trying to make is that no Jew would refer to a person as God; that is an Hellenistic innovation.

Against Hellenistic christology, the Greek Orthodox church, unlike its Latin, Roman counterpart, placed the emphasis directly on the resurrection and not on the incarnation and cross.²³¹ Küng affirms that the orthodox emphasis on resurrection and not incarnation is correct.²³²

Küng now closely defines his concept of the divinity of Christ. He asserts: "In ihm ist, wie wir gesehen haben, Gottes Wort und Willen offenbar, 'Fleisch' geworden."²³³ This means for Küng:

Jesus hat in seinem ganzen Reden, Tun und Leiden, hat in seiner ganzen Person Gottes Wort und Willen verkündet, manifestiert, geoffenbart. Ja, man kann sagen: Er, in dem sich Wort und Tat,

²²⁸ Ibid., p.430.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid., p.431.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Ibid., p.433.

Lehren und Leben, Sein und Handeln völlig decken, ist leibhaftig, ist in menschlicher Gestalt Gottes Wort und Wille.²³⁴

Jesus is therefore, the incarnation of God's word and will in human expression. The emphasis is not speculative but historical. All the New Testament passages referring to divinity must be understood in a functional and not an ontological way.²³⁵

Taking into account the preceding paragraph what does the statement, truly God and truly man mean? It implies "Der wahre Mensch Jesus von Nazaret ist für den Glauben des einen wahren Gottes wirkliche Offenbarung."²³⁶ The truly human Jesus is consequently the revelation of the only true God. The purpose of the New Testament metaphors is to express Jesus as having a unique relationship to both God and humanity.²³⁷

Küng, having criticised the ontology of the councils, for example Chalcedon, then positively affirms his case for seeing Jesus as truly God and truly man. He states:

wahrhaft Gott: Die ganze Bedeutsamkeit des Geschehens in und mit Jesus von Nazaret hängt daran, dass in Jesus - der den Menschen als Gottes Sachwalter und Platzhalter, Repräsentant und Stellvertreter erschien und als der Gekreuzigte zum Leben erweckt von Gott bestätigt wurde - für die Glaubenden der menschenfreundliche Gott selber nahe war, am Werk war, gesprochen hat, gehandelt hat, endgültig sich geoffenbart hat. Alle oft in

²³⁴ Ibid., p.434.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid., p.435.

mythologische oder halbmythologische Formen der Zeit gekleideten Aussagen über Gottessohnschaft, Vorausexistenz, Schöpfungsmittlerschaft und Menschwerdung wollen letztlich nicht mehr und nicht weniger als das eine: die Einzigartigkeit, Unableitbarkeit und Unüberbietbarkeit des in und mit Jesus lautgewordenen Anrufs, Angebots, Anspruchs begründen, der letztlich nicht menschlichen, sondern göttlichen Ursprungs ist und deshalb, absolut verlässlich, die Menschen unbedingt angeht.

wahrhaft Mensch: Dass Jesus ohne Abstriche mit allen Konsequenzen (Leidensfähigkeit, Angst, Einsamkeit, Ungesicherheit, Versuchungen, Zweifel, Irrtumsmöglichkeit) voll und ganz Mensch war, muss auch heute noch gegen alle Vergöttungstendenzen immer wieder betont werden. Aber nicht ein blosser Mensch, sondern der wahre Mensch. Als solcher gab er - wie hier im Zeichen der wahrzumachenden Wahrheit, der Einheit von Theorie und Praxis, Bekenntnis und Nachfolge, Glauben und Handeln zum Ausdruck gebracht - durch seine Verkündigung, sein Verhalten und Geschick ein Modell des Menschseins, das einem jeden, der sich vertrauensvoll darauf einlässt, ermöglicht, den Sinn des Menschseins und seiner Freiheit im Dasein für die Mitmenschen zu entdecken und zu verwirklichen. Als von Gott bestätigt, stellt er so schliesslich den bleibend verlässlichen letzten Massstab des Menschseins dar.

Damit ist nun indirekt auch klar geworden: An der vom Neuen Testament wirklich gedeckten Wahrheit der alten chirstologischen Konzilien soll nichts abgestrichen werden, auch wenn sie aus dem soziokulturellen hellenistischen Kontext immer

wieder in den Verstehenshorizont unserer Zeit hinein zu übersetzen ist.

Nach dem Neuen Testament entscheidet sich freilich das Christsein nicht letztlich mit der Zustimmung zu diesem oder jenem noch so hohen Dogma über Christus, nicht mit einer Christologie oder Christus-Theorie, sondern mit dem Christusglauben und der Christusunachfolge!²³⁸

The New Testament criterion is faith in Christ expressed through discipleship.

This lengthy passage tells one two things about Jesus: He came to show humanity what God is like, and he came to show humanity what it ought to be. He is thus truly God and truly man. It is in the above way that one can speak relevantly of two natures. This issue is raised in the final chapter.

There is no doubt that Küng displays a functionalistic view of Christ's divinity that in many ways is in keeping with the New Testament and the early church Fathers. He is at one with the Father by his actions. No thought of a shared essence entered the earliest discussions.

Küng is consistent because his functionalism involves a God who works in history by identifying with Christ in history, that is, God's history. Hence Küng moves easily from Hegel to the historical Jesus and back to Hegel's view of history for the resurrection and future.

Küng has placed the resurrection at the centre of his system since it highlights all the doctrines mentioned in this section: it is the one who was crucified and died

²³⁸

Ibid., pp.439-440.

who also arose. Certainly God vindicated the person and proclamation of the historical Jesus, who functionally, in the way outlined above, was truly God and truly man.

Since Küng continually emphasizes the witness of Scripture,²³⁹ one may ask how he sees it.

4.4.1 Scripture: The Norma Normans. Tradition: The Norma Normata

One need not dwell upon this subject except to acknowledge its importance for Küng.

He asks:

An was glauben wir eigentlich? Was ist der Grund des christlichen Glaubens? Ist es die Kirche oder die Bibel? Das ist eine falsche Alternative. Es ist weder die Kirche noch die Bibel. Der Grund des Glaubens ist Gott selbst in Jesus, ist somit dieser Jesus Christus selbst, der in der Bibel ursprünglich bezeugt und von Kirche immer wieder neu verkündet wird.²⁴⁰

The church thus proclaims faith in God through Jesus as attested by the Bible.

Küng argues his case against tradition by claiming that the Catholic church has misused tradition, by superimposing it upon Scripture as a norm. The hierarchy ultimately is responsible since it binds Scripture to a tradition acceptable to itself, whereas this authority should not reside in the hierarchy represented by the Pope, but in revelation.²⁴¹

²³⁹ Refer to any one of his works, where scriptures are his continuous point of reference.

²⁴⁰ Hans Küng, Unfehlbar? : Eine Anfrage, (Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1970), pp.178-179.

²⁴¹ Ibid., p.60.

Therefore Küng affirms:

Bestimmend blieben so zu Recht die Schriften des Neuen (und Alten) Testaments. Alle nachfolgende kirchliche Tradition kommentiert, expliziert, appliziert und transponiert, wenn auch mit wechselndem Erfolg, diese ursprüngliche Überlieferung.²⁴²

Tradition, for Küng, is the Norma Normata, its purpose is explanatory. One is therefore continually recalled to the witness to Christ in the New Testament, a norm that the hierarchy are called upon to heed. I simply refer to Küng's position on Scripture and tradition (though it is not essential to the thesis) because Scripture is the final witness to Jesus.

It seems clear to us that all christological doctrines for Küng are interpreted from the viewpoint of the resurrection. Küng, as seen on the section pertaining to resurrection, accepts that because of this concept, one may deduce that God exists and that he is faithful to humanity. By the resurrection of Jesus (a real though not an historical event), God shows that he is on the side of humanity, for death and destruction are not the end, God is!

All christological doctrines in Küng's method are subservient to, or subsumed by, the doctrine of the resurrection. At this point, Küng, to my way of thinking and by his own admission as seen in this chapter, is influenced by Hegel whereby the Absolute directs all history towards itself. In the resurrection, Christ representing all creation returns to God in reconciliation, overcoming estrangement.

Furthermore, by means of the historical-critical method, Küng dispenses with ideas like pre-existence, incarnation

²⁴²

Ibid., pp.60-61.

and the virgin birth, showing that they are indications that a salvation beginning with God must end with God (through the resurrection) as revealed in Christ. In fact, the resurrection is the norm for K  ng's christology.

The atonement, too, obtains its significance for K  ng from the resurrection. The historical-critical method shows that Jesus' death had no significance apart from the status conferred on it by the post-easter community, resulting from their understanding of the resurrection, whereby they were led to see God as the faithful one witnessed to by the Old Testament prophets.

K  ng, by using the historical-critical method, explains Jesus' divinity as the revelation of how God acts (what he is like) and what humanity ought to do and be in response to God's revelation through Christ, a revelation witnessed to be scripture alone in relation to the historical-critical method.

Having discussed K  ng's christology, I will in the next chapter provide a critique of it, prefaced by a summary of the christological ideas discussed in this chapter and the ones before it.

CHAPTER FIVE

A CRITIQUE OF HANS KÜNG'S CHRISTOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to subject Küng's christology to a critical appraisal. In order to do so, it is first of all necessary to provide an exposition of it, gathering together the ideas presented in the previous chapters. Such an exposition is also needed because of Küng's complaint that he has been totally misrepresented by the German Catholic bishops, who accused him of assuming that Jesus is no more than an exemplary human, acting simply as God's spokesman. Furthermore, since the popular German press has taken note of his christology and entered into the debate concerning Jesus' status in relation to God and humanity, a clear exposition cannot be avoided before criticisms are made.

It will be observed later in this chapter when I discuss Küng's position on the christological spectrum that his main problem can be reduced to the fact that his christology never moves beyond the stage of a prolegomenon to a future christology. Thus it is unfair to assess him as if he had presented a final magnum opus on the subject. Indeed, this limitation is a distinct weakness on Küng's part, indicating that he still must develop his christology through further scholarly exposition. At the same time, however, a hasty over-reaction has to my mind been shown by those who summarily dismissed him from his lecturing position as a teacher of seminarians, not for a heretical christology, but for an underdeveloped one. These issues will become clearer when his christological findings are explained and evaluated. A possible solution to what I consider as a prolegomenon to a future christology will take the form

of an option that Küng could have used involving process theology. This is dealt with in the next chapter.

This chapter therefore offers a brief summary of all the preceding material followed by a presentation and evaluation of three issues that I consider to be pertinent arising from his assumptions: Küng's use of Hegel, the historical Jesus, and the problem of history as it relates to faith. Additionally, Küng's reliance on the historical-critical method and the New Hermeneutic in relation to the New Quest will receive attention. Thereafter, following an understanding of his christology, I will attempt to ascertain his position on the current christological spectrum with a view to the possible future direction of his christology.

5.1 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

Küng believes that the Christian church faces problems today that need to be addressed from the standpoint of a modern world-view. He is convinced that christology, in particular, requires a restatement since what the church proclaims about Christ is clearly of paramount importance because Christ is the centre of the church's faith.

The church must therefore be relevant to modern persons. It can no longer be tied to outmoded thought patterns and language. Chalcedon, according to Küng, epitomizes this problem by using language that is incomprehensible to modern persons. As an example of the change in language, one need only observe that words like "person" and "nature" have changed their meaning over the years, becoming unintelligible with the passing of time.

Küng therefore attempts a solution to this problem by a new approach to Jesus Christ, particularly as he relates to God. Küng thus rejects the static ideas of Chalcedon

with its concepts of Jesus having two natures, one being truly God, and the other being truly man. As we have seen, Küng attempts to find a solution by using Hegel's philosophy as an alternative to Chalcedon. Hegel now provides a conception of the arena wherein God enters human history at a particular point in history namely Jesus Christ. Hegel's philosophy is therefore seen by Küng as the vehicle for understanding God's becoming in history. Such an action not only involves the historicity of God, but the historicity of God in Jesus Christ specifically as well. By a dynamic view of God, Hegel, Küng believes, overcomes the problem of God's transcendence in immanence. The classical view of the two natures of Christ is consequently given a new perspective wherein God acts through association with Christ.

However, Küng does not stop with Hegel since the place of Jesus remains speculative within the system; he goes on to attempt to identify the speculative Christ within Hegel's system with the historical Jesus by means of the historical-critical method so as to make him acceptable to modern persons. Jesus is therefore stripped of all that Küng considers unnecessary and liable to hinder Christian proclamation today.

What then can be said about the person of Jesus as discovered by the historical-critical method? Küng, in his lecture at Brussels in 1970 on the context of the Christian message and its relevance for today, sums up that message as the power given by Christ to live in a truly human way in the present, "totally dependent on God and totally committed to our fellow human beings."¹ Küng gives an outline of the critical findings on the historical Jesus. They are, as seen in our third

¹ Küng, "What is the Christian Message?", p.29.

chapter, that Jesus conforms to no pattern. He was a layman who sided neither with the establishment, the moralists, the ascetics, nor the zealots. He relativized the holy institutions of Judaism by showing that the law was only effective in as far as it was of benefit to persons. Worship of God was not centred in the temple, but in service to one's fellows. The love that he preached extended beyond the righteous to the outcasts of society, thereby putting persons above the law, which forbade association with these sinners. Jesus' message was one of forgiveness, thus he gave a new dimension to the teaching on God.

The heart of Jesus' message was the coming kingdom of God in which God actually sided with the sinners. In his actions, Jesus showed himself to be greater than Moses, the temple, and the prophets of Israel. He even claimed the authority to forgive sins. These events ultimately led to his death by the law that he opposed. However, the one who died abandoned by God and man also arose from the dead. The early church now proclaimed that the crucified was alive. Thus there developed the early community based on faith in the risen Christ. It saw that the crucified now exists in the presence of God.

One may consequently adduce that Küng's use of Hegel and the historical critical method with its implications regarding the New Quest for the historical Jesus, will involve a reinterpretation of traditional doctrines such as pre-existence, incarnation, and atonement as well as the concept of resurrection. Küng interprets these doctrines along Hegelian lines using the New Hermeneutic and its corollary in Küng's metadogmatic. This term involves the application of the New Hermeneutic (a concept limited to New Testament studies) to Systematic Theology. In fact, since God is present in all of

history, Küng attempts an explanation of traditional doctrines from his Hegelian and New Hermeneutical method.

In the light of the above summary, certain issues are especially important and need attention. These are Küng's understanding of the historicity of God, followed by its obvious counterpart, the historicity of God in Jesus Christ. The third aspect to be evaluated is Küng's epistemology wherein he relates history to faith.

I will also take note of Küng's position on the current christological spectrum in order to clarify his position by comparing him with Protestants such as Pannenberg, Moltmann, and Jüngel, all of whom have been influenced by Hegel and the historical-critical method. I will also compare Küng with his Catholic colleague at Tübingen, Walter Kasper, as well as Edward Schillebeeckx. Similarities and differences will be noted.

I believe that German christology, particularly that of Küng, has reached an impasse in that it has unsuccessfully attempted to unite a secular method with a metaphysical system. This statement will be expanded upon in 5.4 below. Consequently, I shall make an attempt at a guideline for a possible extension of Küng's christology as I see it. This will take the form of a direction derived from process theology. I believe this method is appropriate, for Küng is deeply committed to the concept of God's becoming, as are the process theologians. Moreover, it is my opinion that Küng needs to move beyond a nineteenth century philosopher like Hegel to a modern concept of God's becoming in Christ. Such a channel is provided by the evolutionary emphasis in process theology.

Next, then, I shall critically examine Küng's findings on the historicity of God.

5.2 THE HISTORICITY OF GOD

There will be a certain overlapping of the above concept and the following section on the historicity of God in Christ. The reason lies in Küng's understanding of the dialectic in God as one that manifests itself in terms such as suffering and becoming. These ideas in Küng's understanding of Hegel are always associated with Jesus Christ, as shown in this chapter.

While this section deals mainly with the dialectic within God's historical action of becoming manifest in Jesus Christ, the next section involves Küng's findings regarding the historical Jesus and his relationship to God. These factors must certainly be seen as Küng's attempt to re-state the two nature theory of Chalcedon to meet the problem of scepticism today. However, should one accept the dialectic that God as the divine acts in history in the humanity of the historical Jesus, Küng's hermeneutic involving history and faith requires examination because this transition from history to faith is an important aspect of Küng's interpretation of christology. This idea will also become clearer in this chapter. Having said this, one must not lose sight of his starting point which is God's historicity as his answer to the problem he has with Chalcedon.

5.2.1 The Dialectic in God

Dialectic according to Hegel (the thrust of chapter 1) involves the essence of God's historicity because all of reality finds its structure through opposites. If that is the situation, then God, to affirm divinity, is obliged to accept the opposite represented in world history. In order to find fulfillment, God is obliged to overcome the negative in history. God's alienation from

the world is expressed in the man Jesus who through the resurrection is united with God together with humanity.² Consequently, God becomes the centre of historical action.³

5.2.2 Becoming in God

The idea of God's becoming through the above Hegelian dialectic, in Küng's opinion, is the most significant contribution by Hegel to modern christology.⁴ By means of Hegel's exposition of God's process through history, Küng is able to define his understanding of Menschwerdung Gottes. God, in order to be complete must of necessity experience history including its darker side of suffering as a part of his becoming so that the unity of absolute Spirit may be attained. This dynamic becoming in God, Küng asserts, is the basis of a future christology, for by the act of God's becoming, he shares in and overcomes that suffering by his historical participation with suffering in the world.⁵

What then is Küng's premise for accepting Hegel's contention that God acts in history? The answer lies in the notion that, "Gott selbst ist die Geschichte!"⁶ Küng does not wish to convey by the above statement that Hegel is a pantheist, he insists rather that he is a panentheist. In other words, God, while in the process of history, is more than the sum total of historicity since God ultimately transcends the operation of history

² Kaufmann, Hegel, pp.440-447. This work is a new translation of Hegel.

³ M.G., p.552.

⁴ Ibid., p.528.

⁵ Ibid., p.353.

⁶ E.G., p.184.

which finds its fulfillment in the divine.⁷ The whole is thus more than the sum total of its parts.

By his exposition of God's becoming, Küng is of the opinion that he has succeeded at the point where classical christology failed. His use of Hegel, he believes, provides the platform for incarnation, something which the static forms of Chalcedon fail to do. This Menschwerdung Gottes, Küng asserts, can only be explained by means of Hegel, specifically through his contribution of the concept of becoming in God.⁸ God is thus not the changeless God of Greek, Chalcedonian metaphysics. Hegel on this view has moved christology beyond the idea of a fixed transcendence in a changeless God.⁹

What then are the implications of a dialectic in God involving an act of becoming in history? These consequences mean that all the static attributes of God, such as immutability and impassibility, have to be redefined in terms of the word becoming flesh.¹⁰

5.2.3 The Suffering of God

In God's association with the man Jesus, humanity really learns something new about God, something hidden by classical christology, and this is God's ability through becoming to suffer with the world.¹¹ God has the capability of self-humiliation and therefore, in Jesus Christ can show love, grace, and concern for humanity,

⁷ Ibid., p.164, p.184.

⁸ M.G., p.551, and Exkurs IV.

⁹ Ibid., p.531.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.537.

¹¹ Ibid., pp.540-548.

for God does not exclude that which is contrary, but encompasses it, taking it up into the divine.¹² This is the meaning of dialectic and becoming, concepts which are not present in classical christology. Clearly, then, one can see why Küng is indebted to Hegel. It is Hegel's contention that through suffering in his opposite, God is actually made complete, consequently God, through an experience of history by the process of becoming experiences the world's suffering, takes responsibility for it by overcoming it through unity with Absolute Spirit. A future christology then, cannot neglect the dynamic in God represented through his suffering. Küng therefore declares:

Weil Gott alles Elend in seinem Gang durch die Geschichte auf sich nimmt, ist das Böse, das Negativ in der Weltgeschichte von vornherein vom Guten umfassen.¹³

The sorrow of the world is therefore overcome in God whose ultimate goal is the unity of all in the divine as vouchsafed in the "Schädelstätte des absoluten Geistes."¹⁴ There is thus no abstract "Rechtfertigung Gottes,"¹⁵ for there is no justification of God if the divine can exist apart from the suffering of the world.¹⁶ God must necessarily enter history through becoming. In this way, God identifies with the world's plight by becoming the other, that is, the suffering one.¹⁷ At this point Küng moves beyond Hegel to the Biblical God who in Christ reveals his goodness. Without

¹² Ibid., p.548.

¹³ E.G., p.184.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp.216-219.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.552.

constraint, but out of sheer grace, God identifies with suffering humanity by sharing in that suffering.¹⁸

Kaufmann shares Küng's assessment of Hegel's contribution to theology.¹⁹ He continues: "Hegel's importance lies in the fact that he tried to find some reason in history."²⁰ How else can one explain "that the indubitably monstrous sufferings recorded throughout history had not been altogether for nothing."²¹ God then "comes into being when all that is contradictory is finally sublated in the Absolute, an Absolute who in the process of becoming, incorporates the opposite in the process of history in order to attain Absolute Spirit."²² The plight of the world with all its suffering becomes God's suffering for, "wenn die Geschichte des Menschen in der Geschichte Gottes aufgehoben ist und die Geschichte Gottes in der Geschichte des Menschen zur Auswirkung kommt ... dann gibt es ... eine Möglichkeit der Aktion und Interaktion."²³ God thus has a history that brings about history.²⁴

Using Hegel, Küng states that the eternal God is the foundation, sustainer, and completion of history, the one who in freedom has the possibility of becoming historical and suffering in history.²⁵ In the act of becoming and

¹⁸ M.G., p.353. Küng elaborates on this discussion on pp.553-556.

¹⁹ Kaufmann, Hegel, p.9.

²⁰ Ibid., p.255.

²¹ Ibid., p.256.

²² Ibid., p.275.

²³ Christ sein, p.367.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ E.G., p.188.

overcoming, God shows power over history.²⁶ This power is revealed in the person of Jesus, the focal point of God's becoming.²⁷

God as the one who acts in all of history must logically have a place both in world religions and in philosophy. Dealing with world religions, Küng, with Hegel, affirms God's presence in their development, but rejects any form of finality in their presentation. He does so on the basis that in Jesus alone one sees God's acceptance of all humanity including not just the good, but the dregs of society as well.²⁸ To summarize his argument it is clear that both the God of the philosophers and of the various religions has many names ("hat viele Namen").²⁹ However, it is in Jesus alone that God's love for all of humanity is seen.³⁰ Concerning Jesus, Küng affirms: "Die Gottesherrschaft erscheint in der Verkündigung Jesus... sie erscheint als die mächtige souveräne Tat Gottes selbst."³¹ For Küng, there is a finality about Christ. In him humanity makes its ultimate decision concerning the demand of God.³² This is a faith presupposition and I will criticise it under the section on faith and history.

Human well-being, or salvation, is prevalent as the common factor or denominator in all philosophies and religions. However, it is only in Christ, Küng believes,

²⁶ Christ sein, p.229

²⁷ E.G., p.666.

²⁸ E.G., p.686.

²⁹ Ibid., p.684.

³⁰ Ibid., pp.684-686.

³¹ Hans Küng, Was Ist Kirche? (Munchen: Siebenstern, 1967), p.41.

³² Ibid., pp.43-44.

that the substance of that well-being as God's love for good and sinners alike is made manifest.³³ All religions and philosophies are autosoteric, but Christianity alone relies on God's free grace for salvation, contrary to religion and philosophy.³⁴ It should be clearly noted that Küng is not rejecting the above as a means to salvation or human well-being, but he does reject the claim that all religions and philosophies are equally true. Thus he affirms: "Heilsfrage und Wahrheitsfrage sind also zu unterscheiden."³⁵ Jesus therefore, is the centre of God's plan for humanity's redemption.³⁶

5.3 GOD AS HISTORICALLY PRESENT IN JESUS

Küng does not make the transition from Hegel to Strauss, he assumes that it is clear and that the historicity of God revealed in Jesus is self-evident since Jesus is the divine's "Gegenüber" for Hegel. I will now examine the relationship of God to Jesus in order to ascertain the historical connection between the God who acts in history in his Gegenüber, and the historical Jesus. The purpose of this section is to explain how God is present in Jesus. A further aim of the section is to show Küng's re-interpretation of Chalcedon, followed by a critique.

