

**CHAPTER TWO: A BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION
FOR CULTIVATING A GOD-GENERATED LIFE
OF BEING EMBEDDED WITH CHRIST IN THE FATHER
THROUGH THE ADVANCE INSTALLMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

I. INTRODUCTION

The general hypothesis of this study is that it appears that many Reformed Christians not only do not experience what living a God-generated life of living embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is, but also do not intentionally live this kind of life. Instead, many appear to live self-generated, dis-embedded lives. It is my suspicion that this situation would be the same in many Evangelical denominations. My first research question is: “To what extent is or was the spirituality of (young) adults in my congregation and in a neighbouring congregation characterized by various forms of affective detachment or dis-embeddness between Christ and themselves?” My second research question is: “Will going through a 10-week spiritual learning experience meant to equip (young) adults to learn to live a God-generated life of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit serve as a stepping stone to move Christians from experiencing the Christian life as dis-embedded, self-generated life to experiencing this life as a God-generated life of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit?”

Since theology’s first source or the “norming norm” of the theological conversation is the Scriptures, this chapter first deals with the biblical basis for cultivating a God-generated life of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. This is also necessary for another reason. If the learning experience wants to offer a biblical solution to the various forms of affective detachment or dis-embeddness it is first necessary to identify this biblical solution. Thus, this chapter first reflects on the nature of

being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. Second, it considers the significance of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.¹

II. THE NATURE OF BEING EMBEDDED WITH CHRIST IN THE FATHER THROUGH THE ADVANCE INSTALLMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A. A covenantal relationship

Being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is a covenantal relation. God sovereignly initiates this relationship (Gen. 1:26; 12:1-3) and lays down the conditions for it (Gen. 2:17; 17:1-2). God's intention for entering into covenant is that his covenant community will glorify Him in this world as his image, i.e., embody his divine nature to creation (Gen. 1:26; 1:28).² God's people do not have to glorify Him by embodying his divine nature in their own strength, but can do this in dependence upon Him because God generates his own Father-Son love through bond of the Holy Spirit (1 Jn 4:8, 16)—the love the Father has for the Son through the bond of the Holy Spirit and the love the Son has for the Father through the bond of the Holy Spirit—into his covenant

¹ This principle of division is adapted from Alister McGrath (gen. ed.), *The NIV Thematic Reference Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 1860.

² The word “glorify” is used here to include the concept of “represent.” Thus, to glorify God by embodying his divine nature includes being his representative on earth. In the ancient Near East, pagan images were also meant to represent gods. While physically transcendent and absent, the deities were spiritually immanent and present in and through their images. This was true for images made of wood, stone or metal as well as a human image such as the king who had dominion over a particular country on behalf of the deity. Accordingly, humankind also represents God and has dominion over the earth on God's behalf. God, who is physically transcendent and absent, is immanent and present in humankind and represented by them. See Rikk E. Watts, “The New Exodus/New Creational Restoration of the Image of God: A Biblical-Theological Perspective on Salvation” in John G. Stackhouse, Jr., (ed.), *What Does it Mean to be Saved? Broadening Evangelical Horizons of Salvation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 21. See also David J. A. Clines, “Humanity as the Image of God” in *On the Way to the Postmodern: Old Testament Essays, 1967-1998*, JSOT 293, Vol. 2 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press: 1998), 478-480, 482. For Adam and Eve being created in covenant, see W. J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: An Old Testament Covenantal Theology* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1984), 15-26; O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1980), 81-86; Gerard van Groningen, *From Creation to Consummation*, Vol. 1 (Sioux Centre: Dort College Press, 1996), 65-67.

community (Jn. 17:26; cf. Ac. 17:27).³ Thus, God breathed his own uncreated life into Adam's nostrils and embedded him in Himself (Gen. 2:7).⁴ Consequently, Adam was able to glorify God by embodying God's divine nature because He was embedded in God's nature through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, humankind is said to be the offspring of God that lives and moves and has its being in Him (Ac 17:28).⁵ As the tree of life once symbolized the promise of the continued generation of this Father-Son love (Gen. 2:9), so Jesus, as the tree of life, now symbolizes the promise of the generation of this life if people remain embedded in his love (Jn. 3:16; 20:31; Rev. 2:7).⁶ Only in remaining embedded in God's Father-Son love would God's people enjoy wholeness and integration in their lives for God's Father-Son love is the integrative, gravitational center of their life.

This covenantal, Father-Son relationship is sometimes compared to the intimacy of a marriage. For instance, after God had made a woman from the rib He had taken out of Adam,

³ Cf. Andrew Murray, *The Two Covenants: Eighteen Meditations* (Fort Washington: CLC Publications, 1999), 17.

⁴ In the ancient Near East, an image was considered to be the dwelling place of the deity because this image contained the spirit, fluid, breath or fire of the deity. These images could be made of wood, stone or metal, or they could be human beings such as the king. See Clines, "Humanity as the Image of God," 475-480. Before wooden, stone or metal images of the deity were placed in their temples, priests would perform a series of ritual acts of animation that were intended to open the eyes, ears and mouth of the image and enable its limbs to move. The image, however, only functioned as the deity's image after the spirit, fluid, breath or fire of the deity had entered into it through a ritual invocation. Then it was placed in the deity's temple. See Watts, "The New Exodus/New Creational Restoration of the Image of God," 20. See also Clines, 476-477. On the earth being God's temple, see Meredith Kline, *Kingdom Prologue* (South Hamilton: Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary [private publication, 1993]), 17-18.

⁵ John Stott writes: "Although in redemption terms God is the Father only of those who are in Christ, and we are his children only by adoption and grace, yet in creation terms, God is the Father of all humankind, and all are his offspring, his creatures, receiving their life from him." See John Stott, *The Spirit, The Church and the World: The Message of Acts* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 286.

⁶ "The word for 'life' used in Genesis 2:7 in reference to the 'breath of life' is identical to the word for 'life' employed in Genesis 2:9 in reference to the 'tree of life.' James A. Fowler, *Man is God Intended* (Fallbrook, Cal., Cal: C.I.Y Publishing, 1998), 21. The word for "life" in the New Testament texts listed above is the same word that is used in the Septuagint translation of Gen. 2:7 and 9, see Henry Barclay Swete (ed.), *The Old Testament in Greek According the Septuagint*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: University Press, 1901), 3. For the tree of life symbolizing the possibility of being sustained by God's own eternal life, see Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 86.

“like a father of a bride, [He] leads the woman to the man” (Gen. 2:22).⁷ After God had liberated his people Israel out of Egypt and brought them to Mount Sinai to give the constitution of the covenant, God said that He had brought them to Himself. As God wanted Adam to cling or cleave to Eve and become one flesh with her, so God wanted to cling or cleave to Israel and become one flesh with her. God’s covenantal design for his covenantal helper was nothing less than living in a personal, intimate union with her.⁸

This explains why elsewhere the Scriptures explicitly refer to this bringing of Israel to Yahweh as a marriage. For instance, Isaiah speaks of Yahweh being Israel’s husband (Isa. 54:5). Jeremiah speaks of Israel’s devotion and love for Yahweh as the devotion and love of a bride (Jer. 2:2) and of Yahweh being Israel’s husband (Jer. 3:14). Ezekiel allegorically describes how Yahweh “wooed, courted, and married Israel” (Ezek. 16:4-14).⁹ Hosea embodies Israel’s unfaithfulness in her relationship with Yahweh by marrying a wife of whoredom and having children of whoredom (Hos. 1:1-3:5).

