

**CONSTRUCTING
A NEW BIBLICAL CREATIONISM
AS SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM
OF THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN RELIGION AND SCIENCE**

by

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NOTICE

This is to notify that the opinions expressed and the study results published in this thesis do not necessarily represent those of the promoter or the Faculty of Theology of the PUCHO.

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ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to construct a new biblical creationism as solution to the problem of the relationship between religion and science. It examines the challenge of modern evolutionism and the churches' responses against it.

The modern evolutionism as the acting hypothesis of many modern scientific disciplines helps the Church to re-examine its traditional doctrine of creation. There are two Christian responses against the challenge: individually, various positions are active, such as the theistic evolutionism, the recent special creationism, and the old earth creationism; collectively, the Christian churches have not given careful consideration to the challenge.

This study examines the creation account in Genesis 1 according to the Kantian epistemology of the writer's Th. M dissertation, an examination of modern eschatology. It proposes a presentist understanding of creation as the tentative alternative to the traditional creationism. It suggests that:

- 1) In evolution debate both creationists and evolutionists seem to assume there is an examined scientific creationism.
- 2) Because the traditional divine report model is unverifiable, we need to construct a scientific model.
- 3) The account seems to follow the ancient clay tablet format.
- 4) This study proposes a 'new habitat orientation week' model: the assumed observer's report of daily recognition of the wonderful world.
- 5) It informs us both of the responsibility for the world and of the significance of communal life.
- 6) It may provide a balanced foundation both for the sound relationship between science and religion and for the positive Christian worldview.

Key words: Modern biblical creationism; relationship between science and religion; gospel of creation; criticism of traditional creationism; and critical and open creationism.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie is 'n poging om 'n nuwe Bybelse kreasionisme te konstrueer as 'n oplossing vir die probleem van die verhouding tussen godsdiens en wetenskap. Dit ondersoek die uitdaging van moderne evolusionisme en die kerke se reaksies daarop.

Die moderne evolusionisme, as die werkende hipotese van baie hedendaagse wetenskaplike dissiplines, help die kerk om sy tradisionele leerstelling van die skepping te heroorweeg. Daar is twee Christelike reaksies op die uitdaging: op individuele vlak word verskeie posisies ingeneem, soos teïstiese evolusionisme, die onlangse besondere kreasionisme, en die ou aarde kreasionisme; op kollektiewe vlak het die christelike kerke nie die uitdaging werklik sorgvuldig oorweeg nie.

Die studie ondersoek die skeppingsverhaal in Genesis 1 volgens die Kantiaanse epistemologie wat bepleit is in die skrywer se Th. M-verhandeling, 'n ondersoek na moderne eskatologie. Dit stel 'n presentistiese verstaan van die skepping voor as 'n tentatiewe alternatief vir die tradisionele kreasionisme. Die volgende voorstelle word gemaak:

- 1) In die debat oor evolusie aanvaar beide kreasioniste en evolusioniste blykbaar dat daar iets soos 'n wetenskaplike kreasionisme bestaan.
- 2) Omdat die tradisionele goddelike verslag-model onverifieerbaar is, moet ons 'n wetenskaplike model konstrueer.
- 3) Die weergawe volg blykbaar die antieke kleitablet-formaat.
- 4) Die studie stel 'n "nuwe habitaet oriëntasie-week"-model voor: die veronderstelde waarnemer se verslag van die daaglikse herkenning van die wonderlike wêreld.
- 5) Dit belig vir ons sowel ons verantwoordelikheid vir die wêreld as die betekenis van gemeenskapslewe.
- 6) Dit kan 'n gebalanseerde fondament bied sowel as 'n gesonde verhouding tussen wetenskap en godsdiens as 'n positiewe Christelike wêreldbeeld.

Sleutelbegrippe: Moderne bybelse kreasionisme; verhouding tussen wetenskap en godsdiens; evangelie van die skepping; kritiek op tradisionele kreasionisme; en kritiese en oop kreasionisme.

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**CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION**

1.1 BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1.1 Background

In the creation/evolution debate, the relevance of the traditional creationism to modern scientific findings is questioned. Though there is no consensus on 'creationism', the conservative Christian creationism in recent debates often appears to believe that God had created the world by word, out of nothing (*ex nihilo*), in six normal days, about six thousand years ago. Though this is one possible interpretation that the church may choose, this specific interpretation has taken the position of the evangelical churches' traditional creationism (Numbers, 1999:243).

Modern sciences challenge the church to re-examine the doctrine of creation. Modern scientific findings, such as the observations of billion-light-year distant starlights or a great amount of dinosaur fossils, estimate the age of the earth at

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several billion years. At least, in regard to the age of the earth, the evangelical traditional creationism cannot hold its position any longer.

Compared to its wide impact, the depth of the challenge is not so deep. Natural science has not reached consensus about the origin of life (Cameron, 1982:30), nor have the churches reached consensus about the reading of Genesis 1. An evolutionist admits, "to say that small changes *might* or *may* make a 'quantum leap' change (so-called 'macroevolution') in a moment is *not* an *observatory* but a *presumptive* statement" (Flank, 2001). Likewise, the *confessional function* of the phrase "God, the maker of heaven and earth" in the Bible is rightly pointed out (Mays, 2000:75).

Current Christian positions in the debate are roughly classified into two exclusive and compromising approaches (cf. Chiang, 2000; McGrath, 1999:48-49). The theistic evolutionists affirm that *with the given fact of evolution* the Christian theology must be restructured or enlarged (Haught, 2000:ix; Korsmeyer, 1998:9; Rahner, 1978:178; Russell, 1998:191; Ward, 1976:46-48 and 1996:187). The recent creationists —Catastrophists or Flood geologists (Morris & Parker, 1982; Numbers, 1999:240)—try to explain away the old 'appearance' of nature (Austin & Rugg, 1998; Philips, 2001; Woodmorappe, 2002) with conviction of the authority of the Bible. Compromising approaches try to harmonize the biblical creation accounts, 'the word of God', with the scientific findings, 'the fact of science'. The gap theorists put gap(s) between the creation days (Custance, 1958:10; 1961:1-4; Maatman, 1970:112). The *fiat* theorists interpret the accounts as God's fiats with explanatory parentheses of earthly realization (Hayward, 1995: 167-170). The day-age theorists relate the creation days to the geological periods. The successive creationists emphasize the assumed ubiquitous design in the creation by God, the omnipotent designer and catalyst (Mills, 1995a:114 - 'an intelligent cause'; 1995b:444, 458 'a design theory at the level of genetic information'; cf., Russell, 1999:25, 'quantum level divine control').

Hermeneutically, there are two ways to interpret creation accounts: literal and literary. Once *the authority of the Bible* is accepted as the highest principle of interpretation, literal interpretation is a corollary. Because God only knows everything, man can get beyond-human information by studying the Bible, thus

the creation accounts become the divine, faithful Reporter's witnesses. If *the supremacy of the human reason* is the highest principle of interpretation, literary interpretation is natural. Because the reader and interpreter is human, and because the beyond-human things cannot be proved by human reason, only within-human information is under scrutiny of human reasoning. Thus, Genesis 1 and 2 must first be interpreted as ancient literature (cf. Kline, 1996:4). The limitedness of the human observer sets limits of the result of observation because reconstruction of the observer is inevitable (Buchdahl, 1994: 7, 9).

To illustrate, the Apostle John saw a vision of the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God (Rev 21:2). The fact that he saw a heavenly vision at a historical time does not necessarily verify the historicity of the content of the vision (Carroll, 2000:260). Vision belongs to virtual reality, by definition, and must be interpreted as virtual. What about the creation accounts in Genesis? Are they visions or historical eyewitnesses? That must first be determined.

Brooke (1991:2-10) classifies three popular positions, which turn out to be problematic in the relationship between religion and science: conflict, mutual complement, and intimate interaction. Basically, however, religion and science are two fields or spheres somewhat arbitrarily divided by our reason (McGrath, 1999:30) in order to study life, the most complicated phenomena which need simplification in order to be studied.

To summarize, the creation/evolution debate has exposed the fact that the traditional creationism has not been sufficiently examined. From a doctrinal point of view, to examine the relevance of the doctrine of creation and, if necessary, to construct a new creationism, would be a timely study.

1.1.2 Problem statement

From the above-mentioned background arises the following main study question:

- What would be a new biblical creationism as an alternative to traditional creationism, suitable for being a dialogue partner of modern evolutionism?

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The following subsidiary questions also need study:

- What is the challenge of modern evolutionism to the church's doctrine of creation?
- What have been the official responses of the church?
- What is the traditional creationism?
- What would be a new biblical creationism?
- Does the new biblical creationism provide a good relevance to modern sciences?

1.2 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.2.1 Aim

The aim of this study is to construct a new biblical creationism as an alternative to traditional creationism, suitable for being a dialogue partner of modern evolutionism.

1.2.2 Objectives

To get to a new biblical creationism, the following objectives are pursued:

- to study the challenge of modern evolutionism and its impact on the doctrine of creation;
- to survey the churches' responses expressed in official statements;
- to scrutinize the traditional creationism;
- to construct a new biblical creationism; and
- to evaluate the constructed creationism, whether it provides a good example of a sound relationship between religion and science.

1.3 CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

The central theoretical argument of this study is: to construct a new biblical creationism as an alternative to the traditional creationism suitable for being the dialogue partner of modern evolutionism is possible, and it will provide an example of a sound relationship between religion and science.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

To reach the above-mentioned aim and objectives the following methods will be used:

- to study the challenge of modern evolutionism, a scientific and theological analysis of documents which treat the modern evolution debate will be made;
- to survey the churches' responses expressed in official statements, a church historical survey of ecclesiastical documents regarding creation will be undertaken;
- to scrutinize the traditional creationism, an investigation of commentaries regarding the creation accounts will be carried out;
- to construct a new biblical creationism, an exegetical investigation of the biblical creation accounts and its theological implications according to the principles of Reformed historical-grammatical exegesis (Kaiser & Silva, 1994) will be pursued; and
- to evaluate the constructed creationism, whether it provides a good example of a sound relationship between religion and science, a comparison between the theological implications of the new creationism and the findings of modern sciences will be made.

CHAPTER 2

CHALLENGE AND RESPONSES

In contemporary thoughts, both the historical reality and the revelational significance of the creation narratives are being called into question from various quarters (Spykman, 1992:176). Schmid (1984:102) writes, "in recent decades the concept of creation has been largely ignored in theology". Evolutionism and creationism, in recent evolution debates, seem to represent science and religion, respectively. Modern evolutionism with recent findings of science (cf., G. R. Morton, 2000, asserts 'phylum level evolution' that much of data regarding the so-called missing links has come in within the past two years) is challenging the Church to examine her doctrine of creation in the light of the modern scientific findings. (Cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, No. 62: "The recent studies and findings of science, history and philosophy raise new questions which effect life and which demand new theological investigations".)

2.1 CHALLENGE OF MODERN EVOLUTIONISM

Modern evolutionism challenges Christians to re-examine the doctrine of creation. The scientific consensus of the at least 15 billion years of age of the universe has raised a fundamental question about the 'traditional creationism'. Neither has modern natural science yet reached consensus about the origin of life (Cameron, 1982:30), nor has the church about the reading of Genesis 1 (Numbers, 1999:237; Waltke, 1975:136). It seems that both creationism and evolutionism are largely based on their fundamental presumptions. While creationism is based on the biblical creation accounts plus literal interpretation of the biblical creation accounts (Morris, 1976:32), evolutionism emphasizes the implications of modern scientific findings.

After the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species* (1859), evolutionism has raised its voice in every field of science. Since some of the issues of evolution are directly opposite to the traditional Christian doctrine of creation, it has provoked from both sides strong emotional reactions, even in scholarly debates (Ramm, 1955:36-37; Roth, 1983; Ryke, 1987: Voorwoord, 339). The debate has been more religious than scientific, as can be shown in a book to which Midgley put a sensational title, *Evolution as a religion – strange hopes and stranger fears* (Midgley, 1985:15, 147; also, Geisler, 1982:28; McGrath, 1999:156 – 'the ambivalence of analogy', both of Darwin's natural selection and of religion; and Snow, 1990:188 – 'the resonance of all of them is clearly religious').

2.1.1 'Evolution' and 'evolutionism'

A relatively short history of the evolution debate is reflected by the use of ambiguous terminology. An evolutionist admits, for example, that small changes *might* or *may* make a 'quantum leap' change in a moment (so-called 'macroevolution') is not an *observatory* but a *presumptive* statement (Flank, 2001). Others say in similar vein that evolution "must" have taken place according to the laws of nature (Van der Ziel, 1975:163 "the details of this transformation are unknown, but somehow it must have taken place"; Lever, 2002:8). An Old Testament theologian points out the confessional function of the phrase, 'Yahweh, the maker of heaven and earth' – "The contexts in which the phrase appears show that its purpose is to identify Yahweh as the deity who can help and bless the people of the Lord because of Yahweh's power as creator of all that is" (Mays, 2000:75).

Numbers recites James R. Moore's note pointing out the fact that little effort had been expended by historians of science in tracing the proliferation of Darwin-related vocabulary and interpreting its function in public discourse (Numbers, 1999:234). The use of equivocal terminologies makes it difficult to properly grasp the significance of the challenge.

2.1.1.1 Meanings of 'evolution'

The term 'evolution' is used with various distinguishable meanings. Wiester (1993:182) lists five meanings of 'evolution' which are used interchangeably:

In recognition of the fact that evolution has “evolved” into a word of multiple distinct and easily confused meanings, the pre-eminent recommendation of the ASA Executive Council was that “the terms ‘evolution’ and ‘theory of evolution’ should be carefully defined and used in a consistently scientific manner”.

The background to the ASA Resolution lists five diverse examples of meanings of the word evolution that must be distinguished from one another.

These are:

- (1) the general concept of “change over time”
- (2) the hypothesis that “all organisms are related through common ancestry”
- (3) a theory setting forth “a particular explanatory mechanism” for the pattern and process described in (1) and (2)
- (4) limited, non-controversial meanings such as the concept of populations adapting to changing environments, and
- (5) a religiously value-laden tenet of naturalist faith, that “Man is the result of purposeless and natural process that did not have him in mind”.

... The problem is that meaning (4) and the first three meanings of evolution are often confused not only with each other, but with meaning (5) (emphasis added).

2.1.1.2 Meanings of ‘evolutionism’

According to Wiester’s above definitions, ‘evolutionism’ can mean either (1) a belief based on a theory setting forth a particular explanatory mechanism for the pattern and process described in both the general concept of change over time and the hypothesis that all organisms are related through common ancestry, or (2) a religiously value-laden tenet of naturalist faith, that “Man is the result of purposeless and natural process that did not have him in mind”. A creationist similarly defines evolutionism as a belief holding “that all organisms were descended from a common ancestor and that any appearances of design could be explained by natural selection working over long periods of time” (Milne, 1997). Russell Maatman (1989:3) tries to relate evolutionism to (3) atheistic materialism, in similar way that Phillip Johnson (1998:32) accuses Darwinism as being a “philosophical doctrine called scientific naturalism”, which excludes any supernatural factor; though others

who take the methodological exclusion of the supernatural in natural science as a necessity don't mind his condemnation.

Howard J. Van Till introduces a distinction between broad 'Naturalistic' and narrow 'naturalistic'. "Walter Bradley and Charles Thaxton, in their chapter on 'Information and the Origin of Life', make a very important distinction, one rarely found elsewhere in this volume (*The Creation Hypothesis*): It is worth noting here that affirming natural causes as the probable source for the origin of life, as most origin-of-life scientists do, does not necessarily mean naturalism...this means we may not infer from experience the metaphysical conclusions of naturalism. I take Bradley and Thaxton to be affirming that naturalistic (narrow) does not at all imply Naturalistic (broad)" (Van Till, 1995:130). People, in general, tend to distinguish scientific 'evolution' (narrow naturalism) from religious or ideological 'evolutionism' (broad Naturalism).

2.1.2 Allusions of the traditional creationism

Though there is no consensus about 'traditional creationism', the conservative Christian creationism in recent debates often appears to believe that God had created the world by word, out of nothing (*ex nihilo*), in six normal days, about six thousand years ago, and the living creatures according to their kinds. This specific interpretation of the biblical creation accounts has taken the position of the evangelical churches' traditional creationism (Numbers, 1999:243; Livingstone, 1987:157). And on that position, with the connotation of 'fundamentalist view', intensive fire is poured onto the debate. To briefly scan the characteristics of traditional creationism:

2.1.2.1 God had created the world *by word*

Originally, it looks deduced from Genesis 1:3, "And God said, 'Let there be light', and there was light". The Apostle Paul relates this verse to the inner illumination in 2 Corinthians 4. Similarly, other mentions in the Old and New Testaments (Ps 33:6, 9; Isa 40:26; John 1:3; 2Cor 4:6; Heb 11:3; 2Pet 3:5) are almost reflections or verbal repetitions of the original account. This doctrine seems to take the poetic *expression* of creation for the scientific *method* of creation.

2.1.2.2 God had created the world *out of nothing*

Originally, it seems inferred in the first verse of Genesis 1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth". Though the Bible has no direct mention of 'creation out of nothing', as Gordon Spykman (1992:158) admits ("nowhere in Scripture do we find an explicit, verbal reference to the idea of *creatio ex nihilo*. Yet its truth is everywhere present"), the follow syllogism seems to have been granted from old days:

- A. 'Create' means 'make something to exist out of nothing'.
- B. The Bible says that God 'created' the heavens and the earth.
- C. Therefore, before the creation there should have been nothing.

The trustworthiness of this syllogism wholly depends on that of A. Does 'create' in Genesis 1 mean "make something to exist out of nothing"? That needs examination.

Interestingly, from the opposite side of traditionally creationism, a British physicist, Paul Davies, raises a scientific (that is, hypothetic) inflationary version of *creatio ex nihilo*, which means a self-creating universe: "In the beginning the universe erupted spontaneously out of nothing. From a featureless ferment of quantum energy, bubbles of empty space began to inflate at accelerating rate, bootstrapping colossal reserves of energy into existence. This *false vacuum, infused with self-created energy*, was unstable and began to decay, dumping its energy in the form of heat, filling each bubble with a fireball. Inflation ceased, but the big bang was started. The time was 10^{-32} s... For millennia mankind has believed that nothing can come out of nothing. Today we can argue that everything has come out of nothing. Nobody needs to pay for the universe" (Davies, 1984:203-205). This latest hypothetic version of *ex nihilo* still needs examination, too.

2.1.2.3 God had created the world *in six normal days*

Originally, it seems that it is alluded to in Genesis 1:31 and 2:2, 3. Other mentions are recallings of the original accounts. In Exodus 20:11 and 31:17, the Sabbath is ordered in relation to the original accounts. The name Yahweh is used in Exodus instead of 'Elohim ('God') which consistently appears in

Genesis 1:1-2:3. It is to be understood in the context that God calls Himself Yahweh, "I *am* Yahweh, Your God" (Exodus 20:2, 5, 7, 10, 12). It is traditionally believed that the original accounts in narrative form mean the historicity (or 'fact'-narrative) of the accounts. But that belief had and has been regarded as a fatal defect, especially in the light of literary perspective.

2.1.2.4 God had created the world *about six thousand years ago*

This is the most contentious, but 'a very popular interpretation' (Behe, 1996:5) of traditional creationism. Though there is no mention of the overall age of the world since the first day of creation, according to traditional creationism the world is about six thousand years old. We can easily imagine that the simple adding of biblical chronology must have been possible at any time after the completion of the Pentateuch, but its recent popularization is related to a pre-modern publication:

This timing was calculated by Archbishop Ussher of Armagh (who rather appropriately was also Professor of Theological Controversies at Trinity College, Dublin) in a book, *Annals of the Ancient and New Testaments*, published in 1650, by the simple method of adding up the ages of all the people in the biblical genealogies from Adam to Christ...The difficulty is that it places Adam as living at a time when there was already considerable urban civilization in the Middle East, thus lessening his claim to be the genetic founder of the whole human race (Berry, 1996:32).

According to this interpretation, the fossils of ancient ages are often explained away by 'mature creation', that is, the world was created originally with the 'old' appearances (Philip Gosse's idea, introduced in Hayward, 1995:75-76).

2.1.2.5 God had created the living creatures *according to their kinds*

While creationists try to define the meaning of the word 'kind' (*min*), evolutionists, since for them the term 'species' itself doesn't have a fixed meaning, don't pay attention to it. Paul Seely argues that the 'kind' in Genesis and other books of the Old Testament was more likely to mean 'species' that had been known to the writers (Seely, 1997:55): in creation context Genesis 1 (verses 11, 12, 21, 23, 25), in the context of Noah's Ark (Gen 6:20; 7:14), and in

the context of listing species (of a genus – Lev 11 and Deut 14; of fish – Ezek 47:10). The biblical usage of 'kind' (*min*) looks as if it takes the fixity of species for granted. Traditional creationism agrees with the stasis theorist position arguing that it is a fact based on fossil record that species never have changed in trans-species level (macro-evolution), but have changed in within-species level (micro-evolution) (Grizzle, 1993:226; Newman, 1995:167). Part of paleontology (Gould's 'punctuated equilibria') and also part of biochemistry (Behe's 'unbridgeable chasms' of evolution in microscopic world) seem to support this 'according to their kinds', while the other part still follows mainline gradual evolutionism.

In short, the challenge of modern evolutionism to traditional creationism is not a challenge to its theological message, but a challenge to its scientific allusions. As Ryke writes, "it is important to distinguish between facts and interpretations" (Ryke, 1987: Preface) especially in assessing the value of the challenge of modern evolutionism.

2.1.3 Warfare between science and Christianity?

It is commonly said that there has been continuous warfare between science and Christianity (Milne, 1997). That 'warfare', however, according to John Brooke's historical approach (Brooke, 1991:15-16), must be understood as an unfriendly relationship between some scientists and some Christians, who tried to (ab)use contemporary knowledge of science in promoting social and political ideologies. According to a summary of Livingstone (1987:67), there are five basic parallels between Calvinism and Darwinism, which served to lead George Frederick Wright to the conclusion that Darwinism was the Calvinist interpretation of nature:

- (1) 'No inevitable progressive development' parallels the doctrine of the fall and human depravity.
- (2) Both Darwinism and Calvinism affirmed the specific unity of the human race.
- (3) The hereditary transmission of variations and the transmission of original sin.
- (4) Darwinian integration of change and pattern in the evolutionary system is a mirror image of Calvinistic interplay of predestination and free agency.

(5) The sovereignty of law.

2.1.3.1 Christian worldview and contemporary knowledge of science

Many admit that the Christian worldview is related to the contemporary science. Driver (1916:33) said early, regarding the cosmogony of Genesis, “the science of the Bible is the science of the age in which it was written”. And in *Darwin’s forgotten defenders*, David Livingstone (1987:2) wrote that it is generally agreed that the growth of scientific enterprise was closely bound up with the (contemporary) spirit of Puritanism. Also Van Huyssteen (1999:6) avers the significance of scientific knowledge for theology today: “theologians, often focusing on the unique hermeneutics of theological reflection, are notorious for neglecting this profound epistemological challenge, ignoring or failing to recognize the pervasive influence of the sciences on the epistemic and other values that shape theological rationality today”. Similarly, Schmeling (1976:23) argues that the pre-Ptolemaic creation accounts of the Bible are being read by post-Copernican cosmology.

“As time passed and scientific knowledge grew, it became apparent that old assumptions about the nature of the world were wrong and that the interpretations of the Bible based on these assumptions were often incorrect. *It is important to emphasize that we are talking about assumptions and interpretations and not about the nature of reality or the authority of Scripture*” (Berry, 1996:18, emphasis added). That we are talking about assumptions and interpretations must be *the* crucial recognition of the evolution debate. In the conversation with the Earth Bible Team Gene Tucker (The Earth Bible Team, 2000:22) points out that “some of the most hazardous principles—like those that have guided so much of scholarship for the past century—are the ones which are unacknowledged and/or unexamined”.

Regarding the influence of contemporary scientific knowledge on the Christian worldview, Young (1990:29, 35) says, “The medieval worldview was an amalgam of Christian beliefs derived from Scripture and philosophical ideas obtained from the Greeks”; and “diluvialism was unquestionably the dominant scheme of terrestrial history in seventeenth and early eighteenth-century Britain”.

This relation between worldview and science does not mean identification. This study submits that both parties in the debate must pay attention to Bernard Ramm's warning against this kind of mistake, which is common in reading Genesis 1: "The second mistake peculiar to the theologian is either to identify a given worldview, with its science, with the Bible, or to derive too much empirical or specific data from the general assertions of Genesis 1. For example, the identification of the Aristotelian science with Christianity as occurred during the Middle Ages has done harm beyond any possible calculation" (Ramm, 1955:37).

2.1.3.2 Modern evolutionism as part of modern science

The most typical characteristic of modern evolutionism is its relatedness to modern science. Modern evolutionism, or Neo-Darwinism, started as a synthetic theory between Darwinian evolutionism and Mendel's genetics, and has undergone continuous modification according to new findings of sciences (Ryke, 1987:37-39). Though it aimed to solve problems of Darwin's theory, it has been criticized by many. According to Ryke's summary (Ryke, 1987:39), the main criticisms can be categorized as follows:

- The modern evolution theory is metaphysical rather than scientific.
- It is better to accept that evolution did not occur.
- The principle of natural selection is tautological.
- Natural selection explains too much, but with the perspective of power of prediction, it gives too little.
- There is no evidence of evolution.
- The principle of natural selection is only the application of prevailing political and social ideas in biology.

Considering those criticisms and continual modifications, the challenge of modern evolutionism may be regarded as a challenge of modern science to traditional creationism, more specifically a challenge to its lack of scientific explanatory power. This challenge isn't theological, philosophical, or religious. It is purely scientific. It challenges the *unscientific* part of the amalgamated worldview of classic Christian theology of which traditional creationism constitutes the main part.

2.1.4 Positive aspect of the challenge

If the challenge is purely scientific, Christians would do better to examine its positive aspects, that is, against whom, about what, why, and to what extent the challenge is raised. To criticize its negative aspects at present should be left to the evolutionists themselves.

- Against whom: the challenge is mainly raised against some Christians who have 'outdated scientific knowledge'. The ostensible warfare between science and religion is in fact the warfare between right science and wrong (or 'folk') science (Snow, 1990:188). We can say, therefore, the challenge of modern evolutionism is raised against the 'folk science part' of contemporary Christian worldview.
- About what: from the above mentioned, the challenge is raised about the 'folk science' part of modern Christianity.
- Why: because the 'folk' science part is likely to provide modern Christians a partly outdated worldview, which hinders a balanced understanding of the world and the life in it.
- To what extent: as long as modern scientific knowledge, accumulated by non-controversial scientific means, does not accord to the traditional folk scientific knowledge of Christians.

Traditionally, the church has believed that Christians can get specific scientific knowledge, which *a priori* surpasses non-Christian knowledge of the world, by studying the *Holy, divinely inspired* Bible. And the way of getting the knowledge is mainly doctrinal. Livingstone argues that Darwin challenged the scientific part of traditional creationism: "Darwin's challenge to the Paleyan idea of design engendered some theological anxiety among Christians, but his suggestion that human beings and apes must have had a common ancestor aroused more popular controversy" (Livingstone, 1987:49). For a good briefing of modern evolutionism see *Acts of Synod* (1991, Appendix).

This recognition leads this study to the next step of the Christian response to the challenge of modern evolutionism.

2.2 CHRISTIAN RESPONSES

Individually, many Christian scientists, philosophers and theologians have expressed their understanding of creation. Collectively, however, the churches seem to only keep watching the debate.

2.2.1 Individual responses

There have been individual Christian responses, which are roughly classified into two approaches, viz. exclusive and compromising (cf. Chiang, 2000; McGrath, 1999:48-49 'confrontational and non-confrontational' models). For more details of the individual responses and their scientific evidences, see Alan Hayward's book, *Creation and evolution: rethinking the evidences from science and the Bible* (1995), a well-balanced synopsis, and for a summarized comparison see Robert Newman's article, "Scientific and religious aspects of the origins debate"(1995).

2.2.1.1 Exclusive approaches

Theistic evolutionism and recent special creationism are the exclusive approaches. They are by nature the two most spirited combatants in the debate.

2.2.1.1.1 Theistic evolutionism

Theistic evolutionists, such as Karl Rahner (1978:178), Keith Ward (1996:13), and John Haught (2000:ix), followers of the Jesuit pioneer Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), insist that with the given fact of evolution the Christian theology must be restructured or enlarged (see also Van Huyssteen, 1999:6). Denis Edward (1999:3) suggests an evolutionary trinitarian theology, that is, an ontology of God based on a specific speculation: "If intellectual integrity demands that Christians accept the broad lines of the scientific account of biological evolution, what impact does this have on a Christian view of God?" For theistic evolutionists, evolution is believed as *the* principle of God's creation: that is, evolution as the scientific, and creation as the religious principle. Robert Russell's belief is an example: "today the majority of scholars who take seriously the mutually constructive interaction between theology and science

have found evolution compatible with the core conviction that the God of the Bible is the creator of the universe and life within it. Evolution, in short, is God's way of creating life" (Russell, 1998:191).

Howard J. Van Till (1995:124), similarly, clarifies his 'evolutionary creationist' presumption as follows:

Its methodology is based on the presumption that the universe is God's creation and that he has generously gifted it from the beginning with a functionally and developmentally complete economy. A broad spectrum of physical structures and life-forms would be realized in time without the need for extraordinary divine interventions to compensate for earlier omissions.

Individual Catholics, interestingly, whether they are theologians or laypersons, seem to be the most favourable to this position.

Some propose similar concepts to the theistic evolution, such as 'evolving creation', 'macro-development', mainly focusing on the Cambrian explosion. Robert F. DeHaan (1996:154-163) proposes 'theistic development' instead of 'gradual evolution'. He argues that the twelve paradoxes in Darwinian theory can be solved by his 'macro-development model', which defines both major changes of phyletic developments since the Cambrian explosion and minor adaptational changes by evolutionary mechanism after that period. The common problem for all theistic evolution models, however, is that the 'supernatural interventions of the Creator' or the so frequent 'creative activities of an intelligent designer' cannot be proved by scientific ways, but by strong belief.

2.2.1.1.2 Recent special creationism

In contrast with the previous position, the recent special creationists (to name one, the *Creation Research Society*), Catastrophists or Flood geologists (Numbers, 1999:240) try to explain away the 'seemingly' very old phenomena of nature (Austin & Rugg, 1998) and the remains of the old past lives insisting that science must be dealt with within the limits of the traditional creationism in order to get constructive results. They argue that God created the present world a 'mature' world. As Adam and Eve were created adults, the universe was

created as almost as old as now, including various stars and the inter-space traveling starlight. The maturely created Earth had, from the beginning, the vast amount of fossil remains. By doing so, it negates the established scientific evidences of the old earth.

Many books and articles have been written to point out the absurdity of this position. But it still is viable especially on Internet, mainly by the support of 'scientifically indifferent' religious activists. That is one of the main reasons that made the evolution debate so hot. It seems that some critics of this position regard their criticism on this 'fanaticism' as a mission of sympathetic humanity to save innocent Christians from the dictatorship of religious fundamentalism.

However, if the recent special creationism is so absurd, why are so many Christians, both scientifically learned and unlearned, still choosing that position? Not because 'creation' looks so absurd, but because evolution (here it means macro-evolution) looks so demanding of unconditional belief without offering any convincing evidence (Hayward, 1995:19). Therefore, if they should choose between the two, as the only available options at present, Christians choose creation rather than evolution. And it is easier for a Christian to choose creation because the traditional church confessions, which have been used without change for hundreds years, *seem to support* the recent special creation.

2.2.1.2 Compromising approaches

Compromising approaches, by nature, often overlap each other in their argument. They may roughly be classified into three: gap theory, day-age theory, and successive creationism. They try to harmonize the biblical creation accounts, 'the word of God', with the scientific findings, 'the fact of science'. For a summary of the detailed Christian discussions about creation days with strengths and difficulties, see the *PCA creation committee report* (2000).

2.2.1.2.1 Gap theory

What matters to gap theorists is the position of gap(s). It could be between the first two verses of Genesis 1, as in Arthur Custance's case (Custance, 1958:10; 1961:1-4). Custance argues that between the first two verses a vast period of pre-creation world(s) perished by God's judgment(s). He wrote a book, *Without*

form and void, only on this one subject (Custance, 1970b). This gap between the first two verses of Genesis 1 is also called the 'restitution theory' (Waltke, 1975:136f.).