God is not present in Jesus as one who shares his nature with Jesus: Jesus does not have a part of God in such a way as to be part God and part man. Küng clearly tries to explain how he sees the relationship between God and

³³ E.G., p.686.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Hans Küng, Kirche-Gehalten in der Wahrheit, (Köln: Benziger, 1980), p.12.

Christ. It appears to take the form of a functional relationship. Küng explains:

Schon der irdische, geschichtliche Jesus von Nazaret trat, indem er Gottes Reich und Willen in Wort und Tat proklamierte, als öffentlicher Sachwalter Gottes auf. Und er war dabei mehr als ein im juristischen Sinn Beauftragter, Bevollmächtigter, Anwalt, Sprecher Gottes. Ohne alle Titel und Ämter erschien er in seinem ganzen Tun und Reden als ein Sachwalter im ganz existentiellen Sinn: als persönlicher Botschafter, Treuhänder, ja Vertrauter und Freund Gottes.³⁷

It is in Jesus' proclamation, deeds and fate that God's word and will have assumed a human form³⁸

The point Küng wishes to make is that Jesus is God's final spokesman, or word, to humanity regarding his desire for humanity's well-being or salvation. Küng continues:

So erwies sich der Mensch Jesus von Nazaret, definitiv Gottes Stellvertreter, zugleich im umfassendsten und radikalsten Sinn - 'ein für allemal' Zeit und Raum übersteigend - als der Repräsentant, Platzhalter, Stellvertreter der Menschen vor Gott.³⁹

The above quotations sum up Küng's christological position. Jesus is God's representative to humanity. Titles attributed to him by the post-resurrection community such as Son of God or Son of Man are not ontological in purpose, but aim, rather, to emphasize Jesus' legal and authoritative status with God before humanity. One is dealing here with function and not with nature according to Küng.⁴⁰ It is because Jesus is God's

³⁷ Christ sein, p.380. Underscoring mine.

³⁸ E.G., p.685.

³⁹ Ibid., p.381. Underscoring of "Mensch" mine.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.380.

Bevollmächtigte,⁴¹ that he should receive the honour given to God since Jesus is God's agent or deputy. It was in this capacity that Jesus experienced the inexplicable presence and unity of God; Jesus saw himself as subject to God and to none other as God's final representative to humanity.⁴²

All the titles attributed to Jesus refer to his vindication and enthronement as an outcome of the resurrection. God has identified with the vocation of Jesus in the resurrection. Jesus, as a result of the resurrection becomes the standard (Der Massgebende) for humanity's understanding of God, hence the titles accorded to Jesus such as the Son of God. Jesus who proclaimed the message of God's love for persons is the one now preached. Küng asserts:

Damit sind Botschaft und Botschafter, sind das 'Evangelium Jesu' und das 'Evangelium von Jesus Christus' zu einer Einheit geworden.⁴³

In his resurrection, Jesus became the central point of God's revelation of himself and the realization of his kingdom.⁴⁴ Therefore the titles are an explanation of his role in the light of the resurrection. Küng explains his position in the light of the title of Son of God. He states: "Ursprünglich also ging es um Titel 'Gottessohn' gar nicht um die Abkunft, sondern um die Rechts - und Machtstellung Jesu. Wenigerum das Wesen als um die Funktion."⁴⁵ Küng further asserts: "Gleichsam der Generalbevollmächtigte Gottes, der von allen Untertanen

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Christ sein, p.373.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp.370-374.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.380. Underscoring mine.

geehrt werden soll wie dieser selbst."⁴⁶ Jesus thus deserves the same veneration in the light of the above statement as God does.

Küng further infers that the ideas of shepherd, saviour, the idea of Jesus as prophet, priest and King, be replaced by advocate, representative, or delegate.⁴⁷ Küng is convinced if one is to speak to modern persons, ontological elaborations obscure this functional relationship between Jesus and God.⁴⁸ At this point Küng could have linked his christology clearly to Hegel by emphasizing the idea of Vorstellung, but he failed to make the association. The problem with Küng is that his innovative thought is not developed even though he places great emphasis on Christ as God's representative. The final product would have involved a clear combination of Hegel with Küng's findings in relation to the historical Jesus. (See section 1.1.2). I believe that the point Küng attempts to make involves Hegel's understanding of God's action in history through the process of becoming manifested in the Gegenüber is the divine's Vorstellung, in this case the historical Jesus, God's representative.

Therefore, Küng works on the assumption that the New Testament, in the light of the historical-critical method, assumes a functional relationship between God and Christ. Küng further concludes that the view of tradition concerning Christ's person as expressed by Chalcedon must be rejected in the light of Scripture. Küng therefore rejects a metaphysical ontology in favour of the two-stage, mission-christology, thus eliminating

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p.380.

⁴⁸ Häring and Kuschel, Work and Way, p.154.

the idea of two substances or natures in one person.⁴⁹ For Küng theology today must resist the attempt to portray Christ in a form modern persons cannot grasp. Küng emphasizes that "Christologie will verständlich machen, was Jesus als der Christus für den Menschen heute bedeutet."⁵⁰

It is clear to Küng that such a christology must reject Chalcedon and the two nature theory of Christ. He then further states that a relevant christology requires "eine Christologie nicht spekulativ oder dogmatisch von oben, sondern geschichtlich von unten."⁵¹

Küng therefore totally rejects an ontological unity between God and Christ. (See section 5.8). It is, in fact, a unity of action, personal, actual, relational and functional as portrayed not only in the Synoptic Gospels but in Paul and John, too, as seen in the Philippian hymn and John's prologue. Küng, at this point, follows modern scholarship in rejecting the two sections referred to above as dogmas; rather, they are hymns of praise.⁵²

Actually, according to Küng, there is no mention in the New Testament of God being born or taking on flesh. The emphasis is on God's dynamic act of identifying with Jesus in his death through the resurrection. At this point one encounters the central message of the New Testament.⁵³ The resurrection is the all-important issue

⁴⁹ Hans Küng, "Anmerkungen zu Walter Kasper, 'Christologie von unten'?", Grundfragen der Christologie Heute, (Freiburg: Herder, 1975), pp.173-176. Hereafter cited as Anmerkungen.

⁵⁰ M.G., p.567.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Anmerkungen, p.176.

⁵³ Ibid., pp.176-177.

which gives substance to the communities' (Jewish and Hellenistic) post resurrection understanding of the cross and the atonement. The atonement therefore, cannot play a major role in the life of the historical Jesus since the New Questers by their historical method attribute the interpretations relating to the cross to later developments in Christianity. Resurrection is the pre-eminent idea. This issue wherein the resurrection is emphasized at the expense of the cross will be evaluated under the section on faith and history.

Obviously, then, Jesus' relationship to God consists in the fact that he functions in the place of God as his representative; hence, humanity is to heed Jesus' message concerning the kingdom of God. Jesus defines God's relationship to humanity as the protector of those who have no privileges. It is in recognizing this act of love that God brings such persons into a relationship with himself through Christ, his representative.

Beyond doubt, Küng also clearly rejects the incarnation as a formula for the ontology of Jesus. Incarnation became linked to pre-existence by its transplantation into the Hellenistic world where functional terms were given ontological significance. Originally, the terms portrayed no more than the fact that Jesus was always part of God's eternal plan for humanity, fulfilled in history. At a later stage, under Greek influence, concepts of the eternal being of Jesus as one with God emerged.⁵⁴ With Christianity's rise in its new Hellenistic environment, metaphysical definitions now come to the fore since those were the only vehicle available to a Greek-speaking, gentile community. The shift was away from the New Testament concept to Greek ontology, hence terms like person, nature, and

⁵⁴

Christ sein, pp.427-429.

hypostasis.⁵⁵ Küng accepts that the New Testament, in speaking of incarnation, means that God's word and will have been perfectly manifested in the person of Jesus.⁵⁶ The incarnation is not central to faith as in much Anglo-Saxon theology; it is an interpretation resulting from Jesus' resurrection. German New Testament theology looks to the resurrection for its main christological emphasis. (See chapter 4) In the light of this act certain statements by the early community were made about Jesus.

I believe Küng is correct in his interpretation of the New Testament's christology as functional. Certain Roman Catholic theologians of note, however, disagree with Küng's functional view. Küng's is opposed by Alois Grillmeier, the renowned expert on historical theology. The contents of Grillmeier's refutation are part of a collection of essays by eminent, anti-Küng, Catholic theologians. There are eleven in all, and include such names as Hans von Balthasar, Alois Grillmeier, Walter Kasper, Karl Rahner, Joseph Ratzinger, and Jacob Kremer. Their essays are found in Diskussion über Hans Küngs "Christ sein".⁵⁷

Grillmeier contests Küng's assumption that the New Testament is solely functional by appealing to John's Gospel where he believes an ontological understanding of Christ's person is accepted by John,⁵⁸ a gospel, however, to which Küng gives no consideration as a New Quester.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp.431-432.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp.433-434.

⁵⁷ Anonymous, (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1978). Hereafter, cited as Diskussion with the title of the article and author.

⁵⁸ Alois Grillmeier, "Jesus von Nazaret", p.69. Diskussion.

Grillmeier bases his argument on the statement of Jesus, Ehe Abraham war, bin ich.⁵⁹ He further asserts that the Hellenistic world was able to differentiate between ontological and functional terms. Tertullian is given as an example of one who was familiar with functional usage.⁶⁰ However, Küng does not dispute the knowledge of functional terms in the Hellenistic world, but believes they were given an ontological significance as pointed out above. On the other hand, Grillmeier is adamant that the councils adequately reflect the essence of Scripture,⁶¹ for while there were ontological models available, the councils refrained from using them. For example, they did not quote Plato who provides an excellent vehicle for ontology with his Logos concept.⁶² In fact Küng, according to Grillmeier, places the whole idea of monotheism in jeopardy by failing to come to grips with the doctrine of the Trinity as a unity.⁶³

In defence of Küng against the attacks by a theologian of Grillmeier's standing, one may simply point out that the New Testament does not begin with the unity of Father, Son and Spirit, but with their functional diversity. The plan of salvation begins with the Father, is completed by the Son and continued through the Spirit. The councils, on the other hand, emphasize a unity which is not the starting point of the New Testament. The basis of Küng's New Testamental response is found in an article in the

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp.71-72.

⁶¹ Ibid., pp.78-79.

⁶² Ibid., pp.74-76.

⁶³ Ibid., p.77.

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung.⁶⁴ Küng rejects the findings of the eleven theologians, accusing them of an inquisition instead of a discussion.⁶⁵

Grillmeier does not reject a christology from below and regards it as a good beginning as long as it finally results in a christology from above which Küng's christology fails to accomplish.⁶⁶ However, Küng has limited himself to the Synoptic gospels as a New Quester so that the observation by Grillmeier is not completely fair. A christology of the community must not be confused with that of the original historical witnesses according to Küng's pre-suppositions. Grillmeier has confused this issue. Sections 5.8 and 5.10 elaborate on the above criticisms.

5.3.1 An Evaluation of Küng's Picture of the Historical Jesus

As seen in the previous section, Jesus is God's final representative according to Küng. His relation to God is functional, and I believe the New Testament emphasizes such a view. However, I would take issue with Küng's functionalism by asserting that Jesus believed that he was acting through the power of God by the Spirit. He may have been mistaken regarding God's presence within him, but then Küng should have said so since this aspect features prominently in the Synoptics. Certainly one may disregard titles and even miracles, but the point of the Synoptics is that God acted in this person. Is one to

⁶⁴ Küng, "Antwort an meine Kritiker", Mai 22, 1976. The Newspaper does not number its pages. However, Küng's reply is placed over two pages.

⁶⁵ Ibid., col. 1.

⁶⁶ Grillmeier, "Jesus von Nazaret", p.66. Diskussion.

believe that he suffered crucifixion only because he opposed the religious order of the day?

The self-same Synoptic gospels, which Küng submits to minute scrutiny, indicate that Jesus as the receiver of the Spirit would be the dispenser thereof by inaugurating the new age, the age in which God would rule through his presence in Jesus by the Spirit. It would thus appear that Küng in attempting to draw an acceptable portrait for modern persons should have been even more rigid in his application of the historical-critical method.

The issue of Jesus' functional link with God is not in doubt as I read the Scriptures. What is in doubt, however, is Küng's very limited view of functionalism in the New Testament. (Sections 5.6.1 and 5.8 expand on the problems relating to Küng's functional christology.)

Furthermore, taking into account the apocalyptic background with which both John the Baptist and Jesus were familiar, is it likely that Jesus would see himself as God's final messenger, proclaiming God's coming kingdom and yet fail to acknowledge and adapt Messianic considerations to his ministry? To my way of thinking, Küng's portrait is far too isolated from the Synoptics who refer to Jesus as the harbinger of the new era under the influence of the apocalyptic Zeitgeist of the time upon Jesus' ministry. Indeed, according to Küng's portrait, "the pale Galilean grows even paler."

Küng does not show why the church ultimately accepted the historical Jesus as the Christ of faith. Are we to believe that this transition arose solely from a non-historical, non-verifiable resurrection witnessed to by certain folk who came to the shattering realisation that the death of this person could not be final, hence they projected their faith about God's faithfulness over

death into a faith in Jesus as the resurrected one? Such an answer seems unlikely. Why should Jesus be the only person in humanity's history to evoke a theological reaction of such limitless magnitude even to the extent of praying through his name when an investigation of his historical contribution does not warrant such veneration? In fact his only claim, according to Küng, was that he spoke in God's stead.

Moreover, certain individuals like James, Peter, and Paul were prepared to be martyred for their faith in Jesus as the one who died and rose again to redeem humanity. Could faith of such a nature be the natural product and projection of acceptance of God's faithfulness? I believe Küng asks too much in requiring one to accept that God had to resurrect Jesus as a model for the ultimate triumph of love over death. The witnesses infer more than projected faith, they seem to indicate an event to which they bore actual testimony.

The Jesus uncovered by Küng's historical-critical method does not seem to be different from any other sage. Küng does not establish sufficient grounds for a commitment to Jesus instead of, say the Buddha, according to his exegetical method. In fact, we are to accept that Jesus is God's final representative only because he said so. Küng's position on faith is thus important and will receive attention on the section covering faith and history.

A logical conclusion to Küng's discussion on the findings of the historical-critical method could centre in Jesus' message about God, wherein God's will is seen as related to human salvation or well-being, to use Küng's term. He could then have shown that well-being is basic to all religions and from that premise drawn certain conclusions, involving, for example, well-being as a

basis for a future religion meant to meet the needs of modern persons. There is nothing at all that is special about Küng's portrait of the historical Jesus which is so different from pictures of other wise men that a new religion is required.

Küng moves hastily from the historical Jesus to the resurrection with the result that the atonement, a central aspect of Christianity, receives scant recognition. (This issue was fully discussed in chapter four in the section on atonement.) In this section I will only comment on Küng's significant failure to emphasize the doctrine.

It is a fact that Küng does not do justice to the concept of atonement. While Küng is correct, indicating that the cross derives its significance from the resurrection, he clearly does not wish to dwell on the cross' meaning, except to show that it is linked to God's victory over death. In the light of the resurrection, Christ who died for us remains our representative before God. Christ shows on the cross that God's desire for humanity's well-being is real in that Christ indicates that the forces of alienation are overcome for us by God in Christ's death. Christ, therefore, rises into the presence of God for us. The New Testament expresses the death of Christ in too many ways for one to settle upon a particular view of atonement.⁶⁷ Consequently, Küng

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.410.

Hans/Urs von Balzar believes Küng has missed Paul's understanding of atonement in that Christ died for our sins. See: Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Gekreuzigt für Uns", Diskussion, pp.83-94. Küng, however, is concerned with the Synoptics. As far as I can ascertain German Protestant theologians are not at variance with Küng, possibly because they follow a similar method as will be seen when Küng's place on the theological spectrum is examined.

believes that the idea of Christ as humanity's representative before God through the resurrection is adequate.

His critics are correct in asserting that the atonement is of little significance to Küng but they have failed to accept his standpoint as a New Quester, emphasizing the resurrection as well as his explanation that the atonement is not intelligible to modern persons, particularly if it is portrayed in terms of a sacrifice. His attempt is invariably to use ideas that modern persons can at once identify with. One should take into account that Küng attempts an apologetic work suitable for persons today. He is not attempting to present a new gospel, rather his aim is to make the old gospel relevant for persons today who find ancient terminology and thought patterns concerning substitution, sacrifice, and propitiation confusing. Küng's christology is therefore reductionistic and aims at delivering an acceptable modern christology. Consequently, the implications of a functionalistic christology are directed at modern persons for the purpose of faith by making Christ relevant for today.

Küng draws his conclusions concerning the historical Jesus from the historical-critical method. The viability of the method must now be discussed as it relates to faith. This exercise will involve an examination of a historical method supplemented by faith.

5.4 KÜNG'S HERMENEUTIC: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HISTORY AND FAITH

One may ask about the wisdom of relying as heavily as Küng does upon the historical-critical method in the light of Käsemann's statement that

the Anglo-Saxons have never really come to terms with the question of the Jesus of history. On the contrary, they exercise towards radical German criticism, ... what is no more than just a sceptical attitude towards such an endeavour in principle.⁶⁸

One should note that Küng thus relies upon a method that is limited to a select German theological audience for purposes of addressing modern persons.

Walter Wink believes that "Historical biblical criticism is bankrupt".⁶⁹ Wink then gives his reasons for the above statement:

It is bankrupt solely because it is incapable of achieving what most of its practitioners considered its purpose to be: so to interpret the Scriptures that the past becomes alive and illumines our present with new possibilities for personal and social transformation.⁷⁰

Historical-criticism has failed, for Wink, in that it has not discerned the purpose of scripture, which is to speak "from faith to faith".⁷¹ The reasons given by Charles Davis for rejecting the method are similar to those of Wink.⁷² He too, is persuaded that historical-criticism is unable to achieve the end of making the Scriptures relevant for it excludes by its critical nature the basic element from which Scripture was written, one mainly of

⁶⁸ Ernst Käsemann, New Testament Questions of Today, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), pp.11-12.

⁶⁹ Walter Wink, The Bible in Human Transformation, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), p.1.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.2.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Charles Davis, "The Theological Career of Historical Criticism of the Bible", Cross Currents, XXXII, 3 (Fall 82), pp.267-284. He replaces the method by the philosophy of structuralism which he himself defines as existential.

faith. This point of view receives further support from Helmut Thielicke.⁷³ A further negative reaction to historical-criticism emerges in the work of Peter Stuhlmacher, K  ng's Protestant colleague at T  bingen and a past student of K  semann. Stuhlmacher believes that the basis of historical-criticism resides in a form of rationalism and scepticism that "distances history from the present and achieves no union of the then and the now."⁷⁴

Stuhlmacher affirms that the gap between past and present can be bridged by a dialogue between hermeneutics and systematic theology. He quotes with approval Eberhard J  ngel, namely, that the historical-critical method requires a complete restatement "in the praxis given by the Holy Spirit."⁷⁵ Stuhlmacher contends that, "Exegesis requires an orientation session with a dogmatics conscious of the tradition and the present."⁷⁶ Exegesis and hermeneutics, Stuhlmacher asserts,

must return to the questions of scripture, inspiration, and the hermeneutical significance of the Third Article, since exegesis is continually in danger of forgetting how and of what place it must be theologically active.⁷⁷

⁷³ Helmut Thielicke, How Modern Should Theology Be? (London: Collins, 1970).

⁷⁴ Peter Stuhlmacher, Historical Criticism and Theological Interpretation of Scripture, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), p.61. The American edition is cited. It should be noted, however, that the American edition has a foreword by Roy A. Harrisville, whereas the British is introduced by James Barr. Some of his penetrating remarks will be cited in the text as: James Barr, Introduction. The original does not have this introduction.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.77.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

The point Stuhlmacher underscores concerns a new dialogue between hermeneutics and systematic theology, one in which there is a "willingness to open ourselves anew to the claim of tradition, of the present, and of transcendence."⁷⁸ Indeed, the principle underlying the "biblical texts must be an openness to the possibility of faith."⁷⁹ The point of issue then implies that the historical-critical method has emancipated itself from God's action in history and the traditions of the church. Thus, "only when exegesis is brought back into the framework of the third article can this minimizing liberation be met effectively."⁸⁰ Krentz is commenting on Stuhlmacher's attack upon the historical-critical method. The criticism implies that the exponents of the historical-critical method anticipate a historicity which is beyond the intention or scope of the text and therefore lose sight of the intention of the text which has a faith content.

James Barr believes that historical-criticism "continues to present difficult problems for the church and theology of today."⁸¹ Barr accepts that Stuhlmacher has underscored some of the problems to which historical-criticism leads, and that it can create a distance between the pastor, church, and Bible. He adds:

We should not too easily render innocuous the harmful effects that critical attitudes have brought about. Furthermore, the historical-critical method in the form of current 'radical' New Testament

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.85.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.89.

⁸⁰ Edgar Krentz, The Historical-Critical Method, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), p.87.

⁸¹ James Barr, Introduction, p.9.

criticism shows quite excessive recklessness and extravagance...⁸²

In addition, the "resultant exegetical uncertainty is ... a cause of the swing towards a 'political theology' orientated towards a 'world-transforming praxis' rather than responsible use of Scripture."⁸³ Barr follows Stuhlmacher's conclusion that hermeneutics can no longer "exist apart from dogmatic theology."⁸⁴ Hermeneutic, at present and as assessed by Barr and Stuhlmacher, requires an acceptance of Jüngel's insistence on the action of the Spirit. However this action of the Spirit today must be associated with an "openness to transcendend"⁸⁵ wherein the interpreter is required to submit, not only to what is happening in and behind the text, but must also ask in what way he submits to their ultimate claim."⁸⁶ Barr concedes, however, that the historical-critical method is "strange"⁸⁷ to Anglo-Saxons, who are more conservative than their German counterparts.⁸⁸

From the above statements one may deduce that some commentators think that the historical-critical method is limited. On the other hand, I will attempt to show how Küng has transcended the other limitations outlined by Barr and Stuhlmacher by keeping the method open to transcendence. He interprets the results of the method in the light of his view of transcendence through the resurrection.

⁸² Ibid., p.10.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.11.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp.11-12.

Küng does not limit his christology to the historical-critical method; rather, he approaches his subject from Hegel's concept of history whereby he works through the historical-critical method back to a theology of transcendence in the resurrection. Küng is to some extent in the same mould as Stuhlmacher since his intention is to lead beyond historical-criticism to the reality of God's present action in Christ by means of the resurrection. The shift from the historical-critical method to a faith position presents problems as seen in Küng's presupposition.

There is of course a presupposition within Küng's whole system: he assumes the existence of God, and God's existence is ultimately a matter of faith grounded upon the existence of reality. Küng takes as an example humanity's desire to make, or to find order where chaos exists. An action of this nature, Küng reassures one, is indicative of a desire to find a goal for existence. However, if it be accepted that existence has a goal, one may postulate the existence of God. God's existence cannot be either proved or disproved. Nor are atheism or nihilism subject to proof. Yet depending on one's view of reality, all are presented as being logical but not demonstrable intellectual positions. An argument for the certainty of reality, however, does not lie in logic, but is a matter of trust; faith is involved. The answer does not simply lie in a reasoned argument; indeed atheism and nihilism are reasonable based on one's view of reality, hence Küng postulates faith as his premise for God's existence.⁸⁹ One therefore makes a choice, according to one's world-view as to whether God exists or not. God's existence is verified, questioned, or rejected according to one's outlook.⁹⁰ Truly one cannot prove God's

⁸⁹ E.G., pp.375-718.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p.425.

existence, but proof is to be distinguished from verification. Proof lies within the area of the demonstrable and empirical realms, whereas verification is imprinted on one's interpretation of one's experience of reality. On this issue Küng acknowledges his indebtedness to William James whose basic argument he summarizes and accepts.⁹¹

Conceding the possibility of God's existence to persons who affirm reality, Küng now expects his readers to accept by means of a giant leap of faith that the God who exists and reveals himself in history ultimately manifests himself in the earthly, historical Jesus.