This also explains why the Song of Songs has great relevance for Yahweh’s relationship with his people. As two young people passionately long for one another and desire to consummate these longings, so Yahweh passionately longs for personal, intimate fellowship with Israel and desires that Israel would have these passionate longings for Him in return.¹⁰ In fact, the sexual intimacy between husband and wife mirrors our covenantal relationship with Yahweh since the word the Hebrew uses for a husband and wife being

⁷ Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary in The Old Testament Library*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), 84. Cf. Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction & Commentary in Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 66.

⁸ Cf. van Groningen, 324.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 324.

¹⁰ See, e.g., St John of the Cross, *The Spiritual Canticle* in St. John of the Cross, *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodrigues, rev. ed. (Washington: ICS Publications, 1991), 461-630 and Teresa of Avila, *Meditations on the Song of Songs* in St. Teresa of Avila, *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodrigues, Vol. 2 (Washington: ICS Publications, 1991).

sexually intimate with one another is the same word that is used for living in an intimate relationship with God.¹¹

Paul picks up on this intimate, personal relationship between Yahweh and his people and applies this to Christ and his people in Ephesians 5. Going all the way back to Genesis 2, he writes, “‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church” (Eph. 5:31-32). With these words Paul confirms that the marriage metaphor for the relationship between God and his people goes all the way back to Genesis 2.

¹¹ See the Hebrew word *yada*. See also Dan B. Allender and Temper Longman III, *Intimate Allies: Rediscovering God's Design for Marriage and Becoming Soul Mates for Life* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1995), 233. Some scholars have suggested that the words Jesus used in the Passover Meal were the same as those used in the common Jewish marriage ceremony of the first century. See, for instance, Darrell Johnson, *Discipleship on the Edge: An Expository Journey Through the Book of Revelation* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2004), 311-313. Johnson argues along the following lines. Jesus picks up on this intimate, personal relationship with God and his people and applies it to Himself. In those days, anyone getting married would go through the following three steps. First, the groom would pay the purchase price to the bride's father so that she was “bought with a price.” Once this price had been paid, the couple—although only engaged to be married—was in fact legally married. From that time on, the bride was “set apart” and consecrated to the bridegroom. This first step of the marriage was sealed with the drinking of a cup of wine that was blessed with the following words: “This cup is the new covenant.” Second, the groom would return to his own father's house for about twelve months, during which time he would prepare a room for the bride in his father's house. During this time, the bride would prepare herself for the wedding. Third, at the end of this period of time, the bridegroom and his best man would make their way back to the bride's house and unexpectedly appear on the scene. The bride with her maidens would come out to meet him and the wedding feast would begin. When Jesus is celebrating the Passover with his disciples and calls one of the cups of wine “the new covenant in his blood,” he is referring to this first century custom and declaring that He is sealing a covenantal marriage relationship with them since He would soon be paying the price (Lk. 22:20). When Jesus says that there are many dwelling places in his Father's house and that He is going to prepare a place for them, He is likewise referring to this covenantal marriage custom (Jn 14:1-3). Clearly, Jesus Christ now plays the role played by Yahweh in the Old Testament. He is now the husband of the people of God. This should not surprise us because He had referred to Himself as the bridegroom of his people (e.g., Mt. 9:15; 25:1, 5, 6, 10; see also Jn 3:29). See also Claude Chavasse who writes, “It does not seem too much to claim that our Lord, in the Last Supper, was as much enacting a Marriage Feast as keeping the Passover. Essentially the Passover itself was nuptial. The foundation of the Marriage between Yahweh and his People was the Covenant between them. That Covenant was made and ratified by the Passover. It is therefore no playing with words, but the sober truth, to say that Jesus, if not enacting a marriage at the Last Supper, was solemnizing the Marriage between himself and his Church in this, the New Covenant.” Claude Chavasse, *The Bride of Christ: An Enquiry into the Nuptial Element in Early Christianity* (London: The Religious Book Club, n.d.), 60-61. However, it is hard to find evidence to substantiate this hypothesis.

John picks up on this same personal, intimate relationship and gives it an eschatological interpretation. He heard “what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: ‘Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.’ (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints)” (Rev.19:6-8). Clearly, God is revealing to John the third step of a first century marriage ceremony. The time of waiting is over and the marriage will be consummated.

This covenant relationship is a relationship made with the people as a whole. This was the case with God’s covenant community in the Old Testament. This continues to be the case with his covenant community or church in the New. In this regard, Lewis Smedes rightly observes:

Sometimes Paul speaks of the whole Church as being in Christ. Some of the salutations that he uses place the congregation in Christ (1 Thess. 1:1; Phil. 1:1). And he talks to members as the “faithful in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:2). He speaks of the churches in Judea as “churches of God in Christ Jesus” (1 Thess. 2:14). When he speaks of the “freedom which we have in Christ Jesus,” he apparently has the Church in mind (Gal. 2:4). He refers to the church as one body in Christ (Rom. 12:5). Being in Christ, the Church knows that sociological distinctions are irrelevant to its existence (Gal. 3:28).¹²

Thus, glorifying God through embodying the divine nature by being covenantally married to God in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is only fully realized and appreciated by being embedded in God in community.

¹² Lewis B. Smedes, *All Things Made New: A Theology of Man’s Union with Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 80. See also his *Union with Christ: A Biblical View of the New life in Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 56-7. Cf. John Stott, *The Gospel and the End Time* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 28. This does not mean that individual members of the church are not in Christ. See Smedes, *All Things Made New*, 9-80; *Union with Christ*, 56.

Excursus one: the image of God and the glory of God

This section noted that God's intention for entering into covenant with his covenant community is that this community will glorify Him in this world as his image, i.e., embody his divine nature to creation by remaining embedded in God. This does not mean that the biblical concept of the image of God refers exclusively to how humankind *functions* or is manifested exclusively in what it *does*.¹³ Instead, glorifying God is an aspect of what it means to be created in the image of God. Yet, while it is only an aspect, it is the orienting aspect of the image of God because it points to creation's goal or *telos*.

Elsewhere, the Scriptures support this functional aspect of the image of God. For instance, they speak about God creating his covenant community "for [his] glory" and "for the display of [his] splendor" (Isa. 43:7; 60:21). Moreover, they refer to the restoration of the image of God as a being transformed into the likeness of Christ "with every increasing glory" (2 Cor. 3:18). Furthermore, they speak about the final restoration of the image of God as being "glorified" (Rom. 8:30). Why, the Scriptures even speak about God showing wrath to the reprobate "to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he

¹³ The creation mandate of dominion (Gen. 1:28) is often used as the biblical basis for this functional aspect of the image of God. For an insightful overview of various understandings of the image of God, see S. Gannon Murphy, "On the Doctrine of the *Imago Dei*," at <http://www.geocities.com/mnapologetics/ImagoDei.htm>. Murphy rightly states that the expression "image and likeness" is hendiadys, i.e., "a grammatical construction in which two words have the same referent; a 'one-in-twoness' of sorts."

prepared in advance for glory” (Rom. 9:22-23).¹⁴ This glory is not something ethereal or light, but substantial and weighty.¹⁵

The Scriptures uses the expression “the glory of God” in a twofold sense. First, the glory of God is a revelatory act, i.e. it is God on display, God manifested, God shown forth. In fact, the glory of God is the presence of God. This is seen, for instance, in the cloud of glory. Not only was this cloud God on display, God also actually dwelt in this cloud. This is also seen in the heavens declaring the glory of the LORD (Ps. 19). Not only does creation show forth and manifest God, God is actually present in creation.