It could also be between the fourth and fifth day because it is written that the sun and the moon were made on the fourth day (Gen. 1:14-19). Maatman suggests that a "carbon dioxide 'blanket' would have kept the earth warmer on the first day and the first part of the second day... then comes the creation of plants which covered the earth, the atmosphere would have been converted over a long period of time from one containing very much carbon dioxide to one containing as much oxygen as it does contain. The temperature would decrease, the cloudiness would largely disappear because of condensation, and on the fourth creation day, the sun, moon, and stars would be visible from the surface of the earth" (Maatman, 1970:112). It could mean that the first three days were different from the following days.

The gap could be even between the days of the week, that is, every day is followed by a long period, either of earthly actualization of divine fiat or of evolutionary processes. It could be either intermittent days as introduced by Hayward's book (1995:166) or six consequent divine *fiat* days with editorial parentheses as proposed by Hayward (1995:167-170). Whereas they add gaps, they try to keep to the six literal days of the text.

2.2.1.2.2 Day-age theory

Livingstone (1987:13) introduces Hugh Miller as a day-age theorist:

The core of Miller's harmonizing scheme lay in his understanding of the nature of biblical language. The first chapter of Genesis, he said, employed the language of 'optical appearances'—that is, it was anthropomorphic. The account of the making of the sun and moon, for example, was not a description of the absolute initial creation of these heavenly bodies; it was rather the record of their first appearance to a hypothetical observer on the earth's surface. And from this principle Miller argued that Scripture was intended neither to provide a scientific account of creation nor to teach the principles of science. His simple conclusion was that each day of the creation narrative represented vast periods of geological time—the day-age

theory of the earth as it later came to be known.

For day-age theorists the day (*yom*) of the creation week is not a normal day. They argue that each day of the creation week is neither a 24-hour day nor a same length of time. Nevertheless, one thing is clear: that each day must be related to the creatures that were created on that day. Therefore, the six creation days must be seen as equivalents to the geological ages, though the two do not identically match. They choose rather to suggest other meanings than to change the word of the text.

2.2.1.2.3 Successive creationism

Successive creationists, or ancient creationists, believe that the world is very old and that God has kept creating from the beginning. God has worked as both the designer and the catalyst of each generation process. In Mills' words, though he calls himself a theistic evolutionist, "in the history of the origin and development of living organisms, at various levels of organization, there has been a *continuing provision* of new genetic information by an intelligent cause" (Mills, 1995a:114; 1996:248; 1998:139), which should be omniscient and ubiquitous. They not only refute the literal interpretation of the creation accounts, but also reject macroevolution as being short of evidence and probability. It should not be the accidental evolution, but the divinely, precisely designed generation or governance (Mills, 1995a:121). For them, God has 'created' the world, in the sense that God has 'designed and coordinated' each and every process of *generation* over a long period.

This position is slightly different from theistic evolutionism because it emphasizes the positive intervention of the Creator and denies the concept of 'evolution' (Hayward, 1995:8, 174; Miller, 1993:150). They try to keep the text intact and to find the meaning of the biblical words with literary interpretation. Though it is not without its own problems, they suggest that an old-earth creation alternative has substantial advantages over other views on origins (Newman, 1995:166, 172 – "the major advantage of old-earth creation is that it takes both the text of the Bible and the 'text' of nature seriously, i.e., as inerrant and straightforward"). God's 'providence', for them, embraces His 'creation'.

2.2.2 Collective responses

Institutionally speaking, churches tend to not explicitly declare their position against the challenge of modern evolutionism. Is it because the issue is either scientific or personal by nature? Or is there another reason for keeping silence? Examination of some official statements of churches may give a clue to the strange silence on this challenge.

2.2.2.1 Catholic Church

The Catholic Church looks outstanding in this regard. Compared to other churches, at least, some Popes, such as Pius XII and John Paul II, expressed ecclesiastical concerns about modern evolutionism. While many individual Catholic theologians have written books with the 'given' fact of evolution (2.2.1.1.1), the Catholic Church, as an institution, hasn't changed her traditional position yet.

2.2.2.1.1 *Humani generis* (1950)

In 1950, Pope Pius XII issued an "Encyclical Letter Concerning Some False Opinions Which Threaten to Undermine the Foundations of Catholic Doctrine". Here modern evolutionism is recognized by the Pope as one of the false opinions threatening Catholic doctrine. To quote numbers 5, 6 and 36 (emphasis added):

5. If anyone examines the state of affairs outside the Christian fold, he will easily discover the principle trends that *not a few learned men are following. Some imprudently and indiscreetly hold that evolution, which has not been fully proved even in the domain of natural sciences, explains the origin of all things, and audaciously support the monistic and pantheistic opinion that the world is in continual evolution.* Communists gladly subscribe to this opinion so that, when the souls of men have been deprived of every idea of a personal God, they may the more efficaciously defend and propagate their dialectical *materialism*.

6. Such *fictitious tenets of evolution* which repudiate all that is absolute, firm and immutable, have paved the way for the new erroneous philosophy which, rivaling idealism, immanentism and pragmatism, has assumed the name of

existentialism, since it concerns itself only with existence of individual things and neglects all consideration of their immutable essences.

36. For these reasons the Teaching Authority of the Church does not forbid that, in conformity with the present state of human sciences and sacred theology, research and discussions, on the part of men experienced in both fields, take place with regard to the doctrine of evolution, in as far as it inquires into the origin of the human body as coming from pre-existent and living matter -- for the Catholic faith obliges us to hold that souls are immediately created by God. However, this must be done in such a way that the reasons for both opinions, that is, those favourable and those unfavourable to evolution, be weighed and judged with the necessary seriousness, moderation and measure, and *provided that all are prepared to submit to the judgment of the Church*, to whom Christ has given the mission of interpreting authentically the Sacred Scriptures and of defending the dogmas of faith. Some however, rashly transgress this liberty of discussion, when *they act as if the origin of the human body from pre-existing and living matter were already completely certain and proved by the facts which have been discovered up to now* and by reasoning on those facts, and as if there were nothing in the sources of divine revelation which demands the greatest moderation and caution in this question.

For Pope Pius XII evolutionism was regarded partly as 'not been *fully* proved', related to materialism (the other name of 'atheism'), and 'fictitious', and partly as worthy of further inquiry into the origin of the human body under the auspices of the Catholic Church "to whom Christ has given the mission of interpreting authentically the Sacred Scriptures and of defending the dogmas of faith".

2.2.2.1.2 *Gaudium et Spes* (1965)

The Vatican II document, *Gaudium et Spes*, uses 'evolution' only in the sense of 'gradual development', for example, in article 56 – "human culture must *evolve* today in such a way that it can both *develop* the whole human person and *aid* man in those duties to whose fulfillment all are called, especially Christians fraternally united in one human family". It doesn't even use the term 'evolutionism'. While the Council "yearns to explain to everyone how it conceives of the presence and activity of the Church in the world of today"

(article 2), 'evolutionism' seems not a major concern for the Council. Though some passages (for example, in articles 3, 7, and 20) might be seen as intimations of 'warnings against hasty evolutionism' with the perspective of the previous *Humani generis*, the focus of the document is on the unity and sound role of human beings for a peaceful and just world.

2.2.2.1.3 Pope John Paul II's message on evolution

In October 1996, Pope John Paul II delivered a message to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences (re-printed in *The Quarterly Review of Biology*, John Paul II, 1997:381-383) regarding the theory of evolution. The document touched on a number of important issues—scriptural, epistemological, and scientific—which are of supreme importance to Catholics. But by misunderstanding or some kind of journalistic sensationalism, the document produced screaming headlines around the world – “Pope Vindicates Darwin!” The Pope, in fact, did no such thing. It was a simple misinterpretation by the media (Johnston, 2003).

Mark Brumley, the managing editor of *Catholic Dossier*, aptly pointed out the misinterpretation. “In his talk to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, he spoke of ‘several theories of evolution’, rather than simply *the* theory of evolution, to make the distinction, and that distinction is crucial” (Brumley, 2003). Out of awareness of the controversy among evolutionists (Johnston, 2003), the Pope said, “On the one hand, this plurality has to do with the different explanations advanced for the mechanism of evolution”, and he went on to reject the essence of Darwinism (Johnston, 2003), “and on the other hand, with the various philosophies on which it is based. Hence the existence of materialist, reductionist and spiritualist interpretations” (John Paul II, 1997:382). In conclusion, the Pope declared that some main propositions of evolutionism are incompatible with the Catholic faith, using exact phrases of *Humani generis*.

It is by virtue of his spiritual soul that the whole person possesses such a dignity even in his body. Pius XII stressed this essential point: If the human body takes its origin from pre-existent living matter, the spiritual soul is immediately created by God. Consequently, theories of evolution which, in accordance with the philosophies inspiring them, consider the mind as emerging from the forces of living matter, or as a mere epiphenomenon of

this matter, are incompatible with the truth about man (John Paul II, 1997:383).

But that does not mean that the Pope rejected the whole theory of evolution. Reminding that his speech was a welcome address delivered to the Members of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences Meeting in Plenary Session, it cannot be expected that the document would convey a new message on such a sensitive issue as evolution. It was only an expression of political 'cordial greetings' repeating the same message, *Humani generis*, declared by his predecessor Pius XII.

In short, the institutional position of the Catholic Church is: both 'a bit' allowing further inquiry into the origin of the human body under the necessary 'auspices' of the Church, and 'mostly' keeping the doctrine of special creation in regard with the human 'immortal' soul.

2.2.2.2 Orthodox Church

Being written to supplement the overall curriculum of the *Orthodox Christian Education Commission*, the 'Orthodox Idea of Creation' (Boojamra, 1999:31-34) offers us a good summary of Orthodox doctrine of creation. The orthodox churches have four specific common grounds of faith:

- (1) God's creation out of nothing.
- (2) Separation between the Creator and the creation.
- (3) A dynamic nature of the world.
- (4) And, the human twofold nature as a unique mediator uniting the two, material and spiritual worlds.

Boojamra (1999:32) explains 'out of nothing': "This doctrine, although stated explicitly only once in the Old Testament in 2 Maccabees 7:28, is implied throughout the Old and New Testaments". John Kamiris (1973:22), a Greek Orthodox systematic theologian, further says, "God created both visible and invisible, into positive being from nothingness. The triune God, out of His extraordinary goodness, created in time *first the invisible*, the spiritual world; and *then the visible*, material world; and, *finally the spiritual and material man*".

The understanding of the spiritual, invisible world seems to take a very important part of Orthodox understanding of creation. For instance, Dumitru Staniloae (1985), a Rumanian Orthodox systematic theologian, treats the doctrine of world creation in two main parts; that is, the visible world ("Die Schöpfung der sichtbaren Welt", pp. 293-378) and the invisible world ("Die Erschaffung der unsichtbaren Welt. Die Welt der nichtleiblichen Geister", pp. 379-416). While other churches in general are relatively silent on angels, Staniloae seems heavily emphasizing the significance of Angelology. In his explanation of the fall, he attributes the beginning of evil in the world to the fallen angels, that is, being created as free beings they freely chose to sin. Under the title, "the fallen angel and his contribution both to the fall of mankind and to the continuation of evil in the world", Staniloae (1985:406) writes:

Aber sogar auch das Böse, das von stärkeren bösen Geistern verübt wird, scheint seinen Ursprung doch in ihrer Freiheit und nicht in ihrem Wesen zu haben, als etwas, dem sie unentwegt freiwillig zustimmen...Doch das vermögen der Menschen, sich davon zu befreien, also nicht mehr Subjekt des Bösen zu sein, weist zugleich darauf hin, daß Böse, unter dem sie leiden, nicht zum Wesen der Wirklichkeit gehört, sondern aus der Freiheit stärkerer Geistwesen herrührt.

A specific Orthodox contribution to the understanding of creation seems to come from the above (3) and (4) with its specific understanding of the spiritual world. With those peculiar, mysterious, pantheist-like understandings, they strongly emphasize ecology and harmony between man and nature as a basic understanding of orthodox faith.

The world has a dynamic nature because God's very creative 'words', His energies, are part of creation, and because God is continually sustaining it by His energies. Because the world is believed to have a dynamic nature, there is no formal teaching against an evolutionary theory in the Orthodox Church. The dynamic nature of the world means, as St. Paul says in Romans 8:22, "the whole creation (*ktisis*) groans in travail and pain together until now", that human beings and all of the non-human creation are tied together and share the same fate of 'deification' (Boojamra, 1999:33; Staniloae, 1985:293, "Der Heilsplan Gottes mit der Welt zielt auf die Vergöttlichung alles Geschaffenen hin").

Staniloae (1985:344) also emphasizes that human beings were created in a special manner, as if the account (Gen 2:7) is the real eyewitness of God's creating act:

In der Genesis wird zwar gesagt, Gott habe zuerst den menschlichen Leib gebildet und ihm dann die Seele eingehaucht. Doch müssen wir dieses in dem Sinne verstehen, daß der Leib seit dem Augenblick, da er sich mit seiner maximalen biologischen Komplexität zu bilden began, bereits die ihm von Gott eingehauchte Seele in sich hatte, die Gott in besonderer Weise dazu gebrauchte, den menschlichen Organismus in seiner biologischen Komplexität zu verwirklichen. Darum wird in der Genesis die Erschaffung der Seele als ein besonderer Schöpfungsakt Gottes angesehen.

According to Boojamra's understanding of the human twofold nature, not only the Christ, but also humans in general because of Christ are mediators of the world in which the energy of God is filled: Man is a unique creature because he is a unity of two worlds—body and soul, matter and spirit. Because of this, humans are called a microcosm (a miniature world), and are seen as the meeting place, the bridge, of the two worlds. Because of this twofold unity, man is seen to be the mediator, or reconciler, uniting all created things together, redeeming all things by offering them back to God in an act of thanksgiving.

The same kind of anthropology was presented by a Jesuit theologian Teilhard de Chardin and an evolutionary biologist Theodosios Dobzansky: *Humankind is the final and latest product of a long bio-historical process*. He is the crown and controller of creation. The destiny of the race and the planet and probably the universe is within man. Here is humankind's role as unifier, the body is his special gift that gives him a special place in the Divine economy (Boojamra, 1999:34).

Orthodox theologians in general have pride in keeping the original dogma of the Early Church. "The dogmatic teaching of the Orthodox Church is identical with the teaching of the one, ancient and undivided Church, preserved integrally and without change over the centuries in Orthodoxy... Thus, she has every right to proclaim that she has kept intact to the present time the dogmatic teaching of the Apostles, as well as the teachings of the early Fathers, and especially the teaching of Nicaea, in which confession of faith our ancestral heritage is

preserved” (Karmiris, 1973:1). On the one hand, it would give them a great feeling that they are keeping the age-long traditions unchanged. But on the other hand, it could be a baffle for them to positively appreciate the developing world according to God’s blessing.

The Orthodox Church affirms the doctrine of the ‘immortal soul’ as a basic Christian belief (Karmiris, 1973:113). In a sense, the immortality of the soul seems to be the most basic assumption in constructing their ‘mysterious’ Christian faith. Staniloae (1985:341-342) writes:

Die Seele kann mit Hilfe des Leibes die ganze Welt in sich zusammenfassen und sie in ihrem Lauf beeinflussen, darüber hinaus ist sie subjekthafte, unendlich reiche Rationalität, weil sie in eine höhere Ordnung hineinreicht... Da sie nicht aus der allgemeinen Natur stammt, kann die Seele, wenn sich ihr Körper auflöst, nicht einfach in ihr aufgehen. Die Seele ist das Werk des ewigen bewußten Geistes, der, nachdem er die rationalen Prinzipien der Materie gedacht hatte und sie Gestalt annehmen ließ, auch die bewußte Seele nach seinem Bilde ins Dasein rief, die zwar an diese gestaltgewordenen Prinzipien gebunden ist und sich doch von ihnen abhebet... Die Seele ist dazu bestimmt, die reationalen Prinzipien, auf denen die Dinge ruhen, mit den ewigen Prinzipien der von Gott gedachten Welt zu vereinen, und dieses durch einen Dialog der Erkenntnis und der Zusammenarbeit mit Gott

Interestingly, all biblical languages of Orthodox doctrine of creation are direct quotations of biblical passages, except of the immortality of the soul.

2.2.2.3 Anglican Church

The Anglican Church seems to have declared a very peculiar position of openness to the challenge of modern evolutionism.

2.2.2.3.1 Doctrine in the Church of England (1938)

This document says about ‘a theory of evolution’ (44-45) with a literary perspective:

It is to be recognized that *the Christian doctrine of Creation* as thus generally

stated leaves abundant room for a variety of theories as to the evolution of the world. There is in any case a sense in which, on the Christian view, the creative activity of God must be regarded as continuous. No objection to a theory of evolution can be drawn from the two Creation narratives in Genesis 1 and 2, since it is generally agreed among educated Christians that these are mythological in origin, and that their value for us is symbolic rather than historical (emphasis added).

It allows various views on the relation of creation to the time-process, since Christianity is not specially committed to any of those views. "Our Report must be read in the context of the thought of our time and with regard to its constant changes" (6). It only condemns an emanation view, which says the finite universe proceeds by emanation from the Divine nature, as non-Christian.

A very remarkable fact is that the document takes a position of suspense and openness as regards some traditional Christian doctrines, not only in the doctrine of special creation but also in the doctrine of the last things, including the resurrection of the body and the limited salvation:

The interest of most modern people in the "Last Things" has an emphasis and perspective different from that disclosed in the New Testament. Today the predominant concern tends to be with the personal destiny of individuals. People ask: What is the destiny of ourselves or (still more) of our friends? That concern is indeed present in the New Testament (e.g., 1Thess 4:13-18), but it is subordinate. The predominant concern is with the fulfillment of the purpose of God – so manifestly not yet fulfilled on the historical plane. The destiny of the individual is a subordinate part of the whole purpose of God. We are convinced that if we are to think rightly in these matters we must recover the perspective of the New Testament: we must begin with the world-purpose of God, and must see everything else in that context. The Gospel knows no private or merely individual salvation: the faithful departed shall not "without us" be "made perfect"; and so neither shall we without them. The world-purpose of God is wrought out partly through history; but for its complete and full working out it requires not only a "new creation" of man, but a "new earth" and "new heaven" (202-203).

There must be room in the church both for those who believe that some will

actually be lost, and also for those who hold that the Love of God will at last win penitence and answering love from every soul that it has created; while probably the majority feel strongly the force of the argument on both sides and are content to hold their minds in suspense (219).

It openly declares that “the Church of England has no official Philosophy and it certainly was not our desire to provide one for it. There is need of Christian philosophers, who set out the map of the world as it is seen in the light of Christian faith. But the value of their work depends upon their intellectual freedom and independence. An official philosophy is a *monstrum horrendum*”(10).

According to the document, the Anglican Church clearly manifests her collective position as ‘open and positive’ to the challenge of modern evolutionism, for their conviction is that “the authoritative value of agreement or *consensus* in doctrine depends upon the freedom of those who agree, so that the utmost liberty of thought compatible with maintenance of spiritual fellowship should be secured” (2).

2.2.2.3.2 The Doctrine Commission of the Church of England (1976)

The Joint Report of the doctrine commission of the Church of England (1976) treats the nature of the Christian faith and its expression in Holy Scripture and Creeds in a literary perspective, same as the previous document. It focuses on the basics of Christian faith, such as the understanding of the written past (7), the need of critical reading (9, 10, 12), the profundity and reality of religious language (15, 19), and the original diversity and tension in the Bible (29-30). Though there is no direct mention of ‘evolution’, there seem to be many implications. “It is easy enough to see that the cosmology of the ancient world, for example, was scientifically incorrect. What is not so easy is to decide whether religious beliefs to which a finite, ‘three-decker’ universe seems to be integral have simply to be jettisoned, or whether there is in them some essential truth which can genuinely be transplanted into our own totally different cosmos” (9).

The Report (30) shows an optimistic view of critical debate: “It is, after all, a fact that the Scriptures do still, even across astonishingly wide gulfs of time and

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culture, succeed in speaking to the minds and hearts of a great variety of people. One reason for this, even if Christians have only recently begun to appreciate it, may well be the pluriformity of the good news and the intensity which this makes possible". "The difference between good and bad criticism is precisely that the light which bad criticism claims to throw on a work is in fact a false light, changing out of recognition the object it purports to illuminate. *Good criticism brings out clusters or families of themes which a consensus of opinion will in time acknowledge as all of them being valid interpretation.* In dealing with a vast collection of varied material such as the Bible our first concern, therefore, should be to *open ourselves to the depths of meaning in each individual document without worrying whether or how these are going to harmonize with the meanings of some other writer*" (27, emphasis added).

This kind of relaxed openness to scholarly studies is typical to the Report: "in any community that is truly alive, conflict is inevitable and can be creative—and especially creative within a community of Christian charity. This suggests that the true interests of the Church will best be served by continuing to recognize the creeds as the classic formularies of Christendom, and encouraging Christians to discuss them freely and seriously as such" (42).

On the other hand, the Report points out that the wording of the creeds (that is, the official declaration of faith) had been drawn as far as possible from the language of the Bible and that the writers selected for inclusion what seemed to them the absolutely essential biblical data; and they made use of biblical words (33). The church creeds only have repeated biblical words. That may be a crucial reason why the church, as a collective body, could not actively participate in the evolution debate. Before responding to the challenge, however, as the Report aptly realizes, the church should have done her homework because the real problem is, not to despise or reject the wisdom of past (such as, the creation accounts) as belonging to ancient cultures, but "to know in any serious sense what that wisdom was" (10).

In short, the Anglican Church seems to have positively accepted the challenge of modern evolutionism as part of critical examinations of her traditional doctrines, ranging from creation to eschatology.

2.2.2.4 Reformed Church

In Reformed theological tradition, unfortunately, all the acknowledged confessions and catechisms—no need to mention the acceptance of the early Nicene, Athanasian and The Apostles' Creeds—were made in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, before the Revolution of science. A recent confession, *Our world belongs to God* (1983:1) admits, “since our newest confession was written, over 350 years ago, the world has changed a lot”. It seems that the challenge of modern evolutionism, therefore, was an idea never thought of by the Reformed church statements.

2.2.2.4.1 Classical formula

Reformed classical formula contains the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Second Helvetic Confession, and the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Belgic Confession (1561)

“At the Great Synod of Dort the French, Latin, and Dutch texts (of Belgic Confession) were carefully revised, and the Confession, along with the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons, was adopted, and since April 29, 1619, has been the doctrinal standard of the Dutch Reformed Churches in Holland, Belgium, and America” (Cochrane, 1966:187). It is also known as “the Confession of Faith of the Reformed Church”.

Regarding the origin of creation, in Article VIII it is said, “the Father is the cause, origin, and beginning of all things, visible and invisible” with the biblical words written in the references of 1 Corinthians 8:6 and Colossians 1:16.

Article XII has the title “Of the Creation”. The first sentence confesses that God created the world: “God created of nothing the heaven, the earth, and all creatures, as it seemed good unto him, giving unto every creature its being, shape, form, and several offices to serve its Creator; that he doth also still uphold and govern them by his eternal providence and infinite”. The other parts, however, are all mentions about angels and devils. It shows that the author of the Confession had more interests in explaining the spiritual beings than the meaning of *creatio ex nihilo*, which looks like a ‘given’ assumption to him.

Article XIV has the title “Of the Creation and Fall of Man, and His Incapacity to Perform What Is Truly Good”. Here also the Confession simply repeats the language of the Bible: “We believe that God created man out of the dust of the earth, and made and formed him after his own image and likeness, good, righteous, and holy, capable in all things to will agreeably to the will of God”.

Heidelberg Catechism (1563)

The Heidelberg Catechism was composed in Heidelberg at the request of Elector Frederick III, who ruled the Palatinate, an influential German province, from 1559 to 1576. The catechism was approved by a synod in Heidelberg in January 1563. The Synod of Dort in 1618-1619 approved the Heidelberg Catechism and it soon became the most ecumenical of the Reformed translation (Reformed Churches of Australia, 1991:61) and it still is used with few revisions in Reformed churches around the world.

Question 26 asks, “What do you believe when you say ‘I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth’?” And the answer is, “that the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who out of nothing created heaven and earth and everything in them” (Reformed Churches of Australia, 1991:70). It is clear here that the catechism interprets the first verse of Genesis with the syllogism of the traditional creationism (cf. 2.1.2.2). The references (Genesis 1 & 2; Exodus 20:11; Psalm 33:6; Isaiah 44:24; and Acts 4:24) are only word-by-word repetition of the biblical language.

Second Helvetic Confession (1566)

“The Second Helvetic Confession was composed by the Reformer Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575) in 1561... It is noteworthy that this Confession was not commissioned by any church and was the work of a single hand, yet it became the most widely received among Reformed Confessions” (Cochrane, 1966:220).

In chapter VII, entitled “Of the creation of all things: of angels, the devil, and man”, it says, “God created all things. This good and almighty God created all things, both visible and invisible, by his co-eternal Word, and preserves them by his co-eternal Spirit, as David testified in Psalm 33:6. And, as Scripture says, everything that God had made was very good, and was made for the profit and

use of man” (Cochrane, 1966:234). That clearly shows the same tendency of word-by-word repetition of biblical language. Interestingly, this Second Helvetic Confession, in the same chapter, clearly “affirms that man consists of two different substances in one person: an immortal soul which, when separated from the body, neither sleeps nor dies, and a mortal body which will nevertheless be raised up from the dead at the last judgment, in order that then the whole man, either in life or in death, abide forever. We condemn all who ridicule or by subtle arguments cast doubt upon the immortality of souls, or who says that the soul sleeps or is a part of God” (Cochrane, 1966:235). It seems that the sixteenth century theologians have had strongly felt needs in believing the eternal spiritualities, such as angels, devils and human souls.

Westminster Confession of Faith (1643-48)

The Westminster Confession of Faith was the work of the Assembly of divines which was called together by Parliament and met in London, at Westminster Abbey, during the years 1643-1648. The Confession and its catechisms are still used with a few revisions (Reformed Churches of Australia, 1991:149).

The Confession says in chapter 4, “it pleased God...in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world and all things therein whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days; and all very good”. Though it adds one ‘biblical’ phrase ‘in the space of six days’, it seem almost similar to other statements discussed previously. It also says of the creation of immortal souls: “After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls”. Larger Catechism Question 17 also mentions ‘immortal souls’, but the Shorter Catechism doesn’t have ‘immortal souls’ (General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, 1976:104, 133).

In chapter 32, “Of the state of men after death, and of the resurrection of the dead”, it says, “the bodies of men, after death return to dust, and see corruption; but their souls, which neither die nor sleep, having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them: the souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God, in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies. And the souls of wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day”.

Because of death and resurrection of the body, the Confession seems to keep holding the 'strange' body-soul dichotomy.

In short, the four typically Reformed confessions have nothing to do with the challenge of modern evolutionism. Evolution is too recent to be an issue for them. But, then, why hasn't the modern Reformed church actively responded to the challenge? Is there any reason for the reluctance?

2.2.2.4.2 Reformed churches

Here we examine the official statements made by the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, by the Christian Reformed Church in North America, and by the Presbyterian churches. It seems that the American churches are the most contestant churches in recent creation and evolution debate.

2.2.2.4.2.1 Reformed Ecumenical Synod/Council

In 1958 the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (RES) duly adopted a study report ("Report to the RES in South Africa on the General Principles in connection with creation and evolution") submitted by the study committee consisting of Prof. A. Lever, Prof. A.D.R. Polman, Prof. Jonker, Prof. Oostendorp, and Prof. Gispen. The report re-examined three General Principles in connection with creation and evolution against which the Christian Reformed Church of USA raised objections (Reformed Ecumenical Synod, 1958:56, 61).

The reason for the re-examination of the three guiding principles was the dissatisfaction stated by the Synod of the Christian Reformed church, "That (CRC) Synod expresses its dissatisfaction with the second and third guiding principles in their present form, because they do not distinguish with sufficient clarity between the Reformed position on the one hand, and the position of so-called theistic evolution and the dialectic theology on the other hand". According to the report, however, the RES reaffirmed the first two principles as intact as they are written, with the explanation that the CRC Synod misunderstood the second principle, but amended the third principle. The finalized three principles by the RES Synod of 1958 are as follows:

1. The historicity of revelation in Gen. 1 and 2 must be maintained undiluted. Neither of these two chapters gives any grounds for a

symbolic or visionary interpretation, or for regarding the account of creation as an allegorical myth.

2. This true and absolutely authoritative account by God of His creation has been given to us in a form intelligible to men, so that, although it gives no adequate description of this Divine act, it nevertheless provides sufficient ground for us to know and glorify Him as our Creator.
3. Observing the historicity of Gen. 1 and 2 implies *inter alia* an acceptance of Divine creation, maintenance, and government of the entire world, and accordingly implies that the Church should repudiate any concept of evolution which a) entirely eliminates God, b) regards Him as dependent on the process of creative evolution, or c) regards Him as merely incidentally intervening in the natural course of evolution.

As is seen in the general principles, both the RES (after 1988, Reformed Ecumenical Council) and the CRC NA have never questioned the first principle confessing the historicity of the first two chapters of Genesis. However, there exists a difference between the historicity of the content of the document and the historicity of the document.

To summarize, the RES of 1958 repeated Abraham Kuyper's teaching on evolution: "Kuyper was opposed to any form of evolutionism whatsoever. But that does not prevent him from realizing that faith in God as Creator does not imply that the phenomenon of evolutionary growth does not exist... Seen in this light, the RES wisely did not pronounce an opinion on the idea of the so-called theistic evolution" (Reformed Ecumenical Synod, 1958:60).

2.2.2.4.2.2. Christian Reformed Church in North America

Since the above mentioned RES report, the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRC NA), a member of the RES has paid further attention to creation and evolution debate and the CRC NA Synod of 1991 received a lengthy study result and adopted a declaration (1991) concerning creation and science.

Background

Synod 1988 appointed a study committee composed of representatives from

the areas of natural science, philosophy of science, and theology and assigned to that committee the following mandate:

To address the relationship between special and general revelation as found in Belgic Confession Article II and in Report 44 of the Synod of 1972 focusing primarily on the implications for biblical interpretation and the investigation of God's creation. This task should include, but not be limited to, such matter as the following: The concept of "vehicle/packaging/contents", the designation of Genesis 1 as "primeval history", the creation of Adam and Eve in God's image, the fall into sin, and the *doctrines of creation and Providence as they relate to evolutionary theory*. The task should include an investigation of the difference, if any, in our subjection to God's special and God's general revelation (emphasis added, Acts of Synod, 1988:598; quoted in both Acts of Synod, 1991:762; Agenda for Synod, 1991:367).

The signed committee members are: A. Wolters (Chairman), D. Holwerda (reporter), D. Ratzsch (secretary), J. De Koning, A. Dragt, R. Maatman, G. Spykman, and R. C. Van Leeuwen. Two more members didn't sign: James Vander Laan resigned before the completion of the report for personal reasons and Calvin B. De Witt because of his conviction that the debate on origins should not proceed until the greater task in creation is restored in faith and practice (Acts of Synod, 1991:412-413).

Regarding creation and evolution

- Hermeneutically, it seems to take a theological position of redemptive history: "The Bible does not intend to present the entire history in which the primeval history narrative is rooted, and the stylized character of the account prevents us from inferring what the total historical picture may have been... In general we can say that the primary intention of the historical narratives in Genesis 1-11 is to serve the understanding of the unfolding history of redemption, not to present us with a detailed history of pre-Abrahamic times" (Agenda for Synod, 1991:381).
- As to evolutionary theories, CRC takes two positions in the text and the notes of Declaration F (of Minority Report I), respectively: in the text officially it forbids evolutionary studies, "the church declares, moreover, that the clear teaching of Scripture and of our confessions on the

uniqueness of human beings as imagebearers of God rules out the espousal of all theorizing that posits the reality of evolutionary forebears of the human race" (Acts of Synod, 1991:767). But, in the notes it allows private studies, "of course, private research, theorizing, and discussion are not addressed by this declaration" (Acts of Synod, 1991:767). Later the Synod added a note, "Declaration F is not intended and may not be used to limit further investigation and discussion on the origin of humanity" (Acts of Synod, 1991:767). In its pastoral advice (Agenda for Synod, 1991:411), "the church reminds its members to be careful not to allow disputes over the origins of creation, however important they are, to diminish or obscure our calling as stewards of the creation". Among negative voters Wietse Posthumus (Toronto) (Acts of Synod, 1991:767) states, "This decision is wrong. It binds the conscience in the extreme and restraints the very thought processes involved in scientific theorizing. In so doing we risk turning our back on what God may reveal through general revelation. Then we should not only insult the scientific community but God as well".