The procedure is as follows: God exists. By means rendered intelligible in the Hegelian methodology he manifests himself in Jesus Christ, whose reality, contrary now to Hegel's speculative revelation, can be located in the person of Jesus by the historical-critical method.

Küng would have one accept the existence of God through a supra-rational faith choice. In addition, one is to accept through another supra-rational choice that God has finally and particularly associated himself with the man Jesus.

Küng believes that as a Christian he can accept that God acts in history. Furthermore, as a Christian he must affirm on the basis of Israel's history and the history of Jesus that God reveals himself historically in Christ. Having stated the above, one must again inquire if Küng really had to establish his case for Jesus' existence by means of a purely secular method? One must remember that his intention was to remove from Jesus' person all ideas

⁹¹ Ibid., p.669.

of titles and miracles that would hinder a modern person's acceptance of Jesus as God's final representative.

However, the historical-critical method only shows that Jesus saw himself as God's final messenger, proclaiming the eschatological moment of decision concerning God's kingdom. It does not prove that Jesus was God's final word to humanity. If the method were applied to Mohamed, there is every likelihood that one could deduce on the basis of his utterances that he was the last word from the divine as he claimed. This type of discussion would then lead into a blind alley wherein one party asserted that Jesus was a better representative than Mohamed, or visa versa.

Certainly many Christian expressions of faith may well be explained in a manner unacceptable to scientifically inclined individuals. There are problems involving miracles, titles, pre-existence and incarnation, that Küng concedes, but then he requires one to accept the greatest miracle of all, the resurrection. Furthermore, he expects persons to accept the resurrection as something purely natural occurring within history. This issue was explained in detail in the fourth chapter.

By means of the historical-critical method, Küng states the positive findings regarding the historical Jesus, but he then appears to move beyond history, despite his denial thereof, to a point of faith by injecting the resurrection into his argument. I have no quarrel with the resurrection, but is there not an inconsistency in a historical method that needs a divine injection to bring the corpse of the historical-critical method back to life?

It seems to us that the method of inserting a resurrection does an injustice to the historical-critical method since the purpose of using the discipline is to allow the Scriptures to speak to modern persons by discarding all forms of miracles and divine titles, all of which are foreign to many persons today.

One cannot ask questions consistent with history on the one hand and then answer these questions by appealing to a method beyond history. There is a real problem when in one instance the concept of the empty tomb is rejected as unhistorical, but then the emphasis on the resurrection is developed as a real event whereby one enters into the presence of God. Why is the historical-critical method essential for the location of the historical Jesus when a hermeneutics of the resurrection as central to K  ng's christology, on his own admission, is both non-historical and non-verifiable?

K  ng, like the New Questers, is obliged to postulate a New Hermeneutic, or to use his terms, a metadogmatic, which he defines as an action beyond the limits of history.⁹² Existentially then, persons have believed that death is not the end, therefore the historian in accepting an existential interpretation of history, must allow that for humanity there is an act of faith that is not explicable by history.

Fuchs, too, as a New Quester committed to the New Hermeneutic, argues along the same lines as K  ng. He also believes that the resurrection of Jesus is the essential evidence of God's love as victory over death. If God is love there must be a resurrection as seen in Christ's resurrection, for if God is love "then death is

⁹² M.G., p.599.

wrong."⁹³ Again, one sees that those who propound the historical-critical method regarding the life of the historical Jesus, a life totally devoid of the supernatural, are obliged to move beyond history by means of an added extra to bolster faith in what little remains of the historical Jesus. It would appear that huge amounts of faith have to be added to secular history for an acceptable solution to the problem of the resurrection of the historical Jesus. Indeed, the method is problematic for those who reject Christ's earthly miracles, yet accept the greatest conceivable miracle, the resurrection. Moreover, Küng would have persons believe that the "modern historical-critical method provides the theologian of today with a scholarly instrument ... which an earlier generation of theologians did not possess...."⁹⁴ However, he concedes that its results are only probable.⁹⁵

Küng looks at Jesus through a pair of bifocal spectacles in stating:

Der christliche Glaube redet von Jesus, aber auch die Geschichtsschreibung redet von ihm. Der christliche Glaube ist an Jesus als dem 'Christus' der Christen interessiert. Die Geschichtsschreibung an Jesus als geschichtlicher Figur.⁹⁶

One can see his metadogmatic at work here as well. A similar pattern emerges in Menschwerdung Gottes where Küng believes that the history of Jesus can only be understood in the kerygma, but on the other hand, it is

⁹³ Fuchs, "The New Testament and the Hermeneutical Problem", pp.136-140.

⁹⁴ Küng, The Church, p.20.

⁹⁵ Christ sein, p.150.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.142.

only in the kerygma about Jesus that history is revealed as to its goal.⁹⁷

There is certainly little substance in a historical Jesus whose ultimate authority lies, not in his historicity, but in the kerygma that expressed the faith of the early church concerning his historicity. To our way of thinking the battle between the historical Jesus of the New Questers and the Christ of faith expounded by Barth and Bultmann in particular, rages on. Küng opts for the historical Jesus with all the added assistance that faith can supply. Küng believes it is not a case of either faith or history; it is both that are relevant to proclamation.

In the light of the above, I believe that, Küng by asking one to accept a secular historical method, which needs to be supplemented by faith is requiring too much of a modernist audience.

It should be noted on the other hand, that the historical-critical method, while in need of correction, is, in fact intrinsically self-correcting. Krenz affirms:

Historical criticism is self-correcting. Arbitrary reconstruction and wild theories are doomed to rejection by scholars who measure them against the texts. Texts are uncompromising masters who drive out bad criticism by calling forth better evaluations. The history of criticism shows how the process of correction goes on ... (misuse does not destroy proper use).⁹⁸

George Ladd, arguing from a non-confessional, anti-credal viewpoint, believes that while the method needs to be

⁹⁷ M.G., p.592 ff.

⁹⁸ Edgar Krenz, The Historical-Critical Method, (Philadelphia: Fortress press, 1979), p.66.

weaned from its rationalistic background, failure to use the discipline forces one into existentialism, or a reliance upon tradition. Neither of these views, he believes, is adequate for biblical interpretation.⁹⁹ Other conservatives, unlike Ladd, who cautiously avail themselves of the method, are confessional in their approach to theology. Their emphasis, however, is on the confessions as no more than an accurate summary of the Bible. They include scholars of the stature of Jüngel, Maier, Mildenerger, Stuhlmacher and Cullmann. In accepting the historical-critical method, they do not empty the content of scripture of the presence of the Holy Spirit, indicating that historical-criticism must not be abstracted from faith in historical interpretation.¹⁰⁰ There are of course those scholars who totally reject the historical-critical method believing that the existence of the early communities with their aptitude for theological innovation whether Greek or Palestinian, is somewhat dubious.¹⁰¹

As seen above, an evaluation of Küng's picture of the historical Jesus is not without its problems. Vincent Taylor had a point when he said: "If the form critics are right, the disciples must have been translated to

⁹⁹ George Eldon Ladd, The New Testament and Criticism, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967).

¹⁰⁰ (1) E. Jüngel, God as the Mystery of the World, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clarke Ltd., 1983).
 (2) Stuhlmacher, Historical Criticism, pp.66-83.
 (3) Oscar Cullmann, "The Necessity and Function of Higher Criticism", The Early Church, ed. A. Higgins, Philadelphia: Westminster Press 1956), pp.3-20.
 (4) Helmut Thielicke, How Modern Should Theology Be? (London: Collins, 1970).

¹⁰¹ R.H. Fuller, The Foundations of New Testament Christology, (London: SCM, 1985), p.18.

heaven immediately after the resurrection."¹⁰² The issue for Taylor centres in the ability of the early church to elaborate in the very limited historical record of Jesus contained in the synoptics. They must have been embellishers of the very highest order to create a clear picture of Jesus from only a few disputed sayings. The question Küng and the German scholars must answer is why the early church involved itself in such a thorough reworking of the material. What was their purpose? Were they simply trying to re-create the image of a leader who would give a new direction, aiding the formation of a new religion? Were they merely trying to find some basis to compensate for their disillusionment arising from the unexpected death of their mentor? If so, why did they emphasize the need for faith in one about whom they knew so little and then proclaim this little known individual as the divine centre of redemption? It seems to me that there is scant evidence to substantiate their vivid imagination.

The creation of a picture of Jesus based on the understanding of a Palestinian as well as on Hellenistic community seems to beg the question. First one postulates these communities without any conclusive evidence indicating their existence. Having done so one then reads into these so-called communities what is considered to be Gentile Christianity followed by a reproduction of Jewish Christianity. The hypotheses are now assumed to be true and their respective pictures of Jesus emerge. The end product is the basis for faith. Would the early church in either of the above forms audaciously call humanity to faith through this recreated picture of Jesus as God's final invitation into divine fellowship?

¹⁰²

Vincent Taylor, The Formulation of the Gospel Tradition, (London: SPCK, 1935), p. 41.

The gospel narratives give some readers the impression of carefully recorded and collected data based upon impressions that have the ring of accuracy and truth. If so little is known about the historical Jesus why should he be believed in and worshipped? Why should people today find ultimate meaning in the fertile imagination of the early church? Certainly the historical Jesus is supplemented by faith, but that faith has a very limited historical sphere in which to operate. Perhaps it is this faith built on dubious historicity, which is leading certain South African theological institutions to become involved in spirituality and the mystical contemplation of Jesus. With a limited historical platform, spirituality or mysticism is a viable alternative to the historical-critical method.

Hence some scholars are not convinced that the use of the historical-critical method, a secular approach, even if bolstered by faith meets the questioning of modern persons. Faith as expounded by Küng and the New Questers seems arbitrary in its scope. What exactly is the basis of this faith? If the reply is an encounter, then the question is with whom? The historical Jesus? What value is faith in one about whom so little is known? If faith is built upon the faith of the disciples then that creates a problem. One is in no position to analyze psychologically their faith particularly since Küng questions a literal resurrection upon which the New Testament attempts to base belief. After nearly 2000 years how does one measure present faith with that of the disciples? If faith is recreated anew for each person in a specific generation, the result is complete subjectively and the content of faith becomes what one would like it to be; a good feeling, an emotional upliftment, or whatever the individual chooses to make of it.

Perhaps one might appeal to the dogma of the Roman Catholic church, but this too is unacceptable to Küng as well as many Protestants. Anyway, Küng claims that Roman Catholic dogma runs contrary to the scriptures. Indeed, very little remains to undergird faith.

Simply put, the picture Küng paints of Jesus looks suspect if it is to become the basis for faith in Christ as God's call to a final and complete redemption because it still needs to be supplemented by faith.

5.5 KÜNG'S POSITION ON THE CHRISTOLOGICAL SPECTRUM

This section begins with a quotation from Jüngel concerning Hegel. He maintains: "Apart from the possibilities worked through by Hegel the entire theology of the twentieth century is scarcely conceivable."¹⁰³ The stress is not on Hegel's philosophy in general, but on his emphasis of becoming as seen from Jüngel's quotation below. It is in the light of this statement that the importance of Küng's use of Hegel should be noted. Jüngel then cites Küng's understanding of Hegel from the point of view that "Hegel speaks of the course of the life of God."¹⁰⁴ Indeed, according to Jüngel, Küng is a leading contributor to the idea of a dynamic God in history, an idea at which he arrived as a result of his study of Hegel.¹⁰⁵ The emphasis on the pattern mentioned is simply to indicate two points: the importance of Hegel for modern theology and the contribution made by Küng in this specific area.

¹⁰³ E. Jüngel, God as the Mystery of the World, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1983), p.63.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p.76.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p.373.

Küng has set forth underdeveloped guidelines in his own theology. For example, he has not developed the idea of the suffering God as have Jüngel and Moltmann based on Hegel; neither has he elaborated on the idea of a universal history, an idea upon which Pannenberg enlarges. Küng, while an innovator, has not fully followed through the implications of his christology. Others have developed this issue along the lines mentioned above.

5.6 PROTESTANT THEOLOGIANS

5.6.1 The Functionalist-Ontological Debate

Functional christology's concern is not what Jesus is but what he does. Clear examples of a functional christology are those of Oscar Cullmann, Emil Brunner, and the German biblical theology movement including scholars such as Conzelmann, Käsemann, Kummel and German New Testament scholarship in general.¹⁰⁶ Cullmann is of the opinion that the christological problems resulting from the hellenizing of Christianity should not be used to interpret the New Testament. Ideas such as nature and essence did not arise at the time of the New Testament writings. He affirms: "When it is asked in the New Testament 'Who is Christ?' the question never means..., 'What is his nature?' but first of all 'What is his function?'"¹⁰⁷ Brunner too, is an advocate of a functional christology, stating that while Jesus is the

¹⁰⁶ Brevard Childs, Biblical Theology in Crisis, (Philadelphia : Westminster, 1970), pp. 70-72.

¹⁰⁷ Oscar Cullmann, The Christology of the New Testament, (Philadelphia : Westminster, 1963), pp. 3-4.

truth that truth "is an event, a deed."¹⁰⁸ He further adds: "Who and what Jesus is, can only be stated...by what God does and gives in him."¹⁰⁹

On the other hand not only Childs but James Barr also questions whether the above writers are correct in holding to a functional christology in the New Testament. He believes ontology is clearly present even at that time. However, it became more refined in the 4th and 5th centuries.¹¹⁰ Barr contends that Cullmann and the other functionalists are interpreting the gospel writers from the viewpoint of modern pragmatism. Metaphysical terms were in vogue and given expression in Jewish and New Testament times.¹¹¹ Pannenberg, while holding to a functional christology as far as the synoptics are concerned, teaches that as a result of the resurrection one may accept the deity of Jesus. Pannenberg deduces that Jesus' divinity can be grasped even from secular history so-called, for all history is revelational. But history must run its course since it is only from the end of history that persons will deduce Christ's divinity. However that end has taken place already in the resurrection, - proleptically speaking, hence Jesus' oneness with God manifested in the resurrection in time¹¹² leads to

¹⁰⁸ Emil Brunner, The Mediator, (Philadelphia : Westminster, 1967), p. 399. See also pp. 399-415.

¹⁰⁹ Emil Brunner, The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption, (Philadelphia, Westminster, 1974), pp. 272-273.

¹¹⁰ James Barr, Semantics and Biblical Language (New York : OUP, 1961), His whole book involves a defence of ontology in New Testament times.

¹¹¹ James Barr, Biblical Words for Time, (Naperville : Allenson, 1962), pp. 47-81.

¹¹² Wolfhart Pannenberg, Revelation as History, (New York : Macmillan, 1968), p. 134^f.

an eternal communion within God. God is a being who in his essence is eternally in communion with this man Jesus of Nazareth. In the divine being and therefore in reality, there never was a time when he was not. He belongs to the essence of the Father.¹¹³

Functionally, from the human side Jesus acts in God's stead, however, from God's side in eternity Jesus is one with the Father in essence as shown forth in the resurrection. Pannenberg certainly knows a lot about the resurrection, God and eternity and furthermore these issues become clear for him from the secular study of history! Need one say more? Anyway, if history is that important to Pannenberg he should be given a hearing on the subject particularly in relation to Hegel.

Pannenberg attempts to redirect a functional christology, as seen above, into one of a unity of essence between the Father and the Son through the resurrection in time and therefore in history. Chalcedon with its theory of two natures in Christ, where one is divine while the other is fully human is not acceptable to him. He states:

"Jesus' unity with God is not to be conceived as a unification of two substances, but as this man Jesus is God."¹¹⁴ He adds: "Out of his eternity, God has through the resurrection of Jesus, which was always present to his eternity, entered into a unity with this man which was at first hidden."¹¹⁵

Jesus was therefore in essence the substance of God's plan in eternity for human salvation (God saves in Jesus) in time. Certainly Pannenberg's idea of the time-

¹¹³ Robert Crawford, The Saga of God Incarnate, (Pretoria : Unisa, 1985), p. 51.

¹¹⁴ Wolfhart Pannenberg, Jesus-God and Man, (London : SCM, 1968), p. 283.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 322. Underscoring mine.

eternity relationship differs in no way from Küng's (See section 4.2). I will now return to the subject of history by showing briefly the relationship between Hegel and Pannenberg on history.

5.6.1.1 Pannenberg and History : A Comparison with Küng

Regarding the concept of history, it should be accepted that Pannenberg, using Hegel, affirms that "History ... [is] the most comprehensive horizon of Christian theology."¹¹⁶ Indeed, Pannenberg, like Küng, asserts that "Hegel's system should be regarded as the most significant attempt at a solution to this problem of history."¹¹⁷ Furthermore, Hegel accepts that history is finally complete in the Absolute. Therefore, according to Hegel, that which makes this whole into a whole can only be visible at the end [of history]."¹¹⁸

The point that Pannenberg wishes to underscore involves God's action in history, followed by his view of the end of history. Now for Pannenberg, the end of history has already occurred in the resurrection of Jesus Christ,¹¹⁹ for he is the goal of history. Jesus therefore, according to the Hegelian dialectic, fulfills history proleptically by means of his resurrection, which is the universe's goal.¹²⁰ God acts proleptically within the whole of history by the resurrection. Hence Pannenberg

¹¹⁶ Wolfhart Pannenberg, Basic Questions in Theology, I (London: SCM, 1971-1973), p.15. Hereinafter cited as B.Q.T., and volume number.

¹¹⁷ Pannenberg, B.Q.T., II, pp.21-22.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Pannenberg, B.Q.T., I, p.15.

¹²⁰ Wolfhart Pannenberg, Theology and the Philosophy of Science, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1976), p.188.

believes that God is present in all of history; that is why he uses the term "universal history" because one cannot divide history into sacred and secular: God is present in all of history. This is the Hegelian influence on Pannenberg. Furthermore, God is present through his act in a particular person, Jesus Christ. Thus Pannenberg attempts to link Hegel with the historical Jesus. God's action in Christ, according to Pannenberg, is manifested in the resurrection. Christ thus becomes the norm for all history. The final point of Hegel's system is the return of spirit to Absolute Spirit. Pannenberg restates the above concept in affirming the resurrection of Christ into God as the proleptic counterpart to Hegel's system.¹²¹ Such a view Pannenberg accepts is open to all on a scrutiny of the evidence he supplies.¹²² The fact that Hindus, Buddhists, atheists and others are excluded does not seem to concern Pannenberg. If Pannenberg's system is as clear as he believes the vast majority of people must be exceedingly obtuse.

The point of this exercise, however, is to show that Pannenberg, too, relies very heavily upon Hegel. It should be noted that their metaphysical theories require that they be undergirded by faith, thus, in fact, one could well argue that their reliance on Hegel is not an historical approach, but a metaphysical one.

Pannenberg, like Küng, also accepts the findings of the New Quest for the historical Jesus. Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God, relativized the law and forgave sins. Additionally, all titles that he received as well as the miracle stories were later interpretations by the early

¹²¹ Pannenberg, B.Q.T., I, p.36.

¹²² Wolfhart Pannenberg, and others, Revelation and History, (London: Macmillan, 1968), p.46.

community.¹²³ As with the approach of Küng, soteriology plays a minor role in Pannenberg's thought. He affirms: "The idea that the death of Jesus was an expiation of the sins of the world must be seen as a retrospective interpretation of the event, rather than an effect deliberately brought about by Jesus."¹²⁴

It is clear then that both limit their approach to Hegel and the historical-critical method. There is an exception however, since Küng interprets the resurrection as a real, but not historical act, where Pannenberg, in the light of his evaluation of the biblical evidence, accepts the event as actual and historical. He states that one can only reject the resurrection if one believes that dead men cannot rise.¹²⁵ Consequently, the event is beyond the scope of the historian's investigation. It is somewhat disconcerting to find that theologians like Küng and Pannenberg are obliged to introduce additional extras to make their Christologies plausible in that their claim to be historical always involves history plus something else. In this instance it is faith.

As far as the modern christological spectrum is concerned, both Küng and Pannenberg, with some differences regarding the historicity of the resurrection, are committed to Hegel's interpretation of God's acts in history through Christ. Furthermore, both are committed to the historical-critical method to discover the historical Jesus.

¹²³ Wolfhart Pannenberg, Jesus - God and Man, (London: SCM, 1968). The method of the New Questers as well as their findings are reflected in this work.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p.65.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p.108.

In attempting to speak to modern persons both reject Chalcedon as a final statement on christology. Neither one of them accepts an ontological unity between God and Christ. The unity is functional for Pannenberg, too, as a result of his christology from below.¹²⁶ For both of them Chalcedon must thus be re-interpreted.

The spectrum then quite clearly involves Hegel and history, a christology from below supplemented by the historical-critical method, to which is added the faith-dimension of the resurrection. Soteriological considerations fulfill a minor role since the cross only receives significance from the resurrection in both these theologians.

5.6.2 Moltmann, Jüngel and the Suffering God

Moltmann has also applied Hegelian themes to his christology, believing that "Christology is eschatology, is hope, forward looking and forward moving, and therefore also revolutionizing and transforming the present."¹²⁷ The foundation of the above statement has a Hegelian premise; Moltmann continues:

Thus the true present is nothing else but the eternity that is immanent in time, and what matters is to perceive in the outward form of temporality and transience the substance that is immanent and the eternal that is present -
so said the early Hegel.¹²⁸

Moltmann now continues his Hegelian theme, not simply by restating Hegel, but he reinterprets Hegel eschatologically in the light of Scripture. Hegel gives

¹²⁶ Ibid., pp.34-35. See also pp.127-129.

¹²⁷ Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope, (London: SCM, 1970), p.16.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p.27.

the apocalyptic dimension of the power of the cross and resurrection as operative in transforming history now, for due to the cross and resurrection the future is here now. Moltmann, in the light of Christ's resurrection, believes one must use Hegel as a basis for transforming the present,¹²⁹ hence Moltmann's close association with many of the Marxist tenets regarding the concept of a present transformation of the suffering in the world.¹³⁰ Moltmann has also given great impetus to the theologies of liberation wherein the future is transforming the present now. In the same way as Pannenberg and Küng, Moltmann uses the historical-critical method wherein the emphasis is placed upon the resurrection as that which gives content to soteriology. However, because of the resurrection, the cross receives a new dimension in the proclamation of the Christian community, for it indicates the suffering of God in Christ, a suffering that transforms the world as an outcome of the resurrection.¹³¹

If Christ symbolises the suffering in God who suffers with humanity in its history, the God cannot be the apathetic God of Stoicism and Greek philosophy, the divine becomes the dynamic, suffering God in history.¹³² "In the passion of the Son, the Father himself suffers the pain of abandonment."¹³³ Moltmann has moved beyond Küng and even Pannenberg by showing why God suffers. God suffers because the world suffers and Godself cannot be complete until all suffering is eradicated. The Hegelian

¹²⁹ Ibid., p.84.

¹³⁰ Jürgen Moltmann, The Crucified God, (London: SCM, 1974), p.5.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid., p.179.

¹³³ Ibid.

motif is now employed to bring the Absolute future into the present by using biblical eschatology.

The cross is consequently a statement about God, arising out of the divine's suffering through the Son in the world's history. One is not involved with theories of propitiation or expiation in the divine action on the cross. Rather, the cross signifies that divine suffering incorporates human suffering, thus God undergoes a change within history through experiencing human suffering. The historical event of the cross in the light of the resurrection indicates that the suffering of God involves the eschatological dimension of an event in the present whereby human suffering is overcome by human participation in changing the structures of society in terms of God's future as already present. Moltmann explains: "God has entered into the finitude of man by experiencing God-forsakenness in himself."¹³⁴ Using language that is difficult to follow, Moltmann speaks of the negative aspect of the cross in the separation of the Father and the Son, but adds: "In the hidden mode of humiliation to the point of the cross, all being and all that annihilates has been taken up in God and God becomes 'all in all.'"¹³⁵ It would seem that Moltmann uses Hegel's concept of the negating of the negative in the cross as highlighted by the resurrection wherein one locates the completion of the Absolute.¹³⁶

Moltmann touchingly describes the suffering of God in his interpretation of the Anglican understanding of the Eucharist, for the emphasis moves from the Eucharist to Golgotha and from that point to the eternal nature of God

¹³⁴ Ibid., p.276.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p.277.