Yet, the expression “the glory of God” is not only a revelatory act referring to the presence of God or the manifestation of God. It is also a responsive act referring to creation’s response to the revelatory act of God’s presence or glory. Creation is called to praise God for what it has seen and received. This can be seen, for instance, in the psalmist calling the sun, moon, stars and all of creation to praise the LORD (Ps. 148). This can also be seen in God’s covenant community praising the Father and the Son for who they are and what they have done (Rev. 4).¹⁶

That God created humankind as his image so that it would glorify Him by embodying Him is in some sense “calculatedly”¹⁷ self-focused of God. Calculatedly, because God intentionally created humankind in such a way that it could only find its sense of fulfillment

¹⁴ It is beyond the scope of this study to delve into this further. Let it suffice that concerning reprobation I have the following convictions. First, reprobation—eternally and historically—is taught in the Scriptures. Second, if election is true, then non-election or reprobation (passing over and condemnation) is also true. Third, God is not accountable to another, but can ontologically do as He pleases. Thus, only when I see God in glory will I perhaps be able to morally and intellectually comprehend some of this mystery. Fourth, reprobation is a hard saying that should never delight us, but also fill us sorrow. See Gannon Murphy, *Consuming Glory: A Classical Defense of Divine-Human Relationality Against Open Theism* (Eugene, Ore: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2006), 227-234.

¹⁵ See *kabod* in Francis Brown, S. R. Driver and Charles A Briggs, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1979), 458-459.

¹⁶ Since the four living creatures representing creation also praise God, Revelation 4 is an illustration of both creation and redeemed humanity praising God.

¹⁷ Murphy, 189

in Himself. Thus, the dis-embeddedness¹⁸ that results when humankind intentionally dismembers itself from God is an inevitable result of not living according the Creator's design and a perpetual reminder of God's creational goal. As Gannon Murphy rightly observes, "We learn something of our true condition and, at the same time, something of the radiance of God's unique glory, in part, by the inevitable sorrow we encounter in a context of existential estrangement. The sting of this estrangement points us away from ourselves and toward the theocentricity of glory."¹⁹ Thus, while in some sense self-focused, it is a self-focus that is meant for the healing and joy of humankind.²⁰

Excursus two: the soul²¹

This section noted that God's people do not have to glorify Him by embodying his divine nature in their own strength, but can do this in dependence upon Him because God generates his own Father-Son love through the bond of the Holy Spirit (1 Jn 4:8, 16)—the love the Father has for the Son through the bond of the Holy Spirit and the love the Son has for the Father through bond of the Holy Spirit—into his covenant community (Jn. 17:26; cf. Ac. 17:27). Thus, God breathed his own uncreated life into Adam's nostrils and embedded Adam in Himself (Gen. 2:7).

¹⁸ See next section.

¹⁹ Murphy, 191. Cf. 189-192.

²⁰ In saying that God is in some sense self-focused with his glory, it should be remembered that the Trinitarian life is characterized by self-giving. The incarnation is a visible demonstration of this self-giving nature of God. Cf. Murphy, 191-192.

²¹ This excursus on the soul is adapted from Kees Waaijman, *Spirituality: Forms, Foundations, Methods*, trans. John Vriend (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 435-446. Cf. Philip Troost, *Christus Ontvangen: gereformeerd en charismatish: leren van elkaar* (Kampen: Kok, 2006), 87-100. For more on the soul, see J. van Genderen and W.H. Velema, *Beknopte Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* (Kampen: Kok, 1992), 321-25; Herman Ridderbos, *Paulus: Ontwerp van zijn Theologie* (Kampen: Kok, 1973), 124-129; Gordon R. Lewis and Bruce A. Demarest, *Integrative Theology*, three volumes (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 2:144; Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 155-158.

This is possible because a human person consists of an immaterial or inner self and a material or outer self. The immaterial or inner self is often called the soul. With one's soul a person engages reality and attempts to have a meaningful relationship with this reality, such as God, others, creation and oneself. Yet, because the soul is a many-sided phenomenon, engaging reality in a meaningful way is not a matter of course. For instance, a soul can "open itself up but simultaneously has the ability to close itself; [it is] a source of life but with the capacity to jam up within itself; [it can] surrender in love but [is] also capable of devouring one's life; it can live together in peace with the core of one's personality but also depress the inner self; it can turn inward and be beside itself. The peculiar nature of the soul is that it is multidimensional and highly mobile"²²

That the soul is multidimensional and highly mobile also comes to expression in the various words used for the soul in the Scriptures. For instance, when the word *heart* is used, it often refers to the desires and motives of the soul. When the word *mind* is used, it often refers to the way the soul thinks and decides. When the word *spirit* is used, it often refers to the way the soul relates to God. Then, of course, there is the *will* or volitional dimension of the soul. This multidimensionality entails we should never reduce the soul to one particular function, but realize the soul functions in a variety of ways. In addition, we should realize that when one function is dominating, the other functions of the soul operate along with this function.²³

The soul not only has multiple functional dimensions, but also many psychological dimensions. The following seven dimensions can be distinguished: First, our soul is an

²² Ibid., 436.

²³ Contra the trichotomist position that posits that human beings consist of three substantial entities: body, soul and spirit. Grenz tries to bridge the difference by speaking of a "substantial dichotomy" and a "functional trichotomy." See Grenz, 158. Since I have distinguished four functions, Grenz's proposal would need to be amended to a "functional tetrachotomy."

enclosed space. Just as our body is an enclosed space, so our soul is an enclosed space too. Within this closed space, we feel, think and relate to God. This closed space is vulnerable (Ps. 116:3). Thus, when it is threatened, we erect walls to protect ourselves. Consequently, we can keep God out of functions of our soul.

Second, our soul is needy and sensitive. Our soul is an enclosed space that seeks to be filled (Mt. 12:43-45). Thus, our soul can thirst or hunger (Ps. 63:1). For instance, our soul can thirst for attention, knowledge, appreciation or love. Consequently, our soul is also sensitive. It can be filled with fear and excitement, but also with deep peace and love. When our soul equates itself with what fills and satisfies it, it is estranged from itself (Eccl. 6:7; Mt. 6:25; 16:26). When our soul is not filled and satisfied with what it thirsts for, we run the risk of filling it with surrogate fillers. When this occurs, our soul is also estranged from itself for in both cases our soul is focused on itself and not God.

Third, our soul wants to live. The core element of your soul is life (Gen. 2:7). Thus, we are born with a strong desire to live. Consequently, our soul wants to grow and express itself. When our soul tries to live on its own, it becomes alienated from itself because it is made to live and move and have its being in God (Ac. 17:28). As a result, a soul cannot save itself, but needs to be saved.

Fourth, our soul is the personal self-representation of our I (Ps. 116:8). However, we are not a victim of what goes on in our soul. As a result, we can reflect upon what goes on in our soul and speak to it (Ps. 42:5; 62:5; 103:1-2; Lk. 12:19-20). Accordingly, we can choose to surrender every function of our soul to God (Deut. 30:19-20).

Fifth, our soul is highly mobile. It can go upward and downward, forward and sideways. Each of these movements, however, is ambiguous. A soul can go upward in

prayer, but also in pride. It can go downward in humility, but also in depression. A soul can go sideways for freedom, but also because of greed. It can go forward in love, but also in bloodthirstiness. Consequently, we should not allow ourselves to be aimlessly tossed to and fro on the movements of our soul, but intentionally focus the functions of our soul on God, always reflecting upon our deepest motives.

Sixth, our soul rests in the (O)ther. Our soul has the capacity to step out of itself. Our soul most dearly longs to be with its lover (S of S. 3:1-4). Being with the other entails personal contact, communion and intimacy. Ultimately, our soul seeks rest in the Other (Ac. 17:27-28). Accordingly, Jesus calls everyone to find rest in Him (Mt. 11:28-30). When we do, we will be one with Him as He is one with the Father (Jn. 17:11, 21, 23). This intimate union, however, will not be attained if we seek God in a consumerist, spiritually materialistic spirit, more for what we can get out of Him than for He Himself.