- As to creation out of nothing and the new creation (Agenda for Synod, 1991:388-389), it seems to follow a Moltmannian position: "The creation account implies a creation *ex nihilo*. This refers, of course, to the initial act of creation, for the days of creation describe actions by which God, through his Word and Spirit, gives order to that which is orderless and life to that which appeared lifeless. Thus everything that is is radically contingent, dependent not independent, subject to the will of the Creator"; "Yet beyond the first climax of creation lies a second. *The purpose and goal of the entire creation lies in the Sabbath rest of God*" (emphasis added).

To summarize, against the urgent challenge of modern evolutionism the CRC NA takes a relatively leisurely church-political position as Pope John Paul II does, officially re-affirming the conservative position of creation out of nothing, and privately allowing further study on the origin of humanity. The most recent CRC document, *Creation and Science* (Christian Reformed Church, 2003) declares its position as follows:

All of life, including scientific endeavor, must be lived in obedience to God and in subjection to his Word. Therefore, Christian scholarship that

integrates faith and learning is to be encouraged. The church does not impose an authorized interpretation of specific passages in Scripture; nor does it canonize certain scientific hypotheses. Instead, it insists that all theological interpretations and all scientific theories be subject to Scripture and the confessions.

Humanity is created in the image of God; all theorizing that minimizes this fact and all theories of evolution which deny the creative activity of God are rejected. The clear teaching of Scripture and the confessions rules out holding views that support the reality of evolutionary forebears of the human race. But further investigation or discussion regarding the origin of humanity should not be limited.

2.2.2.4.3 Presbyterian Churches

Many Presbyterian churches share both the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Greater and Shorter Catechisms as their faith confession (cf., The Constitution of the General Assembly of Korean Presbyterian Church, 1993:19; The Reformed Church in Japan, 1998:27). For that reason, this study puts the Presbyterian churches under the category of the Reformed church.

2.2.2.4.3.1 A Declaration of Faith (1974)

The Presbyterian Church in the United States (1974) proposed a recent confession, *A Declaration of Faith*, in 1974. According to its Study Guide, the Declaration is carefully worded to respect both the (traditional) Christian faith and modern science. On the one hand, to respect modern science, it doesn't repeat the biblical language of traditional creationism. On the other hand, to respect Christian faith, the phrases regarding creation are theologically comprehensive enough. To quote:

Chapter Two: *The Maker and Ruler of All* says

God created (past tense) and rules (present tense) in love. God created all the worlds that are and upholds and rules everything. We affirm that the universe exists by the power of God's Word and Spirit. God has chosen to give it reality out of the love we have come to know in Christ. God still works through *the processes that shape and change the earth*

and the living things upon it. We acknowledge God's care and control in the regularity of the universe as well as in apparently random happenings. There is no event from which God is absent and his ultimate purpose in all events is just and loving. That purpose embraces our choices and will surely be accomplished. The Creator works in all things toward the new creation that is promised in Christ (emphasis added).

And the Study Guide explains, "With regard to the doctrine of creation", the declaration of faith confesses "simply that the universe is not self-existent or self-explanatory but exists because God has chosen to give it reality. The question precisely *how* the universe came into being is *not a theological but a scientific* question and the Declaration does not make any particular theory concerning it a confessional matter" (emphasis added).

Remarkably, this version of faith confession doesn't have a mention about 'out of nothing'. Seeing that it shares with the traditional confessions a futuristic hope of new creation (cf., Chapter Ten: Hope in God), however, its critical reflection seems not so consistent as that of the Anglican Church.

2.2.2.4.3.2 PCA Creation Committee report (2000)

Both in Introductory Statement and in Part VI Advice and Counsel of the Committee, the report reaffirms the traditional supernatural creationism:

We have found a profound unity among ourselves on the issues of vital importance to our Reformed testimony. We believe that the Scriptures, and hence Genesis 1-3, are the inerrant word of God. We affirm that Genesis 1-3 is a coherent account from the hand of Moses. We believe that history, not myth, is the proper category for describing these chapters; and furthermore that their history is true. In these chapters we find the record of God's creation of the heavens and the earth *ex nihilo*; of the special creation of Adam and Eve as actual human beings, the parents of all humanity (hence they are not the products of evolution from lower forms of life)... We recognize that a naturalistic worldview and true Christian faith are impossible to reconcile, and gladly take our stand with Biblical supernaturalism.

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It also expresses the goal of unity between their member churches:

The Committee has been unable to come to unanimity over the nature and duration of the creation days. Nevertheless, our goal has been to enhance the unity, integrity, faithfulness and proclamation of the Church. Therefore we are presenting a unanimous report with the understanding that the members hold to different exegetical viewpoints. As to the rest we are at one. It is our hope and prayer that the Church at large can join us in a principled, Biblical recognition of both the unity and diversity we have regarding this doctrine, and that all are seeking properly to understand biblical revelation. It is our earnest desire not to see our beloved church divide over this issue.

In the concluding remark of "II. Background to the Current Discussion of the Creation Days" the rejection of evolutionism is once more mentioned: "It should be acknowledged, however, that there are presbyteries that do in fact receive men holding other views without requiring an exception, provided the men can affirm the historicity of Gen 1-3 and do reject evolution".

The 28th Assembly of PCA adopted the following recommendations of the Committee:

That the Creation Study Committee's report, in its entirety, be distributed to all sessions and presbyteries of the PCA and made available for others who wish to study it.

That since historically in Reformed theology there has been a diversity of views of the creation days among highly respected theologians, and, since the PCA has from its inception allowed a diversity, that the Assembly affirm that such diversity as covered in this report is acceptable as long as the full historicity of the creation account is accepted.

To briefly summarize, the PCA seems to keep on taking the cautious 'indifference' (used twice in the Conclusion of Part II of the report) as its official position against the challenge of modern evolutionism. Like the RES report of 1958, the PCA mentions about the full historicity of the creation account as the only attached condition, urging "the church to recognize honest differences, and join in continued study of the issues, with energy and patience, and with a

respect for the views and integrity of each other" (VI. Advice and Counsel of the Committee).

2.2.2.4.4 A misapplied Reformed feature

One of the Reformed features is the emphasis on God's sovereignty. There can be no objection in theological perspective to confess that God rules with sovereignty over everything. But if it is stated in a scientific context, which is unfortunately common, it isn't appropriate. For example, five out of six formative principles of Reformed dogmatics that Gordon Spykman proposes (Spykman, 1992:107-110) are directly related to God:

- a. A hallmark of the Calvinist tradition is its steady insistence on a firm and clear distinction between the *Creator* and his *creation*.
- b. God discloses his sovereign will and elicits our responses to it by his mediating *Word*.
- c. A further principle is the idea of *creatio ex nihilo*.
- d. A further distinction, integral to the biblical worldview and therefore also to Christian philosophy and Reformed dogmatics, is that between 'the heavens' and 'the earth'. Scripture presents heaven... very concretely as the deeper background to earthly history. For beyond the 'heaven' of our immediate atmosphere ("the birds of the heavens"), and beyond that of interstellar space ("the hosts of heaven"), there is "the heaven of heavens". This 'third heaven' is the intra-creational abode of God and his "ministering spirits" (Heb 1:14).
- e. History is God's way with his world, his way, through its downs and ups, of unfolding the potentials of his creation. (This is known as 'cultural mandate'.)
- f. In the aftermath of Adam's sin and of redemption in Christ, reformational thought honours the important distinction between structure and direction.

Interestingly, Spykman here relates *creatio ex nihilo* with the 'third heaven', that is, God's 'spiritual space', which by definition stands beyond the purview of modern science. For the meaning of the 'out of nothing', however, he recites Langdon Gilkey's philosophical phrases (Spykman, 1992:160-161), little different from the traditional biblical language:

The basic meaning of creation out of nothing can be summarized in these lines from Langdon Gilkey (*Maker of Heaven and Earth*): “The Christian doctrine of creation, therefore, expresses in theoretical language those positive religious affirmations which biblical faith in God makes in response to the mystery of the meaning and destiny of our creaturely finitude. These affirmations are 1) that the world has come to be from the transcendent holiness and power of God, 2) that because of God’s creative and ruling power our finite life and the events in which we live have, despite their bewildering mystery and their frequently tragic character, a meaning, a purpose, and a destiny beyond any immediate and apparent futility, 3) that man’s life, and therefore *my* life, is not my own to ‘do with’ merely as I please, but is claimed for—because it is upheld and guided by a power and a will beyond my will. This is what the Christian means when he says, I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. This is what the idea of *creatio ex nihilo* is essentially ‘about’”.

The fact that nearly all Reformed principles are directly related to God implies something typical and critical of Reformed theology. In the interest of this study, since the challenge of modern evolutionism must be responded to scientifically, the Reformed way of mentioning God in the debate cannot be accepted. And this asking of the Supernatural Cause for everything seems to have related to the verbal repetition of biblical language. The misapplied sovereignty may be a reason of the Reformed reluctance to the challenge of modern evolutionism.

2.2.2.5 International organizations

International or interdenominational organizations are more concerned with practical and sociopolitical issues, such as protesting to political injustice and religious discrimination or intolerance, reservation of world environment, and redistribution of world resources, because discussion about doctrinal differences easily causes divisions between member churches. They must emphasize common things in order to unify their member churches coming from various backgrounds.

2.2.2.5.1 World Council of Churches (WCC)

1979 World Conference and social priorities

The Council had taken up ongoing discussions culminating in an influential conference at the Massachusetts Institutes of Technology in 1979 on 'Faith, Science, and the Future' (Barrett, 2000:185; cf., Shinn, 1980 and Abrecht, 1980). After that, however, probably due to those who are "orientated towards political and liberation movements, seeing the philosophical nature of Science and Religion as a distraction from responsibility for the poor and oppressed" (Barrett, 2000:132), the General Assembly of the World Council of churches seems to have almost lost its interests in Science and Religion concerns. Rather they have exclusively expressed the concern about the Christian unity towards practical mobilization. Fundamentally, the purpose of WCC gathering is not for debate but for celebration and exhortation, said Charles West (1983:336):

'JESUS CHRIST, the Life of the World', was the theme of the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia, last summer. It is a joyful shout of praise that is both trinitarian in depth and cosmic in breadth. Hence the theme is intended neither as a scientific statement about the reality of nature ('life'), nor as a philosophical statement about the nature of reality ('world'). [It] is rather a doxological offering of praise to the Jesus Christ whom Christians confess to be the gracious source of the world's life, both eternal and temporal, as its Savior and Lord. Precisely so the Assembly went. It was a celebrative rather than a deliberative gathering. Praise and exhortation were its foremost tones. Definition and debate played minor roles. This was its great strength, and its great weakness.

But even the 1979 conference had shown a definitely ecological inclination. About the ecological interest of the Massachusetts conference, George Williams (1997) writes:

There are more explicit moves in this direction in papers that have ecumenical status in the World Council of Churches. Its unit, Church and Society, turned expressly to ecology in the course of its international

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deliberations at a conference at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, July 1979. Indeed, several sections of the ensuing *Report On Faith and Science in an Unjust World* dealt with “nature, humanity, and God in ecological perspective”, with “creation in a time of ecological unsustainability”, with the “solidarity [of humankind and nature] in conflict”, and with “the ecological and moral necessity of limiting economic growth”. In these and related papers Christian strategies were set forth in full awareness of the ecological crisis.

About the report of the conference Jacques Ellul (1990:398) points out the “Christian naïveté of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in its attitude toward technique”:

After reading the two big volumes we are completely disappointed, provided we have any knowledge at all of the issue. The approach is mostly descriptive. We are simply told what is. No effort is made to evaluate, from the perspective of revelation, the scientific and technical developments. At best there is only juxtaposition: Science says this and theology that, with no interaction, and usually a justification of science as such, with perhaps some ethical limitations. The only thing that is condemned is the break between technique and humanity.

The participants of the Conference themselves declared their social priorities (Shinn, 1980:207):

For the most part, the conference did not engage in any systematic debate between ideologies of market and socialist systems. It tended, rather, to concentrate on the big problems of justice, participation and sustainability—usually acknowledging and often emphasizing that ideologies and social systems deeply affect perceptions of issues and possible solutions. Thus ideology and social systems came to be factors that coloured all discussion in the conference.

While expressing a personal opinion about the financial, institutional and even ideological difficulties facing the institution, Alexander Belopopsky (2003), WCC Europe Secretary, sees the organization's priorities as follows:

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One source of the WCC's difficulties has been its perceived priorities. A disproportionate attention to social and political issues, and the attention that WCC has given to a 'third world' and liberal agenda, and to related movements, networks and NGOs, has tended to marginalize the theological, doctrinal and other priorities of the inter-church body, and has resulted in a weakened commitment of a number of traditional churches, distancing the WCC from local parish reality.

Focus of unity and cooperation

The focus of the organization is definitely on unity and cooperation. "The marks of a truly ecumenical body are shared worship, dialogue, ecumenical advocacy, evangelism, social mission and cooperation" (Kessler & Kinnamon, 2000:33). How can particular churches sing the Lord's song aloud without diminishing or denigrating the voices of Christian brothers and sisters? The answer is "without undue emphasis on denominational distinctive" and "with the focus of interdenominational endeavours" (Kessler & Kinnamon, 2000:38). To unite various Christian denominations, it is necessary for the organization to adopt a universally received Christian creed as the common basis of spiritual unity.

The Board of the Faith and Order Commission in 1996 approved the publication of "Towards sharing the one faith: a study guide for discussion groups" which has been prepared through a process of consultations by groups of representatives from around the world, of Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Orthodox, Reformed and Roman Catholic churches (World Council of Churches, 1996). It chooses the ancient Creed of AD381 (the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, also called simply the "Nicene Creed") as a "symbol" or "focus" of the Apostolic faith:

29. It has been more universally received than any other verbal confession of the faith and is still the creed used most widely in worship around the world. It belongs to the historical heritage of contemporary Christianity, embraced by churches of the East and West. The Nicene Creed is therefore an appropriate choice for an ecumenical symbol of the unity of the Church in faith.

The creed itself confesses very briefly about the creation, "We believe in one

God, the Father All Governing, creator of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible; And in one Lord... through whom all things came into being" (Leith, 1973:33).

Though some criticize, for example by a creationist Wieland (1991), that the WCC is run by a clearly evolutionary theology, this study concludes that the official position of WCC regarding creation and evolution is not different from the traditional creationism. More exactly speaking, the WCC seems to be occupied with the practical problems in the context of the classical theology. It may well be illustrated by the fact that the 'culminated' World Conference of 1979 unanimously adopted only one "Resolution on Nuclear Disarmament" (Abrecht, 1980:169-170) among dozens of issues presented at the conference as the most urgent issue.

2.2.2.5.2 Evangelicals

We examine two evangelical institutional positions: a conservative Lausanne Covenant and a progressive ASA declaration.

2.2.2.5.2.1 Lausanne Covenant (1974)

The Lausanne Covenant was ratified at the *International Congress on World Evangelization*, held in Lausanne, Switzerland, in July 1974. The contents of the Lausanne Covenant were agreed upon by approximately 2,300 people, representing 150 nations from all over the world. Since then it has become a *confession of faith for a wide variety of evangelical ministries and associations*.

It confesses in the context of human creation that they should share God's concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men and women from every kind of oppression (Article 5). According to the Covenant, because "*the church* is the community of God's people rather than an institution, and *must not be identified with any particular culture, social or political system, or human ideology*" (Article 6), it must be mandatory to leave out issues like evolutionism that may cause divisions even

within a church.

As a result, the Lausanne Covenant repeats the biblical language in the traditional scheme of creation-and-new-creation, expecting God's direct supernatural acts. In *The Return of Christ* (Article 15), it confesses, "Our Christian confidence is that God will perfect his kingdom, and we look forward with eager anticipation to that day, and to the new heaven and earth in which righteousness will dwell and God will reign forever".

The evangelical participants at the Seventh WCC Canberra Assembly expressed a discomfort that some drafts of assembly documents appeared to show *reluctance to use straightforward biblical language*. However, there is one step of progression that they also, along with the WCC members, realized the lack of reflection among evangelicals on those themes "justice, peace and the integrity of creation", and thus confessed their need for intensive theological reflection in these areas (World Council of Churches, 2000).

The Lausanne II, Manila Manifesto (1989) also confessed the past reluctance of evangelicals to modernism but with a warning against secularism: "We confess that we have not struggled as we should to understand modernization". This evangelical realization may be well shared with the Reformed churches.

2.2.2.5.2.2 An evangelical declaration on the care of creation (1995)

The declaration, printed on *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 47(2): 110-111, by the American Scientific Affiliation, starts with the catch verse, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof" (Ps 24:1). It confesses first, "As followers of Jesus Christ, committed to the full authority of the Scriptures, and aware of the ways we have degraded creation, we believe that biblical faith is essential to the solution of our ecological problems". It relates directly worshipping God to taking care of the creation.

Since its main concern is to take care of the polluted, degraded world, it does avoid some debatable phrases regarding the method of creation, such as 'out of nothing', 'by word', 'in normal six days', and 'in the recent past'. Its focus is not on the past but on the future and the Christian responsibility of today.

It "recognizes that human poverty is both a cause and a consequence of

environmental degradation”, though it still seems to find the ultimate cause of all bad things from human sin and from human alienation from God as the consequence of sin. “The earthly result of human sin has been a perverted stewardship, a patchwork of garden and wasteland in which the waste is increasing... Thus, one consequence of our misuse of the earth is an unjust denial of God’s created bounty to other human beings, both now and in the future.”

It seems to have a focus on the problem of poverty contrasted by the God-given bounty. “We call on all Christians to work for godly, just, and sustainable economies which reflect God’s sovereign economy and enable men, women and children to *flourish* along with *all the diversity of creation*. We recognize that poverty forces people to degrade creation in order to survive; therefore we support the development of just, free economies which empower the poor and *create abundance* without diminishing *creation’s bounty*” (emphasis added).

Regarding the evolution debate, it only mentions comprehensively that the “creation reveals about God’s divinity, sustaining presence, and everlasting power, and what creation teaches us of its God-given order and the principles by which it works” and that “the cosmos, in all its beauty, wildness, and life-giving bounty, is the work of our personal and loving God”.

Nonetheless, we can feel the somewhat pro-theistic evolutionary inclination of the declaration from its declared principle: “Men, women, and children, have a unique responsibility to the Creator; at the same time *we are creatures, shaped by the same processes* and embedded in the same systems of physical, chemical, and biological interconnections which sustain other creatures”. “The same processes” may mean either the same ‘out of the ground’ used in Genesis 2:7 (Yahweh God formed man from the *dust* of the ground) and 2:19 (Yahweh God formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air), or the same ‘evolutionary processes’, though the meaning is not so clear. Viewed with the perspective of commonality, the same processes can be understood without problem. But viewed with the perspective of difference, the presence of ‘dust’ in 2:7 causes a problem to take it as ‘the same’ process. Furthermore, the plural ‘processes’ easily remind us of the typical evolutionary proposition of ‘gradual processes’.

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The declaration develops its principles of biblical faith according to a philosophical scheme. That is, its creation understanding is derived from the ontological understanding of the Godhead. "Our creating God is prior to and other than creation, yet intimately involved with it... God is transcendent, while lovingly sustaining each creature; and immanent, while wholly other than creation and not to be confused with it." Of course, God is not confused with human philosophical ideas, but we are. "God the Creator is relational in very nature, revealed as three persons in One. Likewise, the creation which God intended is a symphony of individual creatures in harmonious relationship." This ontological faith statement seems more esoteric than practical.

It expresses a futuristic hope of restoration: "Because we await the time when even the groaning creation will be restored to wholeness", "In our life and words we declare that full good news for all creation which is still waiting 'with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God' (Rom 8:19)", "God's purpose in Christ is to heal and bring to wholeness not only persons but the entire created order", "We believe that in Christ there is hope, not only for men, women and children, but also for the rest of creation which is suffering from the consequences of human sin", and "We make this declaration knowing that until Christ returns to reconcile all things, we are called to be faithful stewards of God's good garden, our earthly home". At the same time it encourages Christians to be faithful stewards and take responsibility of taking care of the world. If the two, that is, the futuristic hope and the encouragement of faithfulness, are combined, it certainly looks similar to the post-millennialism. And it also seems to accord with its suspected evolutionary inclination.

In a sense, this evangelical declaration on the care of creation may be regarded as a philosophically construed, pro-theistic evolutionary statement which encourages us Christians to solve the worldly ecological and economical crisis by making positive actions for the just re-distribution of world resources according to the evangelical creationism which asserts that we are God's stewards of His good creation. This pro-evolutionary declaration seems to take a unique position amongst the almost pro-creationist evangelical churches.

2.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

It seems that Ernest Wright has pinpointed the blind spot of the present creation-evolution debate. He writes, "(systematic approach) fails to take into account the fact that the biblical writers were uninterested in ideas in the sense that we are" (Wright, 1952:37; also Mays, 2000:75). Biblical writers, including the Genesis writer if he is a human being, couldn't have imagined that the future readers would fight each other about the meaning of their 'brief' expressions.

While the macroevolution of evolutionism is not an *observatory* but a *presumptive* statement, the traditional creationism hasn't yet been examined by the Church. Nevertheless, the debate has gone far in very systematic ways, without paying attention to what the Bible really teaches Christians with the creation accounts. On the one hand, creationists argue that there should be many supernatural interventions and that the single great process of evolution has no evidence. On the other hand, evolutionists argue that by the logical necessities according to natural laws, the evolution process should have happened and that the outdated or mythological Christian creationism must be revised according to that 'given' scientific fact.

Both sides are attacking each other's weak points, but they both seem to assume that there is an established biblical creationism. In fact, there has been no such creationism as we have examined above (2.2 Christian responses). Modern evolutionism goes a few steps ahead of Christian creationism by continually modifying its theory according to new findings of modern science. As the collective responses show, however, there are some signs that Christian churches are starting to recognize the need of intensive examination of their traditional doctrines.

At this stage, both sides need to realize that they both are explanatory systems based on modern science and that they both are considered problematic even by friendly forces. For example, there are the two rival evolutionary models, that is, gradual change and abrupt evolutionary change. There are two human origin models as Cela-Conde (1998:74ff) introduces: two opposite models of the modern human being, that is, 'Multiregional Transition' of paleontology and 'Mitochondrial Eve' of molecular biology. There are also two creationist models: the two most spirited opponents of the Christian position, that is, theistic

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evolutionism and the recent special creationism. At present in the debate there is no third alternative (Geisler, 1982:27; Johnson, 1998:26); it must be either creation or evolution and both have fatal defects. The best way for both sides now seems to sit and examine their own argument and find the way to mend its defects until a totally new third way is found.

This study believes that evolutionists themselves will keep on mending their theory according to the new findings of modern sciences until they make it a probable scientific theory. But on the other side, because the church is rather a body of believers than a body of critics, this study believes that modern Christians should carefully examine whether their traditional doctrines have been properly drawn from the biblical texts as they are supposed to be.

Furthermore, this study suspects that the proposed Christian positions have a common factor of futuristic view of eschatology (Gasque, 1977:243; Longenecker, 1977:149; Midgley, 1985:140 – “the official Western religion, Christianity, is well known to be rather demanding and to have its eye on the next world rather than this one”), which accompanies a self-contradictory theodic compliant, ‘How could a good and almighty God create this evil world?’ (Roberts, 1997:126-127).

If theology is an interlaced system of views, a new understanding of the doctrine of creation needs a new understanding of the doctrine of eschatology, because the view of eschatology affects the whole direction of theology (Schuurman, 1991:2, 156). That leads this study to the next chapter, searching for a new understanding of biblical creation according to a specific view of eschatology, ‘creation eschatology’ (Jee, 2002:86-88).

CHAPTER 3

SEARCHING FOR AN ALTERNATIVE

This chapter examines the creation account of Genesis 1 in order to construct a new modern biblical understanding of creation, because as mentioned above (2.1.2), the traditional creationism is deduced from the 'language' of Genesis 1. To construct a new understanding of creation needs an eschatological pre-understanding, for it gives one's theology a direction (Schuurman, 1991:2; Spykman, 1992:40; Wright, 1951:223). This study hopes that the examination of the account with a specific eschatological perspective would find an alternative, which can open a way of mutual understanding between religion and science.

The two doctrines of eschatology and creation, being the interests of modern times, have not yet been actively discussed in scientific perspective. Gordon Spykman (1992:176) points out that "for nearly two thousand years the biblical doctrine of creation went nearly uncontested as a nonnegotiable article of the historic Christian faith". Similarly, Jaroslav Pelikan (1990:11) writes, "there is, unfortunately, no history of the Christian doctrine of creation". Furthermore, as to the other doctrine Van Wyk (1998:318) points out that "modern eschatology is still in the state of under-developed concern". This recognition of the under-developed status of the two doctrines is the starting point of this study.

Due to the newness, it is methodologically needed for this study to take an examined eschatological position. Garrett (1991:127) warns and encourages us that a new study inevitably takes the form of hypothesis: the choice of presumptions will be somewhat arbitrary, but it is unavoidable because old ideas often don't work in a study on a new area. Therefore, it would be better to be reminded that any 'theory' about creation and evolution, including the ones cited in this study, *is* actually a 'hypothesis', and that its experimental value

must be sought rather from its theoretical consistency than from its conformity to the traditional scheme.

Francisco Ayala (1998:113f.) offers a good summary of the criteria of examining a scientific hypothesis:

- (1) The hypothesis must be examined for internal consistency.
- (2) The logical structure of the hypothesis must be examined to ascertain whether it has explanatory value.
- (3) The hypothesis must be examined for its consistency with hypotheses and theories commonly accepted in the particular field of science, or to see whether it represents an advance with respect to well-established alternative hypotheses. Lack of consistency with other theories is not always ground for rejection... Some of the greatest scientific advances occur precisely when it is shown that a widely-held and well supported hypothesis is replaced by a new one that accounts for the same phenomena that were explained by the supported hypothesis, as well as other phenomena it could not account for.
- (4) The most distinctive test is to put on trial an empirically scientific hypothesis by ascertaining whether or not predictions about the world of experience derived as logical consequences from the hypothesis agree with what is actually observed. This is the critical element that distinguishes the empirical sciences from other forms of knowledge: the requirement that scientific hypotheses be empirically falsifiable... An hypothesis that is not subject to the possibility of empirical falsification does not belong in the realm of science.

In short, the meaning of 'scientific' may well be identified with 'hypothetic'. Ayala's last criterion actually seems to show us a tautological flow of concepts that 'empirically scientific' is 'hypothetic' and 'always open to falsification and revision'. It looks very unsafe ('sowing off the branch on which it sits'), but that is exactly the spirit of modern science and modern common sense, this study believes. Then, naturally the meaning of 'prescientific' may be identified with 'doctrinal', 'appealing to supernatural causes', or 'related to irrefutable system of explanation'. It is commonly said that religion seeks answers to the question of 'why', while science seeks of 'how'. But it is a pre-Kantian idea, because we cannot get provable 'why' answers without knowing the 'how' answers. We must

first decide upon which evidence we establish our reasoning.

This study believes, therefore, that theology must keep the modern scientific assumptions, which presumes the limit of empirical verifiability, so that it can have conversations with other academic disciplines. Though it looks like a positivistic reduction which only allows empirical knowledge, against which Brooke and Cantor (1998:47, 101) warn the possible misuse of a 'meta-narrative', it seems to be a methodologically indispensable reduction (Clayton, 1997:7, 'methodological naturalism' or 'explanatory reductionism').

If theology were the discipline only for within church circulation, there would be no such need to keep to a scientific limit. But, because the challenge of modern evolutionism does not only come from within but also from outside the church, it is a necessary and sufficient way until we have a better means which can examine mental and spiritual phenomena objectively, for us to follow the methodological agreement of modern sciences even in doing theology.

3.1 HERMENEUTICS

Because this study is mainly based on the writer's Master dissertation (Jee, 2002), the main contents of the dissertation need detailed explanation.

3.1.1 A presentist eschatological position

Being the sequel of the Master dissertation, *Yet and not yet? A dogmatical study in modern eschatology*, this doctoral study on creation keeps to the hermeneutical presumptions of the dissertation (Jee, 2002:39-47) and starts with its conclusion. It follows the Reformed interpretative tradition of *sola scriptura* (Spykman, 1985:50; cf., though Barr, 1984:176 warns against fundamental abuse of the concept) in the sense that this study puts the first priority on harmonious understanding of the inner evidences of the biblical text. Lester Kuyper (1978:33) points out that this kind of study, a deviation from existent tradition with the search for a new frame of reference, inevitably raises both the question of hermeneutics and that of the relationship of the Testaments.

3.1.1.1 Methodological presumptions

3.1.1.1.1 Kantian epistemology

First and foremost, this study assumes that the only *verifiable* way of doing modern theology is to follow *modern scientific, or Kantian epistemology* (cf., Buchdahl, 1994:17; Bosman, 1986:9). Since this assumption is crucial for this study, if it is denied this study loses its logical basis. J. Gabel and C. Wheeler (1986:6) show an example of the scientific distinction between the objective and the subjective aspects of the biblical creation account: "Consider the first creation story in Genesis. The object here is entirely unknowable, for it is a series of cosmic events witnessed by no human being who ever lived. The subject, however, is a conception of how the universe was created".

With the 'Kantian' epistemology, this study does not mean the exact epistemological understanding of a person, Immanuel Kant. (1724-1894). It rather reflects that both the recognition of the necessity of verifiability of an observation and the recognition of the influence of observer's subjective pre-understandings on it are commonly attributed to Kant. To borrow Walter Brueggemann's (1997:262) words, this study's reading of texts according to Kantian epistemology may not be much different from conventional 'history' in Old Testament scholarship.

To reword, this study sees that the Kantian epistemology has two common-sense implications. First, it sets the limits of human observation within human capacity. The observer cannot carry out his/her observations without pre-understandings and those pre-understandings affect his/her observation results. This recognition of the observer's influence on observation is an important progress in the history of modern science. Second, it also seems to set the limits of human observation within the present available means of verification. The things that stand beyond-human recognition must be regarded as 'objectively improvable' at present, thus 'unfit for being objects of scientific research' until some properly objective methods or means are found. It neither denies that those beyond-human things exist and should be studied, nor admits that those things can only be researched by a believing faith. It only states that at present our scientific research has certain limits: at least, that our subjective belief system affects our study results and that our present status of technology

sets limits of our scientific research.

The argument that "creationism, in its widest sense, proposes that God is the *ultimate* cause for the universe and all its life-forms; human life is not an accident of nature but the result of God's creative activity" (Mathews, 1996:102) is good as long as it points out that the 'ultimate' cause belongs to 'beyond-human' realm. But when the argument is used to easily attribute the intermediary causes also to the 'ultimate' cause, this study believes, it is a naïve creationism which cannot be regarded as scientific. The piling of the improvable data whether they are about God or about the world (including virtual world) is to be seen not for scientific usage, at present, but for other than science, say for entertainment (or power control), fostering numinous feeling.

"Modern theologians see theology as a discipline that studies human knowledge of God through the Bible and the world history. They do not think that theology can speak directly about God, His attributes or the world itself through studies of the Bible. They do think that theology can and must speak only about human understandings of God collected by the study of human records about their experiences of God" (Jee, 2002:39; cf. Jonker, 1977:6; White, 1991:15).

Gordon Spykman (1992:43) points out the Kantian influence on modern theology: "Barthian exclusivism stands in sharp contrast to the inclusivism of the Schleiermacherian tradition. Together they represent the two dominant, but rival, theological models of our times. The roots of both are traceable to Kant. Nearly all modern theologians, accordingly, find themselves walking in the shadow of this eighteenth-century giant".

3.1.1.1.2 Gospel of creation

This study assumes that the *gospel of creation* is the main message of the Bible. In other words, the gospel of creation is this study's central "theory" that "seeks to give a reasoned account of the data presented to it by everyday practical living in God's world" (Spykman, 1992:61). G. Spykman (1992:60-63) suggests a three-factor theology ('*coram Deo* perspective') that understands the reality in three parts: God, creation, and the Word of God as the covenantal bond between God and his creatures. He suggests it as an alternative to the modern two-factor theologies which have an immanent dilemma falling prey to bipolar

tensions, such as the tensions between sacred and secular and between supra- and infra-lapsarianism (Spykman, 1992:60-63). According to him, this study's gospel of creation may fall in the mundane reduction of the two-factor theology, concentrating only on thisworldly things. But this study argues that Spykman's three-factor theology is a good example of the prescientific Reformed epistemology, because he actually gives the creation a super-natural character by analyzing it with the other two super-natural factors, God and the Word of God.