¹³⁶ Jürgen Moltmann, The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, (London: SCM, 1981).

which is love. Love, for Moltmann means sacrifice. Therefore, he can deduce that what Christ suffers in time God suffered in eternity. As stated above, love means giving in sacrifice, so in order for God to be fulfilled, the divine has to proceed through time and history suffering in Christ so that it may attain completion. He does so by overcoming the power of the negative in that His love seeks expression through its opposite. God's intention according to Moltmann is to unite all alienation to Godself, thus overcoming the power thereof. At this point Hegel's pattern is evident. Consequently, Moltmann too has a dynamic view of God as present in Christ.¹³⁷ God is therefore present in Christ as suffering love.

Moltmann, like Pannenberg and Küng, accepts a functionalistic christology in line with Hegel based on what he interprets as the Anglican understanding of the Eucharist wherein Christ in time manifests God's eternal suffering. Certainly Küng has been the innovator in linking Hegel to the historical Jesus through suffering, but nowhere has he distinctly developed the above concepts as have Pannenberg and Moltmann.

Jüngel elaborates upon certain aspects of Pannenberg's idea of history and Moltmann's concern for God's involvement as revelation in the person of Christ. An example of the above statement is found in his attitude to the resurrection. Like Pannenberg he interprets it as revelation, but in line with Moltmann he links the resurrection to God's identification with Christ.¹³⁸ As the resurrection is brought to bear on the cross, one understands God's action in the world, one of suffering

¹³⁷ Ibid., pp.22-35. Here he presents his argument fully, which I have summarized.

¹³⁸ Jüngel, God as the Mystery of the World, pp.3-15.

and victory. These ideas, in my opinion, are not particularly well developed in Jüngel but they are evident.

The concept of the death of God is prominent in both Jüngel and Moltmann, a concept derived from Hegel's Karfreitag motif wherein God in death as manifested on the cross overcomes death. It is by an act of faith through the resurrection that one sees in the God-forsakenness of Jesus the presence of the action of God.¹³⁹ Thus Jüngel can also reject the static terms of Chalcedon in favour of a dynamic God acting in the history of the world through Christ.¹⁴⁰

The suffering of God in history (Hegel) is thus directly associated with the crucified historical Jesus (Strauss). Again, both Moltmann and Jüngel are representatives of a functional christology as touching upon Jesus the man.

Considering the comments made by Jüngel at the beginning of this section on Protestant Theologians, Küng has had an impact through his use of Hegel that is wide indeed (see footnote 108). Once more it must be emphasized that these ideas are not clearly expounded by Küng despite their real presence. Furthermore, Küng has stopped short in his christology, unlike Moltmann and Jüngel, by failing to emphasize the role of the Spirit in the continuous process of history. Depending to the extent on Hegel that Küng does, this omission is all the more surprising as the concept of Spirit appears vital for Hegel's method. (See section 1.2)

¹³⁹ Ibid., pp.57-100.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., pp.126-152. See Küng, Judaism, pp. 600-603, where he accuses the above theologians of Patripassianism.

Considering the present christological spectrum, one may see clear evidence of a return to Hegel initiated by Küng.¹⁴¹ Again, it was Küng who attempted to unite Hegel's speculative Christ with the historical Jesus of the New Quest and the New Hermeneutic in an attempt to restate Chalcedon. Küng's christological contribution has changed the direction of theology from Kierkegaard to a re-evaluation of Hegel. One wonders if the criticisms Küng evokes are not perhaps the result of a failure to grasp his method, a problem as seen in chapter three that he will have to bear, for he has not been explicit in his combination of Hegel and the historical Jesus.

I must now examine briefly Küng's place on the christological spectrum in relation to two of his Catholic colleagues, Kasper and Schillebeeckx, both of whom strive for relevance in christology.

5.7 CATHOLIC THEOLOGIANS

Kasper emphasizes that theology today must answer contemporary questions in the light of current atheism by means of the modern methods that are at its disposal. Kasper makes reference to Hegel who he believes offers an alternative to the static terms of Chalcedon.¹⁴² Kasper, following Küng, also attempts to associate Hegel with the historical Jesus. He can describe Hegel's christology "as a stroke of genius."¹⁴³ Kasper maintains that "In Hegel this historical knowledge of God is imported wholly christologically,"¹⁴⁴ finding its climax in the cross. Therein one sees that God is love "for it

¹⁴¹ Jüngel, God as the Mystery of the World, p.373.

¹⁴² Walter Kasper, Jesus the Christ, (London: Burns and Oates, 1976), p.182.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

is characteristic of love to find itself in the other in emptying itself ... the supreme negation of negation."¹⁴⁵ Thus one is involved with the cancellation of death, "the negation of negation and the reality of reconciliation."¹⁴⁶

However, in accepting the contribution of Hegel to christology, Kasper firmly attempts to cement his christology in the historical Jesus in terms of his life and destiny.¹⁴⁷ He too, links the history of God (Hegel) with the quest for the historical Jesus.

Kasper, in fact, portrays the historical Jesus in a manner altogether in keeping with the findings of the New Questers and with Küng. Jesus provokes a conflict with the authorities, relativizes holy institutions, sees himself in a special relationship to God whom he refers to as Abba. In addition Kasper furthermore concurs with Küng that the titles and miracles are the product of the early Christian communities.¹⁴⁸ He, too, accepts that Jesus functions as God as a result of his absolute openness to his Father. A functional christology is indeed the logical deduction from a reflection upon the person of Jesus in his attitude to God in terms of the New Testament. The ontological dimension is a later development¹⁴⁹ as seen below.

However, there is a subtle difference between Kasper and Küng regarding the subject of functionalism. Kasper states: "The later Son christology is no more than the

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., pp.26-38.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p.110.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p.166.

interpretation and translation of what is hidden in the filial obedience and submission of Jesus. What Jesus lived before Easter ontically is after Easter expressed ontologically."¹⁵⁰ What then is it that actually makes Jesus the son? It is his absolute submission, expressed in total obedience through his filial relationship. The difference between the christology of Küng and Kasper, to my way of thinking, is non-existent, both are clearly functional in approach in the interpretation of the New Testament.

At this point, I am emphasizing Kasper's approach to the relationship of Jesus to the Father from his analysis of the New Testament; here, he and Küng are not in conflict. I concede, however, that by 1982, speaking from a dogmatician's outlook, Kasper modified his functional/relational christology, giving more significance to ontology. One should remember though that Kasper was now speaking as an exponent of the history of dogma, and not from the New Testament outlook previously espoused.¹⁵¹ This issue is highlighted in section 5.8 and 5.10.

Regarding Chalcedon, Kasper, as does Küng, believes that it must be reinterpreted in the light of scripture¹⁵² for modern persons through modern methods that touch people existentially.¹⁵³

It is upon the subject of tradition and the papacy that the two theologians differ. Kasper accepts tradition and papal infallibility. Küng on the other hand is a

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p.110.

¹⁵¹ Walter Kasper, The God of Jesus Christ, (New York: Cross Road, 1987), p.280.

¹⁵² Ibid., p.239.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p.246.

questioner. Christology does not therefore appear to be an issue between these two theologians, frankly they seem to agree on the subject in terms of the New Testament. The problem lies in quite another area, that of the place of tradition as an addition to the New Testament. (See section 5.8).

The next Catholic theologian with whom I will compare Küng is Schillebeeckx. One could attempt a comparison between Küng and Rahner, but such a venture would be unwise because, while Küng is committed to the historical-critical method, Rahner's method involves a transcendental metaphysic. Plainly put, their methodologies differ. It is wise to compare Küng with Schillebeeckx who also employs the historical-critical method. Furthermore, Küng and Schillebeeckx have published a consensus in theology.¹⁵⁴

Schillebeeckx, in his 800 page work, Jesus, begins by asking "Who is Jesus for us today?"¹⁵⁵ His starting point is thus the same as Küng's in that both theologians are attempting a relevant christology for modern persons. Küng, beginning with Hegel, follows through to the historical Jesus, whereas Schillebeeckx begins immediately with the historical Jesus. He likewise attempts to get behind the documents to the historical Jesus whom one may reach through modern interpretations of history.¹⁵⁶ Indeed, there are certain sayings attributed to Jesus like his titles which are in fact,

¹⁵⁴ Hans Küng and Edward Schillebeeckx, Consensus in Theology, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980). Hereinafter referred to as Consensus.

¹⁵⁵ Edward Schillebeeckx, Jesus: An Experiment in Christology, (London: Collins, 1979), p.19.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., pp.70-71.

"ex eventu".¹⁵⁷ Like Küng, Schillebeeckx, accepts that the early community set its seal upon the person of Jesus in that at a later stage of development he was recognized as God's final messenger by the community.¹⁵⁸

Since Jesus came as the one who served, the early community was obliged to reinterpret the life and death of Jesus through the resurrection. Recognising Jesus' role as the servant of God who was faithful even unto death, an expiatory significance was attached to his crucifixion by the early church.¹⁵⁹ Schillebeeckx accepts the resurrection as non-historical in the sense that Küng does, stating: "The earliest references to Jesus the risen one speak of his death and resurrection, not about appearances."¹⁶⁰ Taking the above statements into account, two issues are clear: first, Küng and Schillebeeckx are New Questers who follow the historical-critical method. Second, their christologies, starting from the same premise are similar in pattern and conclusions. Jesus therefore is a prophet superior even to Moses.¹⁶¹ Moreover, both are functionalistic in their christology,¹⁶² with perhaps one exception: Schillebeeckx lays greater store on the presence of God's action through Christ by the Holy Spirit.¹⁶³ Yet their final conclusions are identical. He is very God and very man in that he shows humanity what God is like, he is a God of love; furthermore, Jesus shows humanity what it means

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., pp.87-90.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p.194.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p.311.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p.312.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p.443.

¹⁶² Ibid., p.513.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

to be truly human by opening oneself to God and others in love.¹⁶⁴ Chalcedon with its limited definition thus undergoes a similar restatement at the hands of both theologians.

Schillebeeckx and Kasper differ from Küng, not in their specific functional christology, but in the fact that they accept the work of the Spirit adding to the functionalism of the New Testament by means of tradition in the church. Chalcedon's understanding of Christ's two natures is for them a logical outgrowth of the New Testament functionalism, for the Holy Spirit continues to be active in the church through all of its history. Tradition is the continuous extension of the New Testament teaching into which the Spirit leads by a logical development of new insights into revelation. They accept both scripture and tradition, the latter adding to the former while not contradicting it. Neither one questions the Pope's infallibility either, as does Küng.

In assessing Küng's christology, one notices that his deductions generally are in keeping with modern German christological trends as reflected by his acceptance of the historical-critical method, the New Quest and the New Hermeneutic. However, it is important to note also that Küng though extremely innovative in his return to and use of Hegel, has not developed his christology as clearly as his colleagues have as seen below.

Additionally Küng clearly emphasizes the resurrection but fails to emphasize the proleptic element for history that Pannenberg underscores. Regarding Küng's reliance on Hegel, he stops short of applying Hegel's philosophy to the problems of suffering in the world, or liberation

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p.601. Consensus, p.24.

theology, deductions drawn by Moltmann and Jüngel. In contrast to Kasper, who also accepts the influence of Hegel on christology and applies the historical-critical method to the Synoptics, Küng does not see the need for using Christ's reliance on the Spirit as a unifying point with God for a solution to God's presence with Christ in terms of the historical Jesus. He who was the receiver of the Spirit (God's presence) becomes the dispenser of the Spirit. Küng has very little room for the place of the Spirit in his historical-critical method.

Schillebeeckx, while accepting the functional approach of the New Testament, affirms that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Councils of the church formulated their christology according to their world-view not in contradiction to the New Testament but in a supplementary manner.¹⁶⁵ Küng, on the other hand, provides the basic material for a future christology, but fails to follow through on his insights by showing God's presence with the historical Jesus. Küng only shows how, he believes, Jesus revealed God's will for humanity. Küng made a good start to a future christology but there also is where he stopped. Küng does develop a doctrine of the Spirit in relation to the resurrected Christ, but this dimension is not found in his concept of the historical Jesus.

Having examined Küng's place on the christological spectrum, I believe that with his powerful Hegelian background he should have followed through his christology by means of process theology. The reasons for this statement will become clear in the next section.

5.8 SPECIFIC CRITICISMS OF KÜNG'S METHODOLOGY

Raymond Brown states quite plainly that the "Roman authorities have shown poor theological judgement about

¹⁶⁵ Schillebeeckx, Jesus, see his final chapter.

some of the scholars they harassed in this century."¹⁶⁶ He then lists Karl Rahner, Teilhard de Chardin and John Courtney Murray amongst others. Controversy is nothing new to the Roman Catholic church. One thinks of George Tyrrell who was refused a Roman Catholic burial and lies buried in an Anglican churchyard in Sussex. Loisy also comes to mind. His problem was that he put forward a view concerning Jesus as the proclaimer of the eschatological kingdom along the same lines as Albert Schweitzer. The result was excommunication by Pius X. Loisy died unreconciled with Rome. Schell too was excommunicated by Pius X. The main reason for the repudiation of the modernists lay in their rejection of metaphysics under Kantian influence. They were also involved in biblical criticism, deemed a destructive influence by the Roman Catholic church.¹⁶⁷ Küng too denies essentialist metaphysics regarding Jesus' person as seen in chapter three. He is also wedded to biblical criticism. In responding to Brown's statement one may well ask if the critics of modern theology, manifested by Küng, have once more shown poor judgement. Brown states the case as follows:

While I find Küng's exegesis defective in part and even on important issues, overall, it is much better than that of the Roman theologians who have been called in to criticise him.¹⁶⁸

Avery Dulles points out that "Küng uses a modern historico-critical approach to the New Testament,"¹⁶⁹ one

¹⁶⁶ Raymond Brown, "Küng and Scripture", The Tablet, 15 January 1977, p. 52.

¹⁶⁷ Walter von Loewenich, Modern Catholicism, (London: Macmillan, 1939), see the chapter on the "Modernist Controversy" in particular.

¹⁶⁸ Brown, "Küng and Scripture", p. 52.

¹⁶⁹ Avery Dulles, "Küng and dogmatic theology", The Tablet, 15 January 1977, p. 53.

in keeping with "Protestant....scholars"¹⁷⁰ including Käsemann with his introduction of the New Quest and the New Hermeneutic.¹⁷¹ Dulles is repeating here a point that he made in 1972.¹⁷² Küng replied to the above article accepting the historical-critical method, the New Quest and New Hermeneutic as the only viable methods aimed at ridding christology of myths in order to locate the "Jesus of History."¹⁷³

The criticisms of Küng can be reduced to three areas: His use of the historical-critical method resulting in a christology from below; a rejection of ontological statements regarding Jesus' relationship to the Father; and his portrayal of Jesus solely in functionalistic and supposedly reductionist categories.

Schultenover summarizes Küng's position well. Christians must set out their faith in a way that can be both understandable and acceptable to persons today. Christians, Küng believes, must exhibit a vibrant faith with "respectable foundations in history and at least not contrary to reason",¹⁷⁴ thus Küng's use of the historical-critical method. Relevance is his aim.

5.8.1 Reactions to Küng's use of the Historical-Critical Method

Riedlinger asserts that the above method leads Küng to place believers and non-believers on the same level, for

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Avery Dulles, "The Theology of Hans Küng : A Comment, Union Seminary Quarterly Review, 27 : 137-142, Spring, 1972.

¹⁷³ Hans Küng, "A Response", Ibid., p. 144.

¹⁷⁴ G Schultenover, Cross Currents, 27: 206, 1977.

historical-critical research being purely objective makes no allowance for faith. Conclusions drawn about Jesus are based solely on one's interpretation of his activity and fate. Faith, consequently, is verified by a secular methodology on the basis of what is reasonable in the eyes of modern persons.¹⁷⁵ Riedlinger is thus contending for faith as supernatural imparted by divine action which he believes the methodology pointedly excludes.¹⁷⁶ The result for Ratzinger means that Küng's christology does not include the later development supplied by dogma.¹⁷⁷ Of course that is the point of Küng's exercise. The method Ratzinger believes is restrictive, failing to produce a true picture of Jesus. It is only interested in the historical aspect of Jesus' existence in terms of a secular methodology with no room for divine intervention.¹⁷⁸ Additionally, Küng's method according to Kasper totally excludes tradition wherein the church develops its testimony about Jesus.¹⁷⁹

To return to the subject of faith as it relates to the historical-critical method, Koch sees the method as assisting faith in Jesus in that it is no longer nebulous, but is grounded firmly in history and is thus verifiable.¹⁸⁰ A general critique will be located at the end of this section.

¹⁷⁵ Helmut, Riedlinger, "Maria in der Wahrheit des Glaubens" Diskussion, pp. 122-132.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 131-132.

¹⁷⁷ Joseph Ratzinger, "Wer verantwortet die Aussagen der Theologie?" Diskussion, p.10f.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 13-16.

¹⁷⁹ Walter Kasper, "Christsein ohne Tradition?", Diskussion, pp. 26f.

¹⁸⁰ Hans Koch, "Neue Wege in der Christologie", Herder Korrespondenz 29: 412-418, 1975.

The starting point is clearly one from below. This means that Jesus is treated as a person who proclaimed the coming kingdom of God which he himself embodied by expressing the divine love for sinners unreservedly.

5.8.2 Departure from Below and the Critics of Küng

Deissler makes the point that by starting from below, Küng neglects all the Old Testament Messianic passages. Küng, Deissler believes, concedes more than he gains by ignoring the Old Testament and that for Deissler is an oversight which seriously distorts the picture of Jesus presented by Küng.¹⁸¹ However, the above argument is not relevant as modern scholarship fails to give credence to those passages in the Old Testament that are usually known as Messianic. Rather they are interpreted in their historical context and refer to situations suitable to their time. Riedlinger is unhappy with a christology that begins from below. It blurs the distinction between what is natural (according to human logic) and what is supernatural (beyond human reasoning), an uncatholic approach.¹⁸² Küng's orthodoxy is now in question.

The picture of Jesus in a christology from below leads nowhere. How does one fill in the missing details such as the resurrection is O'Collins question.¹⁸³ I have made the same point on numerous occasions. I, too, have pointed out that Küng's recourse to a resurrection is in conflict with the historical-critical method in terms of a christology from below. One cannot use a secular method, only to discard it when convenient in favour of

¹⁸¹ Alfons Deissler, "Zum Umgang mit dem Alten Testament", Diskussion, pp. 35-43.

¹⁸² Riedlinger, "Maria", Diskussion, pp. 122-127.

¹⁸³ Gerald O'Collins, "Jesus in Current Theology I : Beyond Chalcedon", The Way, 16: 291-308, 1976.

an added extra in the form of faith. As stated previously (see section 5.8.1), Koch believes that starting a christology from below, strengthens the case for the historical-critical method by ensuring an adequate basis for faith. It is now grounded in an acceptable historical procedure, one that is in keeping with modern historiography.¹⁸⁴ A christology from below begins with the historical Jesus. The aim is to lead individuals to the place where they see that belief in Christ is not just a myth, but is based on historical reality. Generally speaking this approach is not acceptable to the Roman scholars for the reasons given above. Perhaps the most unacceptable aspect of the historical-critical method according to Küng's critics is the end result of the process, the picture of Jesus. His critics maintain that the portrait is unsatisfactory, the exact issue in the next section.

5.9 THE CRITICS' FINDINGS AS THEY RELATE TO KÜNG'S DEPICTION OF JESUS

Jesus, the critics believe, is a truncated individual as a result of the method Küng follows. Certainly Jesus is not the divine God-man of traditional christology. Their considerations are identified below.

5.9.1 Küng's Christology Lacks an Ontological Dimension

Dulles is convinced that "Küng distances himself from traditional christology....and the divinity of Christ. He is unwilling to translate [christology] into ontological or essentialist terms, and therefore stops

¹⁸⁴ Koch, "Neue Wege", pp. 412-418.

short of saying that Jesus is truly God."¹⁸⁵ Dulles continues: "Küng might be able to defend this stand as biblical, but in my view it is inadequate for any dogmatic theology written since the 4th century."¹⁸⁶ Dulles does not elaborate on the statement and leaves the reader to supply the missing reasoning. One may put the following question to Dulles: How can a statement be biblical yet not theological? Küng's orthodoxy is clearly in question and the criterion is not the Bible but dogma as Dulles understands it. Karl Rahner asserts that it is difficult to see how Jesus can be unique in relation to God if there is no shared essence and ontological link between God and Jesus.¹⁸⁷ The shared essence or nature between the Father and the Son is vital for Rahner, a type of divine spark which they have in common. Küng rejects the above metaphysical terms¹⁸⁸ as already demonstrated in the thesis thus far. Why and in what way is Jesus divine for Küng? He is divine because he was both chosen for and exalted to that position by the Father as the divine representative.¹⁸⁹

Tracy believes that because Küng was in the process of developing his christology he did not use ontological terminology. Küng, Tracy maintains, has not finalized his christology. He should be allowed that right before

¹⁸⁵ Dulles, "Dogmatic Theology", p. 54, (Underscoring mine).

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Karl Rahner, "Zur Ekklesiologie", Diskussion, pp. 105-112.

¹⁸⁸ M.G., pp. 622-623, 640.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 610.

he is judged.¹⁹⁰ I have made the same point as Tracy throughout this thesis.

5.9.2 Küng's Christology Is Functional and Therefore Reductionistic

That Küng sees Jesus' relationship to the Father in functional and not metaphysical terms is beyond dispute. He affirms: "Im Neuen Testament...wird Jesu göttliche Würde primär funktional und nicht physisch oder metaphysisch aufgefasst."¹⁹¹ Dulles confirms the above statement by Küng. He says: "Küng in effect affirms Christ's divinity in functional terms."¹⁹² Dulles continues:

The ontological implications of Jesus' 'functional' identity with God must be discussed. If Jesus is in a singular way God's revelation in the flesh, there must be something special about Jesus that makes Him, rather than anyone else such a revelation.¹⁹³

Gregory Baum agrees with Dulles that Küng's method excludes metaphysics in its traditional presentation of the divine essence or nature as present in Christ, however, God's link with Jesus in Küng's christology implies that God and Jesus share the same view of reality; both give it ontological priority in the same way and that view of reality as the divine drive in the

¹⁹⁰ David Tracy, "A Christocentric Vision of Reality", The Christian Century, 94: 202-207, 1977.

¹⁹¹ Christ sein, p. 438.

¹⁹² Dulles, "Dogmatic Theology", p. 54.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

Father and the Son supplies an ontology.¹⁹⁴ Hence my emphasis on process thought as stimulated by Baum.

Arguments by Roman Catholic theologians against Küng's functionalism are based on the titles Jesus is reputed to have used. Kremer asserts that the title Son of God is central to the synoptics. That title for Kremer has ontological significance proving that the Father and Son shared the divine essence.¹⁹⁵ Ratzinger too, sees the term "Son"¹⁹⁶ as implying shared essence. It should be clear though that the historical-critical method as used by Küng excludes the titles as additions by the early church (See the section on the Titles of Jesus).

The conclusion drawn by the critics from Küng's functionalist christology is that his concept of Jesus' divinity is reductionist. This issue will now receive attention.

Ratzinger contends that since Küng does not identify Jesus with God directly in terms of essence, his christology is reductionist, by which he means that Jesus is no more than a person, but as such he is unique.¹⁹⁷ Kremer agrees with Ratzinger regarding Küng's christology: Jesus is only human¹⁹⁸ Since Küng rejects the virgin birth through the use of the historical-critical method Jesus cannot be divine for the divinity of Jesus implies that he be conceived free of human taint

¹⁹⁴ Gregory Baum, "On Being a Christian : A Review", The Critic, 35: 81-85, 1977.

¹⁹⁵ Jacob Kremer, "Marginalien eines Neutestamentlers", Diskussion, p. 51.