Seventh, our soul can be lost. We can lose our soul for another and consequently lose it. We can do this negatively through sex, money, attention, power, status, but also positively like Mother Theresa, Martin Luther King, and Gandhi. Positively losing our soul for the other is the heart of the gospel. Losing our soul includes taking down its protective walls, disallowing it to be controlled by its neediness and sensitivity, and losing its tendency to try to save itself. This is not an end in itself but a means to offering our soul in love to the other, making itself into the other's substitute, by feeling, thinking and acting from the perspective of the other's wellbeing. Only this kind of vicarious love will satisfy the soul. We will only be able to give this kind of love if this kind of love has first entered into our soul (1 Jn. 4:7-11).

Excursus three: the soul and “openness to the world”²⁴

This excursus on the soul is of fundamental significance for this study for it shows that a human being becomes the recipient of God’s eternal life through receiving this life into her soul. This is possible because God created human beings with an “openness to the world.” Wolhart Pannenberg defines this “openness to the world” as the “unique freedom of man to inquire and to move beyond every regulation of his existence.”²⁵

This “openness to the world” or this created “plasticity and adaptability” to move beyond our existence suggests a number of things. First, it suggests that human beings do not have their biological “home” in this world, but can always experience their environment in surprisingly new ways. Second, “openness to the world” suggests that humankind has the possibility of self-transcendence and can thus make both this world and Himself an object of his self-reflection. Third, it suggests that the purpose of humankind’s existence transcends biology. Thus, while the purpose of humankind’s existence is embodied in this world, it’s ultimate point of reference lies beyond this world. Fourth, our biological “plasticity and adaptability” suggests that ultimate fulfillment will not be found in this present world, but in the new heaven and new earth. Fifth, our biological “openness to the world” shows that humankind is dependent on some reality that transcends this present reality. This reality is obviously being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of sonship. Long ago, Augustine already articulated this when he

²⁴ I am indebted to Stanley Grenz for this excursus. See his *Theology for the People of God*, 130-132.

²⁵ Wolhart Pannenberg, *What is Man?* trans. Duane A. Priebe (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970), 3. Henri de Lubac speaks of “an openness to the divine” because God is present in nature. Accordingly, de Lubac beautifully states that there is no such thing as “pure nature.” See Henri de Lubac, *The Mystery of the Supernatural*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), 31-42. For the supernatural and theosis, see chapter four, excursus six.

wrote, “You have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they find rest in you, O God.”²⁶

This biological “openness to the world” is important for our study for the general hypothesis of this study deals with ontological dis-embeddedness and embeddedness. The results of this study so far have shown that ontological dis-embeddedness from God has everything to do with humankind willingly dis-membering itself from God. Moreover, it has shown that humankind has the biological capacity for intentional ontological re-membering and re-embeddedness into the God in whom one lives and moves and has its being.

Excursus four: the image of God and the soul

Excursus one noted that the biblical concept of the image of God does not refer exclusively to how humankind *functions* or is manifested exclusively in what it *does*. Instead, glorifying God is an aspect of what it means to be created in the image of God. This implies that there are other aspects to being created in the image of God.

A second aspect of being created in the image of God refers to one’s *relationship* to God. More precisely, it refers to humankind’s capacity to be a partner with God and one another.²⁷ Thus, when this chapter speaks about believers being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit, it is referring to this relational aspect of the image of God.

Humankind is capable of embodying “the internal communion and encounter present within God” because God created it with a soul into which He breathed his Holy Spirit. This refers to the third aspect of being created in the image of God. Not only is there a functional

²⁶ J. J. O’Donnell (ed.), *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*, I.1.1. at <http://ecat.sas.upenn.edu/jod/conf/text1.html>.

²⁷ See, for instance, Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III/1 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1958), 184. Cf. Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 525.

and a relational aspect to being created in the image of God, there is also a *substantive* aspect. While this substantive aspect refers to certain qualities or attributes, such as rationality, volition, affections and morality that mirror those of God Himself, this substantive aspect also includes being created with a soul that functions as one's spirit with which one enters into relationship with God. Thus, the relational view assumes the substantive view.²⁸

B. A relationship re-membered, re-embedded and deepened through the incarnation

Even though God's intention in entering into covenant was to have his covenant community glorify Him by embodying his divine nature in complete dependence upon Himself so that He could generate his Father-Son love in her, she wanted to glorify herself and generate her own life instead. Commenting on eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, Rikk Watts rightly observes, "At issue is whether humans will accept their subordinate status, recognizing only Yahweh as the final source of wisdom, or seek to usurp his prerogatives by trusting in their own ability to understand—that is, to fashion creation and even themselves in their own image and according to their own wisdom."²⁹

Consequently, God's covenant community dis-membered herself from God's Father-Son love and did not glorify Him as she ought by embodying this love to creation. In general, this continued to be the case with God's people in the Old Testament. Thus, time and again,

²⁸ When I write that the substantive view includes humankind having a soul, this does not mean that God is a *di*unity like humankind. On the contrary, God is a *unity*. It does mean, however, that there is an analogy between God *being* Spirit and humankind *having* a spirit. Thus, I do not agree with the attempt to *replace* the substantive view with the relational view. In my opinion, in order for humankind to have a relationship with God, there has to be something *in* humankind that enables it to be able to have this relationship. In other words, the *anologia relationis* assumes the *anologia entis*.

²⁹ Rikk E. Watts, "The New Exodus/New Creational Restoration of the Image of God: A Biblical-Theological Perspective on Salvation" in John G. Stackhouse, Jr., (ed.), *What Does it Mean to be Saved? Broadening Evangelical Horizons of Salvation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 22. One of the words for sin—*pasha*: "to revolt" or "refuse subjection to rightful authority"—would support this. See also the Greek *hubris*: "pride." See, Grenz, 183.

God came with his covenant curses, the ultimate curse being banishment into exile. This heartrending narrative of continued self-glorification through willful dis-membering from the gravitational center of one's life clearly shows that dis-membering only leads to the dis-embeddedness of one's life³⁰

God, however, does not want his covenant community to glorify herself by dis-membering and dis-embedding herself from his Father-Son love and generate her own life. Consequently, He sends his own Son as the representative of his covenant community to glorify Him by embodying Him so that whoever believes in or into Him would have eternal life, i.e., be re-membered and re-embedded into the Trinitarian life of God (Jn. 3:16).³¹ Thus, as the mediator of the covenant, Jesus generates God's own embedded love life into believers and restores the covenantal relationship broken by the Fall into sin by re-membering and re-embedding God's covenant community into the life of the Father (Heb. 1:3; Rom. 5:5; Eph. 4:22-24). Jesus is able to do this because He is not only divine, but also human. He is not only a member of the Trinity, but also a member of the human race. Consequently, Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, could write: "Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . through His immeasurable love, has become what we are, that He might cause us to be even what He Himself is."³² One hundred forty years later, Athanasius would draw out the implication of this statement and write that the Son of God "became man that we might become God."³³ Thus, Jesus could say, "I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one" (Jn. 17:22).

³⁰ This shows how seriously and sincerely members of the covenant need to take their covenant relationship with God and live at the level of relationship that God desires (see, e.g., 1 Cor. 10:1-13). At the same time, God shows his own faithfulness to his covenant promises by continually preserving a remnant for Himself (see, e.g., Heb. 11).

³¹ There appears to be a correlation to believing *into (eis)* Jesus and being baptized *into (eis)* Jesus.

³² Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, V, Preface at http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-01/anf01-63.htm#P8903_2545596.