But, this study does not take the progressive revelation as granted and proposes that God's treatment of people is so fair that every generation and every person hears the same gospel (in the sense of "Good news", cf., Eichrodt, 1967:15, "about the fundamental character of the 'Mosaic gospel'"), not of its volume but of its core content (cf., Spykman, 1992:85-86 'A single message', "In the march of time the mode of revelation changes. But its essential meaning remains constant"). Because all the gospels are the same in core content, and because the first blessing of God in Genesis 1 seems to have the broadest implication, this study calls it (Gen 1:28) the first gospel, the 'gospel of creation' (Jee, 2002:40). Gerhard von Rad (1962:452) once mentioned the strangeness of the arguments of Proverb 8 and Job 38-41, which seem to reflect the pervasive significance of the creation:

Yet the strangest thing of all is that this divine call (Prov 8:1)—where it condescends to such a thing at all—does not legitimate itself from the saving history, but from Creation. This is very similar to the divine utterances in the Book of Job. There too the glory and the power, that is, the divinity of Yahweh, which no doubt is assailed, proves itself from Creation, though admittedly from a Creation which right from the beginning was probably understood as a saving work of Yahweh. This was thus a very spiritual piety which we can well think of as needing no signs or miracles or cultic symbols as outward sureties. The other side of the renunciation was the conviction of the hiddenness and remoteness of Yahweh's action.

What would be the single essential message, then, which does not change in the march of time? This study submits that it is the recognition that the world is God's world. That recognition *is* the liberating message of all times. And that is the message of Jesus Christ, this study believes. That's why this study calls it

the 'gospel' of creation.

Progressive revelation has been regarded as one of the fundamentals of 'traditional' (after Dahl, 1962:37) eschatology. It sees the New Testament as a better and fuller revelation than the Old Testament. In a sense it is true. By Jesus a better hope was introduced (Heb 7:19), a better covenant was guaranteed (Heb 7:22), and a better promise than the old one was mediated (Heb 8:6). But in another sense, the core promise of the two Testaments is the same. Paul says in Galatians 3:15-19 that the Law was added, because of Israel's transgressions, to the original promise given to Abraham and to his seed, who is Christ, and that the Law has no effect on the promise after the coming of Christ.

God's words cannot be identical for all generations, for God speaks to people in their own situation. It means that God speaks in accordance with the situation of the people, not with the ages of history. If history becomes worse and worse, then God's revelation also becomes more and more complicated (or 'progressive' if it is used in that sense). But the promise to Abraham seemed to be recovered after Jesus Christ! It means that, in a sense, the period of the New Testament is regarded as the same as that of Abraham. Therefore this study assumes that the progression of revelation must be regarded as referring to a specific case, not as referring to a general principle of interpretation.

Second, regarding the eternity of God's kingdom, this study takes a presentist position, which contradicts the famous 'already-and-not-yet' position. This study understands that the 'eternal kingdom of God' or 'God the Creator' basically reflects the human recognition that the world is so enormously rich and blissful, beyond our understanding, that it is only called our God's creation.

The 'already-and-not-yet' seems to have an unmentioned criterion of the now living Christian who sees God's kingdom, on the one hand, already working on this earth and on his life, but on the other hand, still lacking something to be a perfect kingdom (because of the existence of evil in the world). It may be illustrated as a traveler that already crossed the border of a new country but still thinks that he travels the same country since he cannot feel the difference. In that case that matters is not his feeling, but the fact. Like that, if for Jesus the kingdom of God was complete, for us also the kingdom must be complete. Our

feeling is not so important. Maybe we are too immature or dumb to appreciate God's complete ruling. But that does not make God's ruling 'incomplete'.

3.1.1.1.3 Protestant Bible as canons

This study takes the *Protestant Bible as canons*. There still is the debate about the Documentary Hypothesis of Genesis and this kind of canonical approach is still a minority opinion in biblical theology. But, as Garrett (1991:8) criticizes, "the continued dominance of the Hypothesis is a result more of the present confusion and flux in biblical studies than of any dynamic within the Hypothesis itself". Therefore, this study follows the argument of 'topical change of style by a single author' (see a critical overview of Tigay, 1985:151-152) and of literary unity of Genesis (Cassuto, 1961; Garrett, 1991:13, 185-188; Wiseman, 1977:45), because it believes that a Reformed dogmatical standpoint to extract a doctrine harmonized with the whole Protestant Bible appears to be the most desired task for now.

This study believes the creative complexity of biblical texts following Robert Alter (1981:22): "The biblical tale, through the most rigorous economy of means, leads us again and again to ponder complexities of motive and ambiguities of character because these are essential aspects of its vision of man, created by God, enjoying or suffering all the consequences of human freedom". The authority of the Bible is understood with regard to its most consistent and clear message about God's creation and Lordship. And because this is a doctrinal approach, the bibliographical questions—such as authorship, date, processes of redaction, historicity, and canonicity—have little relevance to this study (cf., Jee, 2002:41).

3.1.1.1.4 Specific perspective of theodicy

This study holds a *specific perspective of theodicy* adopting a positive definition of sin: "sin is human's judging God as bad". In Romans 9 Paul treats the problem of theodicy. Although God's sovereign choice *is* total for us humans, the ungrateful people in narrow-downed perspective always grumble. Paul answers them with this conclusion (Rom 9:20): "Who are you, O man, to talk back to God? Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'"

If one defines sin as accidental, contingent, and not-designed-by-creation, their conclusion will make, by circular logic, sin a mystery (in the sense, an evil beyond human logic). Then, salvation as deliverance from sins also becomes a mystery. And then the original creation seems to have little to do with the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. With that mystery-centered approach, this study believes, we cannot expect a positive eschatology. Thus this study has chosen the positive definition: Because sin is, on the one hand, regarded as greed (Col 3:15) for something beyond one's rights, and because, on the other, it always has relation to God, sin can be defined as human judgment on God, that is, "men's judging God as bad" (cf., Jee, 2002:43).

Carol A. Newsom (2000:68-69) introduces us to an interesting interpretation of 'human self-awareness' in relation with human judgment:

Baird Callicott goes back to the moment of the 'open eyes' and the perception of nakedness for his clue. What the man and the woman see is *themselves*. They become self-aware, self-conscious, and this self-awareness is the prerequisite for the experience of shame. That quality of self-awareness is also what distinguishes us from the other animals.

But why did God forbid this knowledge? "For once aware of themselves, they may treat themselves as an axiological point of reference. Self-consciousness is a necessary condition for self-centeredness, self-interestedness" (Callicott, 1991:123-124). And thus, though not culpable in itself, human self-awareness is fraught with peril. It is "the birth of anthropocentrism, which is, if not the root of all sin, at least of all ecological sin. Who now decides what is good and what is bad? In God's creation there is no ranking between one creature and another. But now human beings have disrupted that original creation and taken for themselves the power to distinguish what is desirable and what is not. And the basis for that discrimination is human value" (Newsom, 2000:69).

Related to this study's theodic perspective is the traditional scheme of Creation-Fall-Redemption. According to the scheme, the world was under the curse of Genesis 3:14-19 until Jesus' first coming when the hidden blessing of new era started, which was expressed in the form of a curse on the serpent in verse 15. But even today the curse seems to still have strong influence in our life: the painful childbearing, the power-struggle between sexes, thorns and thistles, and

the sweat on man's brow. Though some of them are overcome by the development of technology, that curse seems to stand intact in the thought of Reformed eschatology. Rather the promised era has been moved off to beyond history, either as a spiritual kingdom or as an epistemological kingdom, or as a distant historical kingdom.

That the world is still struggling with evil, whether it is personal or communal, is regarded as a given fact by modern eschatologies. But is it really a given fact? Is it not a harsh conclusion that comes from a partial observation? The present state of creation is under the threat of the NEE crisis as Moltmann (1996:45, "The deadlines of progress towards the economic, ecological, nuclear and genetic catastrophe is recognized; and the modern world's lack of future is perceived") points out. But that is a crisis created by humans, not a historical necessity. Except the human crisis that we must do our best to solve, the whole creation itself is still full of grace: rain, seasonal change, the Sun, the Moon, air, plants and animals, this study believes, everything is still in good condition and able to support our living on earth (Brown & McBride, 2000:xvii, "the great big 'Good!' that God uttered over creation in the beginning still echoing around the edges"; Finegan, 1962:17, "But since ours is a good creation, it behooves us to look for that goodness everywhere").

If we narrow down our sight and constantly focus specifically on evil on earth, the world looks full of evil. But if we look up to the sky, the world is full of blessings. If we evaluate the balance between the two perspectives, certainly we can see that the evil is supported by the good (or parasites on the good). If the evil overpowered the good by 1 percentage since the fall, there would be no livable world at all by now.

3.1.1.1.5 High point of view about the Old Testament

This study holds a *high point of view about the Old Testament*. The writer's Master dissertation concludes that the visions of Revelation, being the replica of the Old Testament visions, must be interpreted by the visions of the Old Testament, not vice versa. For example, Isaiah 65 talks about new heavens and a new earth. It is definitely the new heavens and the new earth, but there still are deaths (v. 20), building works (v. 22), and toiling (v. 23). Thus it doesn't fit into the traditional Reformed eschatology of the consummated new creation.

Rather, it sees the communal and national resurrection and the life everlasting as the long, reasonable, and politically peaceful life. "Therefore, the new heavens and the new earth of Isaiah 65 must interpret the new heaven and the new earth of Revelation 21, not vice versa, and the 'no more death' (Rev 21:4) must mean 'no more early death' (Isa 65:20)" (Jee, 2002:107).

The New Testament writers including the Apostles seem to have been influenced by the Greek philosophies and the apocalyptic writings of their time. Eichrodt (1967:78) points out that especially the development of the concept of the Word in Philo, under the influence of Greek, in particular Stoic philosophy, the Logos becomes the cosmic mind and the Old Testamental historical revelation, which concerned predominantly the salvation history (namely the presence of the transcendent God in the destinies of his people), recedes in importance.

Furthermore, the New Testament time was the period confronting the imminent destruction of Jerusalem. It was a time of national crisis. And it seems very plausible that the destruction of Jerusalem was the most important event of the history (Anderson, 2000) and that all eschatological events which Jesus prophesized had occurred during the destruction (Dennis, 2000), as the full preterists maintain. The full preterists value most the words of Jesus in Matthew 24:34, "I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened", as the most lucid teaching regarding eschatology.

Regarding the shaking of the heaven and earth, this study follows the full preterists insisting that the symbolic language of heaven and earth must not be interpreted literally but symbolically. The new heaven and earth is a figurative expression of religious change from Judaism to Christianity (DeMar, 2000). The coming of the Son of Man in Matthew 24:30 is for his judgment of apostate Israel for her sins (Durand, 2000). The dissolution of the Mosaic economy, and the establishment of the Christian, is often spoken of in the Old Testament as the removing of the old earth and heavens, and the creation of the new earth and heavens (DeMar, 2000). About Matthew 5:17-18 referring to the fulfillment of the Law before the disappearing of heaven and earth, no Christian denies that the Law was thoroughly accomplished by Jesus, but they are still under the same heaven and earth (Anderson, 2000).

3.1.1.1.6 Uniqueness of Christ

Finally, regarding the *uniqueness of Christ*, this study believes that Jesus' uniqueness must be sought not from the different content of the message of gospel, but from *the purity and intensity of the same message*. If God's message is the same in its core content, not in its expression, the core message must be the same always from creation to Jesus Christ.

Jesus' uniqueness is that there is no one in history but Jesus Christ, who had such a high view of this creation and showed perfect trust in God's faithfulness. His sayings are so simple and profound, and before him none could say the message of God's eternal kingship with that purity and intensity, and after him none has been able to add any profundity to it. Jesus is the only person in history who perfectly and completely acknowledged God's kingdom. He perfectly acknowledged God's sovereignty and goodness, completely trusting Him while he was on earth (cf., Jee, 2002:46).

The Apostle Peter boldly witnessed in Acts 4:12 in front of the Jewish Sanhedrin that "salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved". We must consider whether the concept of salvation that Peter and his audience had at that time is the same one that we have now. This verse has been regarded as the general doctrine of Christian salvation through Jesus Christ only. When we consider that there were non-Abrahamic prophets of Yahweh in ancient times, we think of God's sovereignty regarding the other possibility of salvation. As is often said, salvation is up to God only.

This study understands Jesus' mediatorship as follows:

As a mediator Jesus did not glorify himself (Jn 5:30, 41; 8:50, 54; cf. Mt 16:27 'in the glory of his Father'). He tried to turn all followers' attention to His Father (Jn 7:16, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me"). The Early Church had a specific task of proclaiming Jesus as the Christ (Acts 2:36; 5:42 "Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ"). So their focus was on identifying the right mediator. But once the right mediator is identified, then the focus must move on to the

message he carried, that is, the message he taught about his Father and us. And that message is summarized in the phrase, "My Father, your Father" (Jn 20:17, "Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God'"). That is the same message taught from the creation in Genesis 1.

This leads to the consideration of the uniqueness of Christianity. Practically speaking, there are some things often presented as typically Christian phenomena. For example, we hear many witnessing that their personal life style has dramatically changed after they met Jesus Christ, personally. Some witness that the dying bed stories imply some important facets of the after-death world, that is, some patients show that they are having a happy moment at death while others show that some terrible beings are threatening their death. Dramatic healing, exorcism of evil spirits, and miraculous things are carried out in the name of Jesus, etc.

On the one hand, those stories are genuine and sincere witnesses; on the other hand, they are not provable, yet. Some suggest other possible explanations of those typical phenomena. The common deathbed experience that the patients see a divine being wearing a dazzling white robe receiving them is explained by Near-Death Experience (NDE) as the unconscious recalling of the 'amniotic' experience. That is, they experience a kind of death shock, which is similar to the shock that they had experienced at their birth. According to A. Jones (2003; cf., Wilson, 2003) the divine receiver of a dying soul is an unnecessarily biased religious esoteric interpretation of the actual experiences.

The transformed lifestyle is explained as a conversion experience. Paul's conversion vision can be explained in a purely psychological way. Goulder (1996:49ff.) explains that a conversion experience results from a strong guilt feeling which is caused by the confrontation with a new belief system. While a person is uncertain about the truthfulness of the new system, he normally mocks or persecutes the followers of the new system. But when his inner conflict between the two (old and new) systems reaches the critical stage, he feels peace with the collapse of his old system and finds a new meaning of his life in propagating the new belief system. That experience is often accompanied by a strong vision. Saul, who "still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples" saw a vision (Acts 9) and converted, like a mocker of

communism saw a vision and converted to Communism.

The belief of the existence of the after-death worlds of heaven and hell is a common idea of any religion. The other common religious idea of exorcism of the evil spirits is usually told in relation with yet-improvable psychic experiences. Some followers of sectarian churches assert that the exorcism of evil spirits is one of the essential signs of true discipleship based on their specific interpretation of Mark 3:14-15, "He appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons". They appoint 'exorcist teams' and give them mission to record the whole process of their practice, which recalls the interview between Jesus and Legion (Mk 5:5-13). Before the 'interview' there comes a tumultuous period of 'tong-speaking' prayer. When the patient, that is, the suspect of demon-possessed, is completely confused, the interview with the demon starts. Interestingly, the whole process of their exorcism is exactly identical to that of the spirit-possessed oriental shaman. First comes the great tumult, then, follows the declaration of the spirit's descent and one-to-one interview between the shaman (the team leader) and the supposed spirit, lastly the shaman declares the departing of the spirit. The problem is that the audience never knows whether the patient is really spirit-possessed or the team makes the patient look spirit-possessed by their spirit-calling formula.

Then what would be the uniqueness of Christianity? Though it is not a subject that can be explained satisfactorily in a dissertation or a thesis, might we compare the uniqueness of Christianity to that of democracy? Though we cannot conclude that democracy is the best system of politics for every generation or state, it definitely is regarded as the best system that ever existed to many of us. We may say at present that Christianity is the best religious system for us that can help people to establish a righteous and humane society.

The presentist understanding of salvation as a conclusion of the Master dissertation suggests that the Old Testament salvation means the deliverance from national or local destruction in this worldly history. The biblical concept of the 'resurrection of the body' is communal, political, and practical. An individual as the recipient of God's promise represents a group: the whole world of Noah, a family of Abraham, a clan of Jacob, a state of David, or a believing community

of the New Testament. God's blessings and promises always focus on *you and your people* (or descendants). Though Baillie (1934:169, 171) calls this kind of immortality *the ancient tribalist alternative*, it was, as he admits, *the immortality of the Old Testament* (Jee, 2002:73).

The dissertation implies that the consummated kingdom of God is not a historical necessity, but the ideal society that the Bible presents to every nation and generation. Regarding the Christian salvation there is a debate between the universalism and the limited-salvation. The debate seems to have a very specific focus on the range of the saved. The universalists argue that if temporal human sins are punished eternally, it cannot be a fair judgment. The proponents of the limited salvation argue that because the Bible says so and God's justice must be carried out, there will be God's eternal judgment. They both try to make the two divine attributes (that is, God's love and justice, which they assume) compete with each other. However, it is definitely a divine ontological approach, which appeals to the incomprehensible, improvable, thus 'beyond-human' factors.

But this study's presentist position understands the salvation as the salvation of the covenant people from the imminent earthly crises that threaten their communities, such as war, famine, calamity etc., and the hope of salvation as the hope given to the few remnants so that God can restore them to a nation again. It understands the limited salvation as an expression of hope formed from their historical experiences of salvation. The hope is not a divine ontological dilemma, but a hope formed from the realistic recognition about the worldly affairs. The ontological approach understanding the salvation as an eternal destiny contrasted to the eternal hell seems to fit modern existential philosophy rather than biblical theology.

3.1.1.2 This worldliness

This study adopts the conclusion of the dissertation that the Bible doesn't teach an otherworldly Heaven as Christians' ultimate destination, rather it teaches a presentist, *this worldly divine commandments*:

The Bible enumerates the promises of prosperity and destruction before every generation and every individual – the 'Now commanding' of

Deuteronomy 30 and the promises of the second commandment of Exodus 20.... If an individual or a nation does not live the blessed life, the promised destruction will naturally come upon him or her (Ezek 12:25). It is a matter of act and practice, not merely a matter of religious sentiment or existential decision. It is a present declaration of judgment with sure future results. And the promised prosperity and peace is the eternal life, which starts from the present and will continue to the future descendents as long as they keep the law of blessing. The eternal life is not a personal after-death spiritual life. It is this historical life, a communal life of prosperity and peace. The resurrection is the revival of a nation or a family caused by their returning to God, often after His educational judgment on them (Jee, 2002:107-108)

Joel Green (1998:158) also points out that in "the Old Testament human beings cannot be understood in their individuality. Even those individuals that do gain prominence in the Old Testament have significance typically on account of their role among the people of God. The proverb known to us from Libya, 'We are, therefore I am', is at home in the Old Testament world in a way that Descartes' famous dictum, 'I think, therefore I am', can never be".

3.1.1.2.1 Immortality of the soul?

The dissertation also points out that traditional Reformed eschatology has mistaken two *unbiblical* ideas for 'very biblical', that is, the immortality of the soul (Jee, 2002:69-71) and the end-time scenario (Jee, 2002:55). Anderson writes (1998:178) "the concept of an immortal soul is thus without clear biblical support". Post (1998:195) points out that "the idea of an immortal soul is not as essential to Christianity as might be assumed", Eichrodt (1967:150) as well, "Greek philosophy in the Hellenistic period...in the Wisdom of Solomon (2:22f.; 3:1f.; 4:14; 5:16) *nepesh-psyche* becomes the imperishable substance which as an indestructible principle of life guarantees Man immortality".

Wolffhart Pannenberg (1997:44-45) is an example of such a misunderstanding when he writes about the mysterious concept of 'life transcending spirit':

In biblical traditions, life is not considered as a function of the organism. This constitutes a basic difference from the view of modern biology. The life-

giving power is seen as an agent that influences the organism from the outside. When it is called 'spirit', one must not think of consciousness and intelligence in the first place. The spirit is rather a mysterious reality, comparable to the wind (Jn 3:8). When God breathes it into the creature which he built earlier, it comes alive (Gen 2:7)... Further, this view of life as originating from a transcendent source is an indispensable presupposition for the hope in a resurrection to a new life beyond death. Only if the source of life transcends the organism is it conceivable that the individual be given a new life that is no longer separate from the divine spirit, the source of life, but permanently united with it as a "spiritual body" (1Cor 15:42-44)... These biblical conceptions quite obviously belong to a universe of discourse different from what modern biology has to tell about life and its origin. But they cannot easily be dismissed as transient with the culture of their time because *they possess far-reaching importance for basic affirmations of the Christian faith* (emphasis added).

However, the immortality of the soul evidently came from dichotomist Greek philosophy (cf., Murphy, 1998:4-6; Ringgren, 1987:348; Schmeling, 1976:109).

3.1.1.2.2 End-time scenario?

A two-times scale, e.g. Christian Link (1997:108), 'the plane of eternity exists vertically to the plane of history', is related to this end-time scenario. The application of two kinds of time, a physical time to the quick and a spiritual time (to some, an existential time) to the dead seems to be a good compromise. In that scheme, at the moment of death the dead jump over the historical time gap and directly stand and are judged in front of God's judgment seat, and thereafter their eternal time starts, while the quick will continue making their history until the final judgment day comes. This seems to be the best compromise of philosophical eschatology, for all elements of traditional eschatology are saved without big changes by just introducing a different time for the dead.

However, a critical defect of this solution is that the basis of the eternal time of the dead is not biblical but philosophical, that is, it is deduced either from the meditation of the eternity of God (see Barth, 1977: 105-107 'eternity marks time and history') or from the immortality of the soul. Besides that, by introducing a

new concept of time, seemingly similar to the existential time, this scheme actually nullifies the traditional concept of a linear time scale, which is regarded as one of the fundamentals of 'reportorial eschatology', by unwittingly weakening the importance of this worldly history.

Furthermore, that the added eternal time of the dead needs application not only to the dead but also to the quick, and shakes the firm historical base, since by definition the eternal time should be applied to every point of time. If we expect an imaginary time machine period in the future, that machine must have existed, because it is a time machine, by definition. Similarly, eternal time must have started in the past. That compromise may be summed up as 'to die is better than to live', which is opposite to the saying of the Teacher: "Anyone who is among the living has hope—even a live dog is better off than a dead lion!" (Eccl 9:4).

Herman Ridderbos (1975:508ff.) offers a typical end-time scenario mainly based on 2 Thessalonians 2 interpreted by his collective eschatology: appearance of the man of lawlessness, apostasy, *parousia* of Christ concomitant with the resurrection of the believers and the judgment, and the consummation (eternal dwelling in Heaven or Hell). This scheme seems common for all end-time scenarios of the collective eschatology. For the individual eschatology the scenario is: death, [waiting for Christ's *parousia* in the intermediate state, resurrection] (these elements are often omitted, either one or both, in some scenarios), judgment, and the consummation. One common thing in the scenarios is that they all assume the end of the world as a **fact-to-be**.

Generally, the phrase of "when he (Christ) appears" of 1John 3:2 is regarded as an explicit mention of the end of the world. But literally, its meaning is as it is written, "when he appears in the future". Only with the association with the end-time expectation or presumption, the phrase turns to mean 'at the end of the world'. Therefore, it is not an explicit mention but an interpretation. And in the explanation of the parable of the weeds (Matt 13:39) Jesus uses 'the end of the age (*synteleia aionos*)', not 'the end of the world'. The 'age' simply means 'an appointed period' and that period can be applied to any length of time. Similarly, *aion* is used in Matthew 24:3 in relation with *parousia*. Again, only when this *parousia* is interpreted as the historical second coming of Jesus Christ at the end of world, 'the end of age' means 'the end of the world'. But Hebrews 9:26

relates 'the end of ages' (*synteleia ton aionon*) with Jesus' first coming. Therefore, 'the end of age' does mean 'the end of an appointed period' and this study, agreeing with the full preterist, assumes that 'the end of the world' does not have a textual basis.

Related to the end-time scenario is the final world judgment day. The universal judgment assumes a set day of judgment in the future. Since the two ideas are so closely related (Berkhof, 1981:730) it would be better to combine them into a phrase, 'the final world judgment day'. At first glance, many references of the single day of Yahweh in the Old Testament fit to this day (Ps 110:5; Isa 2:17; 4:1 – 'in that day'; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14 – 'the day of the Lord'; Amos 3:14 – 'on that day'; Zeph 1:18 'the day of the Lord's wrath'; Zech 14:1, 7 – 'a day of the Lord'; Mal 3:2 – 'the day of his coming'; 4:5 – 'that great and dreadful day of the Lord'). All judgments warn that there will be one day to judge their sins.

Contrary to expectations, however, the final world judgment day is never explicitly mentioned in the Old Testament. Rather there are many days for national or tribal judgments, for example, the day of Sodom (Gen 19:23-28), the day of Korah (Num 16:20-33), and the invasions of Nebuchadnezzar into Judah (2Chr 36:5-21). The Flood (Gen 7:11) was the only universal judgment day of the Bible, but it was not the final world judgment day that fits into this category of future judgment. Of course, there are expressions about the judgment of many nations, yet they are not for the whole world but for some nations around Israel (Ps 7:8; Isa 3:13; 66:16-19; Joel 3:12; Mic 4:3). All those judgments were in the future at the time of pronouncement, but now they are in the past, without exception. Regarding the end-time scenario, therefore, this study assumes that the final world judgment day must be rejected because the Bible does not say anything about the end of this creation (Jee, 2002:87).

This study, therefore, tries to examine the biblical material regarding creation with the perspective of the presentist eschatology in order to construct a new understanding of biblical creation.

3.1.2 Literal and literary

It seems that the various Christian positions in modern evolution debate can be divided in two: whether one reads the creation account in a literal way or in a literary way. The recent special creationism and traditional creationism hold the literal reading (Olson, 1982:30), while all others hold the literary reading.

The difference between literal and literary reading may be related to how wide the reader sees the text. Roughly speaking, whereas literal readers stand near the text scrutinizing its details, literary readers rather stand back from the text watching the context in which the text lies.

3.1.2.1 Literal reading

Literal reading or literal interpretation has been the most popular reading of Genesis in the church. Commonly, it is assumed as simple, with no needs of special pre-knowledge, easily shared by all Bible readers, and thus a direct interpretation from the words of the Bible. The problem and the strength of the literal reading lies in its assumption that "Genesis 1 must be God's self-witness account otherwise none could have known about it". Considering that each generation has its worldview or pre-understanding (2.1.3.1), and that repeating the language is not interpreting it, not mentioning the problems of translation (many 'original text' copies and language versions, Gabel & Wheeler, 1986:236), it seems too direct to believe that Genesis 1 is God's self-witness of His creation.

The three-decked cosmology of the epistle of Paul (2 Corinthians 12:2-4), for example, is commonly accepted as describing an 'inexpressible' spiritual reality that can be understood directly even now, without further critical reflection. According to the Kantian epistemology, however, this direct understanding of spirituals is regarded as standing beyond the scientific verification range, thus, 'beyond science'. The possibility of direct spiritual understanding is being confessed, though it cannot be proved nor refuted. Verifiability is the criterion that determines the range of scientific theological discussion.

A dream case may offer an illustration for the difference between pre-Kantian and Kantian epistemology. In a dream, the dreamer assumes that he instantly

recognizes what he 'sees'. The dreamer, even after the dream, can have personal conviction that what he dreamt will be actualized in reality, scene by scene. That conviction, however, is not a proper object of scientific study, yet. It cannot be proved in a scientific way, but in a religious or in a speculative way, who or what causes the dreamer to dream so. The cause of the dream may be either some supernatural beings or a crisis in which the dreamer is temporarily situated. Those causes lie beyond scientific study. Only the content of the dream reported by the dreamer has to be the proper object of scientific study. That is the limit which Kantian epistemology admits. The vision stories of the Bible usually share the same characteristic of a dream in which the seers instantly recognize who the characters of their vision are. However, there are no reasonable clues to prove that recognition, unless the dream is regarded as a necessary sub-story in the broader context of the story.

The problem of literal dream interpretation that Harry Hunt (1989:20) points out may happen in pre-Kantian literal vision interpretation: "More profound doubts about the validity of dream reports seem misplaced. Most people take their dream experiences very seriously and literally, for whatever reasons, and visibly struggle to find just the right words. This is in marked contrast to the subjective reports studied by Nisbett and Wilson (1977), where people fall back on commonsense beliefs about their own experience that may manifestly contradict their observed behaviour. Although the dream is surprisingly dialogic, both individually and culturally, it is really not all that malleable. On the contrary, it is curiously isolated from the rest of one's life and from one's other dreams as well".

For a biblical example, consider the case of the three disciples' direct recognition of Moses and Elijah in the Transfiguration account of Matthew 17. Did they 'see' them in a vision, or in reality? The account is too brief: "There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus" (Matt 17:2-3). 'Just then' the disciples recognize that they are Moses and Elijah, as if a thousand years gap between them matters nothing! Jean-Marie Husser (1999:17, 18) points out that the historical authenticity of the experience related in a dream report, as well as divine visions or messages received from the gods, is less important to the reader than its psychological plausibility.

The biblical writers seem to assume that 'saying' is 'believing'. Or, it may be either a kind of economic writing (cf., Crenshaw, 1978:118, 'economy of language') or the way of ancient writing. "For them to write it as an address by Moses was not an act of literary deception. The authors were no doubt perfectly sincere in believing that Moses either did say or should have said these things. The distinction between 'did' and 'should have' is an invention of the modern mind and did not exist in the ancient world" (Gabel & Wheeler, 1986:75). But one thing is clear: the Bible is written with this kind of 'ancient', pre-Kantian epistemology. "It is noteworthy that there is no subsequent reference to God having written the Ten Commandments. It is therefore quite obvious that the Jews were not very interested in the literary methods through which the record came, but were rightly concerned with the narrative itself. They did not think so much of the method of revelation, as the fact that it had been revealed by God" (Wiseman, 1977:151).

The stone tablets inscribed by the finger of God (Exod 31:18), or the flying saucer-like expanse and the robot-like four creatures (cherubim) of Ezekiel 1 (one of the near-God's-throne characters of Revelation), well remind us of some 20th century sci-fi movies parodying Christian religious traditions, such as *The Fifth Element* and *The Sixth Day*. It must be noticed, however, when we understand the accounts related to God in the Bible as the accounts depicting beyond-human events, the 'beyond-human' can be put to any thing that surpasses human 'present' recognition. This 'beyond-human' or 'divine' can be anything, for example, dream interpretation, a new idea, anachronously advanced technology (like UFO's), visions, both too great and too minute things, control of weather, establishment of a nation, healing of a patient, or the spreading or preventing of diseases. It seems that the writers of the Bible just tell the stories, believing that those things mentioned in their stories are directly related to God; they don't mind the modern scientific reader's problem of understanding (cf., Wright, 1952:37 – "the fact that the biblical writers were uninterested in ideas in the sense that we are").

Traditionally the church has simply interpreted biblical prophetic visions in a historical way. That is, a vision is to be realized in history, as it is seen, scene-by-scene, thus, to read the vision itself is enough; speculative interpretation is unnecessary. But the written form of a vision is indeed a kind of translation or interpretation, from picture language to verbal language or from visional sounds

to written document (see Daniel 7:1) (Fishbane, 1985:447; Husser, 1999:100). For modern readers the written form itself needs interpretations. Actually, vision is always being interpreted in some way. The problem is that most of it is traditionally interpreted as historical foreseeing.

“Prescientific understandings of things characteristically produce interpretations that are hard to prove or test, that are unsystematic and lacking in logical ordering, and that are difficult to communicate to other people. At the prescientific level readers are constantly exposed to the danger of reading into the text their own preconceived convictions” (Bosman, 1986:9).

3.1.2.2 Literary reading

Rudolf Bultmann may easily be recalled in relation to modern literary interpretation. He tried to demythologize the New Testament to find its core message of existential realization (Bultmann, 1953:9-10). Claus Westermann (1984:99) seems to take a very different approach: while Bultmann's demythologizing of the New Testament is purely negative, the newly acquired understanding of myth helps the reader to realize that myth belonged originally to the context of survival, an expression of one's understanding of existence, of one's understanding of the existence of the threatened-self. In short, myth was the only possible way of speaking of real events and their significance for ancient people. “One can understand why the Bible knows no doctrine about Creator-Creation, but only tells stories about it. Only in the narrative, only in the rehearsing, can Creation be repeatedly made present” (Westermann, 1984:100).