¹⁹⁶ Joseph Ratzinger, "Christ sein - plausibel gemacht", Theologische Revue, col. 357, 1975.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Kremer, "Marginalien", Diskussion, pp. 48-51.

and sin. Küng thus rejects the corner-stone of Jesus' divinity reducing him to a mere mortal. To deprive Mary of her immaculate status leads to Jesus' person being contaminated and consequently he is not fully divine.¹⁹⁹

According to Riedlinger, human reason cannot grasp the divinity of Christ. Reason on the human level without divine intervention is bound to be reductionist in relation to the person of Jesus.²⁰⁰ Reductionism is the logical result of a system which builds on human history to the exclusion of faith is Kolping's final word of wisdom on Küng's christological method.²⁰¹

Küng in response to most of the above critics affirms his orthodoxy in that at no time had he ever denied the full divinity of Christ. Küng affirms that Jesus is God's full and final revelation, even exclusively so. Küng contends that his aim is to address modern persons with a clear, logical, historical faith in God's decisive action through Christ.²⁰²

Küng's exegesis is based on the New Testament. Christ there, is pictured in dynamic terms. He acts in God's place, the one whom he alone deigns to call Father. I believe that Tracy is correct, Küng must be allowed to complete his christology (see footnote 25).

¹⁹⁹ Riedlinger, "Maria", Diskussion, pp. 123-125, 131f.

²⁰⁰ Riedlinger, "Radikale Rationalität : Zur Methode in Hans Küngs Christ sein", Theologie und Philosophie, 51: 185-195, 1976.

²⁰¹ Adolf Kolping, Der "Fall Küng" : Eine Bilanz, (Frankfurt : Kaffke Verlag, 1976), p. 170.

²⁰² Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, "Antwort an meine Kritiker : Theologie für den Menschen?" Samstag, 22 Mai, 1976. (The newspaper does not number its pages).

In the newspaper article in which Küng responds to his critics he ignores their specific christological criticisms. Instead, he chooses to launch a personal attack on their approach to theology in general. He also criticizes the methods used to evaluate his christology, contending first that the discussion about his thought was conducted in his absence, and second that he was denied a defence against the eleven theologians who formed an entire football team against one individual. In addition, the choice of persons arrayed against him was a clever move by the Roman Curia. He notes, for example, that every one of his critics had on one or another occasion been at odds with the Curia. His opponents therefore could in no way be considered as traditionalists. The point he makes is that not even the most liberal of Roman Catholic theologians could be seen to side with his views and this, he contends, was a clever Curial move, not only to put him at a disadvantage but also to cast him in a poor light with any who might have had the temerity to side with him.

Küng - without always supplying evidence - indicates how Rahner and others have followed a survival course through compromise. For instance, Rahner shrewdly avoids Roman dogma which states very clearly that Jesus founded the church. He circumvents this by pointing to the church as founded by Jesus through his death and resurrection, which is nothing short of a compromise. Rahner also questions Peter's status in relation to the twelve, yet supports papal infallibility. How can he draw such a conclusion, Küng asks, when the very Petrine basis is dubious? According to Küng, Rahner denies his own exegetical findings, so making real discussion not only difficult but virtually impossible, especially since he and Rahner had agreed on the subject of christology at

Brussels in 1971. Both accepted the need for a re-statement of the creeds²⁰³. Grillmeier, despite his knowledge of the Brussels agreement and Küng's further affirmations that he accepted the intention of Nicaea and Chalcedon, requested him to declare himself an Arian. Küng regarded this as an act of hypocrisy by Grillmeier²⁰⁴.

In Küng's view these theologians put dogma above exegesis and thus lost an opportunity to make their faith relevant to modern persons. Kasper, Küng asserts, has followed the road of expediency. Kasper is familiar with the historical-critical method. He too affirms that the New Testament teaches a functional christology in terms of exegesis. He supplements the New Testament teaching, however, with the teaching of the church, and that for Küng is nothing short of compromise. Because Küng wishes to return to what he considers to be New Testament teaching without encrusted tradition, Kasper, whom one presumes should know better, accuses him of a simple functionalistic christology.²⁰⁵

Küng makes the further point that no Catholic New Testament scholars were consulted, but only dogmaticians. Protestants too were excluded. For Küng the reason is clear: the emphasis on christology is always dogma first to the detriment of exegesis.

In 1978 Küng discussed his christology in particular with a number of German bishops and theologians under the chairman of the German Bishops Conference, Archbishop Cardinal Höffner, who dominated a fruitless discussion. Küng had requested these authorities to await the full

²⁰³ Ibid., col. 5.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., col. 3.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., col. 9.

text of his Existiert Gott?, but to no avail. In 1979, on the basis of his christology, he was dismissed by the Catholic Church as a teacher of Catholic seminarians.²⁰⁶

Küng must accept part of the blame for his dismissal in that his language and definitions often lack precision, thus clouding the christological issue. The following sentence is an example of my point. He states:

"Funktionaussagen - sie stehen zweifellos im Vordergrund - und Seinaussagen dürfen nicht auseinandergerissen werden."²⁰⁷ He then continues with the same line of thought by asserting:

Denn ob man im übrigen dieses Verhältnis von Gott, und Jesus theologisch mehr funktional oder ontologisch beschreibt, mehr von abstrakten Wesensaussagen oder konkreten Heilsaussagen ausgeht, dies dürfte sekundär und is ja auch nicht notwendig ein Widerspruch sein.²⁰⁸

These are not the most important issues. What is vital is that Jesus not only functions as God's son, in fact, "Er ist es, and er ist es nicht nur für mich, sondern auch in sich" (in himself).²⁰⁹ What exactly does Küng imply? Certainly he sounds ambiguous, but in the light of his critics' statements that he is purely functional and therefore reductionistic with regard to the person of Jesus, Küng seems to me to deny their charges. In fact, Kuschel in his consideration of the above type of utterances made by Küng, deduces that his christology implicitly includes an ontological presupposition for Jesus' person. Because Jesus by his actions, and

²⁰⁶ Nowell, A Passion for Truth

²⁰⁷ E.G., p.748

²⁰⁸ Ibid., p.750

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

statements speaks "about God's very being"²¹⁰ therefore one may accept that these acts "have ontological consequences"²¹¹ for Jesus' person. However, to conclude from this above argument that since Jesus speaks about God with a certain finality he is ipso facto divine himself involves a giant leap of faith to my way of thinking.

I accept that the above statements by Küng appear to contradict his whole premise of a christology from below, but one should remember that at no time does he deny the content of Chalcedon. What he clearly questioned was the relevance of its ontological value for today, simply because in his view modern persons do not think in ontological but in functional categories. All Küng does is to offer "a consistent development of Hegel's . . . functional theology,"²¹² in relation to the christology of the New Testament. Küng's request, therefore, is that secondary ontological principles should not displace primary functional ones, in order that the New Testament message about Jesus should be heard today.

In my opinion Küng is correct in holding that the New Testament uses functional language to describe Jesus' relationship to the Father. Furthermore, such language does not obscure but undergirds the link between the historical Jesus and the risen Christ. Because the early church conceived of the historical Jesus as unique, bearing the full mandate of God, they were able to

²¹⁰ Karl-Josef Kuschel, "Jesus Christ is the Decisive Criterion: Beyond Barth and Hegel in a Christology 'From Below'", Hans Küng: New Horizons for Faith and Thought, eds. Karl-Josef Kuschel and Hermann Häring, (London: SCM., 1993), p.193.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Rudolph J. Siebert, "Hans Küng: Toward a Negative Theology", The Ecumenist, Jan/Feb., 1979, p.17.

worship him not as a second God, but as himself divine.²¹³ Since the early church comprehended this relationship between Jesus and God and thus grasped the full significance of his person as the complete symbol of their eschatological hope, they could proclaim that he is risen into the very presence of God. There is thus no difference between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith.²¹⁴

The operative word for Küng underscores faith as trust in or committal to this Christ, based on God's faithfulness to his representative. The argument is as follows: the disciples committed themselves to this Christ and none other because they recognized not only that he was faithful to God, but that God who is faithful raised this one into his presence as a promise to all humanity that neither death nor hell are victorious; they are not the end, but God is. This is what the disciples and the early church grasped in faith. The emphasis here is faith in the faithfulness of God which, although it elicits a subjective response from persons, involves far more: comprehending that God has not abandoned humanity and is ultimately in control.²¹⁵

Thus for Küng, Jesus always points beyond himself to the divine revealed by him. He is therefore God in revelation, or God revealed and perceived as such only through faith. He is not God in terms of essence but rather through revelation and therefore one should not confuse the issue by speaking of secondary matters like essence or nature. Such terms, while having relevance for the fathers are beyond present-day experience or

²¹³ E.G., pp. 752-753.

²¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 740-743. See also Moltmann, Trinity and the Kingdom of God, pp. 84-89.

²¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 752-754.

comprehension. The term "nature", as explained in chapter one, no longer means what it did at Chalcedon.

Küng's critics have been rigid in their demand for a christology of essence, particularly in the light of Heisenberg's uncertainty principle reflected in his book Physics and Philosophy. Here he contends that physics can no longer define the nature of matter as was the case in the nineteenth century. Thus while physics has moved away from explicit definitions of substance, essence and matter, some theologians seem to be caught in a "time-trap" and this, precisely, is what Küng endeavours to avoid. Max Born too, in his book The Restless Universe showed that not even the smallest "particle of matter" could be adequately defined as it appeared to be a series of unending inter-connecting caves, more of a process of energy than something called matter or essence²¹⁶. Yet some Christians, including Küng's critics, hold to dogma as if it were embedded in concrete in relation to the concept of God's "essence" as present in Christ.

Küng, in order to address his modern audience is reductionistic with a functional christology. By this reductionistic approach, however, he wants his readers to ask, Who is this man (person) who functions and acts in God's place?

Jacob Neusner, the Jewish scholar well known for his translation into English of virtually all the works of rabbinic Judaism including the entire texts of the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds, gave his views on

²¹⁶ H.R. Schilling, The New Consciousness in Science and Religion, (London: SCM, 1973), p. 44. See also G.C. Oosthuizen, "The Depth Dimension in the Post-Modern World View and Africa", Perspectives, ed. R. Singh (Durban: UDW Press, 1986), pp. 191-214. The above article is an insightful evaluation of modern physicists.

Jesus in an interview with Robert Hutchinson.²¹⁷ The discussion centred in Neusner's book, A Rabbi Talks With Jesus, which had just gone to press. Neusner's concern is with Matthew's gospel which he considers the most Jewish in content. Using the historical-critical method he pays no attention to Jesus' miracles or resurrection, but focuses solely on what can be considered as an original saying of Jesus. For example, in Jesus' attitude to the law Neusner contends that Jesus claims more than divine authority, he actually claims divine status for himself. "He is claiming for himself the right to adapt, or modify, Divine Law."²¹⁸ Jesus dares to adapt and even reject the Torah, "God himself speaking through his prophet Moses."²¹⁹ What is more "any observant Jew would recognize that fact."²²⁰ Neusner further notes that Jesus was hostile to the customs of first century Pharisaism destined to keep "Eternal Israel 'holy' and set apart from the nations"²²¹, even going to the point of flouting the prohibitions of the day by eating and keeping company with prostitutes and tax collectors. Neusner underlines the fact that God had called Israel to be holy. The conduct of Jews in separating themselves from unclean things and unclean people was central to this sanctity, but Jesus challenges, even reverses such Jewish concepts of holiness. Neusner politely puts the question to Jesus: Who do you think you are - God?²²² The consequent logic to Neusner is that Jesus should see

²¹⁷ Robert J. Hutchinson, "What the Rabbi Taught Me About Jesus", Christianity Today, Sept. 13, 1993, pp. 27-29.

²¹⁸ Ibid., p. 28.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid., p. 29.

himself as the embodiment of the New Covenant with God. Whereas Moses conveyed the Old Covenant from God to Israel on Sinai, Jesus saw himself as the content of the New Covenant.

Christians thus grasped his person as the new way to God. For that reason they were expelled from the synagogues. They had turned from the temple to the cross.²²³ Neusner therefore opposes "a false ecumenism that downplays the real differences between religions."²²⁴ Indeed it is from the above aspect that Küng may be accused by his critics of functionalism and reductionism. Neusner has noted Jesus' opposition to the Pharisees as he presented not only God, but himself as the point of contrast to first century Jewish religious concepts about God and the law. It is for this reason that Neusner declines to follow the way to God as claimed by Jesus.²²⁵

Following Jesus in discipleship is obviously a matter of decision arising from a faith perspective. This is exactly Küng's point. Nature and essence are not the issue for Küng, but committal to this person. Dogma and creeds are not the starting point for Küng. It is faith in this Jesus as God's final way to salvation that Küng underscores and which is a matter of individual decision, yet one with a reliable historical basis. That basis is simply this: Why did the church live for, die for and proclaim this person and none other in worship?

At a meeting in Durban in 1986, Küng stated publicly that he would not write on the subject of christology again until the ban on his teaching seminarians was rescinded. He considered the two to be linked to another significant

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid., p. 28.

issue, namely his problem with papal infallibility²²⁶. There does therefore appear to be a gap in Küng's christology due to intransigence on both sides.

In my view, if there is a weakness in Küng's christology it lies in his failure to follow through on his Hegelian premise. In Hegel's thought God's existence is given a form or ontology and that ontology is world history wherein God is in the process of becoming. The problem with Küng is that he equates ontology with being and therefore sees it as something static. However if God is in the process of becoming and that becoming takes place in a historical sphere, a type of ontology is already implied for God is in the process of becoming. The pathway to Absolute Being has the form of world history exemplified in the individual Jesus as the divine opposite. This opposite seems more than a mere functional opposite; it takes the form of the historical Jesus who shows humanity how God acts. It seems to me that there must be some consistent degree between the way one acts to what one is, even if that involves a developmental process explained in the dynamic form of becoming.

One example of what is meant here can be seen in the ideology of apartheid. The concept may well have taken the form of functionalistic action by excluding some while accepting others. However, even in its functionalistic operation it had an impact on our humanity as South Africans. It had the character or ontology to change our being wherein we were in the process of becoming dehumanized within our historical situation. I do not believe that ontology can be easily dismissed by Küng, especially with his Hegelian premise.

²²⁶

Diakonia Hall, 31 January 1986.

What does concern me is that John P. Meier in his work A Marginal Jew: Re-thinking the Historical Jesus published by Doubleday can state (p.253 et seq) that there is a clear distinction between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. In addition Dominic Crossan in his book published by Harper, The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant, affirms in his first chapter that the earliest church knew nothing about the death of Jesus except that he died on a cross. The point is that both these theologians are Roman Catholics, yet no attempt has been made to censure them. Their picture of Jesus - and they have already been encountered under the section on the Third Quest - in no way improves upon that depicted by German Protestant scholarship. Yet, unlike the reaction to Küng one hears no word of reprimand from the Curia.

In Küng's defence it seems to me he links the historical Jesus to the risen Christ because these biblical stories belong not only to an historical community but to a worshipping one. It appears that instead of arguing from dogma Küng accepts the accuracy of the tradition handed down by the early church, believing that they correctly interpreted the facts surrounding the actions, words and fate of the historical Jesus. Furthermore, while Küng does adhere to the system set forth by the historical-critical method, he is also aware that a tradition is far too flexible simply to be limited to a system, consequently he is cautious in his conclusions as they relate to Jesus linked to the believing community. He does not disregard the evidence of the early community but weighs it carefully; often a possibility being given the status of probability followed by certainty. Küng may be guilty of this procedure in his use of the historical-critical method but none can disavow his circumspection as seen in the present chapter. Küng then, is at pains to give his account in faith through

the eyes of the early church, of someone whom he believes really lived, died and "arose". Much of his information is based on the fact that the early community took the trouble to collect the paradigms (form criticism) based on what they considered as historical in their milieu. They gave that history an interpretation (redactional criticism) which they believed interpreted fully and correctly the evidence at their disposal. For forty days (whatever they mean) they saw Jesus before he ascended. Why this separation of the pre- and post ascended Lord? Küng believes that the church now experienced the exalted Lord as the Holy Spirit.²²⁷ Therefore there could be no confusion between these two periods. That the church was certainly true to the facts as they interpreted them is indeed Küng's point, but one that in no way can be abstracted from a believing community. For this reason the early followers were determined to keep the tradition alive in the form of gospels so that the record could be maintained after the death of the eye-witnesses. Their fidelity to the facts lay in the history of Jesus so that with the expansion of the church its faith could be seen to rest upon a historical figure, not a myth. Küng certainly explains adequately the link between Jesus' ministry and the faith of the disciples.

Küng concedes that there are divergences and discrepancies in the gospels, but as a historian he cannot deny that the early church believed in the resurrection of Jesus. That is the historical evidence; what one makes of that evidence as a philosopher or psychologist is another matter. Certainly the whole issue involves faith, but the historian cannot simply reject the evidence as a historian. He may do so perhaps as a sceptical scientist, but as historian he must allow the facts to speak and those facts, to Küng, seem to

²²⁷

E.G., pp. 760-763

display a great fidelity to the historical Jesus as the resurrected Christ. However, Küng is quite clear on one issue, the person of Jesus has an impact only upon the one who is committed to discipleship through faith.

Küng has developed a christology of reason from Hegel, but even that reason requires belief in and committal to the historical and philosophical Jesus. This matter receives further attention in the conclusion.

To Küng's critics he may well present a reductionistic and functional picture but it is one that evokes the question that Neusner asks of this man, "Who do you think you are -- God?"

The next chapter must be seen as a corrective to Küng's lack of ontology, by means of a modern method of process thought whereby, I believe, Küng could have found a basis for ontology to silence his critics. That section, while it is a new direction for Küng, does not exclude his methodology, but clearly adds a modern dimension to Hegel and the historical Jesus. In itself chapter six is both a corrective and in that way an added helpful critique of his approach.

CHAPTER SIX

PROCESS THEOLOGY : A LOGICAL CONCLUSION TO KÜNG'S CHRISTOLOGY?

6.1 INTRODUCTION

At the outset of the present chapter it should be noted that its purpose is not to give an exposition and critique of process theology, but to add a new dimension to Küng's christology by the use of process thought. Such a step is necessary for one is left with the feeling that Küng's christology is incomplete. Perhaps if Küng had not been silenced, he would have written a christology of the early church in much the same way as Schillebeeckx who after his book Jesus wherein he limited himself solely to the historical-critical method, produced Christ : The Christian Experience in the Modern World to round off his christological contribution. Küng however, considered it more expedient to publish Existiert Gott? which in its turn provoked the Magisterium to summarily place a ban on him. The outcome thereof is that a christological gap exists in Küng's contribution which may never be filled.

This chapter is a modest attempt to offer a new direction for Küng's christology, one that fills the lacuna while answering the criticism that all he offers is a functional christology.

The obvious question that comes to mind is why should Küng be linked to process theology? The whole point of Küng's work on christology lies in his attempt to provide a vehicle acceptable to modern persons whereby christology as it relates to the two natures of Christ can be understood today. He concedes that modern persons cannot accept the idea of an unchanging, static view of

God in the sense of one who is untouched and unmoved by the plight of a suffering world. Hegel then, with his concept of a God who is thoroughly immersed and immanent in the world, progressively moving dynamically through history, provides what Küng sees as the medium for an understanding of God's action in Christ for today.

The problem with using Hegel as a means of addressing modern persons has limitations. Hegel preceded Darwin who of course provided a water-shed in science by introducing the topic of evolution, an important aspect of process theology. In addressing the present situation, Hegel thus is provisional, since his concept of becoming lacks a modern scientific basis. Another question for Küng to answer relates to his joining Hegel, a nineteenth century philosopher, to the modern historical-critical method. To overcome the above difficulty, Küng moved as rapidly as possible from Hegel's understanding of christology to a position close to that of Strauss.

The importance of process theology lies not only in the fact that it is current and receives widespread attention in graduate schools and seminaries in America and is "the most viable form of neo-liberal Theology in the United States",¹ additionally, process theology can be adjusted to accommodate the historical-critical method as expressed by David Griffin.² Process thought gives due recognition to a scientific evolutionary theory as well. These matters will receive attention later in the chapter. The concept of a God who is dynamically working

¹ D W Diel, "Process Theology", Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids : Baker Book House, 1989), p. 884.

² David Griffin, A Process Christology, (Philadelphia : Fortress Press, 1973), pp. 199-205.

in the universe, one so important to both Hegel and Küng is central too in process thinking. Consequently, it appears as an adequate vehicle for Küng's thought since the concept of the two natures of Christ receives prominence in process thought also without reference to substance or essence as explained in this chapter. One must hasten to add though that christology in process theology is a fairly new development in a rather novel theological trend. Attention not to christology "but its expansion within process thought is a phenomenon of the late post war era."³ The point of the above introduction has been an attempt to show process theology as a viable alternative to Küng's method of uniting Hegel and historical-criticism. An expansion on that alternative follows.

Had Küng employed process thought he would have avoided the perception that one derives from Hegel of Christ being a divine cypher of dubious historical value. He could also to some extent have overcome the argument that his portrayal of Jesus is merely functional and reductionistic by giving content to the divine presence in Christ. This issue will receive attention below. Furthermore, it is my contention that process thought can be a logical conclusion to Küng's use of Hegel and historical criticism for it can accommodate both which I intend to try to show in this chapter.

6.2 KÜNG'S REACTION TO PROCESS THOUGHT

Küng has misgivings concerning process thought. He contends that its view of reality is very optimistic in that it does not take evil seriously (das problem des Bösen kaum genügend reflektierenden).⁴ He further

³ Ibid., p. 882.

⁴ E.G., p. 204.

affirms that process theology as expounded by Whitehead is no more than an interpretation of Hegel for in fact Whitehead according to Küng was under the influence of the Hegelian, Francis Herbert Bradley, a point which American process theologians fail to recognize.⁵ Küng believes that Whitehead reproduces Hegel via Bradley and Bergson without acknowledging his Hegelian source.⁶

The problem of evil in process thinking will receive attention in this chapter and I will attempt to show that Küng has overstated his case in that process thinking does have a distinct doctrine of evil, therefore Küng if and when the opportunity arises should re-assess his reflection on process thought. Furthermore, if Whitehead relies so heavily upon Hegel as Küng contends, then to my way of thinking Whitehead becomes a reliable vehicle for Hegel's thought, particularly as Küng at no time accuses Whitehead of departing from Hegel. Since Küng asserts that Whitehead is extremely difficult to understand because of the many categories that he uses (what about Hegel?) and his further assertion that Whitehead is very dogmatic, offering his ideas on a take it or leave it basis (Wir können sie annehmen oder bleiben lassen. Aber wir können sie nicht diskutieren),⁷ I will therefore discuss the topic of process mainly from the viewpoint of Whitehead's followers with a specific reference to christology. Whitehead's contribution to process thought will, however receive some attention. He is also after all one of the originators of the movement.

6.3 THE METHOD OF PROCESS CHRISTOLOGY

⁵ Ibid., p. 207.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., p. 211.

Pittenger makes the following point about process conceptuality. He states that everything about which we have experience or knowledge "can be subsumed under the general description of event and energy event."⁸ This means that "we do not have to do with substances or things, but with events...what Whitehead called...actual entities."⁹ In process thought too, "God is not conceived to be an essence....Rather, he is taken to be a dynamic event or series of events himself..."¹⁰ God is consequently in the process of "becoming" as much as anything else...."¹¹ The energy event means that in process "we have to do with no inert things, with no 'fixed entities'...we have to do, rather, with movement...or becoming"¹² This is true of God, the world and humanity. There is thus no static item called substance, for everything is in the process of becoming. Moreover every event is related to every other event "by a process of 'prehension', in which entities grasp and are grasped by their fellows."¹³ The concept of prehension or experience will be related to God's action in Jesus at a later stage in this chapter. At that point also the relevance of Jesus' person as a vehicle for the divine will, receives attention.

A process understanding of God is important, for process thought considers God in panentheistic terms. The usual

⁸ Norman Pittenger, "Process Theology : A Whiteheadian Version", Religious Experience and Process Theology, (eds.), Harry Cargas and Bernard Lee (Broadway : Paulist Press, 1986), p. 4.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., p. 5.