³³ Athanasius, *On the Incarnation of the Word*, 54:3 at http://www.monachos.net/patristics/athanasius/di_plain_1-26.shtml.

Consequently, living in God's Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit involves being re-integrated in the divine life of the Trinity and revealing the infinite glory of this Trinitarian love in a finite manner again by being partakers of God's divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4).³⁴ This re-membering and re-embedding into the divine life of the Trinity is something that is perceptible and affects one's spiritual senses. One is ravished by God's goodness and begins to taste and see just how good God is (Ps. 34:8).

Yet, the incarnation by itself is not sufficient to restore the covenantal relationship broken by the Fall into sin. As the representative of God's covenant community, Jesus also needs to undo Adam's unfaithfulness and live a perfectly faithful life. Whereas Adam did not remain in God's Father-Son love by accepting his subordinate status, recognizing only God as the final source of wisdom and allowing his life to be generated by Him, Jesus, as the second Adam, remains in this Father-Son love by submitting Himself to his Father, recognizing only Him as the final source of wisdom and allowing his life to be generated by Him (Jn. 5:19; 6:57; Rom. 5:12-21).

However, incarnation and obedience are not in themselves sufficient to restore the covenantal relationship. Since humankind stands condemned because of Adam's fall into sin, as the representative of God's covenant community, Jesus also has to suffer and bear the wrath of God against this sin of the whole human race, stilling this wrath with his death on Calvary's cross. In this way, Jesus makes atonement for God's covenant community, defeats

³⁴ I am indebted to Jos Douma for confirming this connection between John 17:22 and 2 Peter 1:4 in a personal email. For the notion of "reintegration," see Gannon Murphy, *Consuming Glory: A Classical Defense of Divine-Human Relationality Against Open Theism* (Eugene, Ore: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2006), 218.

the devil and enables God's covenant community to live embedded with Him in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.³⁵

Since Jesus manifests the full possibilities of what it means to be a partaker of God's nature, especially when it concerns our capacity to love, this participating in God's nature is a deepening of the relationship that was enjoyed before the coming of Christ.³⁶ In this regard, Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis observes:

Until the coming of Christ, we might say, the depths of our humanness remained in a state of latency. Our knowledge of God and of our human nature must blossom simultaneously. For it is Christ and not ourselves—not even the most heroic and accomplished among us—who embodies the fullness and perfection of human nature.³⁷

The blessing of this restoration was already enjoyed in the Old Testament because atonement for sin and the experience of the Holy Spirit was also possible during that time on the basis of what Jesus would do in the fullness of time. Consequently, even though the reality of the Holy Spirit did not find expression within God's people in the OT to the same extent as it does in the NT, nevertheless also the Old is about the God-with-us and the we-with-God life in Jesus Christ. Thus, Jesus can say that the Old Testament Scriptures testify to

³⁵ For a helpful insight into three models of atonement—the moral-influence model, the model of representative punishment and the Christus Victor model—see Hans Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality, and the Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 115-201. Bonhoeffer begins his classic on Christian fellowship with a chapter on Christian community. Christian community is not something to be taken for granted, but is a gift given by God through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ. It is not an ideal or wish dream that can be constructed, but a reality created by God in Christ in which we may participate not as demanders, but as thankful recipients. See Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together: A Discussion of Christian Fellowship*, John W. Doberstein (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1954), 17-30.

³⁶ We do not have enough information from Genesis 1-3 to be able to assert that Adam and Eve were still infants. See, e.g., Irenaeus who writes, "If, however, any one say, 'What then? Could not God have exhibited man as perfect from beginning?' let him know that, inasmuch as God is indeed always the same and unbegotten as respects Himself, all things are possible to Him. But created things must be inferior to Him who created them, from the very fact of their later origin; for it was not possible for things recently created to have been uncreated. But inasmuch as they are not uncreated, for this very reason do they come short of the perfect. Because, as these things are of later date, so are they infantile; so are they unaccustomed to, and unexercised in, perfect discipline. For as it certainly is in the power of a mother to give strong food to her infant, [but she does not do so], as the child is not yet able to receive more substantial nourishment; so also it was possible for God Himself to have made man perfect from the first, but man could not receive this [perfection], being as yet an infant." *Against Heresies*, IV, 38.1.

³⁷ Leiva-Merikakis, 28.

Him (Jn. 5:39; Rom. 10:4), for He is foreshadowed in Israel, in the return from exile, in political institutions, in individuals, in the rituals of the tabernacle and temple, in signs and visions. When it concerns the types that depict atonement for sin, these types not only point forward to Jesus Christ, but in them the power of Christ is displayed. Otherwise, these types would be an empty show.³⁸

Excursus five: the Fall into sin

This section noted that even though God's intention in entering into covenant was to have his covenant community glorify Him by embodying his divine nature in complete dependence upon Himself so that He could generate his Father-Son love in it, this community rejected God's intent. Instead, it wanted to glorify itself and generate its own life. Consequently, God's covenant community dis-membered and dis-embedded herself from God's Father-Son love and did not glorify Him as she ought by embodying this love to creation. In general, this continued to be the case with God's people in the Old Testament. Thus, time and again, God came with his covenant curses, the ultimate curse being dis-embedded out of the Promised Land and banished into exile. This heartrending narrative of continued self-glorification through willful separation from the gravitational center of one's life clearly shows that self-glorification through separation only leads to the disintegration of one's life.

This shows us that one of the results of the Fall into sin is alienation from God, one another, self and God's creation.³⁹ This is not surprising because the most common Hebrew

³⁸ See Peter Adam, *Hearing God's Words: Exploring Biblical Spirituality* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 119-138.

³⁹ Other results include condemnation, depravity and enslavement.

word for sin is *chatta* which is often translated as “missing the right point.”⁴⁰ Consequently, it can indicate “to lose” as the opposite of “to find” (Prov. 8:35-36). The most common word for sin in the New Testament is *hamartia*, i.e., “missing the mark.” When God’s covenant community misses the mark or miss the point, she is not only guilty, she also lose out because something deep within her is broken as she dis-members and dis-embeds herself from the life of God. Consequently, she alienates herself from the true gravitational center of life. Accordingly, as a dis-membered, dis-embedded community from the communal life of the Trinity, God’s covenant community fails to live out her creational purpose of glorifying God by embodying his divine nature.

This section also noted, Jesus, through his incarnation, life and death, restores and re-integrates his covenant community into her gravitational center again. Jesus begins to heal what was broken by the Fall into sin because being embedded with Christ in the Father through the Spirit of adoption involves being re-membered and re-embedded in the divine life of the Trinity. As a re-membered and re-embedded community, God’s people are able to live out their creational goal of glorifying God by embodying his divine nature through the power of the Holy Spirit.

C. A relationship personally embraced through repentance and faith

In order for God’s covenant community to glorify God by embodying his divine nature, her members need to remain embedded in God’s Father-Son love by personally embracing this love in Christ through repentance and faith. One metaphor used in the Old Testament for repentance is circumcising of the foreskin of the heart (*mul orlah lebab*). A

⁴⁰ Gottfried Quell, *hamartano* in Gerhard Kittel (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 1:271. Cf. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 183.

heart that is uncircumcised is one that is plugged up and no longer receptive to the source of its life because it does not notice that God is the source of its life. Consequently, it has become stiff-necked and non-responsive to the leading and guidance of God (Deut. 10:16). Thus, just as the prodigal son needed to change the attitude or “noticer” of his heart before he was able to decide to return home to his father’s house, so the Israelites would have to change the attitude or “noticer” of their hearts before they would be able to decide to (re)turn to the LORD their God.⁴¹ They needed to cut out of their lives whatever was plugging up their stubborn and unresponsive hearts so that their hearts would be able to notice and respond to the voice of their God calling them to return home.⁴²

The Old Testament, however, not only speaks about the Israelites having to circumcise the foreskins of their hearts so that their “noticer” is changed. It also speaks about God doing this and changing their “noticer” (Deut. 30:6). Moreover, it speaks about the LORD, as an act of a new creation (*bara* [cf. Gen. 1], Jer. 31:22), putting his law in his peoples’ minds and writing it on their hearts (Jer. 31: 33). Furthermore, it speaks about God giving his people an undivided heart and putting a new spirit within them, removing their heart of stone and giving them a heart of flesh (Ezek. 11:19). In addition, it speaks about God putting his Spirit in them and moving them to follow his decrees and being careful to keep his laws (Ezek. 36:27).