Many people, but relatively few in number, try to interpret the Genesis creation accounts other than direct history, as revelatory myths (Kline, 1996), existential parable (Richardson, 1953:43), doctrine in a narrative mode (Stek, 1990:240), or more broadly, as dramas (Waddy, 1975). Kenton Sparks (2000) introduces four kinds of myth in ancient historiography: psychological, metaphorical, historical, and recreational (pleasure) myths. Jean-Marie Husser (1999) studies four kinds of dreams of the Old Testament: symbolic, message-giving, prophetic visionary, and wisdom-giving dreams.

Modern literary criticism tries to classify typical literary forms, styles or genres of the text of the Bible. And it is generally assumed that prose has quite different

characteristics from poetry: prose tends to be more historical, while poetry more artistic. Even a professional historian in ancient times, however, could freely write a history containing myths and 'good' stories (Sparks, 2000:276; cf., Gabel & Wheeler, 1986:44 – 'limitations on reading the Bible as history'). Kenton Sparks (2000:280) suggests that the Paradise/Fall story in Genesis is to be read as a metaphorical myth.

It must be noted, however, that the concept of literary genre itself is not used definitively but descriptively. In other words, genre does not define its content. Rather it helps modern readers to understand a part of the complexity of the given literature. Sparks (2000:269) writes, "these traits (of mixture of historiography and myth) help us to position the historical work of the Yahwist within a specific generic category: antiquarian historiography along the lines laid out in the tradition of the Greek sources". Even in an epistle the writer can put various contents: national history, myth, amusing story, personal journal, or divine revelation. In short, not form or genre, but *the significance and the function of a literature define its literary structure* (Husser, 1999:108, 113, emphasis added).

One common thing about literary reading is that the text is *indirectly* related to real life and history. Text needs interpretation, like dream needs oneiromancy, before the meaning is extracted and applied to real history. Husser (1999:131) again suggests that some oneiric oracles or message-dreams in the Bible look transformed into visions by later apocalyptic additions: "The motifs of 'the heavens opening' and of the coming and going of angels through 'heaven's gate', are frequently found in the introductory parts of the accounts of visions from Ezekiel onwards (Ezek 1:1b), and have become popular in apocalyptic style writings (cf. Testament of Levi 2:5-7; 5:1; 3 Maccabees 6:18; Rev 4:1; Jn 1:51)".

It seems that while the literal reading is the corollary of pre-Kantian epistemology, the literary reading is the corollary of Kantian epistemology. This study, therefore, following the Kantian epistemology, tries to find a modern literary understanding of the biblical creation accounts.

3.1.2.3 Both literal and literary

Considering the two perspectives, nevertheless, this question naturally comes up: Isn't there a third way one can read Genesis both in a literal and a literary way? Actually, that is the other merit of modern scientific (Kantian) epistemology. The 'literal and literary' reading is possible in principle, when a literal reader interprets his given text with the considerations about the multi-faceted nature of the text and about the limitedness of his hermeneutical stance. J. H. van Wyk (1987:205) shows us an example of Reformed hermeneutical prudence which is critically aware of its presupposition and limit:

Daar is immers net een "bril" wat ons behoort te gebruik wanneer ons die Bybel lees en dit is om die Bybel te lees onder leiding van die Gees van die Here. Indien ons die Bybel deur 'n politieke bril lees, indien ons toelaat dat ons politieke voorkeure of afkeure ons lees en verstaan van die Bybel bepaal, dan laat ons die Bybel buikspreek en dan hoor ons nie meer die Woord van God nie maar ons hoor daarin ons eie woorde, ons eie voorkeure en ons eie planne. En dan kan die Bybel nie meer 'n lig op ons kerklike en politieke pad wees nie maar dan leef ons in 'n donker nag. Natuurlik is dit ook waar dat niemand die Bybel volkome onbevooroordeeld kan lees nie, omdat talle persoonlike, godsdienstige en kulturele faktore ons verstaan van die Bybel medebepaal. Belangrik is egter dat ons van hierdie voorveronderstellings bewus sal wees en ook dít onder kritiek van die Woord sal bring.

Recently, some authors, for example Robert Alter (*The art of biblical narrative*, 1981), Hugh C. White (*Narration and discourse in the book of Genesis*, 1991), and Duane Garrett (*Rethinking Genesis: the sources and authorship of the first book of the Pentateuch*, 1991), try to interpret Genesis according to their literary knowledge, keeping the text intact as long as possible. For them the literal reading seems to be the same as the literary reading.

New knowledge can offer clues for a new understanding of the Bible. P. J. Wiseman (1977:182) writes, "Had the literary information which archaeology has brought to light *been applied* to the problems of the 'days', few scholars would have continued to interpret the first chapter of Genesis other than as six day's narration or revelation and not as a six days' creation". He submits that

the six days of the creation account should be interpreted, according to the recent archaeological knowledge about colophons of Babylonian clay tablets acquired by the excavation of ancient cities of Iraq, as literal six days of revelation (to Adam or near descendant of him) of God's creation, which happened in the unknown past.

In a sense, all readers of the Bible are actually trying to read in the same way and there is only an individual difference of preference or satisfaction (Barr, 1984:114). Because all we have is the written texts of the Bible, which give the uniquely detailed information of the biblical peoples' life and thought, and because the temporal and cultural gap is so vast, it would be the best for us to read the Bible with consideration of all available knowledge about human life, keeping the texts intact – without adding, deleting, or modifying words from them. Then, "to interpret a text by all available knowledge without modification of the text" may be identified with 'both literal and literary' reading, provided there is always the limit of different personal satisfaction.

3.2 SEARCHING FOR A MODERN UNDERSTANDING OF CREATION

The search starts with P. J. Wiseman's hypothetic theory because it has a unique literary approach which suggests that the commonly called 'creation week' of Genesis 1 was actually a 'revelation week'. Then, by partly accepting and partly modifying the theory, this study will try to present a proposal.

3.2.1 A literary approach: P. J. Wiseman's revelation week theory

Wiseman's theory comes from his book, *Clues to Creation in Genesis* (1977), and for the citations from the book onwards only the number of the page will be noted. He suggests that the creation week would be best understood as a revelation week, instructing the first human beings about God's creative acts which took place in the unmentioned past, based on his research on Babylonian clay tablets. He has a strong conviction that "because the six days have been misunderstood as though they were periods occupied by God in his creative acts, instead of the time occupied by him revealing what he had created in the past, the first page of the Bible has fallen into not a little reproach, and has become a stumbling-block to many" (141).

Wiseman's definition of *toledoth* is critical in understanding his theory. "The word is used to describe *history*, usually family history *in its origin*. The equivalent phrase in English is, "These are the historical origins of ..." or "These are the beginnings of ...". It is therefore evident that the use of the phrase in Genesis is to point back to the origins of the family history and not forward to a later development through a line of descendants... In Matthew 1:1, we read, 'The book of the generations of Jesus Christ', following which is a list of ancestors. Here it certainly means the exact opposite of descendants, for it is used to indicate the tracing back of the genealogy to its origin" (37).

3.2.1.1 All six days were for the education of man

Wiseman's understanding starts with Jesus' saying about Sabbath (133): "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath; so the Son of man is lord even of the Sabbath" (Mk 2:27). "It is significant that the only references

elsewhere in Scripture to the six days of work and one of 'rest' in connection with the narrative of Creation are those attached to the fourth commandment. In no other connection are these six days mentioned" (119).

He argues that the seventh day was originally introduced by God in order that man could rest for a day and not in order that God could rest for a day (133). He goes on to say that if the seventh day was introduced for man's benefit, then, considering the 'evening and morning' phrase is used repeatedly in the chapter, it is only reasonable to suppose that what was done on the consecutive 'six days' also had to do with man. And considering that the fourth commandment in Exodus 20 uses the verbs 'made' ('*asah*'), which conveys the meaning of 'something done, prepare, or showed' (131, 132) and *nuach*, which means 'stop or cease from work' (130), instead of 'created' and 'rested', it is obvious that on the six days God was not creating the earth and all life, but was revealing his creative acts already done in the past (134).

3.2.1.2 Colophon theory

While almost all scholars agree that the typical phrase containing the word *toledoth*, "these are the generations (*toledoth*) of ...", is the most significant and distinguishing phrase of Genesis (34), they seem to have misunderstood both its use and meaning (35). "The reason is quite simple. Many of these sections commence, as is frequent in ancient documents, with a genealogy, or a register asserting close family relationships. This has led them to associate the phrase with the genealogical list where this follows, hence they have assumed that the phrase is used as a preface or introduction". According to the study about the ancient Near Eastern literature around 3,000 BC, which predated Abraham, however, the main history of the person named in the phrase has been written before the phrase and most certainly not after it (35).

In cuneiform and other ancient Near Eastern literature, a colophon is a note added at the end of the account, giving particulars of the title, date, name of writer or owner, together with other details relating to the contents of a tablet, manuscript, or book (143; cf. Fishbane, 1980:438; while DeWitt, 1976:198, proposes a somewhat modified colophon theory). Wiseman's explanation of his colophon theory is as follows:

First, the title given to an ancient piece of writing was usually taken from the opening words of the first tablet (145). For the first tablet of the creation accounts, the title is 'the heavens and the earth'.

Second, as for the date of writing, ancient colophons often include the date when tablets were written. In this case, the date is "when they were created in the day that Yahweh God made (or showed about) earth and heavens". This date, however, does not refer to the time when the world was created, rather, as it states, to the day when the records were finished. Babylonians, Egyptians and Assyrians gave the year a name by identifying it with some important event in that year (146).

Third, as for the series numbers of tablets, in Babylon the account of creation was generally written on six tablets and these were serially numbered at the end of each tablet. Similarly, at the end of each of the six sections of the first creation account we see that these same serial numbers 'one to six' are given (first, second, third, fourth, fifth, but *the* sixth). The Hebrew word used for 'first' indicates that it is the first of a series. But the definite article attached to *the* sixth day indicates the close of a series (146; cf., Wenham, 1987:34, who merely points out that the definite article hints at the special character of the day and the next day, Sabbath). As for the end of the series, it has been assumed that the reference to 'finished' is to the acts or processes of creation, but, according to the ancient writing method, the word 'finished' must mean the finish of writing the tablet (147). The original word commonly translated as 'vast array' (2:1b) conveys the idea of an orderly muster or arrangement, or orderly collection of things (148). Therefore, Wiseman asserts, "what was finished on the sixth day was the revelation and recording of the acts of Creation long past in a tablet series... the Genesis text uses the word in a manner similar to the literary custom which prevailed in ancient times, thus indicating that the sixth tablet concluded the series of tablets on which the account of the creation of 'the heaven and the earth' had been recorded" (147-148).

Fourth, about the name of the writer or owner of the tablet. Seeing that what God did in the six days was clearly not the creation of the universe but the *account* of its creation, the phrase "in the day that Yahweh God made the earth and heaven", would indicate that God was the author of the record (150). It must be noted that in Exodus we read that Yahweh gave Moses tablets, which

He himself wrote! "I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and commands I have written for their instruction" (Exod 24:12). The same thing could have happened for the creation account, at least as an ancient writing technique. Maybe that is why "the narrative is so sublime in its elevated simplicity, so concise yet expressive in its language, so pregnant in meaning yet uncontaminated by human speculation" (152).

Fifth, it is unlikely that we could find all these literary aids in its complete form from Genesis. But the presence of these aids strongly indicates that Genesis was compiled at an early date, certainly not later than the age of Moses. It is a remarkable confirmation of the purity with which the text has been transmitted to us, that we find them still embedded in this ancient document (51).

3.2.1.3 Educational anthropomorphism

Wiseman submits, "the textual statement is an account of what 'God said' about the things God made. In other words, it is his revelation to man about his creative acts, which were already completed... It is a narrative of what 'God said' to man. There is no suggestion that the acts or processes of God had occupied those six days" (137). Another significant thing that should be noticed is that the names God gave to the things He spoke about was not for God but for man for his instruction (138). He seems to propose an educational anthropomorphism:

It may be said that all this is very anthropomorphic. Of course it is. It is God giving names for the instruction of man and recognizing man's need of rest. The whole of the Bible is frankly anthropomorphic (138).

In past interpretations this anthropomorphism has been applied to God apart from man. It has been assumed that before man existed God gave objects names. Whereas it was, on the contrary, that God was in the process of explaining his works of creation to man (139).

During the daylight hours of each of the six successive days (each day divided by an evening and a morning, when man rested), God revealed to him something new about Creation, and during the first three days gave to man the names of the things He had revealed. When at the end of the six days God had finished talking with man He instituted the seventh day as a rest day for man's sake. In six days God had revealed 'the heavens and the

earth and all that in them is', and the six days occupied in this work were followed by a day of rest (138).

3.2.1.4 Antiquity of Genesis

Antiquity of Genesis means that the original records of Genesis have ancient origins. It is an argument opposite to the common assumption that the early parts (chapters 1-11) of Genesis were composed later than the later parts. Claus Westermann (1992:2) writes, "chapters 1-11 of Genesis must be regarded as a separate element of the Pentateuch and not primarily as a part of 'Genesis'... It is a relatively late component", and "The real question is this: Why has Israel's confession of the god who rescued Israel from Egypt been extended back into the primeval events?" (1992:6). Also John Van Seters (1998:14, 38) attributes the first part of Genesis (1:1-2:3) to the Priestly Writer (P) of post-exilic period (ca. 400 BC). Considering that the dating of the document is a very debated issue, besides its notoriously fragmenting effect, it seems better for us to listen to Wiseman about the internal evidences of antiquity of Genesis.

Wiseman (1977: 46-55) enlists these evidences:

- (1) The presence of Babylonian words in the first eleven chapters. How do the experts account for the fact that the only definite Babylonian words are to be found in the earlier chapters of Genesis, and not in the latter part of the book, or in the rest of the Pentateuch?
- (2) The presence of Egyptian words in the last fourteen chapters. Had he not been accustomed to the Egyptian living, the writer could not have known Egyptian details, such as, names (Potiphar, Zaphnathpaaneah, and Asenath) or its customs, for example, that the land was granted to the Egyptian priests (47:22).
- (3) Reference to towns, which had either ceased to exist, or whose original names were already so ancient in the time of Moses, that as the compiler of the book, he had to insert the new names so that they could be identified by the Hebrews living in his day.
- (4) The narratives reveal such familiarity with the circumstances and details of the events recorded, as to indicate that they were written by persons concerned with those events.

- (5) Evidence that the narratives were originally written on tablets and in an ancient script, not transferred by oral traditions. Various indications are found that these records were originally written on tablets, and in accordance with ancient methods including literary aids (title, catch-lines, colophon mentioning the name of the scribe and the date of writing).

Later he adds some more internal evidence of Genesis (Wiseman, 1977:169-175):

- (6) No anachronisms. Genesis contains no reference whatever to any event subsequent to the creation of man and woman, and of what God then said to them.
- (7) Universality. All the references of the first chapter are universal in their application and unlimited in their scope. We find no mention of any particular tribe or nation or country, or of any merely local ideas or customs. Everything relates to the earth as a whole and to mankind without reference to race.
- (8) Childlike simplicity shows unique antiquity. Genesis 1 calls the sun and the moon simply as the 'greater and lesser' lights. Knowing that long before the days of Abraham Babylonian writers had given names to both the sun and the moon, this simple account of Genesis 1 shows that it must have been written before the days of Noah.
- (9) Brevity. Compared to the Babylonian series of six tablets of 'creation', the biblical account uses only one-fortieth of the number of words. Writing in the earliest days was necessarily brief and later became more extended.
- (10) And impossible but important terms. Genesis 1:26 writes God in the first person plural form ('let us'). Surely it is impossible to imagine a Hebrew writer of the eighth or any century originating such a sentence. If the creation narrative was an attempt to explain the Sabbath, why is the name Sabbath never referred to? On any rational and even 'critical' grounds this would be regarded as clear evidence that the narrative had been written before the word Sabbath had been introduced, or at least before it had become a common name in the vocabulary of the people to describe the seventh day's rest.

Based on his investigation, Gary Rendsburg (1986:107-120) argues about the internal evidence of Genesis almost along the same lines as the above listed, that the date of the *final redaction* for the Book of Genesis must have been during the United Kingdom period. Duane Garrett (1991:237) has the same conclusion to Wiseman's theory, namely that "the traditional understanding of Genesis as the product of the Exodus period is still the best solution to the problem of the origin of the book". Contrary to common redaction theories, David Noel Freedman (1992:497), based on his Hebrew word counting study, proposes that the Hebrew Bible has such a specific symmetry that the collection as we know it must be the product of *one person, or a very small group, working at one time, in one place*, to achieve the results visible in the entire structure of it. Based on computerized 'word' counting, though 'alphabet' counting might have shown the more exact symmetrical structure, Freedman (1992:505) proposes an early redaction date and the unity of the Hebrew Bible:

Once we eliminate Daniel from consideration as part of the Hebrew Bible in the late 5th or early 4th century, then, everything falls into place. The numbers change slightly but dramatically and the pristine symmetry emerges from relative obscurity. Instead of 84,000 for the Writings, the number becomes 78,000, and the total for the second half of the Hebrew Bible almost exactly 150,000, just like the first half. The difference between the two halves, without considering a single emendation of a single word, is then exactly 296 words, or just about one tenth of 1% of the total of 300,000. This is remarkable under any circumstances, for it is hard to believe that anyone could have worked things out to such a point of precision. And if it happened by accident, it would be truly miraculous... This assertion of an early date for the compilation of the canon of the Hebrew Bible is bound to be controversial. It further implies an early date for several books about which there is considerable debate and discussion, among them Job, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, and Esther... suffice is to say that I recognize the questions, and it may well be that some of those books did not reach final form until much later than I have proposed [i.e., the limits are between 415 BCE and 165 BCE]... in my opinion it would be difficult to remove such books from the collection we know as the Hebrew Bible, since that would disturb their symmetry so artfully constructed.

First Half: The Primary History		Second Half: Latter Prophets + Writings	
Torah	79,983	Latter Prophets	71,852
Former Prophets	69,658	Writings	78,085
Totals	149,641		149,937
Grand Total:	299,578		

3.2.1.5 Summary of Wiseman's theory

To summarize, Wiseman's revelation week may be paraphrased as an 'education week'. God had educated the first of mankind, probably Adam (Wiseman, 1977:57), about His creation acts for six days. It seems that Wiseman takes hold of literal reading and interprets both God's creation and the six revelation days as real facts. But whether they were real acts or not cannot be proved by us. Genesis 1 is so unique among ancient documents that we cannot find the same kind of origin stories. But to explain it as God's revelation or instruction about the real creation acts is 'going back' to supernatural belief. Despite new findings of archaeology, Wiseman's revelation week theory ultimately appeals to the 'divine' acts.

Then, how can we read Genesis 1 keeping the human limits, without mentioning the methodologically forbidden supernatural causes? This question leads us to this study's proposal.

3.2.2 A proposal: New habitat orientation

This is an attempt to find an alternative interpretation for the creation account as literary as possible. Owing to the brevity of the history of the study, this proposal may well be a wide speculation. Nonetheless, it is necessary to start to think over the doctrine of creation in modern terms, for it is the very foundation of Christianity.

This study attempts to suggest that we must literarily understand the first account of creation as an orientation for new inhabitants who were totally alien to the new ecosystem of the planet earth. It is very speculative to imagine the implied observer of Genesis 1 as the newly created one (of traditional creationism), the newly arrived astronaut from outer space, the time-traveler from the past world, or the unknown redactor of early script tablets. But it is very plausible to read the first chapter as the 'introduction for new inhabitants', since they are in a sense all 'new comers' either by birth or by travel. Though the most important beginning starts with a theological declaration (Barr, 1984:134-136; Stek, 1990:230; Wright, 1952:57), this study tries to interpret Genesis 1 as literary as possible.

3.2.2.1 General consideration

General consideration examines the first two verses and some general topics such as the names of God and the verbs related to creation.

1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

1:2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

3.2.2.1.1 In the beginning

Regarding the first verse, the first question would be: Who could compose the first verse? We can answer it in two ways:

- (1) God. This option argues that since the creation of a universe lies beyond human capacity, by definition, it must be God's self-witness. This direct appeal to God comes from an unwarranted syllogism. But by appealing to the ultimate, transcendent God, it rejects the only possible way of

reasonable discussion and consequently makes the question itself meaningless (cf., Clayton, 1997:16).

- (2) Human. This option argues that since the verse is a human statement it must be interpreted by human reason. Even if it is God's self-witness delivered to a human being—due to the time gap between God's creation and its revelation, God should have revealed it in some way, for example, by vision or story, or by giving God-self-written documents, and the writer should have written down the revelation he received—there is no other way for us but to interpret the written record reconstructed by the receiver according to our reason (cf., Raven, 1955:20-21).

Then the second question would be: How can we interpret the first verse as human composition? It can be answered again in two ways, either as the conclusion of philosophical (or ancient scientific) speculation or as the writer's thankful confession for having a new (chance of) life:

- (1) This first verse may mean the conclusion of ancient philosophical speculation that the present world should have, at least for logical reason, any kind of beginning for its existence. The first sentence, it believes, declares the logical necessity that the universe should have been created by a supernatural, immaterial being. Some theologians, however, simply assert that this verse is the introductory statement or the title of the chapter. In other words, it doesn't mean the creation of the universe. In that case, they must find the basis of creation belief in places other than the Bible, because the following verses of the account have indeed no mention about the creation of heaven and earth. Verse 2 just starts with the state of the already existent earth (cf., Young, 1977:118)! There was the earth, filled with great waters and space above before the first creative saying issued! Then, consequently, the confession of the traditional *creatio ex nihilo* loses its textual ground. The first verse must mean the instant creation of the universe, or the traditional *creatio ex nihilo* must be rejected. But if the verse means the instant creation of the universe (cf., Young, 1977:117, "the creation of the initial material of the universe"), we must appeal again to the divine cause, which is rejected by the methodological presumption.
- (2) This verse may also mean the writer's thanksgiving confession of having a new life: a new chance, a new world, and new living conditions.

The 'new heaven and earth' in visions of the Old and New Testaments mean a new world, a changed world, a new righteous ruling system or, more broadly, a new living condition which *may* come true through the repentance of people and by God's saving grace (Jee, 2002:106; cf., DeMar, 2000). When we apply this presentist eschatology even to this first verse, it would mean a new world, new living conditions given to the present mankind 'in the beginning'. The 'beginning' comes to denote specifically the point that the implied observer starts to *recognize* the new living conditions. In other words, the newness means the *newness perceived by the observer*. "In Genesis 1:1-2:3, the author recounts the creation of heaven and earth as if he had stood in the very presence of the Creator as he issued his decrees... Nevertheless, the author writes as one made privy to the inner precincts of God's executive actions" (Stek, 1990:235).

The first verse is too short to put fixed meaning on it for now. But one thing seems clear – that it must mean either the instant creation of a universe or the observer's recognition of his new living conditions in an already existing world. The former option belongs to the beyond-human perspective (3.1.2.1), the latter one, the first recognition option, falls within human perspective. The latter option does neither principally exclude 'religious language' (cf., Murphy, 1996:36) of 'God's creation' nor mention the beyond-human things keeping the limit of Kantian epistemology.

3.2.2.1.2 Syntax of 1:1-3

This creation account in Genesis 1 looks so vivid and, at the same time, complex and subtle (Alter, 1981:21), but indeed it is not a live broadcast. We cannot simply believe that it is God's self-witness of how He created the world. The contents, at least, may possibly be God's witness, but the problem is that we don't know about God's rhetoric. Therefore we need to read the first verses in a new literary way.

Gordon Wenham (1987:11f.) provides a good summary for the possible syntax of the first three verses:

- (1) Verse 1 is a temporal clause subordinate to the main clause in verse 2.

"In the beginning when God created..., the earth was without form..."

- (2) Verse 2 is a temporal clause subordinate to the main clause in verse 3 (verse 2 is a parenthetic comment). "In the beginning when God created... (now the earth was formless) God said..."
- (3) Verse 1 is a main clause, summarizing all the events described in verses 2-31. It is a title to the chapter as a whole, and could be rendered "in the beginning God was the creator of heaven and earth". What being creator of heaven and earth means is then explained in more detail in verses 2-31.
- (4) Verse 1 is a main clause describing the first act of creation. Verses 2 and 3 describe subsequent phases in God's creative activity. This is the traditional view adopted in my (Wenham's) translation.

"Theologically these different translations are of great consequence, for apart from #4, the translations all presuppose the existence of chaotic pre-existent matter before the work of creation began" (Wenham, 1987:11).

Whereas Arthur Custance (1970b) proposes the fifth possible syntax as follows:

- (5) Verse 1 is an independent statement declaring the original creation. Verse 2 is also an independent statement describing the state of the earth after God's judgment upon the creation. Verse 3 starts to describe a re-creation. "*Originally*, God created the heaven and the earth. *But* the earth *had become* a ruin and a desolation; and ...And God said, let it *become* light...."

Arthur Custance proposes a gap between the first two verses based on linguistic evidence (Custance, 1970b:41ff; 1961:1-44; 1958:10-12; also, Pink, 1922:10) introducing three different translations: 'originally', 'but', and 'had become', instead of 'in the beginning', 'and', and 'was'. He proposes a new translation: "Originally, God brought into being and set in perfect order the heavens and the earth. But the earth had become a ruin and desolation and a pall of darkness hung over this scene of disaster. And the Spirit of God moved mightily upon the face of the waters. And God said, 'Let it become light'" (Custance, 1961:26). Though his translation is grammatically not impossible, his reconstitution theory is putting too much on a conjunction. And he also repeats the appeal to the divine. This study will submit its interpretation of verses 1-3 a

bit later.

3.2.2.1.3 God and Yahweh God

The first verse directly introduces 'God' as the Creator of the heavens and the earth, while the following unit uses 'Yahweh God'. For some anti-documentary scholars cited below it looks very original, for others, such as Van Seters (1998:6) and Skinner (1930:xlix), it is very challenging and problematic. Walther Eichrodt (1967:104; cf. 1961:185-186) offers a theological explanation that "the use of the name Elohim gathers all the divine forces into a personal unity, and thus contrasts one absolute Lord of the divine realm with the polytheistic thinking of the heathen cosmogony".

The Documentary Hypothesis points out that Genesis uses different names for God, that is, God in 1:1-2:3, Yahweh God in 2:4-3:23, and Yahweh in 4:1-26, and that it causes a source problem compared to Exodus 6:2-3, "I am Yahweh. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name Yahweh I did not make myself known to them". If by this verse is understood that the name Yahweh was first known to Moses in the Exodus period, the former Yahweh in Genesis should have been written after Moses.

Some anti-documentary scholars have tried to solve the problem of divine names by explaining them semantically, archaeologically, or rhetorically:

- (1) Umberto Cassuto (1967:79) suggests a semantic solution, paraphrasing Exodus 6:3: "I (God) revealed Myself to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in My aspect that finds expression in the name Shaddai, and I made them fruitful and multiplied them and gave them children and children's children, but by the name Yahweh, in My character as expressed by this designation, I was not known to them, that is, it was not given to them to recognize Me as One that fulfils His promises, because the assurance with regard to the possession of the Land, which I had given them, I had not yet fulfilled". Although one of the attributes connected with the Tetragrammaton was fulfilled also in the Patriarchs, yet in the implementation of the meaning of this name God was not known to the Fathers of the nation (Cassuto, 1967:79; similarly Hasel, 1985:22; *contra*, Westermann, 1992:86, criticizes Cassuto for in vain trying to prove his

point). In short, “the variations in the choice of the divine names did not come about accidentally but by design” (Cassuto, 1961:17).

- (2) P. J. Wiseman submits an ‘old script’ solution that the name Yahweh is a Hebrew transliteration of the name of the God of Israel which was probably written in clay tablets either in cuneiform or in a primitive script (Wiseman, 1977:90). Furthermore, unlike primitive time when all people worshipped one God, Moses, living in a polytheistic society, would have felt a need to distinguish the God of Israel from the heathen gods. That’s why Exodus 6:3 mentions the Almighty (*El Shaddai*) and Yahweh. It was the problem that Moses met as a translator while he compiled the early ‘books’ (Wiseman, 1977:92-93). While God is a title, Yahweh is His name (Wiseman, 1977:91). The double name Yahweh God in Genesis 2:4 may show a similarly felt need of Adam’s grandson, Enosh. The second tablet belongs to the time of Enosh (Gen 4:26) for the most probable reason that at that time men began to worship other gods, so that then a distinguishing name became a necessity (Wiseman, 1977:94).
- (3) Duane Garrett (1991:20-21) proposes a rhetoric solution that Exodus 6:3b is not a simple negative statement, but an affirmative rhetorical question. According to him, the documentary theorists have not recognized the ‘common’ ancient rhetoric device of parallelism: the criterion of divine names, the historical and evidential starting point for the Documentary Hypothesis, is without foundation. It is based on misinterpretation, mistranslation, and lack of attention to extra-biblical sources (Garrett, 1991:22).

“Exodus 6:2c-3 appears to be a straightforward assertion that the patriarchs did not know the name Yahweh... But the Hebrew text, as Francis I. Andersen points out, contains a case of noncontiguous parallelism that translators have not recognized, I am Yahweh... and my name is Yahweh. The ‘not’ is therefore assertive in a rhetorical question rather than a simple negative, and it should not be connected to what precedes it. In fact, the whole text is set in a poetic, parallel structure:

- A I am Yahweh.
- B And I made myself known to Abraham...as El Shaddai.
- A’ And my name is Yahweh;
- B’ *Did I not make myself known to them?*

The text does not assert that the patriarchs had never heard of Yahweh

or only knew of El Shaddai, although it does say that God showed them the meaning of his name El Shaddai. El Shaddai is preceded by the *essentiae*, which implies that God filled the name with special significance for them when he made a covenant with them and promised the land of Canaan as their inheritance (v. 4). Now he is going to fill the name Yahweh with significance in the even greater deliverance of the exodus (v. 5). Even so, the text stresses the continuity between the revelation to the patriarchs and the revelation of the exodus rather than any discontinuity”.

It would be better to remember that there is a major group of theologians who try to find the best modified documentary solution (cf., Brueggemann, 1982:14). But at the same time, it needs to be remembered that, even though they are still in a minority position, there are theologians expressing discomfort with the documentary position trying to find the best modified literary solution. For example, Gary Rendsburg (1986:105) writes:

The evidence presented here (*The redaction of Genesis*) points to the following conclusion: there is much more uniformity and much less fragmentation in the book of Genesis than generally assumed. The standard version of Genesis into J, E, and P strands should be discarded. This method of source criticism is a method of an earlier age, predominantly of the 19th century. If new approaches to the text, such as literary criticism of the type advanced here, deem the Documentary Hypothesis unreasonable and invalid, then source critics will have to rethink earlier conclusions and start anew.

As long as they try to find the best modified solution by paying attention to both positions, it is hopeful that a convergent solution would come out.

3.2.2.1.4 Created, made, and other verbs

The verbs used in Genesis 1 need more examination. In this regard John H. Stek (1990) provides word studies with which this study agreeably proceed:

[Regarding ‘create’ (*bara*’),] common usage indicates that when a person is the subject it ordinarily expresses the thought that the subject has conceived

of some new thing, willed to bring it into being, and then produced it. 'Creating' can be inadvertent, as when we say that 'his policies created great confusion in the enterprise', but more commonly 'creating' involves deliberately bringing into being something that had been consciously conceived (Stek, 1990:207).

Since *bara'* (as 'create') occurs in the Old Testament only with God as its subject, it seems to denote specifically (in biblical usage at least) a divine bringing into being. It views an existing reality and declares of it that God has by an incomparably divine act brought it into being... Still the semantic limits of *bara'* seem to be such that it remains silent regarding that aspect of the action, focusing instead of the newness of the object created and the incomparable divine action by which it came into being (Stek, 1990:208).

The words 'created' and 'make' appear combined in a tight syntactical construction. "And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of *creating* that he had *done*" (Gen 2:3). Stek (1990:209) interprets the phrase as follows:

Bara'...la 'asoth. To 'he created' (*bara'*) has been added an infinitival phrase of the verb '*asah* in a construction that expresses further specification. While the precise force of the construction here is disputed, it brings together the two key verbs of the account. The immediate occasion for its use may arise from the presence of the noun *mela'kah*, which, like the English word 'work', can refer either to the *activity* required to produce something (its most common usage), which can be 'ceased', or to the product of the activity, which can be 'created'. In contexts of making something (such as the tabernacle and the temple and their furnishings), these two senses stand side by side (cf., for example, Exod 39:43 and 40:33; see also 1 Kings 7:14, 51; 2 Chr 4:11; 5:1). In Hebrew idiom, however, *mela'kah* is normally joined with the verb '*asah*—one 'does work', as in Genesis 2:2 - And on the seventh day God was finished with all his work (*mela'kah*) which he had done ('*asah*) and on the seventh day he ceased all his work (*mela'kah*) which he had done ('*asah*). Only in Gen 2:3 does (*mela'kah*) occur with *bara'*. Hence the *sense* of the final clause may be more closely captured by paraphrasing it, "for in it God ceased all the work which he had been doing in creating".