¹³ Ibid.

definition of panentheism derived from Hartshorne considers the universe as God's body in that nothing exists outside of God; "but God transcends his body in the sense that a man is more than his body."¹⁴ As God is absolute (in terms of perfect goodness) whereby he does not change, he is also relative.¹⁵ From this aspect, God possesses the potentiality for change by "incorporating the actual into his experience, yet he possesses as actual only that which has been actualized."¹⁶ The above concepts impinge upon christology by the fact that Jesus appears as the supreme symbol in history of one who assimilates all the experiences of people and even the world itself into his person. He cares in God's stead about the sparrows that fell to the ground and the lilies of the field as well as humanity with its joys and sorrows.¹⁷ Jesus in fact symbolizes God's feeling towards creation. Hartshorne does not speak to the divine substance or nature in Christ. He does not confuse Jesus with God, "but he is indeed the supreme symbol of deity."¹⁸

¹⁴ John Robert Baker, "The Christological Symbol of God's Suffering", Experience and Process Thought, p. 94. See also, Charles Hartshorne, "God and the Social Structure of Reality" in Theology in Crisis : A Colloquium on the Credibility of God (New Concord : Muskingum College, 1967), pp. 20-21.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 95. See also Charles Hartshorne, Reality and Social Process : Studies in Metaphysics and Religion (Glencoe : Free Press, 1952), p. 160.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 96. See also, Charles Hartshorne, A Natural Theology for Our Time (La Salle : Open Court, 1967). pp. 20-21.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 96-97. See also, Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process, p.24.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 96-97. See also, Charles Hartshorne and William L Reese, Philosophers Speak of God, (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 162-163.

God, though dipolar and thus having both on absolute and relative relationship to the world, is symbolized by Jesus in history. Hartshorne affirms:

This then is how the decisiveness and uniqueness of Jesus are understood : The living God, though possessed of a character no man can possess is imaged in Jesus with a clarity and definitiveness not to be found in any other man.¹⁹

Lewis Ford makes the point that process theology

in its attempts to present an understanding of Jesus Christ, has tended to stress the continuity of God's presence in Jesus with God's action in all the world, rather than stressing the discontinuity (i.e. the absolute uniqueness) of God's presence in Jesus.²⁰

Ford is speaking as a theologian over against Hartshorne the philosopher. An example given by Cobb and Griffin of prehension will throw light on the manner in which this idea impinges upon the person of Jesus by showing that the present prehensions or experiences of an individual are related to previous experiences. In process thought no experience is isolated. Persons inter-relate their experiences as individuals, which action in turn leads to one's individuality in humans. Cobb and Griffin link this prehension to the human psyche which is shaped by these prehensions, becoming open to further experiences.²¹ Another word of psyche is "soul".²² Since this act of prehension is internalized and related to all previous experiences, it must be continuous as one

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 97.

²⁰ Lewis, S Ford, "The Power of God and the Christ", Religious Experience and Process Theology, p. 79.

²¹ John B. Cobb and David Ray Griffin, Process Theology an Introductory Exposition, (Belfast : Christian Journals, 1977), pp. 19-20.

²² Ibid.

action is related to another to form an ongoing open-ended unification.²³

Daniel Day Williams develops process thought along the same lines seeing the world in evolutionary process beginning with the lowest forms of existence, gradually developing through inter-relationships to higher entities. He uses the developmental example of the world of molecular structure moving upwards towards a general fulfilment in humanity with Christ as the specific fulfilment of the world's evolution. It is not that the world is destined to become Christ, rather it finds its destiny in association with him.²⁴ This point will receive attention later in the chapter. A section on evolution and process thought will now follow.

6.3.1 Process Christology, Evolution and Evil

The view that God is "persuasive is a fairly modern development...."²⁵ In fact it is Darwin's theory of evolution that undergirds the whole concept of persuasion for the world does not appear to have come into being by the means of coercive force or efficient causality. "Darwin's theory of evolution provided the opportunity where one could now consistently conceive of the world as having come into being by means of divine

²³ David R Griffin, A Process Christology, (Philadelphia : Westminster Press, 1973), pp. 167-192.

²⁴ Daniel Day Williams, What Present-Day Theologians Are Thinking, (New York : Harper and Row, 1959), pp. 120-148.

²⁵ Ford, "The Power of God and The Christ", p. 81. See also Cobb and Griffin, Process Theology, pp. 54-58 and 119-120.

persuasion...."²⁶ What one is actually attempting to achieve in science is

"in effect establishing correlations between events according to laws and according to patterns of regularity...leading to the emergence of new structures which have not existed before."²⁷

Ford is following the process of natural selection over random mutation.

The statement that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny appears basic. In the successive embryological stages of growth in cephalopods and persons one observes the phylogeny of the species recapitulated in the embryo by evolutionary growth. At a certain stage it has gill arches and clefts but these of course do not become gills. After their initial appearance they develop into other structures, however, it is true to state that "the human embryo does recapitulate, in its own development, the developmental background of the whole animal order."²⁸ In an examination of the cephalopods one observes a similar process in that "the different genera can be distinguished on the nature of the sutures of the later chambers."²⁹ Upon the examination of vertebrates a distinct progression is noted also. One can trace a developmental process from the most basic of chordates to vertebrates and finally to a human being. As Romar states: "One cannot make a comparative study of the vertebrates without formulating some general concept of

²⁶ Ibid., p. 81.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Eric Rust, Faith and Science : Towards a Theological Understanding of Nature, (Philadelphia : Westminster Press, 1972), p. 112.

²⁹ Marshall Kay and Edwin Colbert, Stratigraphy and Life History (New York : Wiley and Sons, 1965), p. 330.

the nature of evolutionary process."³⁰ Huxley sums up as follows: "It is this process that converts randomness into direction and blind chance into apparent purpose."³¹ There thus appears to be room for divine persuasion within evolution.

If humanity is the final product of evolution and the psyche the central point of humanity (See footnote 21), then one can assume that God's action upon the psyche is persuasive. Indeed "all of God's activity in the world is a persuasive activity... always [involving] a creaturely response."³² God's action upon humanity is in the nature of "the divine lure"³³ and "his activity always involves a human and a divine response."³⁴ Whitehead states the case as follows regarding God's influence: "That influence is always persuasive and can only produce such order as is possible."³⁵ Whitehead is arguing for a divine being who desires what is best for creation and the creature. God's intention is to bring about good in the present by incorporating the past with its good and evil, but attempting to re-direct that activity or series of activities to "bring about greater good in the future - a greater good which will involve a fuller incarnation of the divine reality itself."³⁶ What then becomes of the problem of evil and why is there so

³⁰ A.S. Romar, The Vertebrate Body, (Philadelphia : Sanders and Co., 1958), p. 1.

³¹ Julian Huxley, Evolution in Action, (New York : New American Library, 1964). p. 47.

³² Ford, "The Power of God and the Christ", p. 82.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ A. N. Whitehead, The Adventure of Ideas, (C.U.P., 1938), p. 189.

³⁶ Griffin, A Process Christology, p. 69.

much evil in the world? K  ng, as noted at the beginning of this chapter contends that process thought does not have an adequate understanding of evil's presence. Traditional theology denies God's responsibility for evil but process thought accepts that since divine power is persuasive and not controlling, "finite actualities can fail to conform to the divine aim for them."³⁷ There are two basic evils, discord and triviality that detract from God's aim "which seeks to maximize that which is intrinsically good."³⁸ Discord, "is simply evil in itself."³⁹ It is that which involves all forms of suffering whether mental or physical.⁴⁰ Triviality, on the other hand, is evil in that it is the result of a deliberate attempt to choose to maximize the lesser good instead of the greater.⁴¹ However in process thought the very fact that God took the risk of creating the universe involves the divine in evil. Had God not created there would have been no chaos.⁴² The act of creating is an act that has evil as a corollary. Were this not the case then "God would not stimulate the chaos to incarnate increasingly complex forms of order."⁴³ Hence evil is not extrinsic to evolution, but is actually a requirement for the attainment of good in that were there no evil one would then have no criterion for measuring the good.⁴⁴ Simply put, "The good cannot be had without the

³⁷ Ibid., p. 70.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., pp. 71-72.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

possibility of the bad."⁴⁵ Self-determination and freedom include the possibility for evil as one may "disregard the initial aim preferred by God in favour of some other possibility for that moment of existence."⁴⁶ Process thought can thus hold God as "responsible for evil in the sense of having encouraged the world in the direction that made these evils possible."⁴⁷

God thus risks discord in order to attain perfection by offering creation the highest good through persuasion in an evolutionary process that leads to the greater good. Santiago Sia states: "It is meaningless to ask why God does not control the world so that evils could not happen. Such a question would arise only if God is understood to have a monopoly of decision making."⁴⁸ Moreover, the consequences of evil such as suffering and heartache as experienced by the creature are in their turn felt by God. "Not only does he contain our suffering, he also suffers"⁴⁹ in terms of the divine's consequent nature.⁵⁰ Küng as stated earlier believes that process thought makes light of evil, however, it should be clear that evil touches the very depths of God. Baker makes the same point in his article referred to in this chapter.⁵¹

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 73.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 75.

⁴⁸ Santiago Sia, God in Process Thought, (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1986), p. 97. The above work is a third world attempt to replace liberation theology by process thought.

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 96-101.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Baker, "The Christological Symbol of God's Suffering", pp. 93-103.

Küng's rejection of process thought on the basis that it lacks an understanding of the problem of evil is thus invalid. Persuasion does involve the risk of evil.

To return to biological evolution, an example of the place of "evil" is seen when duplication occurs in DNA. Mutations occur in DNA when errors are made by the single strands in their replication, resulting in a partner strand which is not its exact complement. Such action though an error becomes beneficial leading to an improvement in the evolutionary process.⁵² The point of the above exercise is to indicate that process thought is in harmony with and theologically complements evolution. Küng certainly could use process thought in attempting to find a modern expression for his thought as seen below.

6.3.2 Persuasion and the Person of Jesus Christ

If all actions are both divine and creaturely, then indeed "the action produced is divine and creaturely."⁵³ Where then does one find "a response...totally atuned to the divine lure?"⁵⁴ Indeed the whole creation is incarnational and incarnation pervades the whole of reality, but it is the creatures who decide how to appropriate this manifestation of God's reality. It is the creatures within the evolutionary process who "decide how they appropriate their past, how they respond to the lures directed towards greater and greater complexity."⁵⁵ I believe the point that Ford is making is that every individual, as well as the whole of creation, is the sum

⁵² George W. Beadle, "The Language of Gene", The Language of Science, (Greenwich : Fawcett Inc., 1966), pp. 79-85.

⁵³ Ford, "The Power of God and the Christ", p. 82.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

total of its past, finding fulfilment in a very fleeting momentary experience called the present, forming the basis for the future. Within the above development lurks the divine persuasion immanent in the world directly. Where and at what specific point, if any is God really present? Whitehead argues for God's immanence on the basis of Nicaea. He believes that "the Arian solution involving a derivative image is orthodox Platonism though it is heterodox Christianity."⁵⁶ In Arianism, Christ is but an "imitation of the presence of God but not God himself."⁵⁷ It is necessary if God by immanence incarnationally speaking, is in the process of persuasion in the world that, that incarnation should manifest itself in history.⁵⁸ At this point God "interacted with his people."⁵⁹ This statement is developed below. It is this interaction that leads to a christology. The question is not one of two natures in Christ, one divine the other human, that is a mathematical formula. "The issue that should be faced is different. How is it and why is it that the Christ must come from Israel."⁶⁰ This matter involves God's call and human response. The truth is that God calls all people, but persons respond to the divine call in differing degrees. The extent to which an individual responds to that call enables God to intensify the call and to develop it further. Of course this is the whole basis of process thought. "God...is known for what he is through a study of what he does."⁶¹ This is a direct reference to the history of God, or God's

⁵⁶ Whitehead, Adventure of Ideas, p. 216.

⁵⁷ Ford, "The Power of God and the Christ", p. 83.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 84.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 85.

⁶¹ Norman Pittenger, Process Thought and Christian Faith (London : Nisbet and Co., 1968), p. 39.

historical action. If that is the case then this historical action does not simply involve isolated events, for the response of Moses is directly related to the call of Abraham, a call that is expressed throughout the call of the nation of Israel involving both divine and human interaction and response in relation to divine persuasion. It is just this history that "generates a context of meaning that makes it possible for Jesus to be the Christ."⁶² This results not only from God's persuasion in history but also from the fact that divine prehension is involved in re-directing the world's course advancing it and "moving it onwards."⁶³ This applies to Israel's history in particular as it has responded to the divine call that culminates in the history of Jesus. "Without that context of meaning, dependent upon prior response, there is no way in which the people could have received or understood or been open to Jesus in the way that they were."⁶⁴ Ford affirms: "This means that Christology should become a much more historical undertaking than it has ever been."⁶⁵

The issue of persuasion and history takes on an important dimension for process thought. Persuasion is most clearly manifested in the response of Israel and for this reason one could state that no other history could bear the Christ.

"Socrates cannot be the Christ simply because he is not of the house of Israel and does not participate in the whole context of meanings which makes it possible for Jesus to fulfil a different role than is otherwise possible."⁶⁶

⁶² Ford, "The Power of God and the Christ", p. 85.

⁶³ Cobb and Griffin, Process Theology, p. 123.

⁶⁴ Ford, "The Power of God and the Christ", p. 85.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 83.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 85.

The argument develops by showing Israel as the bearer of God's hopes and purposes for humanity, but the real question is "who in the tradition of Israel would actualize these hopes and purposes?"⁶⁷ In the next section, the presence of God in Jesus will receive attention.

6.4 THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN JESUS CHRIST AS REFLECTED IN PROCESS THEOLOGY

In process thought creation and the creature respond to God's call or lure. Persuasion is a vital part of that call, but so is response. God by persuasion directs the universe to a point of greater evolutionary fulfilment, but there must be a response and that response takes the form of an evolutionary reaction as seen previously on the section referring to evolution. Pittenger affirms that "the central conviction of American process-thought is that the evolutionary perspective must be taken with utmost seriousness."⁶⁸ He continues:

In process thinking...the meaning of the concept of God is not derived from an abstract theory, but from observation of the world and its concrete reality.⁶⁹

Consequently, God is known by action "through a study of what he does."⁷⁰ But in whom does God act primarily? Schubert Ogden answers: "That God is the 'pure unbounded love' whom Jesus represents...."⁷¹ The whole created universe participates in this love represented in Jesus

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 86.

⁶⁸ Norman Pittenger, God in Process, (London : SCM, 1967), p. 98.

⁶⁹ Pittenger, Process Thought, p. 39.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Schubert M. Ogden, The Reality of God, (New York, Harper and Row, 1977), pp. 123-124.

Christ, whether atheist or humanist⁷² Jesus Christ is the "decisive act of God"⁷³ the reality by which one judges the whole of reality,⁷⁴ for "the historical event of Jesus' life and ministry is seen to be God's decisive act in human history."⁷⁵ The reason for Jesus' decisive role in history is due to his absolute manifestation of the divine love in action by identifying with the suffering of the universe in order to redeem it.⁷⁶

Process thought attempts to be definitive in demonstrating how God is present in Jesus Christ. However, not all process theologians see that presence in the same way. Attention will now focus on the manner wherein Jesus manifests God.

Griffin sees Jesus Christ as the supreme revelation of God in that he is the one who constantly shows compassion for all who are broken and suffering in the world. Jesus not only suffers with humanity and creation, he by example shows God's care in identification with the travailing universe for a purpose, and that purpose means that in losing oneself for God and others, one actually finds oneself. Here the concept of evolution through the negative of suffering leads to the greater good of self-fulfilment. "God...is always influencing man towards the end which will bring him the greatest fulfilment consonant with the good of the rest of creation."⁷⁷ Griffin contends for the "Abelardian view...that God

⁷² Ibid., p. 143.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 184.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 164-187.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 187.

⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 164-187.

⁷⁷ Griffin, A Process Christology, p. 236. See also pp. 233-246.

saves us by revealing his love for us in Jesus Christ."⁷⁸ In Jesus Christ one not only observes God's love for humanity, one is also invited to participate in that love "calling us beyond the past, to that which is right and best for us, given our concrete situation."⁷⁹ But why is Jesus Christ special and decisive for God's revelation? Is it because of two natures one divine the other human in him? Cobb argues for and explains the divinity of Jesus in terms of Jesus' self, which is that "relatively continuous centre within human experience around which the experience attempts more or less successfully to organize itself."⁸⁰

In Jesus this self was so organized that there was no tension between what God expected of him and what he expected of God. Absolute harmony existed between Jesus' self - the sum total of all that he was - and the divine.⁸¹ Jesus expressed the divine character and will because his prehension "was from the perspective given in his prehension of God."⁸² Cobb states clearly that the prehension of God constituted Jesus' self.⁸³

Griffin attempts to demonstrate that whereas with the prophets the divine call to them was in the form of an encounter, in Jesus that call fulfilled completely the

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 234.

⁷⁹ Ibid. See also John B. Cobb, The Structure of Christian Existence, (Philadelphia : Westminster Press, 1967), pp. 103-105.

⁸⁰ John B. Cobb, "A Whiteheadian Christology", Process Philosophy and Christian Thought, eds., Delwin Brown and others, (New York : Cobbs-Merril 60, 1971), p. 391.

⁸¹ Griffin, A Process Christology, pp. 228-229.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Cobb, "A Whiteheadian Christology", pp. 392-395.

divine prehension, he did not simply encounter an external call, rather that call formed the centre of his psyche as part of the sum total of all that Jesus was. The prophets heard God's call, Jesus on the other hand was (embodied) God's call. Certainly the claims of Jesus and his actions were the claims and actions of God upon the creation. In Jesus the call of Abraham and Israel to participate in God's coming redemption, found its fulfilment, for Jesus was that promised redemption.⁸⁴

Griffin further affirms:

It was because Jesus actualized those particular aims of the divine Logos, the character and purpose of that reality in which the whole creation is grounded, was supremely expressed through him.⁸⁵

Although the Logos is present in all things as God's primordial nature incarnated in creation, that "incarnate Logos is Christ [specifically]. In this broadest sense, Christ is present in all things."⁸⁶ But, "it is in living things that the proper work of the Logos is significantly manifest."⁸⁷ The action of the Logos is God's supreme action of transforming creation towards the divine's intended goal which is the highest good of both creation and the creature. Such "creative transformation is the essence of growth, and growth is the essence of life. The source of this novelty is the Logos whose incarnation is Christ."⁸⁸ There is therefore a link between God as the divine exists in itself and the

⁸⁴ Griffin, A Process Christology, pp. 206-231. See also Ford, "The Power of God and the Christ, p. 87, where he elaborates on this discussion.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 231.

⁸⁶ Cobb and Griffin, Process Theology, p. 99.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 100-101.

Christ. In this instance the association takes the form of the Logos "recognized as Christ."⁸⁹ Because of this association Christ is the revelation of God "about reality."⁹⁰

The argument is as follows: God is present in all of creation and existence, but particularly so in the call and response of Israel to the divine persuasion. The acme of that persuasion is in Christ, for the Logos acts throughout history and creation transforming all by directing towards a greater and deeper prehension as God patterns each new occasion. Of course the deterring element of evil must not be overlooked because it hinders the experience that God has in store for his creatures in that it distorts the divine lure. Christ is the exception. In him God's plan is fulfilled unconditionally How?

In Jesus there is not the normal tension between the initial aims and purposes received from the past, in that those past purposes were themselves conformed to divine aims, and thereby involved the basic disposition to be open to God's call in each future moment.⁹¹

Jesus consequently clearly mirrors God's aim for humanity, an aim achieved by none other. God not only completed a history in Jesus but by the special divine presence enabled Jesus to complete that history in himself. There is thus a distinctive call of Jesus and a divine presence with Jesus in the Logos.

Ford comments on christology as follows: "A good deal of contemporary Christological thinking, even within process

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 103.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 106.

circles, tends to see Jesus as revealing God because he fully actualizes the divine aim."⁹² He adds:

The aims that God has for differing individuals differ....God has an aim for each situation.... certain aims....are capable of embodying a much broader aim.... In Jesus' life we see fulfilled God's aim as reaching beyond his own life into the lives of all of us."⁹³

Not only is Jesus, God's supreme revelation in process thought but it is through him knowingly or unknowingly that one and all attain fellowship with God. This act makes Jesus decisive for creation as the true mediator.⁹⁴

If "every event pervades its future",⁹⁵ then God must be the power of that future which lures and directs our actions now. Jesus recognized the futurity of God in his statements about the kingdom where it is observed that the kingdom while future impinges directly upon the present for in "Jesus' own power...the present allowed the divine power of the future to become fully effective."⁹⁶ One may therefore deduce that God's work in and through Christ is ongoing and open-ended. Christology is not a closed system, God continues to call, lure and persuade creation through his Christ in an "evolutionary development of the world, which is also God's advance."⁹⁷

In process christology, God works through Christ in persuading creation to accept that which is best for both

⁹² Ford, "The Power of God and the Christ", p. 86.

⁹³ Ibid., Underlining mine.

⁹⁴ Griffin, A Process Christology, pp. 218-221.

⁹⁵ Cobb and Griffin, Process Theology, p. 104.

⁹⁶ Ford, "The Power of God and the Christ", p. 89.

⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 90.

God and itself as seen in the call of Abraham, Moses and Israel. This divine act is manifested historically in Christ. Christ then in turn pervades creation transforming it by redirecting the universe towards God by responsive love in the person of the Holy Spirit,⁹⁸ the point made by Hegel but clarified in process thought.

6.5 AN EVALUATION OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST IN PROCESS THOUGHT

To re-quote Whitehead's words, Christ in process thought does not appear to be a "derivative image" of God, he is certainly divine (see footnote 55 and 56). Quite clearly too, process thought is not caught up in the two-nature-hypothesis of substance and essence. Pittenger concedes that concepts like nature and substance run contrary to the reality of a God who acts instead of one who is. When one overlooks the dynamic aspect of God as involved in the world and concentrates instead on the metaphysics of being the picture that emerges is one of static essence. Instead the biblical picture is of "a dynamic living universe in which God is ceaselessly at work...alive and related to it as the living God."⁹⁹ As a development on the above theme, he asserts: "It is the self-expressive action of God in Christ which is important, not some description of 'natures' as if they were definable entities or categories...."¹⁰⁰ However, when Pittenger expands on the presence of God in Christ, Jesus' special relationship to the Father is merely one of degree in that Jesus actualized the divine presence and purpose, a purpose and presence found in creation,

⁹⁸ Cobb and Griffin, Process Theology, pp. 109-111.

⁹⁹ Norman Pittenger, The Word of God Incarnate : A Study of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ, London : Nisbet and Co., 1959), p. 179.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

albeit to a lesser degree.¹⁰¹ Jesus, in fact, actualizes the potentiality open to all people.¹⁰²

In addition Pittenger, to my way of thinking, associates himself with the Nestorian school of thought in stating: "I have tried to show, in a previous chapter, the 'Nestorian' interpretation is not of itself heretical...."¹⁰³ Nestorius taught or is reputed to have taught that in the womb of Mary there was a conjunction and not a union between the human and the divine. The union was thus a moral union and not one of essence. In other words, Mary bore a man who was the vehicle of God.¹⁰⁴ Jesus is the clearest expression of divine love acting to transform, for in Israel's religion completed in Christ, one observes the ultimate example of God's creative love which is at work in all creation. "Process theology finds its criterion in the biblical text 'God is love', understood in the light of the event of Jesus Christ in whom (for the Christian faith) the Love 'which moves the Sun and the other stars' was vividly 'enfleshed.'"¹⁰⁵

The poetic language, however, does not conceal that Pittenger holds to a moral union wherein Jesus is but the vehicle of the divine. He differs from the rest of humanity in degree but not in kind.

Cobb attempts to show by his Logos doctrine that Jesus was different from the rest of humanity not only in

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 177.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 188.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 129.

¹⁰⁴ J.N.D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, p. 311.

¹⁰⁵ Norman Pittenger, "Process Theology", A Dictionary of Christian Theology, ed., A Richardson (London : SCM, 1969), p. 277.

degree but in kind. He believes that Jesus is the supreme manifestation of the divine because there was no difference in intention between the divine will and that of Jesus. Jesus' experiences of God or prehensions of the divine were so encapsulated in him that God's will, experience and action were one and the same as those of Jesus. The emphasis here is on the psyche or the self. Jesus' self was identical in intention to God's self through the action of the Logos. Cobb envisages Jesus as more than a vehicle or expression of the divine, his self is united with the divine self. The difficulty with Cobb's view is that in his attempt to sidestep the issue of two natures in one person he could open himself to Apollinarianism wherein the human mind of Jesus is occupied by the Logos. There is no clarity as to when it is the Logos as divine that is acting upon the self of Jesus for that self seems to include the divine Logos.