In the New Testament, God does this circumcision of the heart or regeneration through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit in a much greater degree than He did in the Old Testament (e.g., Jn. 4:13-14; 7:37-39; Acts 2:14-21).⁴³ Both in the Old and New

⁴¹ For the meaning of “noticer,” see excursus six at the close of this section.

⁴² Helpful in understanding circumcision as an unplugging or removal of that which clogs or plugs up is B. Holwerda, *Exegese Oude Testament [Deuteronomium]* (Kampen: Van de Berg, 1957), 277-280.

⁴³ “Regeneration” is used here both for initial regeneration and ongoing regeneration or conversion.

Testament, God is under no obligation to do this, but does it for the sake of his holy name so that the nations shall know, i.e., notice that He is the LORD (Ezek. 36:22-23; Rom. 2:17-24; 2 Pet. 2:9-10). Thus, God changes the “noticer” of his people so that the “noticer” of the nations is changed.

Through repentance or a change of one’s “noticer,” God’s people can receive God’s Father-Son love into their inner being or soul.⁴⁴ The Scriptures often refer to faith as receiving. For instance, it speaks about receiving the seed of the Sower (Mt. 13:23), receiving the kingdom like a child (Lk. 18:17), receiving Jesus (Jn. 1:12), receiving the Spirit (Jn. 7:39; Ac. 1:8; 8:15, 17, 19; 19:2; Gal. 3:2), receiving the word of God (Ac 11:1), receiving the promise (Rom. 4:13), receiving reconciliation (Rom. 5:11), receiving God’s grace (Rom. 5:17) and receiving eternal life (1 Tim. 1:16).

Receptivity was also the fundamental posture in Jesus’ life. For instance, Jesus says, “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does, the Son does also. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does” (Jn. 5:19-20). Furthermore, Jesus says, “For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it” (Jn. 12:49). The receptive posture Jesus showed towards his Father during his earthly ministry is an extension of the receptive posture He has as the eternally, generated Son of the Father (Jn. 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 Jn. 4:9; 5:18).⁴⁵

Receptivity ought also to be the fundamental posture of the members of God’s covenant community. John indicates this when he writes, “Yet, to all who received him, to

⁴⁴ For the relationship between *metanoia* (repentance) and *nous* (“noticer,” mind), see excursus six. While the word repentance in the Old Testament (*sub*) lays the emphasis on a concrete outward turning, this outward turning is only authentic when it is the fruit of an inward turning of the “noticer.”

⁴⁵ For an able defense of the eternal generation of the Son, see Lee Irons, “The Eternal Generation of the Son” in *The Upper Register* at http://www.upper-register.com/other_studies/monogenes.html.

those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God” (Jn. 1:12-13).⁴⁶ Paul also indicates this when He describes Jesus as the Bridegroom who gives Himself in sacrificial love to his bride, the church, and the church as obligated to receive this sacrificial love by submitting to Christ (Eph. 5:22-33). In addition, Jesus Himself indicates this when He describes Himself as the Vine and the members of his church as the branches who receive their fruitfulness from Him by abiding in Him.⁴⁷ Thus, when keep our “noticer” on Jesus and remain embedded in Him through faith, we receive God’s Father-Son love into our inner being or soul.

Receiving God’s Father-Son love into our soul through keeping our “noticer” on Jesus and remaining embedded in Him through faith involves receiving knowledge (*epignosis*) of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, Peter writes, “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us by his very great promises (*epangelmata*), so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires” (2 Pet. 1:3-4). Consequently, receiving Jesus into our soul appears to find its entry point in the knowledge a person has of Him in his mind.

⁴⁶ F.F. Bruce writes, “To receive him who is the Word of God, then, means to place one’s faith in him, to yield one’s allegiance to him and thus, in the most practical manner, to acknowledge his claims.” See F.F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John: Introduction, Exposition and Notes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 38.

⁴⁷ N.T. Wright writes, “Within Jewish tradition, the vine was a picture of Israel [Hos. 10:1; cf also Ps. 80:8-17; Jer. 2:21; 6:9]. . . Now Jesus is saying that *he* is the ‘true vine’. This can only mean that he is, in himself, the true Israel. He is the one on whom God’s purposes are now resting. And his followers are members of God’s true people—if they belong to him and remain in’ him.” See Tom Wright, *John for Everyone: Part 2: Chapters 11-21* (London: SPCK 2002), 70. Both the Old and New Testament teach that the covenant community is made up of believers and unbelievers as the metaphor of the Vine and the branches indicate (cf. also Rom. 2:28-29). As branches or covenant members were broken off in the old covenant, so branches or covenant members can be broken off in the new covenant (Jn. 15:6; cf. Rom. 11:17-24). From a human perspective, one has to abide or remain in the Vine in order to daily receive eternal life. From God’s perspective, it is God who enables a covenant member to do this. This runs parallel to the Old Testament concept of having to circumcise your heart and having God do this.

This knowledge of Jesus through faith, in turn, is the human avenue that leads to becoming a partaker of God's divine nature.

Excursus six: the mind

The excursus on the soul noted that its multidimensional and highly mobile nature also comes to expression in the various words used for the soul in the Scriptures. One of these words is *mind* that often refers to the way the soul thinks and decides.

The Greek underlying the word *mind* is *nous*. About this word, J. Behm writes that that original meaning of this word is “(inner) sense directed on an object,’ [it] embraces ‘sensation,’ ‘power of spiritual perception,’ ‘capacity for intellectual apprehension.’”⁴⁸ Frederica Mathewes-Green builds on this definition when she writes, “The *nous* is a faculty of *perception*, analogous to your ears or eyes. After you perceive something you might have rational thoughts about it, and you might have emotions about it – but first of all, you just notice it. The *nous* is your ‘noticer.’”⁴⁹ Thus, when the Scriptures speak about the *mind*, they do not immediately refer to rational, intellectual activity, but the capacity for intellectual apprehension. They are referring first to the receptive, registering, noticing function of the *nous*. Rational, intellectual activity that follows is a *reaction* to what was received, registered and noticed. Thus, the *nous* has been compared to an eye that registers impressions. Because of the Fall into sin, the *nous* is darkened so that it cannot receive, perceive and notice well. Thus, it needs to be enlightened. In this context, *nous* is sometimes used interchangeably

⁴⁸ J. Behm, “Nous” in Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 952.