Regarding the verbs used in creation accounts, this study suggests that appointing different semantic value to each verb may be one way of differentiating the “virtually synonymous, poetic expressions” (Stek, 1990:211). For example:

- The word *bara'* (create) specifically denotes God's bringing something into being. Its focus is specifically on the fact that the original idea and its end-result have come through God's action. It simply does not mention the process or how the result has come into being (cf., Harland, 1996:91, “when the verb is used there is never any mention of material from which something is created”). It mentions that God has caused the result. This denotation, being almost the same to the traditional meaning, seems to be applied to all verses containing the verb *bara'*. While *bara'* and *'asah* look interchangeable in biblical usage, putting different focus on “end result as the realization of God's idea” to the former and “general handiwork” to the latter may help differentiate them.
- Two creation related verbs (formed and set), by anthropomorphism, may denote God's creating motions which the writer assumed in his literary expression. In other words, their main focus is on depicting God's motion while He acts: say, *yatsar* (formed, Gen 2:8) ‘formed by fingers’ like a potter shaping the pot at the wheel (cf., Isa 29:16; Jer 18:3; Alter, 1981:145); and *kun* (set) ‘set or placed with hands’ like planting or supporting a plant by two hands (cf., Gen 1:17).
- The jussive (third person) forms are descriptions mainly focused on the changes occurring in the commanded subjects after God's command. See the following cases: 1:3 ‘let there be light’, darkness → light; 1:6 ‘let there be expanse’ and ‘let there be separation’, one-water → two-waters; 1:9 ‘let the waters gather’ and ‘let the dry ground appear’, water only → sea and land; 1:11 ‘let the earth produce’, land → floral world; 1:14 ‘let there be lights’ and ‘let them serve as signs’, temporarily invisible → visible; 1:15 ‘let them shine lights’, insensible → sensible; 1:20 ‘let the waters teem’ and ‘let birds fly’, unseen → apparent; and 1:24 ‘let the land produce living creatures’, floral world → eco-system.

Does *bara'* or *'asah* mean creation out of nothing, as traditional creationism has confessed? Russell Maatman (1970:117-118) concludes that the Bible simply does not inform about *creatio ex nihilo*. It cannot be answered by studying the

verbs, for the verbs are interpreted according to presuppositions of the interpreter: "In answer to the question concerning whether or not God created the simplest life from nothing, it must be stated that there is no certain biblical information" (Maatman, 1970:118).

Philip Clayton (1997:20) also writes, "The doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* is not itself taught in Genesis. Now Genesis 1:1 is often taken to imply a creation out of nothing. But the text does not directly require this interpretation, and it is in fact not until much later writings (e.g. 2Macc 7:28) that the doctrine of a creation out of nothing is explicitly stated. Instead, it appears to have been the *cumulative picture of God* as it emerged in the Hebrew Scriptures and as it is reflected in the opening chapters of Genesis that led to the inference that God is so in control of history that he could not be limited by any other principle".

3.2.2.1.5 And the earth

Verse 2 says, "Now (or And) the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters". We find 'empty' standing against 'inhabited' in Isaiah 45:18: "For this is what Yahweh says—he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited—he says: 'I am Yahweh, and there is no other'". Here 'empty' stands opposite to 'inhabited'. Therefore, this study submits that the 'formless and empty' may denote 'yet-unmanned state' of the planet.

This second verse is often interpreted as the description of 'uninhabitable' earth, with the connotation of "barren, desert-like wasteland" (Mathews, 1996:115; Harland, 1996:96, "the earth is being described as an uninhabited and unproductive place"). But it must be noticed that the verse also mentions the deep water and indistinguishable watery atmosphere, 'darkness', and that water is the commonest symbol of life and blessing. Or if it is interpreted as 'original chaos' (cf., Eichrodt, 1967:101-102, 'original watery chaos seems to precede the creation of the universe') or 'chaos come by God's judgment on the former creation' (cf., Custance, 1970b:12), it is to introduce a beyond-human factor, only to make unnecessary problems. By the same reason the capitalized Spirit of God is better translated in another possible literary way, say, 'mighty windstorm' (cf. Speiser, 1964:3 – 'an awesome wind'; Richardson, 1953:48 – 'a

very strong wind'; Vawter, 1977:40 – 'mighty wind'; Von Rad, 1972:49 – "storm of God', i.e., terrible storm").

And the 'darkness' simply denotes that the observer felt no brightness, contrary to Morris's pious conjecture (1976:51): "Elements of matter and molecules of water were present, but not yet energized. The force of gravity was not yet functioning to draw such particles together into a coherent mass with a definite form". It must be noticed that the creation of stars including the sun and the moon is not specifically mentioned in the account in Genesis 1. It just starts with the present earth from the beginning. Therefore, the darkness means not the primitive chaos but something screening the sunrays, say, probably thick clouds.

According to these considerations, this second verse must be translated as follows: "Now the earth looked like an unmanned virgin planet covered by thick clouds and deep waters, and a strong windstorm was whirling over it". Contrary to common interpretation, this short verse reveals how the earth *is* a blessed planet. It doesn't imply a 'total chaos' (cf., Schafran, 1995:92; Wenham, 1987:15) or a primitive earth that had a primitive ocean without life forms (cf., Young, 1977:119), but a blessed planet furnished with living essentials.

Let's imagine a space refugee searching for a new planet. He found the earth at last. And the earth is covered by thick clouds! It means it has atmospheres as well as a vast amount of water vapor, which could turn to rains. It would be amazing to think about the balanced atmospheric pressure. And even the waters! No ice, but plenty of waters! The earth looks covered by deep waters. It implies the optimum temperature for life. What a blessed planet it is! But that's not all. It has windstorms, too. Thanks to its round shape, this planet even self-regulates the temperature differences! No forced convection, but a natural air conditioning system! The refugee cannot stop giving thanks for all that the planet has: 'Oh, this must be heaven!' 'And luckily, it is still night!'

All these remind us of Moses' final blessing on the tribe of Joseph: 'heavenly dew', 'the deep waters beneath the land', 'the best the sun brings forth', 'the finest the moon can yield', 'the choicest gifts of the ancient mountains', 'the fruitfulness of the everlasting hills', and 'the best gifts of the earth and its fullness' (Deut 33:13-16) (cf., Eichrodt, 1967:102, footnote - "blessing of the deep occurs as the source of fertility"). As we often read from the Old Testament,

for the ancient people water is the most precious resource for a normal, peaceful life and fruitfulness of the land.

Provided that it was the description of the original state of the earth recognized by the observer, he should be located deep inside the waters and, of course, in darkness. Russell Maatman (1970:111) again proposes that the appearance of darkness is most important because it shows that the point of view Moses is presenting is that of an observer on the surface of the earth. For, in interplanetary space there is no alternation between light and dark. And the appearance of darkness means that the source of the light was localized. But the darkness seems to need a more 'essential' explanation (Alter, 1981:80, "Whatever is reported, then, can be assumed to be essential to the story"), a really practical explanation than his localized sun. How can we explain it in the context of a new habitat orientation?

Let's ask this question: Why should it be dark and deep in the waters? If we imagine a landing of a galaxy-traveled spaceship, the time should be night. There might have been worries of an explosion, of an environmental catastrophe, or of a possible attack by earthlings. Even if we imagine the first exposure of newly created adults, say, by a superbly developed genetic engineering technology (cf., Schmeling, 1976:102, introduces Erich von Däniken, a Swiss writer, who maintains that the Genesis accounts are in fact the accounts of visitors from outer space who created man in their image), to the new ecosystem, they should be protected from harmful shocks—such as, too strong sunlight, harmful cosmic rays, great sounds, or other injurious electro-magnetic pulses. The written condition of 'in deep waters and darkness' would provide them with the optimum condition of the protected exposure.

In short, we can interpret this "Now the earth..." as the expression of the blessedness and the appropriateness of the new world for further life, with our proposal of new habitat orientation.

3.2.2.2 Six days

A doctrinal study needs more focused examinations, not a running commentary. This study tries not to examine every verse, but only specific points in each day's account.

3.2.2.2.1 Day one

- 1:3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.
1:4 God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness.
1:5 God called the light "day", and the darkness he called "night". And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

Though there still is the debate whether the first day started from the first verse or from the second verse, having treated the general consideration, this study takes the position that the first day of system adjustment (or of orientation for the new inhabitants) starts from the third verse. The account, simply, does not mention the creation of a universe, or the question of origins.

And God said, let there be light

In verse 3 comes the first 'God said', 'Let there be light!' Since verse 2 mentions that the earth is already there, this 'let there be light' cannot mean a new star creation by God's creative *fiat*. Then what can it be? It can mean that the observer could sense the brightness through thick clouds and the deep water, possibly by weather change and by the rotation of the earth. It may also mean that the observer is moving up from the deep to the surface of the waters and senses the brightness of day still in a dim state.

The traditional confession of 'creation by word' presents this verse as the most important textual ground (cf., Von Rad, 1962:142, "the concept of creation by means of the word is to be taken as an interpretation of the *bara'* of verse 1"). However, according to this study, this verse cannot mean a new light creation, regardless of whether it is a spiritual light or a physical light. To identify either this light or the first verse's declaration with the Big Bang is nothing but to put another extra-biblical idea into the Bible, causing problems rather than solving them. But this verse can be interpreted literally as the observer's recognition of brightness.

And God separated and called

The first written separation is the light from the darkness in verse 4. God called the light 'day', and the darkness 'night'. Why this calling or naming? Is it for God? Or, is it for man? Is it a rhetorical anthropomorphism mentioning God's habit of calling (cf., Ps 147:4 – God calls the stars each by name)? Then, it is again going into the realm of 'divine'. If it is for man as Wiseman argues (1977:138), and it must be an instruction for them, then why that instruction? Is it for the revelation of God's real creative acts which had happened long past, for immeasurable ages? And were all those instructions to give the information that God is God?

If it were an educational revelation, it should have a practical educational goal for the receivers. What would be that goal for them? Just to let them know that God is the Creator? Had it not been so evident for them that God is God? Or, did God have a duty to teach them about His acts, at least, about the most important ones (not only for them but also for their far future descendants)? Isn't it too audacious for us to insist that God should let us know about what He had done regarding this world? God speaks, and that is enough. G. E. Wright (1952:94) points out that the Bible does not seek to explain the situation as much as it simply attempts to describe it in narrative form.

Then what would be the goal of this instruction? Was it to make the first of mankind ready for the opening of the salvation history? Ariarajah (1999:115) points out, "In much of Protestant theology creation just sets the stage or becomes no more than a prelude to the 'fall' and the consequent unfolding of the drama of salvation". Besides its other worldly presumption, the salvation history hypothesis must handle another problem that demands a beyond-human religious attitude.

If it were the orientation for new inhabitants, however, one can easily construe the possible goal; say, the naming could be the observer's first recognition of the new ecosystem. In addition to that, lingual capability should be ascribed as an innate ability of human beings and the first work assigned to Adam was naming (Gen 2:19). D. F. M. Strauss (1987:20-23) writes that the typical human lingual ability is dependent on specific anatomical conditions absent in the anthropoids, and all speech-related organs, the lungs, larynx, mouth cavity,

palate, teeth, lips and nose cavity etc. cooperate in human speech production. "This highly developed and subtle cooperation, especially of three organs so heterogeneous in character as the mouth, the larynx and the brain integrated in the production of speech sounds, makes it rather difficult, if not hopeless, to provide us with an evolutionistic causal explanation of this astonishing phenomenon" (Strauss, 1987:23).

But how can 'God called' (v. 5) ever change to mean 'human recognized'? This human recognition does not and cannot ignore the originally written 'God called'. The text shouldn't be altered. Nevertheless, if the verse should be understood just as it is written, the meaning of the text would be lost in ancient religious language. Ancient people didn't have a highly differentiated view as modern literary criticism does, for it wasn't necessary for them.

This study suggests that, while the implied observer started to see and recognize his environment, he immediately identified it as his God's handiwork. Though at this stage which God he knew is not clear, the observer's concept of God and his environmental recognition would grow together along with the story unfolding. Therefore, the 'God separated... and called' can be interpreted as "the observer recognized that his God has separated the light from the darkness and they each had a name".

And there was evening and there was morning

"And there was evening and there was morning—first day." If Wiseman (1977:135) correctly points out that the 'evening and morning' phrase denotes the rest time for human beings, this specific expression offers the clue that the creation account was structured according to human physical need, since God doesn't need a rest. The phrase in verse 5, then, denotes the situation that the first day's adjustment has been completed and the second day's instruction session is about to start.

Quite contrary to Wiseman's conclusion, some scholars propose an opposite conclusion: Meredith Kline (1996:10) says that "the seventh day has to do altogether with God, with the upper register"; Brueggemann (1982: 37), 'an aesthetic God rest'. Similarly, Von Rad (1962:148; cf., 1933:101-102) thinks of a hidden relationship which becomes clear in the future: "To talk of an 'institution'

of the Sabbath would be a complete misapprehension of the passage. For there is no word here of this rest being imposed on man or assigned to him. And yet on the other hand what is spoken of is much more than just something affecting only God himself: even here it possesses a hidden relationship to the world and man which will, though of course only later, become completely clear”.

Kline believes that the creation week is to be understood figuratively, not literally, asserting that that is the conclusion demanded by the biblical evidence. But his pre-understanding of Sabbath (Kline, 1996:11 – ‘consummation-directed eschatological movement’) led him to the conclusion of ‘heavenly week of creation’:

The divine rest which characterizes the seventh day is the reign of the finisher of creation, enthroned in the invisible heavens in the midst of the angels. It is precisely the temporary exclusion of man from this heavenly Sabbath of God that gives rise to the two-register cosmological order. At the Consummation, God’s people will enter his royal rest, the seventh day of creation (Heb 4:4, 9, 10), but until then that seventh creation day does not belong to the lower register world of human solar-day experience. It is heaven time, not earth time, not time measured by astronomical signs (Kline, 1996:10).

Kline’s conclusion is based on the hope of the heavenly consummation. It is an example of how eschatology gives direction to theology. Unfortunately, his future hope is methodologically rejected by the presentist eschatology of this study. This study is rather in favor of Wiseman’s conclusion.

Alan Hayward (1995:170) proposes a parenthesis theory, which demands insertion of some parentheses into the first day’s account: “And God said, ‘Let there be light.’ (*And there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.*) And there was evening and there was morning, one day”. His theory, a mixture of assumptions, has adopted a modern literary device (of parenthesis) to prove traditional creationism, which believes the account as the real report about God’s creation.

Regarding this phrase, Robert Alter (1981:142) points out the rhythmic

repetition: "Everything is numerically ordered; creation proceeds through a rhythmic process of incremental repetition; each day begins with God's world-making utterance ('And God said') and ends with the formal refrain, 'It was evening and it was morning', preceded in five instances by still another refrain, 'And God saw that it was good'. P's narrative emphasizes both orderly sequence and a kind of vertical perspective, from God above all things down to the world He is creating".

Compared to other days, the first day's job seems too little. It was just for light! A whole day has passed just for the distinction between light and darkness. To what can we compare it, in modern terms? Let's imagine the case of a long sleep of space travelers. Thanks to the long sleep, all their organs would be in a weak state; especially their eyes would be probably vulnerable to naked sunrays. In that case, the whole day's exposure to dim light in watery surrounding would offer sufficient stimulation for awakening and alerting them to be prepared for further stimulations. It should be weak and soft. Then comes the first distinction of light from darkness. It was the beginning of their education about the new planetary surroundings.

In computer terms, we can say that the distinction of light and darkness can be compared to the basic binary unit of 'on and off'. Before the use of a new computer, provided it has all the normally functioning parts—such as, sufficiently quick working Central Processing Unit (CPU, compared to the human brain), Random Access Memory (RAM, auxiliary brain), hard disk (data storage), and the input and output devices (keyboard, mouse, scanner, video camera, barcode sensor, monitor, speaker, printer etc., compared to human sense organs, such as eyes, nose, mouth, ears, skin, hands, and feet)—the system linking process or the installation of an operating system (OS), which functions cooperatively with the already existent outside system (Network, compared to the ecosystem of nature), should be first completed. In that sense, a day's distinction between light and darkness as mental preparation for the further recognition is compared to the binary digit formatting of the hard disk, which normally takes a relatively long time. It is the beginning of adjustment of the new computer to the existing network. Then further necessary program installation can come. It is like teaching the computer the most basic instruction for further education before it can carry out its destined job. It was the first education for the newcomer, who was in the state of *tabula rasa* with regard to

the new ecosystem.

3.2.2.2.2 Day two

- 1:6 And God said, “Let there be expanse between the waters to separate water from water”.
- 1:7 So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so.
- 1:8 God called the expanse, “sky”. And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

And God said, let there be an expanse...and let it be separation

Maatman (1970:112), according to his partly geologic age presumption, postulates that the early earth atmosphere was largely carbon dioxide, and the CO₂ blanket would have kept the earth warmer on the first day and the first part of the second day than it is now. But his problem is that the ‘evening and morning’ formula doesn’t work with his geologic ages.

The second day is for the sky formation. Does the verse describe that the sky has been formed by God’s act, or that the implied observer has come to recognize the sky? It is noticeable that the point of view has changed: yesterday he was in deep waters, now he comes up to the surface of the waters. Traditional creationism confesses that the sky is created by the divine *fiat* of dividing waters. But the verse uses two jussive forms, ‘let there be’, not ‘create’. According to general consideration (3.2.2.1.3), the third person command verbs are descriptions mainly focused on the changes occurring to the commanded subjects. Thus it seems to fit more into the observer’s recognition than ‘divine’ *fiat*. Then it simply denotes the observer’s recognition of the result of weather change.

Remembering that ‘the surface of the deep waters’ in verse 2 implies space, that is, a yet-undistinguishable expanse from the waters, this expanse in verse 6 should mean the observer’s recognition of the expanse, which was, probably thanks to thick clouds, unrecognized on the first day. The first day was a very cloudy day completely packed with water vapor. But the weather conditions changed on the second day so that the implied observer could see the

separation of still thick cloudy sky from the waters below. Until the fourth day, the weather had been persistently cloudy.

3.2.2.2.3 Day three and day four

- 1:9 And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear". And it was so.
- 1:10 God called the dry ground "land", and the gathered waters he called "seas". And God saw that it was good.
- 1:11 Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds". And it was so.
- 1:12 The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to its kinds. And God saw it was good.
- 1:13 And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.
- 1:14 And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years,
- 1:15 and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth". And it was so.
- 1:16 God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars.
- 1:17 God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth,
- 1:18 to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good.
- 1:19 And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

Sea-lake?

According to the account of the third and the fourth days, the observer moves as if he rides on a swift flying machine. His viewpoint changes from the surface of the deep waters, through into the air, on to the dry land, probably by the sea. Since the *yamim* in verse 10 is an observable body of water gathered to one place ('let the water under the sky be gathered to one place'), this viewpoint change may mean that the observer could see a big 'sea-like lake' from the top of a high mountain near the 'sea'. Later in 1Kings 7:23 we see that the same word 'sea' is used with definite article: "Hiram made the Sea of case metal, circular in shape, measuring ten cubits from rim to rim and five cubits high". The

Sea was a big circular water basin. That 'the sea' has a circular shape and is of relatively small size makes us speculate whether the first sea in Genesis 1 also had similar features, and if it did, then, it means that the sea was a local lake.

Mediterranean flood?

Related to this local lake speculation, Glenn Morton (1997:238-251) suggests a Mediterranean Flood model:

In 1961, when the first seismic data were collected in the Mediterranean Sea, mysterious salt domes were discovered on the sea floor. The mystery that those domes present to the geo-scientist is that there is no known manner in which 6,500 to 10,000 feet of salt can be deposited on the floor of a deep ocean basin (244). Further researches found that the basin has the juxtaposition of shallow-water deposit overlaid by a deep-water deposit. Those are only understandable if an empty and desiccated Mediterranean basin is suddenly, catastrophically refilled by the opening of the Gibraltar dam. Geologically speaking, one day the sea floor was desert; the next, it was deep ocean (245).

If the Strait of Gibraltar were to be dammed up today, the Mediterranean would evaporate in approximately 1,000 to 4,000 years. This is prevented only by the continued influx of new Atlantic waters, since more water is lost by evaporation than is replenished by river flow. Small basins with brine lakes would be all that would remain in a Mediterranean basin if the Gibraltar were closed. The continents of Africa, Europe, and Asia would appear as a surrounding ring of 10,000-foot-tall mountains (245).

Does Genesis really teach a universal flood (241)? In Genesis 2:5,6 we read that there was no rain (238). This is an odd state of affairs, because spherical earth, due to the movement of the air, causes lots of rain (239). But the desiccated basin theory can offer an explanation. The lack of rain of the land would be understandable, since the major source of water for rainfall in the Mediterranean region is the Mediterranean Sea itself and the basin would be on the lee side of huge mountains in all directions (245).

Consider the first description of Eden with this model, the relative location of 'in the east' (Gen 2:8) can mean the eastern Mediterranean basin. The characteristics of a desiccated eastern Mediterranean basin seem to match those described in Genesis (246). This model can easily provide a possible

mechanism for forty days of rain, which other models could not plausibly present: "As the water rushed in through Gibraltar, the first phenomenon would be air-rising, as it was replaced by the fluid filling the basin. Then the moisture-absorbed air, through condensation by adiabatic cooling, would again fall down as rain, and those processes lasted for forty days" (248).

Morton's Mediterranean basin hypothesis is interesting not only in a literary perspective but also in a scientific perspective, considering the lowest interest level of theological understanding of creation.

Visionary report?

To think more about the viewpoint change, it may imply that the observer was taken into the air or to some high place (Ezek 40:2) to see the vision, like Ezekiel was lifted up between earth and heaven, by the hand of *Adonai* Yahweh (Ezek 8:3, or by the Spirit) by the hair of his head. Ezekiel saw a vision of the life giving river coming out from the temple (Ezek 47 parallel to Rev 22), which reminds of the deep water (Gen 1:2): "He measured off another thousand, but now it was a river that I could not cross, because the water had risen and was deep enough to swim in—a river that no one could cross" (Ezek 47:5). Like Ezekiel, the observer might have watched in a vision the recession of waters from the land (separation of the land from the seas; cf., Norman Habel, 2000:41, proposes a literary interpretation that a personified Earth is 'revealed', not 'appeared', according to his Geophany-model which sees Earth as a central character or subject of the account) and the local floras growing on the land in great variety.

Then the next day he could look up into the sky and see the glaring sun during the day, the shining moon and glimmering stars at night. He could even recognize some moving patterns between the stars, as well as between the sun and the moon, while gazing at them. It might not be for one day's gazing to get the intuition of seasonal signs (verse 14). It might be an inserted contemplation about the significance of the celestial bodies long after the first recognition of them. Or it might be an expression of the advanced knowledge of the new inhabitants if they were intergalactic travelers.

Whatever it may be, literarily speaking, it seems possible to understand this

viewpoint change in relation with the observer's thankful recognition of the blessedness of the given world. "The creation narrative is a statement about the blessing God has ordained into the processes of human life" (Brueggemann, 1982:36).

3.2.2.2.5 Day five

1:20 And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky".

1:21 So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

1:22 God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth".

1:23 And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

God created and blessed

The verbs 'created' and 'blessed' are used specifically for living creatures in this day's account. But the blessing is given to animals! Animals can be fruitful and increase in number only if there are optimum reproduction conditions. It means that there should be much more affluent minerals and inorganic matters for these conditions. Is the blessing a synecdoche, in which all these prerequisite conditions are included? Or does the blessing put a special focus on animal life, taking the abundance of floral life for granted? Both are possible interpretations. Then, how about the observer's recognition?

According to the proposal, the blessing is also an expression of the observer's religious recognition regarding the new blessed world. When he saw the great variety of the earthly fauna, he would have immediately related it to God's blessing. 'Though I don't know what happened to them in the past, whatever it may be, these great varieties of fauna should be the result of a blessing of my God!' It is a thankful appreciation for another important factor (other living creatures) for keeping human life on the new planet. And we notice that the blessing is aiming for a long future life on earth. The great variety and abundance of both floral and faunal life is a guarantee warranting that the earthly life can last very long. And that guarantee is the same to the blessing of

mankind (1:28).

3.2.2.2.6 THE sixth day

- 1:24 And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind”. And it was so.
- 1:25 God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.
- 1:26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground”.
- 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
- 1:28 God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground”.
- 1:29 Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.
- 1:30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food”. And it was so.
- 1:31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—THE sixth day.

Let us... make them rule over the living creatures

If the first person plural form *na'aseh* ('let us make') in verse 26 denotes divine plurality, the third person singular *wyyibra'* ('and he created') for the same God used in the following verse may cause a conceptual confusion. And if the Spirit of God in verse 2 means the third person of the Trinity, two divine names are introduced in Genesis 1, that is, *'elohim* (God) and *ruach 'elohim* (the Spirit of God). As long as it is related to the 'divine' nature, the answer must be found either in philosophy or in theology. But this study wants to find a literary answer even to this problem.

Wenham (1987:28) again offers a good summary of historical interpretation of 'let us':

- (1) Divine announcement to the heavenly court (traditional Jewish position).
- (2) Adumbration of the Trinity (traditional Christian position).
- (3) Dislocated polytheism (some literary position).
- (4) 'Honorific plural' is later rejected by lack of 'we' majesty verb.
- (5) Plural of self-deliberation or plural of self-encouragement, though there are rare parallels.
- (6) Plurality within the Godhead.

Among them, Wenham (1987:28) chooses the first option for the following reason:

The Old Testament nowhere else compares man to the angels, nor suggests angelic cooperation in the work of creation. But when angels do appear in the Old Testament they are frequently described as men (e.g., Gen 18:2). And in fact the use of the singular verb 'create' in 1:27 does, in fact, suggest that God worked alone in the creation of mankind. 'Let us create man' should therefore be regarded as a divine announcement to the heavenly court, drawing the angelic host's attention to the masterstroke of creation, man. As Job 38:4, 7 put it – "When I laid the foundation of the earth...all the sons of God shouted for joy" (cf. Luke 2:13-14).

Von Rad (1962:145) explains this 'let us' as 'angels' in relation with Psalm 8:5 ("You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings"), "in his resolve Yahweh associates himself with his heavenly court, and in so doing at the same time hides himself in their plurality". And interestingly, he points out that Ezekiel 1:26 is of particular importance to the 'likeness' (Von Rad, 1962:145-146) between man and Elohim: "The light-phenomenon of the 'glory of God' clearly displays human contours. It has been rightly said that Ezekiel 1:26 is the theological prelude to the *locus classicus* for the *imago* doctrine in Genesis 1:26".

A chemist's Genesis evolution hypothesis/ But how can we interpret this 'let us' in relation with recognition of the observer? For a pro-evolutionary example, Raymond Zimmer (1996:17-24) proposes a chemist's literary view of 'Genesis evolution' that the creation days well fit into the evolutionary epochs. Specifically

each verse of the account of human creation (1:26-30) appears as an allusion relating the importance of the corresponding epoch to humanity:

- v. 26 – the ‘intention of man’ and early hominid evolution – ‘let us’ means ‘human-like behavior’ and ‘dominion’ means ‘meat eating’;
- v. 27 – the creation of man and Late hominid evolution – the image resembles expressions of spirituality found in Upper Paleolithic art;
- v. 28 – the blessing and the Late Paleolithic – the blessing alludes territorial expansion, population growth, material advance, and an emphasis on hunting which belong to the Late Paleolithic;
- v. 29 – the giving of plants to humans and the Epipaleolithic/Archaic Neolithic – ‘plant food’ refers the ‘dependence more on plants for food’, which is the feature of the last episode of glaciation; and
- v. 30 – the giving of plants to animals and the Developed Neolithic – ‘giving of plants to animals’ alludes advances in farming and stock raising during the Developed Neolithic era of the first Sumerian civilization.

His assumption is so novel that he compares Genesis 1:26-30 to current scientific ideas and data concerning human evolution.

Writer's imagination? On the other hand, if the ‘let us’ were a divine announcement to the ‘literal’ heavenly court, as Wenham and Von Rad propose, it would be also possible for us to assume a case of an ‘imaginary’ heavenly court, like the scene in Job 1:6: that is, the writer of Genesis 1 could compose the text through his creative imagination. Then we should try to interpret the visualization of God and angels as the imagination of the writer, and find an answer to this question again: What could have caused the writer to imagine the heavenly court? Did he see people of great variety, looking holy and majestic?

Let's imagine that the writer could see, whether in a dream or in a hopeful vision, an innumerable great multitude of white robes (righteous people, like John saw in Rev 7:9) praising his God in a dazzling, jeweled city (Rev 21, the jewels are definitely not for vanity, but to symbolize the ‘high culture’ of the city) and that he could have got to think that his God must be majestic, creative and resourceful. Then this ‘let us make’ would be an ancient prophet's doxology giving thanks to his God for letting them live on the blessed new world.

Hugh White (1991:111) writes about the narrative of Abram's calling (Gen 12:1-3): "Abraham is presented from the outset as a character who is opened toward and shaped by a word-event within his 'inner' world", because no other words in the text explain the motive of his migration than God's order. Abraham could obey God's order without hearing any objective content of promise but only the promise of future. He also points out that abrupt appearance of God sayings (Gen 1:1; 12:1 etc.) is one of the most anomalous, puzzling, and even mysterious features of the book of Genesis (White, 1991:3).

Furthermore, the Bible doesn't use modern parentheses so that we often read the narrator's saying in the middle of God's saying (e.g., Exod 23:17 in the context of 20:22-23:33). Alan Hayward (1995:169-170) applied parentheses to the creation account. From these we possibly speculate that 'Abraham had seen a startling vision' ('the God of glory appeared to Abraham and said' Act 7:2,3) 'and later wrote it down, probably in his words, as did the writer of Genesis 1'.

God created mankind...male and female he created them

This passage reminds us of an androgynous (hermaphrodite) being. To speculate in a more genetic engineering way, the first of mankind might be compared to Siamese twins joined by the sides (Gen 2:21, 22 – "Yahweh God took part of the man's side...then made a woman from the part He had taken out of the man"). It seems that, for a while until God separated them, only the man part was active (Adam), the woman part was dormant, and Adam could not recognize the real identity of his 'woman-to-be' part. It might have been the most economic way of creating human beings, in a sense, to create them both at the same time. It is a rudimentary speculation but, we must admit, at the same time the parallel verses 2:21-23 easily remind us of a medical operation. "Yahweh God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping..." (Gen 2:21) is best understood by us as the anesthesia for an operation. Adam's exclamation, "this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman', for she was taken out of man" (Gen 2:23), looks very understandable from this perspective.

Livestock and wild animals?

According to our knowledge of biological taxonomy, we can easily follow the classes of water living creatures, birds, the great creatures of the sea, every living and moving thing, every winged bird. But the separation between 'livestock' and 'wild animals' in Genesis 1:24-25, unlike to other universal terms, seems to have a special connotation of 'human utility'. Gesenius (1979:105) defines this 'livestock' (*behema*) as 'domestic animals or cattle' opposed to 'wild animals' (*chayyat ha'arets*) used in Genesis 1:24. Paul Seely (1997:48) writes about the development of taxonomical recognition:

Anthropologists have found that when it comes to classifying animals, proto-scientific peoples by and large begin with three basic life-forms at the top of their taxonomy: FISH, BIRD, and SNAKE. After that they may develop WUG (worm + bug) and MAMMAL. C. H. Brown confirms that children c. 3 to 5 years of age recognize only the broad life-forms FISH and SNAKE, from c. 5 to 7 years of age they add BIRD, then add WUG and after that c. age 8, MAMMAL.

According to Zimmer (1996:23) the advances in farming and stock raising techniques belonged to the Developed Neolithic period. The writer of Genesis 1 classifies the land animals by a utilitarian human perspective, from the very beginning. And this human perspective can be applied to the whole chapter, which well supports the hypothesis that an experienced human observer wrote the first chapter of Genesis after long meditation about the world and nature. Finegan (1962:17) writes, "The biblical account of creation is the result of an illumination which came to the Israelites as they pondered the ultimate questions of life". Similarly, Von Rad (1972:47) writes, "it contains the essence of Priestly knowledge in a most concentrated form. It was not 'written' once upon a time; but, rather, it is doctrine that has been carefully enriched over centuries by very slow growth".