Ford it would seem is contending for Jesus as the person in whom the divine and human prehensions meet. At this point of meeting there is a direct level of unity involving the experiences of history as call and persuasion. Jesus is the sum total of the historical action of God and humanity, the confluence of all divine-human encounters. Therefore he is not only the manifestation of a divine-human fellowship, he is that fellowship,

the summation of every event, past and future as they impinge on the individual's present. Jesus is divine as the sum total of divine experience in the world. He is human as the sum total of all human experiences, therefore he is both divine and human as the one who is the basis of all prehension.

It appears as if Ogden and Hartshorne see Christ as God's cypher in that both limit Christ to an exemplary individual who displays the noblest aspects of humanity by openness to God.

Christ is justly then the finest illustration of an individual human being who allowed God to direct his life. However the other process thinkers mentioned are attempting to define the two natures in terms of a vital relationship wherein Christ is the centre of both divine and human prehension.

6.6 PROCESS CHRISTOLOGY : A VIABLE DIRECTION FOR KÜNG'S CHRISTOLOGY?

Küng's starting point for christology lies in the assertion that modern persons cannot accept the idea of a static, unchanging God. Furthermore, he contends that in order to speak to modern persons, a comprehensible vehicle is needed. The result is that Küng is persuaded that Hegel provides the medium for a modern understanding of God's action in Christ.

One need not dispute Küng's intention to speak relevantly in the present situation, but it is the way he addresses the issue that is problematical. Hegel, upon whom Küng relies, lived in a pre-Darwinian era with no idea of modern biology, psychology, chemistry or physics. It would therefore have been wiser to choose a medium in keeping with modern evolutionary and historical trends. Process thought can incorporate both the historical-critical method and the dynamic evolving view of God and the world as becoming. A brief elaboration on the above statement will obviously follow in this section. Küng could have developed his christology in line with American process thought, but as seen earlier, he rejects it merely as an elaboration and extension of Hegelianism (See section 6.2 for details). Hegel, Küng contends, supplies a superior model for christology. He is the deeper thinker upon whom process thought is founded.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ E.G., pp. 201-211.

Process thought acknowledges and defines the place of evil in the world, but one questions whether Hegel really developed an understanding of evil and its consequences in this ravaged world. Hegel's optimistic system does not take serious account of God's becoming as an act of identity with the world based on love. The system seems to exclude such an emotion. This is a serious defect for what is it that drives the Absolute by a dynamic process of becoming to engage the world? Is it only a desire for harmony? The fulfilment of reason or Geist in the process of becoming does not seem to provide sufficient impetus for the transcendent to become immanent. Hegel's system does not appear to have room for God as one who is unlimited, the divine is bound within the system. There is no apparent room for grace, fellowship and redemption in Hegel's system. The structure looks impersonal.

Hegel certainly pointed out that the Absolute comes to realization in the act of becoming and that static terms cannot do justice to God's involvement in the universe. However, one does not appear to be involved with the God of the Old and New Testaments, a personal God who cares. The system ostensibly replaces the biblical view of God.

One continually asks why Küng felt obliged to use Hegel as a vehicle for his future christology? Certainly Küng is dealing with the problem of God's historicity in order to solve the difficulty of Christ's two natures by representing him as the focal point of God's historical action, but such a view does not require the abstract, speculative categories of Hegel in my opinion. I cite Kaufmann and Durant who affirm Hegel's virtual incomprehensibility.¹⁰⁷ It appears as if Küng forces the Scriptures into a Hegelian mould to find the basis for

¹⁰⁷

1. Kaufmann, Hegel, p.9
2. W. Durant, The Story of Philosophy (New York: Washington Square Press, 1979), p.292.

his future christology. Perhaps Küng seeks a respectable garb for his christology in order to appease the sophisticated, post-enlightenment person by presenting the Christian message in esoteric, philosophical language. Küng loses more than he gains, for Hegel, to my way of thinking, is as confusing as Chalcedon. Furthermore, it is generally accepted that Hegel is the most difficult and obscure philosopher of the nineteenth-century (See section 1.1). Küng could have rejected the static terms of Chalcedon without lending the weight to Hegel that he does. He could have reached his christological conclusion quite apart from his reliance on Hegel.

Küng attempts to point out what christology needs. The basic requirement is a re-interpretation of the person of Jesus Christ as the expression of God's action in history. However, Küng often leaves one with the feeling of an unfulfilled promise, for the directions given are limited to God's action in history as outlined by Hegel. O'Meara believes Küng's use of Hegel is deficient and confusing with very little relationship to christology.¹⁰⁸ Fitzer holds that Küng does not enter into dialogue with Hegel.¹⁰⁹

Despite the above problem, Küng is attempting an approach hitherto unexplored. He is attempting to link the historicity of God, manifested in Christ, as explained by Hegel, with its full historical implication of the person of the historical Jesus as outlined by Strauss. For Hegel, Jesus remains part of a speculative system, but in

¹⁰⁸ Thomas O'Meara, "Review of *Menschwerdung Gottes*", Journal of Ecumenical Studies, 8 (1971), pp.652-653.

¹⁰⁹ J. Fitzer, "Hegel and the Incarnation: A Response to Hans Küng," Journal of Religion, 52 (1972), pp.24-67.

Strauss there is a historical touchstone, so Küng quite easily moves from Hegel to the New Quest for the historical Jesus developed in embryo by Strauss. This novel view of history, combining the historicity of God with the historical Jesus is a new christological solution to the problem of Chalcedon. It involves the dynamic action of God moving through history as manifested in Christ in order to overcome the suffering of humanity. Furthermore, in Christ's death one actually gains access to the suffering in God. While this theme is developed by Moltmann and Jüngel, it has its origins in Küng.¹¹⁰

Process thought lends weight to Küng's use of Hegel's concept of God's becoming. It does full justice to God as one who is dynamic, actively involved in the world without forfeiting either transcendence or immanence. Additionally, God does appear to have a human face within the idea of process thought. That face is mirrored in Christ and seen in God's creative history.

The divine lure, human responsibility and God's accountability are present in process thought, but one searches in vain for them in Hegel. By the use of process thought, Küng in striving for relevance by underscoring God's becoming in the world could have used process to advantage. He would have achieved his original aim of a dynamic God presented through a modern evolutionary vehicle. Küng should not have dismissed process so glibly, it could have strengthened his case to

¹¹⁰ Ebërhard Jüngel, God as the Mystery of the World, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clarke, 1983), pp.55-102.

The above writer has used Hegel comprehensively to speak relevantly of God to modern atheism, linking God with the crucifixion of Jesus. However, Küng alone has extensively followed through to the historical Jesus by means of Hegel's thought.

speak relevantly while discarding outmoded and incomprehensible Chalcedonian interpretations. At the same time the theory of the divine and human as they are related in Jesus could have received a modern, comprehensible re-statement. Ford's view in the previous section gives credence to the above affirmation.

Process thought, higher-criticism and the search for the historical Jesus are not mutually exclusive. After all, Küng did attempt to unite Hegel with the historical-critical method.

Regarding the findings of the historical-critical method as they relate to Jesus within process thought one may deduce that Jesus speaks in God's stead inviting the outcasts of society to have fellowship with him. He ate with publicans and sinners and to a Jew a meal symbolized fellowship. Such an action on Jesus' part led to antagonism, for he was actively identifying with the very ones upon whom the righteous in society sat in judgement. Jesus, as seen previously, was concerned about their salvation or well-being. Jesus acting in God's place offered the outcasts a new life as friends of God through participation in the kingdom. That kingdom included both the present and future reign of God. God's reign took on the nature of a continuing dynamic process wherein God already active in the present through Jesus' words would continuously be calling humanity to participate in the divine future. God's reign certainly involved Israel's history whereby all history is seen to be under the divine direction. The kingdom parables speak of growing and of the work of God as a learning process. One observes an evolving dimension within the kingdom. God is in control of the situation but there are both the tares and the wheat which are growing together. An evolutionary process is present which includes both good and evil. Yet through the actions of Jesus and his

message of the divine love, fellowship is opening up for humanity and God on both the vertical and horizontal level. God by the divine persuasion is offering fulfilment and fellowship now to those who are open to the divine lure. Barriers to fellowship are in the process of being removed by all who heed the divine call in the person of Jesus. The naked are clothed, the hungry are fed, the lame leap for joy; the divine lure despite obstacles, triumphs. God's creation is in the process of becoming the divine creation despite all appearances to the contrary. God is effecting his purposes. Therefore the divine call beginning in the history of Abraham's response manifested in Israel and fulfilled in Jesus is achieving the divine end of fellowship and forgiveness through the agency of Jesus. Certainly Küng's system could have benefited from the findings of process thought as it relates to the historical Jesus who invited people into fellowship with God through words and deeds.

Process thought provides an evolutionary and current vehicle for God's becoming, the basis of Küng's presupposition based on Hegel. It does not run contrary to the New Quest and is in harmony with the words and actions of Jesus, particularly his identification of the divine aim and cause with his own. Certainly the Chalcedonian formula of two natures receives a modern re-statement.

Process christology as a relatively new area of study certainly could enhance Küng's christology without detracting from any of his presuppositions as they relate either to Hegel, the New Quest or Chalcedon.

If Christ is the representation (Vorstellung) of God, certainly process thought takes into account fully that representation by giving it a modern intelligible

expression. Small wonder that for significant numbers it is rapidly becoming the new vehicle for christology. It not only supplies a functional view of christology, it adds an ontological dimension as well by emphasizing the psyche. In this discussion ontology is used as an equivalent to psyche, in so far as psyche allows a form of reality to control it.

As psyche an individual can have a relationship to itself as well as being able to distinguish itself from itself; one can deal with oneself as the object of one's own conduct. This results in the individual having not only the power to act, but as an acting subject these deeds take the form of a relational object in a person. They stand over-against the individual. In this relationship the psyche, as the sum total of one's self, results in the possibility of one being under the control of an outside power. The individual can either be in control of itself or lose that control by forfeiting it to an ontological force (see footnote 111) which now assumes the basis of the real or reality. This now means that the psyche can enter into a relationship with reality as that reality assumes the object of ontological existence. When an individual submits to the power or reality that lays claim to it that power becomes the determining force for existence. The person thus has the opportunity of choosing a goal by allowing the ontological to assume ontic status. Such a statement is important for that is exactly what occurred in Jesus' relationship to God. Jesus can therefore be divine for God's ontological priority assumed an ontic position in Jesus. Jesus' prehensions as they directed his life were in fact no different from God's prehensions.

One is not dealing with nature or substance in the above process thinking. Two natures are not what is involved. What is involved is that the divine psyche is congruent

to the psyche of Jesus.¹¹¹ Process christology would have given Küng the direction he needed by solving the problem of Chalcedon's ontology with a modern - dare one say it - biblical view.

¹¹¹ Schubert M. Ogden, Christ without Myth : A Study in the Theology of Rudolph Bultmann, (Harper & Brothers 1961), pp. 49-154. See also Rudolph Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, (New York: Scribner's 1959), pp. 190-269.

CONCLUSION

Professor Rudolf Siebert a frequent contributor to The Ecumenist, and a well-known Hegelian scholar, in his article entitled, Hans Küng: Toward a Negative Theology?¹ is of the opinion that Küng has shown logical consistency in following a functional theology that reflects the mood of modern philosophy and theology. Siebert believes that a study of Hegel and an application of his principles as expounded by Küng proves "essential" statements about God and thus also about the relationship of Jesus to God to be illegitimate at the present point in history. This point is characterized as a process of learning, reflection and emancipation.² It then follows logically for Siebert that Küng, in rejecting essential statements about Jesus' link to God has touched upon the truth of Jesus' divinity. He is the one person "completely filled ... with the divine presence."³ Siebert continues: "To say that Jesus is divine means that he is the truly human man per se,"⁴ and as such he functions supremely in God's stead by the revelation and act of God's love in caring for the dregs and rejects of society. God therefore identifies particularly with the suffering of humanity in Jesus for the purpose of human upliftment.⁵ That relationship is functional in terms of "relationship, consequence, special task, purpose, plan, service, etc. Ontological expressions are here excluded."⁶ This is

¹ The Ecumenist, Vol. 17, No.2 Jan/Feb 1979, pp.17-21.

² Ibid., p. 21.

³ Ibid., p. 18.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., p. 19.

⁶ Ibid.

"Küng's position in Does God Exist? and has been his position in The Incarnation of God and in On Being a Christian." ⁷

On the subject of functional theology Siebert points out that this is "now a common trend among contemporary theologians" ⁸ The reason is quite clear. As individuals modern Christians often live in two spheres, the sacred on Sunday and the secular through the week. On Sunday morning the Christian hears that a virgin conceives a child, axeheads float and asses speak, dead people are called forth from the grave, people walk on water and angels protect little children. Some persons have heavenly visions and the Christian hears of the devil and his angels moving about this universe, but the time is coming, - it is even at hand - when God will bring this world to a cataclysmic end. However, on leaving the church one now moves into the scientific realm where the automobile starts at the turn of the key, driving away by means of automatic transmission, power brakes and steering. One listens to stereo music and is cooled by air conditioning. On arriving home the gates and garage are opened by a remote control device. On entering the home the food is popped into a microwave oven and lunch is ready within fifteen minutes. If persons are ill on a Sunday hands are laid upon them for healing and they are anointed with oil, but during the rest of the week they run to the doctor. People know that the world is in a state of chaos, but on Sunday they are told of a person who has both a divine and a human nature and who rules the universe. That divine nature is of the same essence as God, and as the God-man he has defeated all the powers of evil including those manifested in Bosnia and Somalia.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

Such a dichotomy as described "leads not only to the world's incomprehension of the gospel but to the split personality of modern Christians"⁹

It is exactly this modern schizophrenia between the religious and the secular consciousness, as analysed by Hegel, that Küng - like Hegel and by his use of Hegel - attempts to reconcile by means of a dialectical dynamic christology. In the light of the above presentation and assisted by the historical-critical method, one may make the following deduction concerning Küng's Hegelian platform for christology.

On the level of present knowledge, the dogma of Chalcedon, resting as it does on the logic, language and sentence-understanding of antiquity, can be interpreted in terms of the Christian truth-message intended by it, but it can no longer, in modern times, be subscribed to as a sentence which claims to be true as such.¹⁰

Küng offers an apologetic in the midst of the perceived spiritual malaise, confusion about God and the relationship with Jesus. He offers a direction in which he demonstrates Hegel's contribution to reconciling the divine and human consciousness in Jesus. In this way he attempts also to reconcile faith and reason, sacred and profane. Unlike most Roman Catholic and some Protestant theologians Küng leans heavily on the findings of German New Testament scholarship. Should this point be missed, Küng will be both misunderstood and misrepresented. I have therefore attempted to trace the background to his christology via the conclusions of the historical-critical method, in terms of the new quest for the historical Jesus with an emphasis on the New Hermeneutic.

⁹ Ibid. See also Millard J. Erickson, Christian Theology, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1989), pp. 106-107.

¹⁰ Ibid.

His conclusions about Jesus are directed by the Germanic methods which have also had an impact on the Americans; Borg, Meyer, Sanders and Crossan. On the other hand I am convinced that Küng's emphasis on Hegel wherein God is in the process of becoming and Küng's use of the historical-critical method would have benefitted from the modern direction given by process thought. This discipline as seen in my thesis is compatible with both Hegel and the historical-critical method, and it provides an ontology for Küng's christology, albeit one that moves away from essence and substance.

The specific contribution of my thesis lies in placing Küng's christology in context. Using modern methods he attempts to address modern, alienated secular persons by providing what he considers a comprehensible picture of Jesus as both truly God and truly human. He is not at variance with Chalcedon; he offers a re-statement of it, but his critics are so deeply committed to dogma that the thrust of Küng's apologetic has been missed.

One must accept that Küng believes fully in the divinity of Christ. Certainly he has made that point often enough. The problem then does not lie with Küng's Credo; it is a question rather of conclusion. Has Küng proved beyond a doubt what he affirms so vehemently, the full divinity of Jesus? By his very definition of Christ's relationship to God as representative, has he overcome the incomprehensible combination of Chalcedon's two natures in one person? Or if Küng subscribes to the definition of Chalcedon but believes it requires a modern re-statement, has he supplied that alternative? My answer is in the negative because his presentation of Jesus still requires the very important step of faith. Thus for me he underscores the very limited value of apologetics in its attempt to address reason.

His conclusion - cast in a modern mould - that Christ is truly God and truly man does not follow logically from his premises, as I have endeavoured to show throughout this thesis. I am convinced, however, that process theology is a viable avenue for Küng to explore. The understanding of person or psyche outlined in process thought offers Küng this opportunity. In this way he could possibly update Chalcedon and so make his contribution to christology one of even greater value, turning him from one now perceived as an iconoclast into a builder of enduring stature.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Abbott, Walter M. (ed.), The Documents of Vatican II. New York: Guild Press, 1966.
- Anonymous, A New Catechism. New York: Herder and Herder, 1967.
- Anonymous, Diskussion über Hans Kungs "Christ sein" Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1978.
- Barbour, I.G. Myths, Models and Paradigms. London: SCM Press, 1974.
- Barr, J. Semantics and Biblical Language. New York: OUP, 1961.
- Barr, J. Biblical Words for Time. Naperville: Allenson, 1962.
- Barr, J. Old and New in Interpretation. London: SCM Press, 1966.
- Barr, J. The Bible in the Modern World. London: SCM Press, 1973.
- Barth, Karl. Church Dogmatics I: The Doctrine of the Word of God. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1956.
- Barth, Karl. Protestant Thought from Rousseau to Ritschl. New York: Harper Brothers 1959.
- Bartsch, H.W. (ed.) Kerygma and Myth. London: SPCK, 1972.
- Beadle, George. The Language of Science. Greenwich: Fawcett Inc., 1966.
- Beardslee, W.A. Literary Criticism of the New Testament. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970.
- Beasley-Murray, G.R. Preaching the Gospel from the Gospel. London: Lutterworth Press, 1965.
- Berkouwer, G.C. Holy Scriptures. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975.
- Berne, Eric. Games People Play. New York: Grove Press Inc., 1967.
- Briggs, R.C. Interpreting the New Testament Today. Nashville: Abingdon, 1977.
- Bornkamm, Gunther. Jesus of Nazareth. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1960.

- Braaten, C.E. and Harrisville, R.A. (eds.) Kerygma and History. Nashville: Abingdon, 1962.
- Braaten, C.E. History and Hermeneutics. New Directions in Theology Today. Vol.II. London: Lutterworth Press, 1968.
- Brown, Delwin and others. Process Philosophy and Christian Thought. New York: Cobbs - Merrib, 1971.
- Brunner, Emil. The Mediator. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967.
- Brunner, Emil. The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974.
- Bultmann, Rudolf. Theology of the New Testament. 1, New York: Scribners, 1951.
- Bultmann, Rudolf. New Testament and Mythology. Kerygma and Myth, ed., R. H. Fuller. London: SPCK, 1953.
- Bultmann, Rudolf. The Problem of Hermeneutics. Essays Philosophical and Theological, London: SCM Press, 1955.
- Bultmann, Rudolf. Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting. London: SCM, 1956.
- Bultmann, Rudolf. Jesus and the Word. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958.
- Bultmann, Rudolf. Jesus Christ and Mythology. London: SCM Press, 1960.
- Bultmann, Rudolf. The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ. New York: Abingdon, 1964.
- Bultmann, Rudolf. The History of the Synoptic Tradition. Oxford: Blackwell, 1968.
- Cargas, H. and Lee, Bernard (eds.). Religious Experience and Process Theology. Broadway: Paulist Press, 1986.
- Chardin de, Teilhard. The Phenomenon of Man. London: Collins, 1965.
- Chardin de, Teilhard. The Vision of the Past. London: Collins, 1966.
- Childs, Brevard. Biblical Theology in Crisis. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970.
- Cobb, B. John. The Structure of Christian Existence. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967.

- Cobb, John B. and Griffin, David R (eds.). Process Theology on Introduction Exposition. Belfast: Christian Journals, 1977.
- Conzelmann, Hans. An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament. London: SCM, 1969.
- Crawford, Robert. The Saga of God Incarnate. Pretoria: Unisa, 1985.
- Crossan, J.D. The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant. London: Harper Collins, 1992.
- Cullmann, Oscar. Christ and Time. London: SCM Press Ltd., 1949.
- Cullmann, Oscar. The Christology of the New Testament. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963.
- Durant, W. The Story of Philosophy. New York: Washington Square Press, 1970.
- Ebeling, G. Word and Faith. London: SCM Press, 1963.
- Ebeling, G. Theology and Proclamation. London: Collins, 1963.
- Ebeling, G. The Nature of Faith. London: Collins, 1966.
- Ebeling, G. God and Word. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967.
- Ebeling, G. The Word of God and Tradition. London: Collins, 1968.
- Ebeling, G. Introduction to a Theological Theory of Language. London: Collins, 1973.
- Elwell, Walter A. (ed.) Evangelical Dictionary of Theology. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989.
- Fortman, Edmund J. The Triune God. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972.
- Fuchs, E. Studies in the Historical Jesus. London: SCM Press, 1964.
- Fuchs, E. Marburger Hermeneutik. Tübingen: Mohr, 1968.
- Fuller, R.H. Interpreting the Miracles. London: SCM, 1961.
- Fuller, R.H. The New Testament in Current Study. London: SCM Press, 1963.

- Fuller, R.H. The Foundations of New Testament Christology. London: SCM, 1985.
- Gadamer, H.G. Truth and Method. London: Sheed and Ward, 1975.
- Griffin, R. David. A Process Christology. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973.
- Hahn, Ferdinand. The Titles of Jesus in Christology: Their History in Early Christianity. London: Lutterworth Press, 1969.
- Hahn, Ferdinand. The Titles of Jesus in Christology. London: Lutterworth, 1969.
- Häring, Hermann and Karl-Josef Kuschel, Hans Küng: His Work and His Way. Glasgow: Collins 1979.
- Harris, H. David Friedrich Strauss and his Theology. Cambridge: University Press, 1973.
- Hartshorne, Charles. Reality and Social Process: Studies in Metaphysics and Religion. Glencoe: Free Press, 1952.
- Hartshorne, Charles. Theology in Crisis: A Colloquium on the Credibility of God. New Concord: Muskingdom College, 1967.
- Hartshorne, Charles. Philosophers Speak of God. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953.
- Harvey van A. The Historian and the Believer. London: SCM Press, 1967.
- Hegel, G.W.F. Sämtliche Werke, Berlin: Dunkler und Humblot, Vol. 11-15, 1840-1848.
- Hegel, G.W.F. Hegels theologische Jugendschriften. Mohr, Tübingen: 1907
- Hegel, G.W.F. Early Christian Writings. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948.
- Hegel, G.W.F. Lectures on the Philosophy of History. New York: Dover Publications, 1956.
- Hegel, G.W.F. Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion. 1, New York: Humanities Press, 1962.
- Hegel, G.W.F. Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion. 11, New York: Humanities Press, 1962.
- Hegel, G.W.F. Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy 111, New York: Humanities Press, 1963.

- Hegel, G.W.F. Philosophy of Mind. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.
- Hengel, M. The Son of God. London: SCM Press, 1961.
- Huxley, Julian. Evolution in Action. New York: New American Library, 1964.
- Inwood, Michael. (ed.) Hegel. Hong Kong: OUP, 1985.
- Jeremias, Joachim. The Parables of Jesus. London: SCM Press, 1963.
- Jeremias, Joachim. Rediscovering the Parables. London: SCM Press, 1966.
- Jeremias, Joachim. The New Testament Theology I: Proclamation of Jesus. London: SCM Press, 1971.
- Jüngel, Eberhard. God as the Mystery of the World. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clarke, 1983.
- Kaiser, O. and Kümmel, W.G. Exegetical Method: a Student's Hand-book. New York: Seabury, 1967.
- Käsemann, Ernst. New Testament Questions of Today. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967.
- Käsemann, Ernst. New Testament Questions of Today. London: SCM Press, 1969.
- Kasper, Walter. Jesus the Christ. London: Burns and Oates, 1976.
- Kasper, Walter. The God of Jesus Christ. New York: Cross Road, 1987.
- Kaufmann, Walter. Hegel. New York: Doubleday & Co., 1965.
- Kay, Marshall and Colbert Edwin. Stratigraphy and Life History. New York: Wiley & Sons, 1965.
- Keck, L. E. A Future for the Historical Jesus. London: SCM Press, 1973.
- Kelly, J.N.D. Early Christian Doctrines. London: Harper and Row, 1960.
- Knox, John. The Humanity and Divinity of Christ. Cambridge: CUP., 1967.
- Koch, K. The Growth of the Biblical Tradition. New York: Scribners, 1969.
- Krentz, Edgar. The Historical-Critical Method. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979.