⁴⁹ Frederica Mathewes-Green, “The Jesus Prayer” (Vancouver: Regent College Audio).

with *heart*. For instance, Paul prays that the “eyes of your heart” may be enlightened (Eph. 1:18).⁵⁰

While the *nous* or “noticer” can be compared to an eye, it also literally looks through the physical eyes of the body and controls the body. Jesus alludes to this when He says, “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness” (Mt. 6:22-23). About this text, Davies and Allison write:

Pre-modern people tended to believe that the eyes contain a fire or light, and that this fire or light is what makes sight possible . . . They spoke of ‘the light of the eyes’ (Prov. 15.30 . . .), of eyes becoming dimmed or darkened (Gen. 27.1; 48.10, Deut. 34.7; Lam. 5.17 . . .) and of God ‘enlightening’ or ‘brightening’ the eyes (Extra 9.8; . . .) They imagined that the eye was like the sun, both being senders of rays (2 Sam. 12.11 . . .), and they told stories in which the light or fire of the eyes actually became so intense that it was visible (Dan. 10.6; Rev. 1.14; 2.18; 19.12 . . .).⁵¹

In the light of this premodern, intromission and not the modern, extramission understanding of the eye, Jesus says that “the eye is the lamp of the body.” Because our “noticer” or “inner eye” looks through the physical or outer eyes, this “noticer” or “inner eye” controls the movements of our body. Consequently Jesus says that if your “eyes are good [or single-minded], your whole body will be full of light. But your eyes are bad [not single-minded], the whole body will be full of darkness.” The “noticer” or “inner eye” is always steering our

⁵⁰ Drawn from personal email correspondence with Frederica Mathewes-Green.

⁵¹ W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, Vol. 1, in *The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments* (Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, Ltd., 1988), 635.

body either in the right or wrong direction. It either steers our body towards earthly treasures or heavenly ones (Mt. 6:19-21), the reward of men or of our heavenly Father (Mt. 6:1-18).⁵²

In this light, it is understandable why Jesus says that He is both life and light. Believers not only need new life in their inner, spiritual deadness in order to live embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit; they also need new light in their inner, spiritual darkness to be able to participate in this Trinitarian life. As life, Jesus gives new spiritual life; as light He gives new spiritual eyesight.

Excursus seven: the will

The excursus on the soul noted that its multidimensional and highly mobile nature also comes to expression in the soul functioning as *will*. What actually is the will? John Calvin observed that “Few have defined what free will is, although it repeatedly occurs in the writings of all.”⁵³ He goes on to agree with Origin, Augustine, Bernard of Clairvaux and a few others who locate the will in mind. Jonathan Edwards builds on this and defines the will as “the mind choos[ing] one thing rather than another”⁵⁴ He then adds, “. . . and the mind’s making its choice in that case is properly the act of the will.”⁵⁵ Yet, the mind always chooses according to its desires that are both in the body and the spirit. According to Edwards, “A man never in any instance, wills anything contrary to his desires and desires anything against his will.”⁵⁶

⁵² See Jacob van Bruggen, *Matteüs: Het evangelie voor Israël in Commentaar op het Nieuwe Testament* (Kampen: Kok, 1990), 115-16; Cf. also Davies and Allison, 636-41.

⁵³ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. John T. McNeill (ed.), trans. Ford Lewis Battles, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), II, 2, 4:261.

⁵⁴ Jonathan Edwards, *Freedom of the Will* in Paul Ramsey (ed.), *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), I, 1: 137. I am indebted to Murphy for this section on the will. See Murphy, 126-27.

⁵⁵ Edwards, I, 1:137.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 1:139

If the will is “the mind choosing” and the mind always chooses according to its desires, then it logically follows that the will is never undetermined, uncaused or free for desires are never undetermined, uncaused or free. In this regard, Edwards scholar, John Gerstner, keenly observes:

[The “willful” person] is . . . making a choice according to what seems good to him. But he is not weighing carefully what should seem good to him, in as detached and objective manner as he ought to do . . . he is allowing some rather frothy considerations to have undue weight . . . it’s their weight as motives which determines his choices. Even when it is a foolish choice, it is still a choice based on motives. It may be the wrong kind of choice, but one thing it is not and cannot be (in the sane person) is a choice without any constraining motives or considerations. This normal person, good or bad, is always choosing according to what seems good to him. Maybe what seems good to him . . . ought not to seem good to him. There is a question about his very motives, but there is absolutely no doubt that the strongest motive triggers his will into motion. The will, even in that case, is not really, technically, willful or arbitrary, or acting independently of considerations. That type of thing can never happen in a rational human being. A rational human being never makes a choice of his mere, bare “free will.”⁵⁷

The excursus on the noticing and thinking mind and the excursus on the will is of fundamental importance for this study because it deals with ontological dis-embeddness and re-embeddness. Excursus two already showed that humankind is created with a biological capacity to receive God into one’s inner self. Excursus three showed that this biological capacity involves an “openness to the world” entailing the “unique freedom of man to inquire and to move beyond every regulation of his existence.” Moreover, it showed that this “openness to the world” suggests that humankind is dependent on some reality that transcends this present reality, namely, God.

The excursus on the noticing and thinking mind suggests that humankind’s “openness to the world” is anthropologically located in his noticing mind. If humankind’s noticing mind

⁵⁷ John Gerstner, “A Primer of Free Will,” in John Gerstner, *Primitive Theology* (Morgan, Pa.: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1996), 230.

is focused only on its biological existence, it will continue to live in ontological dis-embeddedness from God. If, however, humankind's noticing mind is focused on the reality of God that transcends its biological existence, it is open to being intentionally re-membered and re-embedded into living with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. In doing so, it experiences the purpose and the joy of its existence.

Moreover, the Scriptures teach us that believers receive the mind of Christ and the affection of Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 2:16; Phil. 1:8). Thus, if the will is the mind acting upon the affections, Jesus is the One who, through the use of our noticing mind, re-members and re-embeds his covenant community into the Father with Himself. Consequently, she is able to live with Him in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

Excursus eight: monergistic regeneration.

Yet, though the will is never undetermined, uncaused and in this sense free, in another sense it is. It *becomes* free when God monergistically regenerates a person. Synergistic regeneration posits that human beings and God work together in the work of regeneration. The part that human beings play is that they accept the grace of God offered to them by their free will.⁵⁸ Put differently, they decide to choose that it's a good idea to be saved and thus allow God's regenerating grace to enter into their lives. Monergistic regeneration posits that human beings do not open the door of their hearts with their free will to let God's grace in, but that God unilaterally opens this door and freely comes into their lives with his regenerating grace. However, when He does, He never violates the human will. Instead, He quickens the will and works through the will in "an existentially all-

⁵⁸ This grace is known as prevenient grace. For more on prevenient grace, see the section dealing with John Wesley in chapter four.

encompassing act.”⁵⁹ Thus, Gannon Murphy rightly notes, “Nothing whatsoever is being done contrary to the will of the person in whom the Spirit moves effectually. Rather, the will too, in connection with a regenerated spirit, is spiritually inclined and given a new object for its affections.” Citing Augustine, Murphy writes, “‘The will’ itself, Augustine observes, ‘is prepared by the Lord.’” Murphy concludes, “Monergistic regeneration is, in short, not a Divine *violation* of the human will, but a Divine *liberation*.”⁶⁰

This monergistic regeneration or monergistic preparing of the will, i.e, the mind acting upon the desires, is also the position espoused by the Canons of Dort. Summarizing monergistic regeneration, the Canons state:

God carries out His good pleasure in the elect and works in them true conversion in the following manner. He takes care that the gospel is preached to them, and powerfully enlightens their minds by the Holy Spirit, so that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God. By the efficacious working of the same regenerating Spirit He also penetrates into the innermost recesses of man. He opens the closed and softens the hard heart, circumcises that which was uncircumcised, and instills new qualities into the will. He makes the will, which was dead, alive; which was bad, good; which was unwilling, willing; and which was stubborn, obedient. He moves and strengthens it so that, like a good tree, it may be able to produce the fruit of good works.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Murphy, 131.