Size of man

Custance (1970a:29) introduces an interesting physical harmony between human body size and the earth, citing F. W. Went's study report of American Scientist (1968) titled, "The Size of Man":

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Interestingly enough, Went showed how even many of the cultural aspects of man's technology, such as the making and using of books, are all influenced by the size of man's body, and contrary to what one might suppose, it is surprisingly difficult to construct a workable 'world' to any other proportions...even in the final minimum size of typefaces for printing. Even the plants (especially grains) which man makes use of for food have a size which is appropriate to his size and probably could not be made much larger to suit a creature fashioned on a larger scale. Thus man is small enough to be able to stand erect as a habit of life. Because of the size of the earth and its limited gravitational forces his two legs will nicely carry the weight of his body. Yet he is large enough to handle fire and to extract from the environment substances necessary to create a civilization which permits him to have dominion over the earth. His size is not an indifferent consideration.

To conclude, we do freely guess about the source of information written in the text. It may be either that God had inscribed the idea directly into the writer's heart (cf., Jer 31:33; *contra*, James Barr, 1984:75) or that the Holy Spirit had organically inspired him. There cannot be any obstacle in principle in believing the divine origin of the account, as long as we understand it in its theological and rhetoric context. Eichrodt (1956:28ff. and 35ff.), for example, suggests the theological significance of the belief in the Creator both as a revelation of man's dependence and dignity and as the basis of social thought. Also Von Rad (1962:4, 50) writes that "everything is shaped by faith" and "even the simplest fusion of two originally independent units of tradition was in itself already a process of theological interpretation". In short, the text of Genesis has no problem with theological perspective. The problem lies with us. We usually infuse our ideas into the Bible trying to find some implications about modern interests to which the account doesn't refer (Caird, 1980:80).

For example, those speculations—such as the origin of the universe, the hypothetical documentary redaction processes, the origin of the existentialist alienation which was supposedly caused by the uncritically defined original sin (cf., Young, 1995:380), the male chauvinist scheme of ancient society, or human genetic engineering—are not the issues that Genesis has interests in. We must differentiate those extra-biblical modern interests from primary biblical issues—

such as, a clean conscience (Heb 9:14; 1Pet 3:16, 21), a life of integrity (Job 1:1; Gen 18:19), godly offspring (Mal 2:15), a just and peaceful society (Amos 5:24), and a great and powerful nation as the channel of world blessing (Gen 18:18). It would be better for us to treat those modern interests as 'secondary' or 'derivative', which should not be confessed as the basic teachings of the Bible.

3.2.3 Summary of new habitat orientation

The whole week is for education: mostly dividing and naming, thus, introducing the new ecosystem. The first of 'mankind', Adam (cf., Gen 1:27 and 6:1), appears as an adult. Other creatures appear as simply existing there. The question of how they come to exist is not the interest of the account. It just narrates the story, which has its own 'story' value (cf., Moore, 1999:221-222), as if there were only Adam and God. Nevertheless, one clear thing is that the creation account introduces us to the blessed condition of the earth when the implied observer saw it.

All these imply that the account of Genesis 1 is written with the focus on the new habitat orientation. The whole story provides the first of mankind with information about this ecosystem and the crucial code of behaviour to which he properly responds to the ecosystem. In other words, it introduces Adam to the existent habitat of celestial fine-tuning (stars, planets and the moon), of terrestrial living space (atmospheres, sea and land), of the delicate environmental changes (the sun, the moon, and the stars – maybe even including the precessional stars), and of an organic network of life (plants and animals), with the instruction about the principle of the everlasting life (the gospel of creation – be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish and the birds and over every living creature, 'with thoughtful considerations'!) (Cf., Gen 2:15 'take care of it'. Jee, 2002:104).

It would be better to remember that all these instructions are specially given to human beings in human language (cf., Schafran, 1995:100-101, an 'egalitarian' status of mankind with the rest of the natural world) so that they can live on this earth, from that time on and hopefully in eternity. Van Rad (1962:150) writes,

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"The difference between P and J is very great. Both, however, are at one in understanding creation as effected strictly for man's sake, with him as its center and objective". Also Walter Brueggemann (1982:12) points out, "The theologians of Israel, face the basic mystery of life upon which all social well-being depends. But they handle and utilize them in a peculiarly theological way". The Bible, thus, the creation account, is given for our this-earthly life.

Therefore we should not expect that the Bible would give 'divine', 'beyond-human' information about whatever we don't know yet. The questions about spiritual things (angels and evil spirits), natural things (exotic animals, insects and plants), past things (fossils), future things (the intermediate Messianic Kingdom and the Consummation at Heaven), astronomical things (galaxy formation), or sci-fi things (extra-terrestrial beings) may satisfy our modern curiosities. But they are not the interests of the Bible.

In conclusion, this study proposes that the creation account of Genesis 1 was the first and most important *orientation for the new inhabitants*, who were destined to develop their knowledge 'further'—hopefully, 'everlastingly'—from it. But this proposal says nothing about the question, 'By whom, and to whom is the orientation given?' It would be better for us to leave it as a 'beyond-human' question, until substantial new data is gathered or until a new technique, which can reveal more information from old data, is developed.

The next chapter discusses the theological implications of this proposal.

CHAPTER 4

THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

This chapter discusses the theological implications of the acquired presentist understanding of creation in relation with eschatology, with society and culture, with philosophy and worldview, and with ethics. This discussion on theological implication would offer a broader background upon which the creation and evolution debate as a problem of the relationship between religion and science has to be understood.

According to this study's proposal, this world is the only living ground for us and the creation account of Genesis 1 describes the blessedness of this earth as the new habitat of mankind. All the words of the Bible are said based on this earthly life. No future perfect, deathless society is expected in the Bible. Normal life on earth is depicted as God's blessing.

The phrases 'Kingdom of God' and the 'Kingdom of Heaven', the word 'Immanuel' (God-with-us), and the sentence "God rules over the whole world", all express the same idea that God is the Creator of the world (cf., Van Wyk, 1988:235, "God heers oor almal. Wel nie altyd op 'n transparante wyse nie, maar tog"). Immanuel is both the nickname and the message of Jesus Christ, which means God rules over us and cares for us, from eternity to eternity. In other words, this world is God's world, God's creation, and we are His children and are always with Him (cf., Luke 15:31, "My son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours"). And the creation account in Genesis 1 shows how our earth is in a blessed state.

4.1 CREATION AND ESCHATOLOGY

We examine first what would imply the new habitat orientation to eschatology, in three antithetic ways: creation or the new creation, this worldly or that worldly, and probability or necessity.

4.1.1 Creation or the new creation

Creation and the new creation are often regarded in ontological relationship. Here we discuss how we can re-interpret the traditional consummation and original sin.

4.1.1.1 Consummation

The most fundamental problem lies in the ultimately 'beyond-human' nature of the traditional creationism. As is seen in the second chapter, almost all modern Christian creationist positions have a common factor: they understand this creation in relation with the new creation, which is traditionally defined as 'super-natural'. This super-natural 'new-creation-dependency' is the basic dilemma that lies at the root of the creation/evolution debate. That is, while the scientific evidence is being discussed solely based on this-worldly phenomena, Christian interpretation of them is being formulated according to the traditional, bi-worldly (both natural and super-natural) scheme.

The 'promised consummation' (cf., Spykman, 1992:40) is the ultimate goal of the futurist eschatological position. For example, Gordon Spykman (1992:109) distinguishes structures *for* creation from structures *of* creation:

In the aftermath of Adam's sin and of redemption in Christ, reformational thought honors the important distinction between structure and direction. Structure refers to the orderliness of creation as it originally was and as God's Word still impinges on it, calling it back to what it is still meant to be and to what it will one day become. Direction refers to creational life as it is now distorted and misdirected through our fall into sin, and as it is now also in principle renewed and redirected to obedience in Christ. The divinely ordained structures *for* creation stand forever. But the structures *of* creation

are fallen in Adam.

By 'the divinely ordained structures *for* creation' he means that the originally structured creation was once realized before the fall on earth and will be more majestically realized in the new creation at the consummation. Thus, the original creation and the new creation have the same structures. Therefore the Reformed understanding of creation, at least, in the perspective of original divine design, must be related to the new creation, which by definition is 'supernatural' in nature.

On the other hand, the theistic evolutionists seem to make the same mistake by appealing to the other 'super-natural' cause, by unconditionally accepting Teilhard de Chardin's speculative 'omega point'. As an example, let's quote some religious passages from John Haught's *God after Darwin* (2000):

The evolutionary picture of nature passing from 'matter' through life to mind readily allows us to discern in its various past phases a perpetual potency for new being. Evolutionary emergence has always borrowed in advance from the future that is coming to birth in it, a future sustaining it in creative tension from 'up ahead' (188).

The beauty and value emergent in the various phases of the evolving universe are not simply epiphanies of an eternally present perfection residing outside of time but also perishable promises of what is to come. And it is in its openness to what is to come that all of the world's past receives continually fresh redemption. Theologically speaking, we are summoned to read all of nature in terms of the future horizon whose enticement we experience most ardently whenever we ourselves indwell the great sacred narratives of hope for the unexpected. Our biblical ancestors' sensitivity to the futurity of being was the product of a way of seeing the world that centuries of world-fleeing mystical spirituality and, more recently mechanistic pessimism have unfortunately blunted. Evolutionary knowledge, however, now provides us with fresh opportunities to recover the ancient hopes afresh—this time perhaps in a grandeur, and more cosmic, version than ever before... There is a sense, of course, in which the pre-Darwinian hierarchy also allows for spiritual adventure in our existence 'here below'. We are, it has often been said, on a momentous journey, an *itinerarium*

mentis ad Deum—guided by the great wisdom traditions—to the divine font of all being (189).

But his 'evolutionary picture from matter to mind', or 'spiritual adventure towards God' could never have been observed by empirical science. It was only speculated by meta-philosophy, which denies the possibility of empirical falsification.

According to this study's proposal, however, the relatedness between this creation and the new creation must not be supernatural. The relatedness is not of ontological nature; it must not be sought from the same design of creations. The new creation is not a supernatural, other worldly heaven, but a virtually assumed society which *may* result in people's returning to God's life principle manifested in the original blessing of Genesis 1:28.

4.1.1.2 Original sin and total depravity

Related to this new creation is the concept of original sin and its long-lasting consequences. The fundamentalism has argued that the five fundamental doctrines are the essence of Christian teaching. Among them is the doctrine of total depravity. It is emphasized along with the significance of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. The logic is that since the divine Son should die to save mankind from their sin, the sin would be very offensive to God by nature (cf., Eichrodt, 1967:380, "sin in the proper sense...an unconditional Ought is being contravened"). Thus the redemption needs something seriously bad and that bad thing is defined as 'sin'. But the problem is that the ordinary readers of the Bible could find no such bad thing from the fall narrative. So the theologians might have rationalized, 'though the original sin looks not all that offensive, it should be so offensive that it demanded the divine Son's life for expiation; the first sin must have been very offensive in a mysterious way, or in God's sight, which we can't appreciate'. It seems that they aren't concerned about the idea that God could forbid Adam and Eve to eat the fruit for some other purpose or even with humour.

The doctrine of total depravity has been too much emphasized because we don't know God's real purpose yet. But according to this study's proposal, that doctrine must not be understood as an ontological doctrine but as a literary, for

example a poetical, statement. The reformed scheme of creation-fall-redemption-consummation puts too much weight on Adam's sin. It is being interpreted as if the first mankind's sin had such a pervasive influence that even God could not nullify its consequences in a short time. While the creation took a week's time and the fall probably took one day, the redemption takes the whole history! And the first sin is not one of the important issues of the Bible. Von Rad (1962:147) writes, "Certainly, the story of the Fall tells of grave disturbances in the creaturely nature of man. But as to the way in which these affected the image of God in man, the Old Testament has nothing explicit to say".

A Catholic scientist and process theologian J. Korsmeyer (1998) points out that the Latin mistranslation of 'in whom' in Romans 5:12 is the origin of the doctrine of the original sin:

Adam's story is hardly mentioned anywhere else in the First Testament. There is hardly any mention of him in the Prophets. What is even more striking is that there is no mention of Adam's sin in the Gospels. As historian of original sin Henri Roudet, S. J. noted, obviously the evangelic doctrine of the redemption is not based primarily upon the need to make reparation for Adam's sin... It is in Paul that we find the seeds of the Christian doctrine of original sin from Romans 5. Paul draws conclusions that are not in Genesis, and his exposition is quite brief, but it is clear that he felt that to be human was to be corrupted by sin, and that even creation itself is subject to bondage and decay (Rom 8:19-22) (24).

The Latin translation of Romans 5:12 that was current in the Church for more than a thousand years was faulty, and this may have made it easier for some Church Fathers to assimilate Paul's conclusions and move toward the later concept of original sin. It stated, 'through one man sin entered into the world and through sin death, and thus death has passed unto all men *in whom* all have sinned'. The Latin *in quo* (in whom) is a mistranslation of the Greek ἐφ' ᾧ, which means 'since' or 'because', so that Paul's phrase 'in whom all have sinned' should have been read, 'because all have sinned'. It was Romans 5:12 that Augustine quoted over and over in his arguments to support the concept of original sin. One should not make too much of this error, however, since Romans 5:19 still says that 'by one man's obedience the many were made sinners', which was Augustine's point. [But my point is that] in the first centuries, redemption was the fundamental assertion, rather

than original sin (25).

Luther called on Augustine for support of his position that humanity had totally lost its free will, but it seems that in this matter he misread Augustine... Calvin followed Luther in his view of total depravity. For the Reformers, original sin is not removed by baptism; rather baptism is a sign that complete remission has been made for this sin by Christ, both of the guilt that should have been imputed to us, and the punishment that we all deserve (42).

[In conclusion,] in the light of what scientists can tell us about human origins, modern Catholic biblical scholars recognize that the origin stories in Genesis 1-11 are not meant to be understood as historical fact (120).

Therefore, we need not take as literal truth that human beings began their existence in a paradise, and were endowed with beyond human capabilities of knowledge and bodily control, and were without suffering and death. And, most important of all, one needs not conclude that there was an offense committed by the first human beings so horrible that the justice of God demanded that henceforth they and their descendants be punished with suffering and death, and declared guilty of eternal damnation. The nature of the universe was not changed as a result of this fall, and physical evil was not henceforth inflicted by God upon the earth as punishment. Original sin was not some primal crime (121).

If it is the case, then, how can we interpret the fall narrative in another literary way? Viewed from an educational perspective, the fall should have had something to do with education. God might have intended some lessons for the first couple by the fall. In other words, the writer wanted to relate the fall narrative with some essential lessons for mankind. That lesson might be the noble recognition of human limitedness in exercising his power over the living things. He must follow the life principle if he wants himself and his descendants to live a peaceful long life on earth. Viewed from the perspective of recognition, the fall might have been the writer's dramatic reconstruction of the recognition of self-identity as a man and as a woman. They were at first ignorant about their personal differences, in sex, temper, manner etc. The fall narrative might have shown that they have come to recognize their differences seriously.

4.1.2 This worldly or that worldly

Is this world but a 'provisional' cosmic rehearsal (cf., Beasley-Murray, 1957:79)? How much value must we put to this world? Is this world only sinful, perverse, and self-destructive? Or, is it not so bad but a half-significant, preliminary rehearsal? That negative view cannot find support from Genesis 1. The original creation account in Genesis 1 does not inform us about other worlds. Then, since the other scriptural creation mentioning passages are the recollections of or the derived arguments from the original account, we can say that the whole Bible does not mention other worlds. The creation account only tells us about this world, as if the writer was so focused on the blessed conditions of this world that he could not think about other worlds, that is, the world before this world and the world after this world.

The difference between the writer of Genesis 1 and us is that we modern readers are not so thankful for this wonderful world. Rather, we are cross with the problems of it, even though we cannot see the good part of the 'so-called' problems. We complain, 'If God is so good and mighty, why did he create an evil world?' Whether this world is really evil or not doesn't matter. What matters is that we feel that it is. And we assure that nobody can answer that question, forgetting the immaturity and impatience of the questioning mentality. The main complaint indeed is that we are not gods. The 'existential predicaments' (cf., Peacocke, 1993:249, "The perennial human predicament still manifest today...reflects the perennial insights of the Judeo-Christian tradition into the significance of the Adam-and-Eve myth, of the 'fall' and of 'original sin'") are actually nothing more than the complaint of our not-being God: 'We are mortal, limited in place and time, knowing nothing about tomorrow, and powerless, but there is God who is (known to us as) immortal, ubiquitous, omniscient, and almighty'.

Our problem is that we thank God too little, grumble too much. Whatever we see, we complain about. Problems are not bad as long as there are solutions. They are often necessary for improvement. That the solutions are not given to us easily is never a proper excuse for complaint. The Bible doesn't say that we will eventually be made the happiest eternal gods. We are destined to live once. Here we live and go: "For dust you are and to dust you will return" (Gen 3:19b). A man's life, which has close relation with God, is declared 'eternal', not

because it has in itself something immortal or ontologically super-temporal, but because it is related to God who is, by definition, good and eternal (Jee, 2002:55, 59).

Traditionally, Genesis 1:2 has been interpreted in a very negative way: All words in the verse, 'formless', 'empty', the 'darkness', the 'deep', and the 'waters' have 'dark' nuances, enough to give images of judgment, destruction, devastation, chaos, and disorder. But this study interprets it as the expression of a blessed condition of the earth, for it fits the optimum conditions for life. To appreciate its blessedness, this study suggests, as one of the possible perspectives, the perspective of the space refugee (probably the survivors of the 'nuclear winter', cf., Midgley, 1985:137) searching for an alternative planet.

This proposal argues that, while that worldly Heaven is by definition 'beyond-human' and 'not mentioned in the Bible', this worldly Heaven, the blessed condition of our planet earth is 'within human' and 'amply mentioned in the Bible'.

4.1.3 Probability or necessity

In what way would the new creation come to be realized? *May* it be realized, or *will* it be realized? Is the new creation a probability, or necessity? "Daar is dus 'n begin en daar is 'n einde" (Nürnberg, 1975:212) is a typical pro-necessity position.

Traditionally, the new creation is supposed to come by God's supernatural act (Brown, 1998:100), just like this creation. This world will go on from bad to worse (2 Tim 3:13) until the total destruction becomes inevitable. They say, it is predicted in the New Testaments, for instance, Matthew 24 and 2 Peter 3. "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man" (Matt 24:37-39). "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements

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will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare... That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness" (2Pet 3:10, 12-13). In that perspective many other passages seem to support the pessimistic future. Therefore, they say that the new heaven and earth, the new creation *will* come true.

But considering that the supporting passages come from an 'apocalyptic' context, they cannot be accepted as they are written. At what purpose the sayings are aiming must be first interpreted. Literal application of those apocalyptic sayings to real history is nothing but an ambiguous repetition of the language of the Bible. It is simply pre-Kantian, 'beyond-human' interpretation.

Based on the presumption of the presentist eschatology, this proposal submits that the new creation is not an automatic process destined to take place. Rather it is a hopeful vision for a community, or a peaceful state as a virtual reality that may happen on this earth provided the community be continuously obedient to God's life principle by correcting their bad habits and customs in repentance. Sometimes the conditionality ("if you obey...") is explicitly mentioned in the new creation context, and sometimes it is not. The unconditional saving grace is typically phrased like this: "Israel's stubbornness cannot affect God's redemptive works. 'The zeal of Yahweh Almighty accomplish this' (Isa 9:7; 37:32; 2King 19:31)". But in this case, it would suffice to point out two things: first, what is accomplished by the zeal of Yahweh is not a salvation-historical event but a this worldly historical event (the sparing of the remnant in Jerusalem), and second, because the idea of salvation is understood as something supernatural (spiritual, immaterial, and heavenly), no confutative discussion is possible.

To declare that the Bible has no systematic eschatology (Ridderbos, 1975:535, 562) seems very biblical, but it makes systematic study of biblical eschatology impossible and unbiblical, in principle. However, considering that the kingdom of God is the central element of the preaching of Jesus, if the Bible has no systematic eschatology, Jesus' teaching becomes eventually aimless. This study proposes that the problem of eschatology is not that the Bible doesn't have systematic eschatology, but that many theologians have failed to see this

worldly eschatology which the Bible consistently provides because of their bias of the otherworldly consummation.

4.2 CREATION AND SOCIETY

Next comes the implication of this proposal to a Christian view of society. There seems to be unnecessary divisions between the clergy and the laity, between theology and piety, and between the state and the church.

4.2.1 Clergy and laity

The official division between the clergy and the laity is being regarded as a main feature of the Catholic Church, the teaching church and the learning church. In that system only the clergy have determined, at least, church matters mainly due to the ignorance and the indifference of the laity. While the Reformed church keeps the doctrine of everybody's priesthood, partly because of the lay persons' ignorance about and neglect of theology and church doctrines, partly because of bad memories about the devastating experiences of religious wars, and partly because of the newness of eschatological and protological debates, theology in general has been the exclusive field for the clergy. Those baffling factors have also influenced the Reformed church to divide its congregation actually into two parts, ministers and lay members. The clergy are church officers, the laity soldiers. Nobody can say it overtly, especially in the Reformed church, but it is an open secret.

It is not to deny that practically the clergy have a function of teaching and keeping the tradition. Rather, it is to point out that there are strange fears in our church in expressing personal convictions regarding the ultimate destination of Heaven, and that the clergy must take the responsibility first because it is part of their duty to revise their old traditions for their time. Lay members may think: 'Our pastors assert that the traditional teachings of the church about the last things are still relevant even to our modern times, and to raise questions about the traditional teachings looks too audacious as if rebelling against the authority of the Bible, but certainly these doctrines are very ambiguous. Furthermore,

some pastors frankly confess that eschatology is very difficult to understand, even for them! Whilst they preach that having a sound eschatological viewpoint is so important, they confess that to properly understand the eschatological passages is so difficult. If the experts are not able to clearly understand, how much less can we lay-persons understand eschatology?' So all the church members made a tacit agreement to keep silent on eschatological matters especially on new questions, because they look dangerous. The best and safest way, therefore, is to repeat the language (the exact phrases) of the Bible.

While they are doing so, the ambiguity results in uncontrollable societal problems, for example, sectarian teachings about a definite time schedule of Jesus' return, a hyper-pietistic worldview neglecting some vital global and national duties (cf., Wright, 1995:89-90, the 'evangelical anti-environmentalism'), and scientific irrationalism as seen in the debate on creation and evolution. And now the Christians find themselves standing in the middle of problems. Some even deny that it is their duty to take any responsibility for the problems. For them it is totally a personal matter, thus the sectarians and the fanatics who follow those unsound teachings must bear the consequences of their choice. But some are starting to realize that the church has neglected some of its educational duties related to those societal problems. Most churches have been so hypochondriacal about eschatological issues, teaching only the safe guidelines, that their members are over-protected from the real issues. And it results in a kind of obscurantism.

This study proposes that both the clergy and the laity can find a common ground of a balanced worldview from this presentist creation understanding which asserts that only this world is declared to us as God's world. With that balanced worldview they can start to ponder what would be their proper status and function in this modern society.

4.2.2 Theology and piety

It is common for conservative Christians to say that theology must serve the church. They say, if theology doesn't help Christians to increase the knowledge of the Bible and encourage their godly life, it is useless or harmful. For them

theology is the same as the study of piety. But there *is* a conceptual difference between theology and piety.

Theology in general is being taught in two distinct institutions. On the one hand, when its academic character as part of social science is emphasized, it belongs to the humanity studies of a university along with other social studies, such as philosophy, history, politics, psychology etc. (cf., Hilke, 1976:12). On the other hand, when its practical character as a professional training is emphasized, it belongs to a seminary under the authority of a church synod. In this case the theological training is part of the pre-requisite of being a certified church professional. And the common saying of 'theology as a maidservant of the church' (cf., Schrotenboer, 1976:23, 29) can be applied only to this latter case.

Ideally speaking, theology and the study of piety must go hand in hand. If both theology and the study of piety are wide enough and embrace all areas of Christian life, they would look identical. Practically speaking, however, theology has a different interest from the study of piety. To paraphrase, while theology as a science keeping to the limits of human research cannot speak about 'beyond-human' matters, the study of piety as a professional training to equip the candidates for their church services can speak about 'beyond-human' matters, provided that it is only for inner circulation, like a membership training. In a sense, theology is an objective academic discipline, while the study of piety is a subjective, inner-circular, confidential discipline (cf., Grenz & Olson, 1992:303).

Similarly, Bernard Ramm (1961:99) points out the fundamentalist confusion of subjective certitude and objective certainty that the fundamentalists erroneously seek a rational religious certainty for the history narrated by the Bible. However, the historical dimension of Christian faith can never be known with certainty but only with a high degree of probability.

Therefore, this study proposes that to differentiate theology from the study of piety is the first step to prevent the fundamental conceptual confusion commonly seen in the creation and evolution debate. We must keep to the limit of a scientific way of speaking in order to have reasonable discussions. We should not pretend to be an advocate of God. It is too presumptuous and unnecessary.

4.2.3 Church and state

From the bad experiences of the past

The long history of religious wars and feuds, international and local, seemed to have made the Christians take the separation between the church and the state for granted. But once that separation was established, the church has been disarmed and comes under the control of the state government. Actually, the so-called religious wars were not purely religious but more economic and political wars, which were waged mostly by politicians and world traders. The past misgovernments in the Christianized Western countries resulted not from the rulers being Christians, but rather because they were not Christian (or, not such good) politicians. In other words, because the rulers were bad politicians defying the universal life principle of Genesis 1:28, they lost the sovereignty on their land. Therefore blaming the church for the past misgovernments is a false accusation.

Then, why is the church so silent? Why not protest and restore its proper position? It seems to be not because the church admits that it had misbehaved, but because the church, especially the Protestant church, as a localized national church has become a small, disarmed, and powerless church that cannot participate in the political power-struggle field. Once removed from the field, the church seems to have almost lost its proper status as a moral pressure group affecting the policy determining processes.

Furthermore, most churches by half-focusing on the religious heavenly Kingdom and by half-neglecting worldly affairs, have failed to recognize the primary significance of state politics, against which the Bible incessantly warns. The traditional bi-worldly vision of God's kingdom has indirectly hindered the church from playing an active role in establishing and developing God's world. And it created a kind of existential vacuum within the church. The Early Church could not develop a positive vision of establishing God's world because they were under severe persecution as a sectarian minority (cf. König, 1980:19, 21). Besides, since the New Testament writers had a special life focus of witnessing Jesus as the Christ who was sent by God for them, they seemed to have had no time to expand on the universal life principle of Genesis 1:28.

But now the situation is changed. It is a dilemma that the Christianized rich countries have removed the church from the economical and political arena, lest the church restrain the governments from exercising unbridled monopoly of international mercantilism. For a while the de-Christianized governments of the rich countries looked successful in making their countries richer. But their heedless international exploitations have caused all other nations to join their exploitations. Now we see that the whole world is under the threat of climate cataclysms and of shortage of natural resources. Ironically, even though the richer countries have de-Christianized governments, Christianity still seems to take the blame for world exploitation.

Therefore, now is the time for us Christians to seriously think over the biblical responsibility of taking care of our nation and the world. For the conservative church's coming back to the responsible position, this presentist creation understanding has a crucial importance.

To an indecent individualism?

Furthermore, there is a more serious problem derived from the prescientific epistemology. The above-mentioned Reformed reluctance to the challenge of modern evolutionism (2.2.2.4.4 A misapplied Reformed feature) confines itself not to the intellectual sphere but extends to all other spheres of our life. The partly pessimistic worldview results in undue neglect of the 'secular' world and again the neglect causes many conservative Christians to hesitate in actively participating in world affairs in an escapist attitude.

The classical theology ultimately explains all essential teachings of Christian belief as mystery, because it is the corollary according to its prescientific epistemology. "Ultimately, everything is God's work." Ultimately, we can say that. But if that statement is overused, it works as an easy excuse for our irresponsibility and ignorance. This study believes that the crucial significance of the stewardship in Genesis 1:28 excludes that kind of easy excuse.

A too often appeal to the super-natural cause, the other worldliness, the total depravity of human nature, the unconditional grace, the partly pessimistic worldview, and the loose modern individualism, all these factors are in some complicated ways related to the irresponsible and indifferent 'fideistic'

("requiring modern believers to sacrifice reason and return to the tutelage of religious authority", Grenz & Olson, 1992:75) attitude towards the 'secular' world, which "contributes to subjectivism in contemporary Christianity and therefore diminishes Christianity's influence in the world" (Grenz & Olson, 1992:324, reciting Pannenberg's criticism against Barth's theological method, though Barth is not *the* representative but a famous representative of Reformed theology).

The problem is that in doing so the church seems to have lost its biblical criteria of ethics to properly criticize the indecency of the loose individualism. The professional mercantilism which accompanies the idea of world market looks like threatening even the church: lawyers try to win a case regardless of the client's innocence; doctors do not need to keep to their professional ethics any longer; universities sprinkle degrees only to gather financial support; and seminaries produce unqualified pastors to meet the present needs of local churches and of mission fields. Our church seems to have no positive criteria against these open secrets. It seems that we condone these public crimes or just have no biblically positive criteria to react against it. To confront these ethical problems the first thing that our church needs is to restore the biblical positive worldview.

World government?

Regarding the recent world trends of resurgence of tribalism and of the formation of great economic blocks, we can ask whether the Bible recommends a world government. Jürgen Moltmann (1996:198-199) seems to say yes to this question when he identifies the world government with the transitional Messianic kingdom after the Second Coming:

Yet even Israel's 'life *from* the dead' is not identical with the eschatological 'resurrection of the dead' on the Last Day, but is in line with the resurrection of Christ *from* the dead and the resurrection 'from the dead' of those who live and suffer with Christ (Phil 3:11); it must therefore be understood in a millenarian sense, in the framework of the end-time of history, not eschatologically as the end of history itself. Israel's resurrection and redemption belong to the great process of giving life to this mortal world, and the new creation of all things, a process which has begun with Christ's

resurrection *from* the dead... If the chosen and 'sealed' Christians are joined together with the chosen and 'sealed' Jews, together with them becoming the messianic people of the messianic kingdom, then it is not impossible also to think with J.T. Beck of Jerusalem and the land of Israel: 'the central people' and 'the land of the first fruits'...If this is the End-time kingdom of Christ, then that gospel must be 'the universal *preaching of the kingdom*: a preaching which calls people, no longer to the church but to the kingdom—converts no longer to the Christian faith but to hope for the kingdom'.

And in Genesis 17:6 and 16, God gives Abraham a universal promise, "I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you", "I will bless her (Sarah) and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her". But this promise is not the mention of a world government. In Revelation 13 the Apostle John saw a vision of a beast coming out of the sea which the whole world followed. But here the 'whole world' (cf. Mk 15:33, 'darkness came over the whole land') implies not the world but a local land as far as the writer is seeing it. So this beast is not a world government either.

Considering that the New Testament writers had not been able to travel by spaceships, even though in a vision Ezekiel was lifted up and ancient people might have had experience of short flights by bird-power or by some natural powers, all biblical passages do not show any sign of their recognition of the whole globe, as we now know it. Therefore, it would be safe to conclude that the biblical writers could not mention a global government. Their world was a local, Near East-centered world, not a global world, as Von Rad (1962:152) points out, "It can never be over-emphasized that our current concept of 'world' was foreign to ancient Israel".

Also in the original blessing of Genesis 1:28, even if we assume that the landmass were originally a super-continent ('Gondwanaland', cf., Rae, 2003; Monash University Science Center, 2003), it doesn't seem implied that the first of mankind and their near descendents were supposed to rule over the whole global world. The Bible is full of national things, but no global things are mentioned. It must be because of the writers' limit of experience. But the recent resurgence of tribalism around the world leads us to wonder whether the frequently referred to nationalities and language groups in the Bible are the

proper limit of maximum unit of God's 'multiply' blessing. In other words, we speculate that the people are destined to develop by nation or by language group. Even if the computer technique is so developed that language difference becomes no longer a communication barrier, the tribal and national difference may still continue to exist.

To summarize, this study suggests that the undue divisions of the traditional bi-worldly worldview must be revised. This study's proposal of this worldly worldview may function as a tentative alternative for modern Christians. It may encourage us more effectively to responsibly participate in the world with the recognition that it is their task proper, given by God through the whole Scripture.

4.3 CREATION AND PHILOSOPHY

This worldly understanding of creation is to understand the world in an ordinary way, in a phenomenological way, and in an evidential way.