- Kümmel, W.G. The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of its Problems. London: SCM Press, 1972.
- Kümmel, W.G. The Theology of the New Testament. London: SCM, 1974.
- Küng, Hans. The Council, Reform and Reunion, New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961.
- Küng, Hans. The Living Church. Reflections on the Second Vatican Council. London: Sheed and Ward, 1963.
- Küng, Hans. That the World May Believe. London: Sheed and Ward, 1963.
- Küng, Hans. Justification: The Doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic Reflection. New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1964.
- Küng, Hans. Freiheit in der Welt. Sir Thomas More. Theologische Meditationen. Einsiedeln: Benziger, 1964.
- Küng, Hans. Theologe und Kirche. Theologische Meditationen. Einsiedeln: Benziger, 1964.
- Küng, Hans. Kirche in Freiheit. Theologische Meditationen. Einsiedeln: Benziger, 1964.
- Küng, Hans. Structures of the Church. London: Burns and Oates, 1965.
- Küng, Hans. Freedom in the World. London: Sheed and Ward, 1965.
- Küng, Hans. The Church and Freedom. Theological Meditations 6. Sheed and Ward, 1965.
- Küng, Hans. The Changing Church. London: Sheed and Ward, 1965.
- Küng, Hans. Freedom Today. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1966.
- Küng, Hans. Christian Revelation and World Religions, ed. J. Neuner. London: Burns and Oates, 1967.
- Küng, Hans. Gott und das Leid. Theologische Meditationen. Einsiedeln: Benzinger, 1967.
- Küng, Hans. Was Ist Kirche? Munchen: Siebenstern, 1967.
- Küng, Hans. Structures of the Church. Notre Dame, Indiana: University Press, 1968.
- Küng, Hans. Was ist Kirche. Freiburg: Herder, 1970.

- Küng, Hans. Unfehlbar? : Eine Anfrage. Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1970.
- Küng, Hans. Menschwerdung Gottes: Eine Einführung in Hegels theologisches Denken als Prolegomena zu einer künftigen Christologie. Freiburg: Herder, 1970.
- Küng, Hans. Wahrhaftigkeit: Zur Zukunft der Kirche. Freiburg: Herder, 1971.
- Küng, Hans. The Church. London: Search Press, 1971.
- Küng, Hans. Why Priests? A Proposal for a New Church Ministry. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1972.
- Küng, Hans. Was in der Kirche bleiben muss. Theologische Meditationen 30. Benziger, 1973.
- Küng, Hans. Christ sein. München: Piper, 1974.
- Küng, Hans. Jesus im Widerstreit. Ein Jüdisch - Christerlicher Dialog. Stuttgart-München: Calwer-Kösel, 1974.
- Küng, Hans. Existiert Gott? Zürich: Piper and Co., 1978.
- Küng, Hans. Signposts for the Future. New York: Doubleday & Co., 1978.
- Küng, Hans. The Christian Challenge. London: Collins, 1979.
- Küng, Hans. On Being a Christian: Twenty Propositions. (in The Christian Challenge). London: Collins, 1979.
- Küng, Hans. The Church Maintained in Truth. Seabury Press, 1980.
- Küng, Hans. Existiert Gott? Antwort auf die Gottesfrage der Neuzeit. New York: Doubleday, 1980.
- Küng, Hans. Kirche-Gehalten in der Wahrheit. Köhn: Benziger, 1980.
- Küng, Hans. and Edward Schillebeeckx, Consensus in Theology. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980.
- Küng, Hans. Eternal Life? London: Collins, 1984.
- Küng, Hans. J van Ess, H. Bechert. Christianity and World Religions: Paths to Dialogue with Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, New York: Scribners, 1986.
- Küng, Hans and Tracy David. Paradigm Change in Theology. New York: Crossroad, 1991.

- Küng, Hans. Theology for the Third Millennium. London: Harper Collins, 1991.
- Küng, Hans. Judaism and Religious Situation of Our Time. London: SCM, 1992.
- Küng, Hans. Christianity and the World Religions. London: SCM, 1993.
- Küng, Hans and Julia Ching. Christianity and Chinese Religions. London: SCM., 1993
- Kuschel, Karl-Josef, and Hermann Häring. Hans Küng: New Horizons for Faith and Thought. London: SCM., 1993.
- Ladd, George Eldon. The New Testament and Criticism. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967.
- Lindars, B. New Testament Apologetic. London: SCM, 1961.
- Macquarrie, J. The Scope of Demythologizing. London: SCM Press, 1960.
- Maier, G. The End of the Historical-Critical Method. St. Louis: Concordia, 1979.
- Marshall, I. Howard. I Believe in the Historical Jesus. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977.
- MacIntyre, A. (ed.) Hegel: A Collection of Critical Essays. Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 1976.
- McIntyre, John. The Shape of Christology. London: SCM Press, 1966.
- McKnight, E.V. What is Form Criticism? Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969.
- Meier, John P. A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus, New York: Doubleday, 1989.
- Metzger, B.M. Historical and Literary Studies: Pagan, Jewish and Christian. Leiden: Brill, 1968.
- Moltmann, Jürgen. Theology of Hope. London: SCM, 1965.
- Moltmann, Jürgen. The Crucified God. London: SCM Press, 1974.
- Moltmann, Jürgen. The Trinity and the Kingdom of God. London: SCM Press, 1981.
- Neill, S.C. The Interpretation of the New Testament, 1861-1961. Oxford: University Press, 1964.

- Neill, Stephen and Tom Wright. The Interpretation of the New Testament, 1861-1986. Oxford: OUP, 1988.
- Niebuhr, R.R. Resurrection and Historical Reason: A Study of Theological Method. New York: Scribner, 1957.
- Nineham, D.E. (ed.) The Church's Use of the Bible Past and Present. London: SPCK, 1963.
- Nowell, Robert. A Passion for Truth - Hans Küng : A Biography. London: Collins 1981.
- Nygren, A. The Significance of the Bible for the Church. Philadelphia: Fortress, Press, 1963.
- Nygren, A. Meaning and Method: Prolegomena to a Scientific Philosophy of Religion and a Scientific Theology. London: Epworth Press, 1972.
- Ogden, S.M. Christ without Myth. New York: Harper and Row, 1961.
- Ogden, S.M. Christ without Myth: A Study in the Theology of Rudolph Baltmann. Harper Brothers, 1961.
- Ogden, S.M. The Reality of God. New York: Harper & Row, 1977.
- Palmer, R.E. Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969.
- Pannenberg, Wolfhart. and others, Revelation and History London: Macmillan, 1968.
- Pannenberg, Wolfart. History as Hermeneutic. New York: Harper and Row, 1968.
- Pannenberg, Wolfhart. Jesus - God and Man. London: SCM Press, 1968.
- Pannenberg, Wolfhart. Revelation as History. London: Collier-Macmillan, 1969.
- Pannenberg, Wolfhart. Basic Questions in Theology. 3 vols. London: SCM Press, 1971-1973.
- Pannenberg, Wolfhart. Theology and the Philosophy of Science. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1976.
- Perrin, Norman. Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus. London: SCM, 1967.
- Perrin, Norman. What is Redaction Criticism? London: SPCK, 1970.

- Perrin, Norman. Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom. London: SCM Press, 1976.
- Pittenger, Norman. The Word of God Incarnate: A Study of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ. Nisbet and Co., 1959.
- Pittenger, Norman. God in Process. London: SCM, 1967.
- Pittenger, Norman. Process Thought and Christian Faith. London: Nisbet and Co., 1968.
- Pittenger, Norman. Christian Faith and the Question of History Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973.
- Pittenger, Norman. The Holy Spirit Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1974.
- Rahner, Karl. Theological Investigations. V, Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1963.
- Ramm, Bernard L. and others, Hermeneutics. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977.
- Richardson, A. (ed.). A Dictionary of Christian Theology. London: S.C.M., 1969.
- Robinson, James M. and Cobb, John B. Hermeneutics since Barth. The New Hermeneutic. New York: Harper and Row, 1964.
- Robinson, James M. and John B. Cobb, The New Hermeneutic New Frontiers in Theology. 11, New York: Harper and Row, 1964.
- Robinson, James M. A New Quest of the Historical Jesus. London: SCM Press, 1959.
- Romar, 1958S. The Vertebrate Body. Philadelphia: Sanders &
- Rust, Eric. Faith and Science: Towards a Theological Understanding. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972.
- Sanders, E.P. Jesus and Judaism. London: SCM., 1985.
- Schillebeeckx, Edward. An Experiment in Christology. London: Collins, 1979.
- Schillebeeckx, Edward. Jesus: An Experiment in Christology. London: Collins, 1979.
- Schilling, H.R. The New Consciousness in Science and Religion. London: SCM, 1973.
- Schleiermacher, Friedrich. The Christian Faith. 1, New York: Harper and Row, 1963.

- Schoonberg, Piet. The Christ. London: Sheed and Ward, 1974.
- Sia, Santiago. God in Process Thought. Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1986.
- Strauss, D.F. The Life of Jesus Critically Examined. London: SCM Press, 1973.
- Stuhlmacher, Peter. Historical Criticism and Theological Interpretation of Scripture. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977.
- Stuhlmacher, Peter. Historical Criticism and Theological Interpretation of Scripture. London: SPCK, 1979.
- Schweitzer, A. The Quest of the Historical Jesus. London: A. and C. Black, 1911.
- Taylor, Vincent. The Formulation of the Gospel Tradition. London: SPCK, 1935.
- Theissen, G. Sociology of Early Christianity. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978.
- Thielicke, Helmut. How Modern Should Theology Be? London: Collins, 1970).
- Thiselton, A.C. The Two Horizons. New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description, with special reference to Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer and Wittgenstein. Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1979.
- Tillich, Paul. A History of Christian Thought. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968.
- Van der Loos, H. The Miracles of Jesus. Leiden: Brill, 1968.
- von Loewenich, W. Modern Catholicism. London: Macmillan: 1939.
- Weiss, F.G. (ed.). Hegel, The Essential Writings. New York: Harper & Row, 1974.
- Welch, Claude. In This Name. New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1952.
- Whitehead, A.N. The Adventure of Ideas. London: C.U.P., 1938.
- Williams, Daniel Day. What Present Day Theologians Are Thinking. New York: Harper & Row, 1959.
- Wink, Walter. The Bible in Human Transformation: Towards a New Paradigm for Biblical Study. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973.

Zahrnt, Heinz. The Historical Jesus, London: Collins, 1963.

Articles

Barr, J. "Common Sense and Biblical Language", Biblica 49, (1968): 377-387.

Baum, Gregory. "The Küng Case : Brief Reflection", The Ecumenist, 18 : 3, March-April, 1980.

Baum, Gregory. Review of "On Being a Christian". The Critic 35 (1977): 81-85.

Berkhof, Hendrikus. "Ökumenische Strukturen." In Diskussion um Hans Küng "Die Kirche", Hrsg. von H. Häring und J. Nolte. Freiburg, (1971): 246-248.

Betz, H.D. "Jesus as Divine Man", in Jesus and the Historian, ed. F.T. Trotter. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968.

Brown, Raymond E. "On being a Christian' and Scripture." America, 129 (1976): 343-345.

Brown, Raymond. "Küng and Scripture" The Tablet, 15 January, 1977. pp. 52-53.

Brown, Robert McAfee. Review of On Being a Christian. Theology Today 34 (1977): 205-11.

Bultmann, Rudolf. "New Testament and Mythology," Kerygma and Myth, ed. H.W. Bartsch. New York: Harper and Row, 1961.

Bultmann, Rudolf. "Is Exegesis without Presuppositions Possible?" Existence and Faith, ed. and tr. S.M. Ogden. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1961.

Cairns, David. Review of Menschwerdung Gottes. Scottish Journal of Theology 23 (1970): 480-85.

Cullmann, Oscar. "The Necessity and Function of Higher Criticism", The Early Church, ed. A. Higgins, Philadelphia: Westminster Press 1956.

Davis, Charles. "The Theological Career of Historical Criticism of the Bible", Cross Currents, XXXII, 3 (Fall 82), 1982.

Draper, J. "Jesus and the Renewal of Local Community in Galilee: Challenge to a Communitarian Christology". Unpublished Paper Given at the Theological Society of Southern Africa, Cape Town, 1993.

Dulles, Avery. "Küng and dogmatic theology," The Tablet, 15 January 1977. pp. 53-54.

- Dulles, Avery. "The Theology of Hans Küng: A Comment," Union Seminary Quarterly Review, 27 (1972) : 137-142.
- Fitzer, Joseph. "Hegel and the Incarnation: A Response to Hans Küng." Journal of Religion 52 (1972): 24-67.
- Frankfurter Rundschau. Januar 9, 1980.
- Fries, Heinrich. "Das unterscheidend Christliche bei Hans Küng." Orientierung 30 (1974): 226-28.
- Fries, Heinrich. "Hans Küng: Christsein - Deutung und Praxis." Orientierung 30 (1974): 240-43.
- Fritzsche, Hans-Georg. Review of Menschwerdung Gottes. Theologische Literaturzeitung 95 (1971): 129-32.
- Fuchs , E. "The Hermeneutical Problem", in J.M. Robinson (ed.), The Future of Our Religious Past: Essays in Honour of Rudolf Bultmann. London: SCM Press, 1971.
- Gager, John. "Shall We Marry Our Enemies?" Interpretation, 37 (1984): 256-265.
- Gray, Donald P. "The Divine and the Human in Jesus Christ." The Catholic Theological Society of America Proceedings 31 (1976): 21-39.
- Greeley, Andrew. "Hans Küng's Masterpiece." The New Review of Books and Religion 1 (1976):2-3.
- Grillmeier, Alois, "Jesus von Nazaret - im Schatten des Gottessohnes?" In Diskussion über Hans Küngs "Christ sein", Mainz, (1976): 60-82.
- Grillmeier, Alois. "Die Einzigartigkeit Jesu Christi und unser Christ sein: Zu Hans Küng, Christ sein." Theologie und Philosophie 51 (1976): 196-243.
- Häring, Hermann and Karl-Josef Kuschel, "An Interview with Hans Küng," Hans Küng : His Work and His Way, eds. Häring and Kuschel. London: Collins, 1979.
- Hooker, M.D. "Christology and Methodology", NTS 17 (1970): 480-487.
- Hutchinson, Robert. "What the Rabbi Taught Me About Jesus", Christianity Today, Sept. 13, pp.27-29.
- Käsemann, Ernst. "Is the Gospel Objective?" Essays of New Testament Themes. London: SCM Press, 1964.
- Käsemann, E. "The Problem of the Historical Jesus", in Essays on New Testament Themes. London: SCM Press, 1964.

- Käsemann, E. "Vom theologischen recht historisch-kritischer Exegese", ZTK 46 (1967): 259-281.
- Kasper, Walter. "Christologie von unten? Kritik und Neuansatz gegenwärtiger Christologie." In Grundfragen der Christologie heute, Hrsg. von Leo Scheffczyk. Herder (1975): 141-170.
- Kasper, Walter. "Für eine Christologie in geschichtlicher Perspektive. Replik auf die Anmerkungen von Hans Küng. In Grundfragen der Christologie heute, Hrsg. von Leo Scheffczyk. Herder, (1975): 179-183.
- Kasper, Walter. "Christsein und die Christologie." In Diskussion über Hans Küngs "Christ sein", Mainz, (1976): 19-34.
- Kasper, Walter. "Christsein ohne Tradition?" In Diskussion über Hans Küngs "Christ sein", Mainz, (1976): 19-34.
- Kern, Walter. Review of Menschwerdung Gottes. Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie 93 (1971): 458-60.
- Kern, Walter. "Hegel theologisch gesehen und anders." Stimmen der Zeit 189 (1972): 125-33.
- Kern, Walter. "Das Christsein und die Christologie." Stimmen der Zeit 193 (1975): 412-18.
- Koch, Hans Georg. "Neue Weg in der Christologie? Zu einigen christologischen Neuerscheinungen." Herder Korrespondenz, 29 (1975): 412-418.
- Kolping, Adolf. "Hans Küng and die Unfehlbarkeitsdebatte," a letter to Küng. Herder Korrespondenz, 27 (1973): 646-649.
- Kremer, Jacob. "Marginalien eines Neutestamentlers: Zum Umgang mit den Ergebnissen der neueren Exegese." In Diskussion über Hans Küngs "Christ sein", pp.114-159.
- Küng, Hans. "Ist in der Rechtfertigungslehre eine Einigung möglich?" Una Sancta, 12 (1957): 116-121.
- Küng, Hans. "Christozentrik" Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche (Freiburg, 1958): 1169-1174.
- Küng, Hans. "The Ecumenical Council in Theological Perspective." Dialog, I (1962): 40-49.
- Küng, Hans. "Karl Barths Lehre vom Wort Gottes als Frage an die Katholische Theologie." In Einsicht und Glaube, Hrsg. von Joseph Ratzinger und Heinrich Freis, Herder (1962): 75-97.

- Küng, Hans. "Does a Catholic Have to Defend Everything?" The Sign, (February, 1963): 11-13.
- Küng, Hans. "The Chrismatic Structure of the Church." Concilium, (April, 1965): 23-33.
- Küng, Hans. Encyclpaedia Brittanica, 14th ed., 1967, Vol. 13. "Justification".
- Küng, Hans. "A Question to the Church," (Concerning Charles Davis). The Month, 38 (1967): 259-261.
- Küng, Hans. "The World Religions in God's Plan of Salvation," Christian Revelation and World Religions, ed. Joseph Neuner. London: Burns and Oates, 1967.
- Küng, Hans. "Intercommunion". Journal of Ecumenical Studies, 5 (1968): 576-578.
- Küng, Hans. "Tribute to Karl Barth." Journal of Ecumenical Studies, 6 (1969): 233-236.
- Küng, Hans. "What is the Christian Message?" Address to the Concilium Congress of September 14, 1970 Catholic Mind, 68 (1970): 28-34.
- Küng, Hans. "What is the Christian Message?" Catholic Mind. 68 1970.
- Küng, Hans. "To Get to the Heart of the Matter: Answer to Karl Rahner - Part II." Homiletic and Pastoral Review 71 (1971): 17-32, 49-50.
- Küng, Hans, and Jullien, Claude François, "Christianity With a Human Face." Commonweal 94 (1971): 106-107.
- Küng, Hans. "Postscript." Homiletic and Pastoral Review, 71 (Aug.- Sept., 1971): 28-31.
- Küng, Hans. "Why I Am Staying in the Church." America, 124 (1971): 281-283.
- Küng, Hans. "What is the Criterion for a Critical Theology? Reply to Gregory Baum." Commonweal 94, (1971): 326-330.
- Küng, Hans. "Response to Avery Dulles." Union Seminary Quarterly Review, 27 (1972): 143-147.
- Küng, Hans. "Die Gretchenfrage des christlichen Glaubens: Systematische Überlegungen zum neutestamentlichen Wunder". Theologische Quartalschrift. 152 (1972): 214-23.

- Küng, Hans. and Rahner, Karl. "A Working Agreement to Disagree." America 129 (1973): 9-12.
- Küng, Hans. "Die Religionen als Frage an die Theologie des Kreuzes." Evangelische Theologie, 33 (1973): 401-23.
- Küng, Hans. "Mein Spiegelbild: Eine Entgegnung des Tübinger Theologen." Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 21 Sept. (1974): 21.
- Küng, Hans. "Zur Entstehung des Auferstehungsglaubens. Versuch einer systematischen Klärung." Theologische Quartalschrift 154 (1974): 103-17.
- Küng, Hans. National Catholic Reporter, Press Conference given by Küng, Hans on Christ Sein. 29 November (1974): 8.
- Küng, Hans. "Anmerkungen zu Walter Kasper, 'Christologie von unten?'." In Grundfragen der Christologie heute (Quaestiones Disputatae 72), (1975): 170-178.
- Küng, Hans. "Anmerkungen zu Walter Kasper, 'Christologie von unten?'", Grundfragen der Christologie Heute. Freiburg: Herder, 1975.
- Küng, Hans. "Antwort an meine Kritiker". Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 22 May 1976, "Bilder und Zeiten".
- Küng, Hans. "Twenty Propositions," The Christian Challenge. London: Collins, 1979.
- Küng, H. "Was ist die wahre Religion? Versuch einer ökumenischen Kriteriologie" Gottes Zukunft - Zukunft der Welt. Festschrift für Jürgen Moltmann zum 60. Geburtstag, (1986) pp.536-558.
- Küng, H. "Paradigm Change in Theology: A Proposal for Discussion", Paradigm Change in Theology (eds.) Küng, H. and D. Tracy, New York: Crossroads, (1991), pp.1-33.
- Küng, H. "Is There One True Religion?" Theology for the Third Millennium, (1991), pp.227-256.
- Kuschel, Karl-Josef. "Jesus is the Decisive Criterion: Beyond Barth and Hegel in a Christology 'From Below'", Hans Küng: New Horizons for Faith and Thought, eds., Karl-Josef Kuschel and Hermann Häring. London: SCM., (1993): 171-197

- Lehmann, Karl. "Christsein ökumenisch." In Diskussion über Hans Küngs "Christ Sein", pp.112-121.
- Lohfink, Gerhard. "Extreme Theologie oder radikale Erneuerung des Glaubens?" Herder Korrespondenz 28 (1974): 539-42.
- Maartens, P.J. "Interpretation and Meaning In a Conflict Parable", Linguistic Biblica, 67 (1992): 61-82.
- Malina, Bruce, "Jesus as Charismatic Leader", Biblical Theology Bulletin, 14 (1984): 55-62.
- Negrey, Jerome. "The Idea of Purity in Mark's Gospel", Semeia, 37 (1986) : 256-265.
- Nida, E.A. "Implications of Contemporary Linguistics for Biblical Scholarship". JBL 91 (1972): 73-89.
- O'Collins, Gerald. "Jesus in Current Theology. Beyond Chalcedon." The Way 16 (1977): 51-64.
- O'Meara, Thomas. Review of Menschwerdung Gottes. Journal of Ecumenical Studies 8 (1971): 652-53.
- Oosthuizen, G.C. "The Depth Dimension in the Post-Modern World View and Africa". Perspectives, ed. R. Singh. Durban: UDW Press, 1986.
- Pelikan, Jaroslav. "On Being Hans Küng." Commonweal 104 (1977): 407-08.
- Ratzinger, Joseph. "Christ sein - plausibel gemacht." Theologische Revue 71 (1975): cols. 353-64.
- Ratzinger, Joseph. "Wer verantwortet die Aussage der Theologie?" In Diskussion über Hans Küngs "Christ Sein", Mainz, (1976): 7-18.
- Riedlinger, Helmut. "Maria in der Wahrheit des Glaubens." In Diskussion über Hans Küngs "Christ sein", Theologie und Philosophie 51 (1976): 185-95.
- Ruether, Rosemary R. Review of On Being a Christian. Religious Education 72 (1977): 545-53.
- Schoonenberg, Piet. "Christologische Diskussion heute." Theologischpraktische Quartalschrift 23 (1975): 387-391.
- Schultenover, D.G. "On Being a Christian", Cross Currents 27 (1977) : 205-208.
- Scroggs, Robin. "The Sociological Interpretation of the New Testament", New Testament Studies, 26 (1980): 164-179.

Siebert, Rudolf. "Hans Küng: Toward a Negative Theology," The Ecumenical, 17 (1979) : 17-21.

Smith, Morton. "The Zealots and Sicarii", Harvard Theological Review, (1971) : 1-19.

Watson, D.S. "Why Chalcedon". Unpublished Paper, 1980.

Die Welt. "Blickpunckt", Dezember 15, 1979.

Zeitlin, S. "Zealots and Sicarii", Journal of Biblical Literature, 4 (1962): 359-398.