4.3.1 Ordinary and mystery

Traditionally speaking, Christianity is often regarded as the religion of mystery (cf., Berkouwer, 1971:131; Blamires, 1991:30; Kantzer, 1991:39; Morris, 1991:36; Rahner, 1978:44; Ramm, 1961:23; Ridderbos, 1975:562). The world is God's creation, and God is 'mysterious', therefore, the world is full of mysteries. In this case, 'mystery' means 'beyond-human understanding'. Everything is God-given, therefore, it has some mysterious parts. That belief is good for us Christians in emphasizing our God's grace and greatness. But they are not scientific, but confidential, religious statements.

We can ask this question: Does the Bible call its teaching 'mysterious' in the sense of 'beyond-human' or 'known only by divine beings' as we usually mean it? "The secret things belong to Yahweh our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law"

(Deut 29:29). The focus of this verse is in the latter part that we *have* the revealed things. "Surely the Sovereign Yahweh does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). The writer says that the revealed things belong to 'us' and to 'our children' that 'we' may follow all the words of His Law. "Yahweh confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them" (Ps 25:14; Prov 3:32).

Therefore we can say that all biblical mysteries are, because they are all revealed ones at that time and now, to be understood by His people as given for ordinary life teaching: "O my people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter hidden things, things from of old—what we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of Yahweh, his power, and the wonders he has done" (Ps 78:1-4, quoted in Matt 13:35 and probably implied in Rom 16:25). The mysteries of the Bible are revealed for our ordinary life.

Does the Bible demand of us to do things that stand beyond our capability? No. It seems logically unnecessary to write down beyond human things in our Human Bible (cf., 3.2.3). And the Bible says that God's law is all for us and applicable to us:

Now what I am commanding you today is *not too difficult for you or beyond your reach*. It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, 'Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?' Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, 'Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?' No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it. See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction.

For I command you today to love Yahweh your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and Yahweh your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess (Deut 30:11-16, emphasis added).

The last verse reminds us of the original blessing of Genesis 1:28: "then, you will live and increase". According to the argument of this passage, linking the original blessing to God's later commands, decrees and laws, and even to the

covenant given to Abraham (the land, Gen 17:1-8) we can say that Moses understood the core message of them as one, that is, the gospel of creation (Jee, 2002:100-108).

4.3.2 Phenomenological or ontological

The traditional creationism has a typical feature of ontological understanding, regarding God and the world. Ontological theology starts with the attributes of God: the nature of God, the relationship among the divine trinity, God's self-revelation or self-manifestation, the dualist aspect of human body and soul, the difference between relatives and absolutes etc. It seems that many are practicing this ontological approach as if it were the only way of doing theology, regardless of one being conservative or liberal. And theologically speaking, this ontological approach is directly related to the soteriological approach (cf., Von Rad, 1936:134, "the doctrine of creation provides a foundation for the message of redemption"; 1936:138, "it has always been subordinated to the interests and content of the doctrine of redemption").

The scientific methodology and the Kantian epistemology are accepted by all academic disciplines as the only possible way that we human beings can take, except in the studies related to theology and religion. Whilst theology and philosophy of religion declare that God is incomprehensible and beyond human understanding (cf., Grenz & Olson, 1992:10, 'creative tension'; 1992:314, 'transcendent-immanent God'), they still try to speak about the declared *impossible*.

This study proposes that the persistence of the classical tradition of pre-Kantian epistemology in theology (cf., Avis, 2000:182, criticizes this concept of theology as 'an enquiry into the being of God and the relation of God to the universe' is an 'old-fashioned', 'speculative' view) has been the main mental block that hinders Christians from realistic thinking about the world and the Christian message of the Bible. We must admit that the beyond-human approach cannot be accepted in scientific discussion. But that recognition seems very difficult even today. It still is a problem of conservative Christian thought (cf., Russell, 1999:9 – "the question of double agency still remains the key issue in the

general problem”).

The only way we can do scientific theology is to accept the scientific limit of research and to start gathering empirical data about human religious experiences, written in the Bible and in history. Philip Clayton (1997:6-8) gives an example of this scientific way of thinking:

Of course, a scientist is a person too. She has prejudices, she may hold religious beliefs, and she may wish or hope that certain results will turn out to be true and others false... Yet when she is in the lab, it is her business to pay close attention to the data, to the viable explanations, and to the theories and hypotheses that best predict observed phenomena (6).

Theology may of course be pursued in abstraction from the results and methods of the sciences. But if we do choose to attempt a theology of nature ‘in light of contemporary science’, then we must not pretend the task is more simple than it really is. As we will find, the task requires an openness to scientific results and to the various directions in which they point; it necessitates that one wrestle with tendencies that run counter to traditional theological answers; it demands an openness to revising certain dearly held theological conclusions; and, at the points at which one may wish to break with the (apparent) implications of the scientific results, it mandates that one either find reasons inherent within the sciences themselves for making that break, or that one supply reasons that might be held to be convincing in other fields (history, the human sciences, ethics or philosophy) which point in the direction of the theological conclusions one wishes to defend. The bottom line is that theologians must be intellectually honest with the data and conflicts that their discipline faces when it wishes to take contemporary science into account (7-8).

Christians had accepted the classical doctrines, including the Reformational doctrines, which were deduced directly from the language of the Bible without problems because it had fitted the worldview of their time. But now, especially after the revolution of science, we have a very different worldview thanks to the accumulated scientific knowledge of the past, and the new worldview demands more relevant understanding of the classical doctrines.

4.3.3 Evidential or speculative

The history of development of empirical science is in a sense that of the development of measuring devices. And a critical part of a measuring device is its sensor. Modern technology uses mechanic sensors which are more powerful than human senses, for example, optical and laser sensors for light, radio wave sensors for sound etc. Even some super-computers do more than imitating human brain capabilities. So we can say not only human senses but also the synthesizing power of human brain, which has previously been regarded as one of the unique functions of human soul, is being replicated in some way.

The objectivity and reliability of an experiment is acquired by its replicability. If an experiment is not replicable, however plausible it seems, the result must belong to speculation. All the results of the reported experiments are in principle the objects of verification, and other experimenters prove it or refute it by replicating the experiment. Some disciplines, such as sociology, psychology and medical science which were previously regarded as unable to be objectively experimented, are now more and more reported through experiments. By finding some measurable features directly or indirectly related to the given immeasurable features, the objectivity of an experiment can be acquired.

As to theology, some parts are also definitely empirical, for example, the practical theology and the biblical theology. But most parts of the traditional systematic theology are still regarded as accessible only by speculations, largely because of the above mentioned ontological presupposition: the mysterious Godhead (the doctrine of God); predestination, creation and providence (the works of God); human nature as God's image-bearer and the over-emphasized sin and its consequent results (anthropology and hamatology); the doctrine of the person and work of Christ (Christology); the doctrine of the application of the work of redemption (soteriology and pneumatology); and the doctrine of the last things (eschatology) (cf., Berkhof, 1981).

Systematic theology must reject self-contradictory speculations by accepting the Kantian limitations of scientific study, for the methodological *impossibles* cannot turn into *possibles* by whatever efforts. "We defend the idea that a direct, miraculous act of God can guide research, explain data and receive some

scientific confirmation in historical science, but such an act would be irrelevant in empirical science" (Moreland, 1995:473).

4.4 CREATION AND ETHICS

This worldly creation understanding may have some advantages in emphasizing positive ethics.

4.4.1 Creation theology as ethics

This study presumes the gospel of creation as the kernel of biblical message. The original blessing says that mankind is to rule over all the living creatures. It implies that they have to take the responsibility for the results of their ruling. Then we may paraphrase the original blessing as the original ethics of ruling. In that perspective of responsibility of acts and attitudes, all biblical teachings are ethical teachings.

The Early Church period and the Reformation period have one common situational factor of persecution. In that situation the church had emphasized the salvation and the faith in Christ's redemptive works (cf., Runia, 1976:60), because the situation didn't permit them to expound a wide range of theology. They would have believed that they should preach the most important teaching of the Bible, because for them the 'time was short' (1Cor 7:29). Thus, the focus was that "Christ is the Son of God, and the Second person of the Holy Trinity". They probably had no time to preach other than that.

One side effect of that Christ-centeredness, however, is that from the Early Church many Christians have interpreted biblical stories from that perspective, which amalgamated with the spiritual, that-worldly kingdom. Christ is the principle of all biblical interpretation, thus the first couple, even before they fell, must have been created falling short of entering the ultimately destined kingdom of God. This kind of 'argument from silence' seems to have been a common

interpretation.

With some great 20th evangelical revival movements such as that of Billy Graham and other parachurch group leaders, mainly focusing on young generations, the concept of salvation through Jesus Christ seems to have been more simplified and come to mean definitely personal, spiritual, and of heavenly court. It seems that they have found out the concept of redemption in the New Testament, for example, where the Apostle Paul recites Deuteronomy 30 for encouragement:

Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: 'The man who does these things will live by them'. But the righteousness that is by faith says: 'Do not say in your heart, Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down) or 'Who will descend into the deep?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? 'The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart', that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: *That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord', and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.* As the Scripture says, 'Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame'. For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved' (emphasis added, Rom 10:5-13).

But in this passage Paul is not introducing an easy way of getting salvation with the implication of 'only by confessing can you get the ticket to Heaven'. The saying of the righteousness by the law in verse 5, "The man who does these things will live by them", is a direct quotation from Leviticus 18:5, which never has negative implications for Israelites. It seems clear when we read the verse in its context of giving the instruction about new lifestyle. Yahweh says:

I am Yahweh your God. You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices. You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am Yahweh your God. Keep my decrees and laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. I am Yahweh (Lev

18:2-5).

This original context does not seem to imply a negative attitude of the Israelites as Paul says in Romans 10:5. Rather it seems to paraphrase the original life principle, with the new opportunity given to Israelites once again. And Paul is not writing a systematic theological lecture here for the Christians in Rome. Apparently, his intention is to encourage the gentile Christians to hold fast to their faith: 'You are now God's new people, for you have believed Jesus as Lord'. Neither does Paul deviate from the original context, nor does he make a new doctrine here. Though the modern revivalists do not emphasize only the confessional significance but also the importance of changed lifestyle, their simplified understanding of salvation and neglect of theology seems to cause people to think more on spiritual salvation (Zwaanstra, 1997:3, 7).

Cees Van der Kooi (1997:12-15) enlists some pitfalls that modern evangelicals face:

Reconciliation with God is conceived of one-sidedly as personal.

A too meager or scarcely developed awareness that God is the creator of the world and thus has a concern for the entire world.

The emphasis on personal communion with God can take on all-too-familiar features which turn into an obliteration of boundaries and distinctions.

Sanctification of personal life can become negative when within one's own group people have an exact picture of how the other person ought to be.

The recognition of the gracious character of salvation is applied indeed to the work of redemption in a narrower, religious, inner-circle-only sense, rearing a very I-centered and activist thinking.

Tendency of group-elitism boasting 'only-our-church' feeling.

We can understand Romans 10 with the gospel of creation that Paul is using a common contemporary rhetoric, which uses loosely linked images in order to encourage the new Christians. Summing up the ancient way as allusion and typology, Kuyper (1978:6) says, "We can easily surmise that the writers of gospels and epistles were conversant with some of all methods then in vogue (that is, rabbinic combination of texts, allegorical interpretation, and appropriation of Qumran Peshier). They would therefore use whatever method would best serve their purpose of showing the significance of Jesus Christ and

the Christian church" (cf., Crenshaw, 1978:164, "Many New Testament allusions to the Old Testament constitute spur-of-the-moment linkages rather than legitimate proof from scripture").

Nevertheless, it seems that a very spiritualized idea of that worldly salvation is very common, especially in modern fundamentalist churches. They ask, "Preach us only the gospel of salvation by Jesus Christ. Do not preach us your ethical sermon of how to live as good people!" It sounds as if becoming good people is not the crucial part of the gospel. But the gospel of creation implies that theology should be accompanied by ethics since God's blessing aims at our proper ruling of the world.

4.4.2 Existential vacuum in church

There seems to be some strange existential vacuum in the church. And the bi-worldly kingdom perspective has definitely something to do with that vacuum. They have already confessed Jesus as Lord. They are living as good Christians. But still they feel something important is missing in their Christian life. 'If the world is after all going to be destroyed by God's wrath, why should we try to keep the society clean? Isn't it a pure waste of power and energy?'

The born-again Christians don't find good reasons for good work from the main teachings of the church. Some find reasons for Christian good work from their personal experiences. For instance, a former political prisoner may establish a rehabilitation organization for the ex-convicts, or a former poverty-stricken pastor may try to establish a free-hospital for the poor people of the city etc. They hold fast to a few passages that give them strong conviction that to do the specific job is their life mission directly given by God. But other Christians, because they don't have that kind of experiences, though they are good Christians, are not motivated by the same passions.

Is the 'prophetic pessimism' ("The world *will* perish anyway, according to the Bible. Nevertheless, we Christians should behave ourselves well") really the core preaching of the Bible? To this question, this study answers a strong No! That pessimism has nothing to do with biblical teaching. It is a philosophical

teaching, outside of the Bible. The pessimistic worldview is related to the complaint of our not being God. It just sees the dark parts of the world and doesn't see the possible usefulness of the dark parts.

The Bible teaches from the beginning, from Genesis 1, the blessedness of this earth. It was from the beginning in the optimum conditions for life. And that condition has not much changed yet, though now is the time that humans can, at least theoretically, nullify the blessed condition. And because of that theoretical possibility, the message of the gospel of creation must be preached to modern Christians. This is the only world that we are to live in. There is no other spiritual heavenly kingdom up there, prepared for our after-death life. This is the world that God promises to us and to our descendants. That is the gospel of creation we must rediscover.

This creation understanding puts more significance to each human work. Everyone is serving God, by taking care of his field. A religious job is not more significant than other jobs. Each work has its proper service in serving God. Politics, economics, medicine, mechanics, trading, education, etc. every job, every work is significant and has its own religious value, which cannot be graded by one measure. Though the Reformation re-discovered this idea of biblical vocation, modern Reformed churches seem to imitate more and more the Old Catholic Church, especially in church rituals and offices. Perhaps the Roman Catholic Church looks more 'collective, authoritative and majestic' than the democratized Reformed churches, in general. We hope that this presentist proposal may effectively remove the theological blinkers which prevent us from having the wider sight of God's wonderful world.

4.4.3 Balanced worldview

The traditional Christian pessimist worldview is focused only on the 'now' 'seemingly bad' things. First, it judges things by now conditions. But how can we know about tomorrow? Even some financial miracles are being advertised every day as a form of lottery. Second, it judges things by sight. Because it looks bad,

it is judged as bad. But often, 'seeing' is not 'believing'. There are more things hidden from our sight. Third, the pessimist view presumes that God will eventually destroy the world, like did the flood. The Apostle Peter and the Lord Jesus predicted it, they believe.

This study proposes that the pessimist view is just opposite to the main teaching of the Bible. And Jesus' warning about the destruction of the world is not for the warning of the total annihilation of the whole world. It was a calling of repentance and of proper living. In Revelation 21:24, we see that even after the final judgment day, history still continues: "the nations *will* walk by its light, and the kings of the earth *will* bring their splendour into it" (the new Jerusalem, coming down out of the new heaven, 21:2, 10). Because now that the world doesn't have many kings any longer, the vision must be interpreted literally. And this study takes a presentist literary interpretation, suggesting a responsible, balanced worldview.

The Bible supports neither a pessimist worldview nor an optimist worldview. Originally in Genesis 1 the blessed initial condition is introduced to us. We are entrusted with the world to take care of it. If we follow God's ruling principle faithfully, we will enjoy the finest things of the earth endlessly. If we don't follow God's life principle faithfully, we will suffer from the consequences of our destroying the given conditions (cf., Peterson, 1995:107). But because this world is so big and blessed, our breaking laws is usually not punished instantly. It takes time. In other words, God bears with great patience the objects of his wrath (Rom 9:22).

We can find a balanced worldview from Paul, "For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving" (1Tim 4:4). The world is created as good, but the direction it takes, whether up or down is up to us. While human beings have committed many wrongdoings, they also have carried out many good works. We cannot decide whether the world is heading for self-destruction or continual progress. But one thing is clear—that a wonderful world is entrusted to us and we will be repaid by it for whatever we do on it.

We are in the world (Jn 17:11), not of the world (Jn 15:19). This 'not of the world' does not mean a direct ontological difference between Christian and non-

Christian. It means rather the ethical difference of life-principle and life style. It is an indirectly ontological difference between them. We don't know whether our mysterious existence, our status before God does change by our confession. But we know that by our confession our mentality, life-philosophy, the spirit, the thought of how we live on this earth does change.

4.5 CONCLUDING REMARK

This proposal has some theological implications:

4.5.1 Theology as a part of scientific discipline

Above all, this study asserts that modern theology must be a part of modern science. The classical theology of the bi-worldly scheme, as is seen in the Reformed positions in chapter two, has taken the pre-Kantian epistemology for granted as typically Christian epistemology and could not examine the meaning of their traditional doctrines. As a consequence, the Christian scientists cannot actively participate in scientific debates. Partly because of the modern professionalization, and partly because of the marginalization of the church from the secular power competition, the Reformed church also has come to have two classes, namely teaching and learning.

Being lay members, regardless of however expert in their specialties, Christian scientists have never been taught to think critically about church dogmatics. For the same reason, the church ministers could not have been taught about scientific things. That situation might have caused the church to ignore the scientific challenge and the lay scientist members to take the representing position without proper knowledge of theology. The lay scientist members feel needs, but don't have knowledge; the clergy have knowledge, but feel nothing serious.

But that situation cannot last for long. The modern scientific challenge is so

demanding that, if the church fails to properly respond to it, the church would start to lose their weakest members first. The church must re-examine their important doctrines and must encourage their members to contribute in revising the doctrines with their scientifically trained thought.

4.5.2 Need of an open mind for criticism

The creation account in Genesis 1 doesn't speak about the other worlds, before or after this world. It only says that this world was originally in a very blessed condition for life. Regarding the evolution hypothesis, some theologians try to harmonize the scientific findings and the biblical doctrines. But their attempts are to be arguments from silence, for the Bible simply tells us nothing about the principle of theistic evolution or the details of God's creation. Thus the best way for us now is to have an open creationism.

But at the same time, this study hopes that the evolutionists themselves also self-criticize their hypothesis and its meta-empirical basic presumption so that the traditional naïve evolutionism (just like the traditional creationism) becomes an open, critical, scientifically falsifiable evolutionism. For example, we see Van Huyssteen (1999:4) expressing his evolutionary meta-empirical epistemology: "The basic assumption of evolutionary epistemology is that we humans, like other living beings, result from evolutionary processes and that, consequently, our mental capacities are constrained and shaped by the mechanisms of biological evolution". Regarding those ontological statements, David Livingstone (1987:181) criticizes, "the point is that the ontologically reductionist statements of some evolutionists are contentious, not to say tendentious claims. Creationists have good grounds to challenge the adequacy of such proposals".

A microbiologist, James A. Shapiro (1995:205-224) seems to show us an example of the scientific, open evolutionism:

The conventional wisdom about bacteria is that they are primitive, single-celled organisms. Actually, bacteria (the smallest living cells) are essential and sophisticated actors on the stage of life, often outwitting larger organisms for their own (the bacteria's) benefit (205). Bacteria as symbionts and

pathogens outsmart bigger organisms (210). Bacteria as multicellular organisms show unexpected social capabilities, such as division of labor and communication between the cells (215-216). Bacterial sensitivity and responsiveness to its environments demonstrate the following: as the colonies grow, they modify their environments, sense the environmental changes, and adjust their cellular activities accordingly (217)

What lessons have bacteria, these tiny but highly sophisticated cells, taught us? They teach us first a great deal about the interconnectedness and complexity of nature. Second, the importance of communication and information processing as fundamental to life at all levels, including the supposedly most primitive cells we know. Information processing is not a monopoly of man or of higher organisms. And last, they teach us that the evolutionary process is not just a matter of random changes in DNA due to chemical or physical events. Evolution is not anarchic. Rather, it is at least in part, a process involving natural genetic engineering under biological control that has produced the diversity of exquisitely adapted organisms we find in the biosphere. In brief, bacteria teach us about complexity, communication, and interconnectedness in life and about the cell biology of evolution (222).

I think that questions of cosmic beginnings and human ends are outside the realm of scientific investigation until we solve the problem of time travel and that the proper relationship of science and religion should be one of mutual respect for the distinct role that each plays in helping human beings to understand their place in the scheme of things. Historically, we have run into great trouble when we tried to substitute religion for science or science for religion (224).

4.5.3 The blessed and responsible life

This world is full of good things. The bad things come mainly from human mal-administrations. We Christians must have a balanced worldview encouraging the universal good works in order to rule the world properly. The Christian life must be the God-given-mission fulfilling life, full of thanks and meanings. The prodigal son went away with all his fortunes only to find out that his father was good and righteous. While he came to himself, the other son, who had always been with the Father and had had all that is His, simply could not gratify and

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give thanks. The Bible does not give us the promise of the paradise in heaven. It demands from us to confront the challenge between life and death on this earth, for us and for our descendants.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In the previous chapters, this study has proposed a presentist understanding of biblical creation as a new biblical creationism. It suggests, first, that we have long neglected the fundamental fact that this earth is a wonderful planet. With that recognition the traditional doctrine of creation, which repeats the language of the Bible with religious and supernatural implications, can be revised in a scientific way. This study suggests, secondly, that the revision according to the new recognition would give a sound view in which religion and science can reasonably respond to each other.

5.1 RECOGNITION OF THIS WONDERFUL WORLD

The variety, the wonder and the greatness of the living creatures on this earth, and the gratefully abundant material basis which this earth provides to the living world, as well as the unbelievably harmonious cosmic powers that make life on this earth possible, the recognition of all these 'mysteries' might have caused the writer of Genesis 1 to confess that the world is the creation of God. Other causes, except the God who has infinite benevolence to human beings and to living beings and even to inorganic and celestial beings, visible and invisible, could not have explained all these wonders. That enormous thanksgiving feeling might have caused the writer to write down the first line of Genesis 1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth".

The closer we study this world, the more we are amazed by the 'plans', 'harmonies', or 'designs', whatever we may call them, in which this world is

organized. Water is the most precious resource for life, generally speaking, or perhaps especially viewed from the perspective of a Bedouin. The variety of the land animals and the great variety of the floral life are invaluable resources for the quality of life. Unimaginably various sea creatures and the extravagant resources of the oceans, and the indescribably elegant birds in the air, about all these we cannot give enough thanks to whom it deserves. The magnificent spectacles of sunrise and sunset, the moon as the endless source of inspiration, and the so-tiny-looking enormous gas-stars, all these are the gratis, the freely given blessings to everybody on earth. Regardless of whether this planet is the offspring of innumerable gaseous star explosions or not, this earth is definitely an extra-super-lucky speck in the whole universe (Custance, 1970a:24).

For some reasons, however, this fundamental blessing seems to have been long forgotten. We modern Christians seem not so happy with our living on this earth. Though we are not the beings thrown into a dungeon-like situation, we think we are. Though we are being supported by wonderful material and organic structures, we think we are in a miserable condition and alienated from the good world. Though all those good things are always with us, we ungratefully complain: If God is so good and mighty why has he made a world like this full of evil? It is not the problem of this world, but of our mind and attitude. We simply lost the balance.

This negatively biased view has influenced the reading of the creation account in Genesis 1. The second verse is commonly interpreted as the original chaos before the first creating act of God. Not only does it appeal to the 'beyond-human' cause, but it also reflects a biased negative judgment. This negative prejudice must be corrected.

5.2 AN OPEN CREATIONISM

Even in recent creation and evolution debates, the real problem is the difference of perspective. While the creationists keep the argument of piety appealing to the authority of the Word of God, the evolutionists don't allow a religious perspective defiling their scientific debate (Scott, 2002). The real purpose of the debate is to discuss whether the scientific evidence supports creation or

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evolution. But due to its short history, both sides seem engaged in reconnaissance, mainly focusing on the attitudes and their epistemological differences. While the impatient prescientist members of both sides are waging verbal battles (cf., Midgley, 1985:13), the more scientifically-minded members keep investigating both positions (cf., Blackwell, 1998:40), this study believes.

The 'simple' version of evolutionism as a scientific hypothesis (cf., Baldwin, 1995:423, 443) must be scientifically criticized in the debate. But before that we creationists must do our homework properly (Young, 1995:396). We must first admit that our traditional creationism is not a scientific hypothesis but a religious hypothesis. Second, we must find a new alternative of scientific as well as biblical creationism.

However, this kind of rethinking is never an easy job both for creationists and for evolutionists. It is often regarded as 'upsetting the applecart rather than polishing the apples' (Giberson, 1995:459), for it demands a radical restructuring of the present hypotheses which look as if they are functioning quite well. It may even threaten the privileged positions of the experts in the field. Nevertheless, it must be done in the name of science, as Philip Johnson (1995:491) points out:

All I need to say is that whether Darwinism is false is a different question from what scientists are likely to do about its falsity. I have no doubt that biologists will fiercely resist giving up Darwinism until somebody provides them with an acceptable replacement. The theory not only unifies their discipline and directs research; it provides academic jobs and grant money. Above all, it gives an enviable status as guardians of modernist culture's official creation story. Why should biologists agree to give all this up merely because the theory happens to be false? But this is no reason for the rest of us to stop telling the biologists that they are on the wrong track. One might as well have argued to Luther that his attack on the selling of indulgences was misguided because the College of Cardinals would never accept his arguments unless he could provide the Church with an alternative method of raising money.

This study presents its presentist creation understanding as an alternative that is fit to be the proper creationist partner of the creation and evolution debate. It

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is an open creationism, which asserts that the Bible does not teach anything about the origins of the universe and of life, in the modern scientific sense. This proposal of the gospel of creation highly recommends scientific activities, for it believes that they are the manifestations of the original blessing.

About the findings of modern sciences including the modern cosmological hypotheses, we can critically accept the evidence and its proposed interpretations with this proposal without hurting our Christian belief. We must remember that the natural scientists also use many speculations, especially in the fields regarding the scientifically 'unobservable' things. A theoretical physicist writes, "Theories of the quantum origination of the universe are highly speculative and do not have anything like the scientific status" (Isham, 1999:56) and "This means that all existing approaches to quantum cosmology are grounded in pious hopes that the techniques employed give a reasonable approximation to the 'correct' (but unknown) theory. But they may all be quite wrong" (Isham, 1999:77).

On the other hand, we modern Christians do not have to try to protect the authority of the Bible in the field of natural science, simply because the Bible does not give us that kind of information. The creation accounts teach us that we are lucky to be here and that by keeping the original life principle we can live in this world a peaceful and prosperous life, individually and communally.

The Bible assumes the existence of God from the beginning (Harland, 1996:89, "both the narratives of creation and deluge presuppose a belief in a majestic, omnipotent God who is the source of all that is created"). And the writers of the Bible confessed, very understandably with conviction, that the world is God's creation (Hobbs, 1975:12). They didn't have interests in modern apologetics. It was unnecessary for them. They followed the ancient way of writing. Lack of modern ideas does not mean lack of truth. But the Bible was written by ancient epistemology, and it did not defend its assumptions. Then why should we be concerned about that? We must admit that we cannot get good information from the Bible about which modern curiosity raises questions. Therefore, it is best to leave the unwritten unknown, and to pay more attention to the most clearly written.

At this moment, a word of caution seems to be necessary: This study tried to

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examine the traditional assumptions and interpretations (cf., Berry, 1996:18) of both eschatology and protology, which have been regarded as premises of Christian faith, in a quite different perspective. Furthermore, because protology is almost a virgin field and because the starting point of this study is a coarsely construed eschatology of the writer, this study results can easily be criticized. It would have been better to wait for further eschatological studies. Nevertheless, this coarse study results may at least contribute to provoke now-seemingly-indifferent-to-science theologians to construct a much more plausible Christian alternative to the traditional creationism.

This leads us to the final chapter about the prospect of future study.

CHAPTER 6

PROSPECT OF FUTURE STUDY

This study expects more scientific experiments in dogmatics not only according to this presentist proposal but also according to other new perspectives provoked by (or regardless of) the radical suggestion of this proposal.

6.1 MORE DOGMATIC EXPERIMENTS

This presentist creationism proposes one possible way of literary interpretation of the creation account within the limits of modern scientific epistemology. As a pioneering experiment of church dogmatics it hopes that more dogmatic experiments are being carried out in the fields of eschatology and protology. The traditional consensus of Christian belief according to the prescientific epistemology simply does not work in our modern age which has the characteristics of pluralism and tolerance to other perspectives. Though it may hurt our patriotic religious ethos, it should be taken seriously (cf., Hunt, 1995:225, "the crucial significance of 'feministization' for an adequate dialogue between science and religion") and in the process of soothing that common hurt feeling may come more practical and more positive experiments.

At the moment, this proposal as a hypothesis may provide a new dogmatic frame to the following fields of study:

6.2 THE EVOLUTION DEBATE

Above all, this proposal has no problem in taking the evolutionist position as a scientific hypothesis. If both parties admit that the biblical creation accounts have an apparently theological purpose and that the modern scientific interests cannot be reflected in the ancient document form, the debate will be able to focus on more modern scientific matters by modern scientific ways. At the same time, this proposal, having criticized the traditional religious version of creationism, demands that the evolutionists also revise their simple, religious version of evolutionism into a more thoroughly scientific hypothesis.

Mary Midgley's (1985:147) warning seems very apposite for both parties in the debate:

It is extremely urgent to try and adapt our thoughts realistically to a world which has no fixed general direction either upward or downward, but which is likely to vary largely according to what we do. Both creationism and Spencerism seem radically to confuse the functions of religion and science, attempting to produce an amalgam which will do the work of both. In doing so, both seem to distort not just the province they are trying to take over, but also the one in whose name they want to make the conquest.

6.3 CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

This proposal has an advantage in handling the problem of the existential vacuum in the church. Based on the gospel of creation, which offers a comprehensive worldview aiming at the life of mankind in a communal perspective, it provides a wide theological reference frame both for individual life and for communal life. Asserting the need of morally guided knowledge and technology, Kenneth Vaux (1995:256) writes, "we need to confront squarely the public health crisis". The ethics for communal health, including AIDS, abortion and euthanasia, can be most comprehensively derived from this gospel of creation. The traditional distinction between the sacred and the secular doesn't work with this creationism. Rather it emphasizes the necessity of a positive Christian act because this world is God's world. That view may promote all

kinds of reasonable studies regardless of religious difference. "To be reasonable does not mean to possess the truth (that would be dogmatism) but to give reasons for preferring one solution over another to a given problem. To affirm is also to negate. Any search for truth has thus to be somehow 'doctrinal', claiming something about something, albeit in a hypothetical mood which is open for revision" (Gregersen, 1998:195).

Christian activities in relation to society, now still debated between the conservative and liberal churches, would become no longer an object of debate. The separation between the church and the state must be more positively examined. More trained lay members should participate in practical church issues. In Acts 6 we see a financial problem raised in the Early Christian community about which the Apostles quickly decided to create deaconship, a new church office. But modern churches definitely have more complex problems than that, which need more talented lay members' participation in church offices. So we can expect an open study about church offices.

And by seeing the urbanization, the complexity of metropolitan life, various nations and cultures with the perspective of blessing we can take it as God's challenge to widen our understanding of the world. More consistent guidelines for Christian living may be developed with this proposal which includes the Christian ethical problem of having double standards within and without the church.

This proposal's theological frame which underlines both the individual and the communal life on this earth may have a corrective function about some too individualized or spiritualized ideas, such as the ultimate goal of a heavenly kingdom, the monotonous heavenly life commonly assumed, the so-called cheap salvation, or a definite time of Christ's return.

The pessimistic worldview of modern existentialist philosophy and its insidious influence on theology and other disciplines can also be criticized by this creationism. This proposal hopes for the emergence of a more scientifically consistent theology or Christian philosophy based on the practical teachings of the Bible, with which the church members can plan for their world and their descendants' world.

6.4 A HUMBLE RESTART

The strange impression regarding theology, especially the systematic theology, such as too philosophical, too clever, too verbose and difficult, should be removed. The Middle Age order of disciplines which puts theology above philosophy and other academic disciplines is no longer valid. Therefore, as one of the youngest modern sciences, as Von Rad (1962: Preface) called 'theology of the Old Testament' 'one of the youngest of the disciplines of Biblical studies' in 1957, scientific theology must take a humble position, for it does not lead other disciplines at all. We hope that by applying the comprehensive gospel of creation we may gain a balanced view to understand this blessed world and carry out our service properly with a contented heart.

Paul's admonition to Timothy seems also apt for this experimental study:

If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that (1Tim 6:3-8).

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