⁶⁰ Ibid. Monergistic regeneration is taught in the Scriptures. See, e.g., Jn. 1:13; 3:6; 8; Mt. 20:15; Ezek. 36:26-27; Rom. 8:29-30; Jn. 6:37, 39, 44, 65; 10: 26; 15:5 Jn 10:26 is an interesting text. Synergistic regeneration posits that a person does not belong to the church or sheep of the Lord Jesus because he or she does not believe. Jesus, however, says that a person does not believe because he or she does not belong to the church or his sheep. Cf. Jn 10:29. See Murphy, 133-34. About Jn 15:1-8, Todd Billings writes, “The emphasis in this Johanine passage is that the human will ‘in itself’ does not cooperate with God—as if it could act and cooperate on its own power apart from God—yet, when the human is ingrafted onto God as the vine, God produces fruit through those human faculties.” J. Todd Billings, “United to God through Christ: Assessing Calvin on the Question of Deification,” *Harvard Theological Review* 98:3 (2005):319 with a reference to John Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will: A Defence of the Orthodox Doctrine of Human Choice against Pighius*, ed. A.N.S. Lane and trans. Graham I. Davies (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 212. Billings adds, “Humanity at its fullest is humanity united to God. As in John, however, this positive principle has a negative corollary: ‘without me you can do nothing.’ (John 15:5). Ibid. When monergistic regeneration liberates the will (the mind acting upon the desires) by instilling new thoughts in the mind and new desires in the heart, one could speak about freedom of the will. See John Feinberg, *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2001), 741.

⁶¹ “Canons of Dort, Chapter III/IV, Article 11” at <http://www.surreycovenantreformed.com/>.

Just to make sure no one misses the point, the Canons continue:

This conversion is the regeneration, the new creation, the raising from the dead, the making alive, so highly spoken of in the Scriptures, which God works in us without us. But this regeneration is by no means brought about only by outward teaching, by moral persuasion, or by such a mode of operation that, after God has done His part, it remains in the power of man to be regenerated or not regenerated, converted or not converted. It is, however, clearly a supernatural, most powerful, and at the same time most delightful, marvellous, mysterious, and inexpressible work. According to Scripture, inspired by the Author of this work, regeneration is not inferior in power to creation or the raising of the dead. Hence all those in whose hearts God works in this amazing way are certainly, unfailingly, and effectually regenerated and do actually believe. And then the will so renewed is not only acted upon and moved by God but, acted upon by God, the will itself also acts. Therefore man himself is rightly said to believe and repent through the grace he has received.⁶²

In this manner, God unplugs or circumcises of the foreskin of the heart so that it is no longer unreceptive to the source of its life. In this way, God puts his Spirit in people's hearts and re-embeds Himself into their lives so that they begin to desire the Lord Jesus Christ. In this monergistic manner, God moves the noticing and thinking mind to act upon these new desires, bringing a person's will in line with his will. In this way, people come to faith by receiving the Lord Jesus Christ Himself into the inner recesses of their souls through faith. As a result, the Holy Spirit re-integrates them in the divine life of the Trinity so that they begin to embody the infinite glory of this Trinitarian love in a finite manner again by being partakers of God's divine nature. Consequently, they experience the intimate embrace of God's Father-Son love as they live embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

⁶² Ibid., Article 12.

D. A relationship enriched by the sacraments

The God-generated covenantal relationship of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit, re-membered, re-embedded and deepened through the incarnation and personally embraced through repentance and faith, is enriched by the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. A sacrament is a "symbol—something we can see, something we can touch, something we do together—that has religious or spiritual significance for a community of faith."⁶³ This is possible because God has structured the universe in such a way that material things point beyond themselves to their Creator. As Donald Ballie says, "[Nothing can be] in a special sense a sacrament unless everything were in a basic and general sense sacramental."⁶⁴ Accordingly, Christ is the archetypal sacrament for He is the image or icon of the invisible God (Col. 1:15).

1. The Sacrament of Baptism

Baptism symbolizes one's entrance into God's covenant community or Christian church where one has been sovereignly embraced by God's Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. Because of God's faithfulness to his covenant promises, his covenant community no longer lives embedded in the realm of sin and death, but is embedded in the realm of grace and life (Rom. 5:12-21). This is the church's new status.⁶⁵ This was also the case with God's covenant community in the Old Testament that was brought out of the realm of sin and death of Egypt and brought into the realm of grace and life in the Promised Land.

⁶³ Gordon T. Smith, *A Holy Meal: The Lord's Supper in the Life of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 24

⁶⁴ Donald Baillie, *The Theology of the Sacraments* (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), 42. Cf. Leonard J. Vander Zee, *Christ, Baptism and the Lord's Supper: Recovering the Sacraments for Evangelical Worship* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity, 2004), 17.

⁶⁵ See N.T. Wright, *The Letter to the Romans: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections in The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), X: 533, 537.

This new status is visibly portrayed when members of God’s covenant community are baptized. When they are “dipped in or under” the water,⁶⁶ they are dipped in or under into Christ. More precisely, they are dipped in or under in Jesus’ death. In fact, they are co-crucified with the Lord Jesus Christ and co-buried with Him in his death. Consequently, the body of sin or the solidarity with sin is broken or has “come to an end.”⁶⁷ It no longer has a legal claim on them to make them do what it wants them to do. As a result, they are now free to walk in newness of life. Likewise, their baptism symbolizes their union or “growing together with”⁶⁸ Jesus’ resurrection. Thus, baptism visibly portrays that “the existence of the covenant community is, as it were, intertwined with that of the Messiah, like two young trees whose trunks grow around one another.”⁶⁹ It is “the representation of the sacred history (*Heilsgeschichte*) which comes to pass between God and man in Jesus Christ.”⁷⁰

This was also the case for God’s covenant community in the Old Testament because she was “baptized” into Moses when she left the old way of Egypt and entered into the new way of life in the desert and the Promised Land (1 Cor. 10:2). Reflecting on being “baptized” into Moses, Lewis Smedes writes:

Being baptized into Moses, then, meant an initiation into the redemptive program of which Moses was the dominant personal figure. . . . But all future generations of Israel were participants in that same redemptive action

⁶⁶ Albrecht Oepke, *bapto, baptizo* in Gerhard Kittel (ed.) *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), I, 529.

⁶⁷ J. P. Louw & E. A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition (United Bible societies: New York, 1996), 13:100.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.193

⁶⁹ Wright, *The Letter to the Romans*, 539.

⁷⁰ Karl Barth, *The Teaching of the Church Regarding Baptism*, trans. Ernest A Payne (London: SCM Press, n.d), 15. Whereas Wright would include the children of the covenant in the representation of this sacred history, Barth would not. For a foreshadowing of this sacred history of being united to Christ, see 1 Cor. 10:1-2. See also N.T. Wright who draws a parallel of the church being in Christ and Israel being in the king. Thus, he writes, “But why should ‘Messiah’ bear such an incorporative sense? Clearly, because it is endemic in the understanding of kingship, in many societies and certainly in ancient Israel, that the king and the people are bound together in such a way that what is true of the one is true in principle of the other.” Wright then illustrates this point with 2 Sam. 19:40-43 and 2 Sam. 20:1. See N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 46-47.

This would be possible because they too were members of the community created by the Exodus and sealed by the crossing over under the cloud . . .

He then adds:

The Passover liturgy contains some illuminating dialogue on this point. It shows how the Jewish individual was to think of himself in terms of the community and to think of himself and his community in terms of its origins in an act of God that took place long before. The youngest person at the Passover celebrations asks, ‘Why is this night different from all other nights?’ And the response is this: ‘We were slaves to the Pharaoh in Egypt and the Lord our God brought us forth from thence with a strong hand and outstretched arm. If the most holy, blessed be He, had not brought our fathers from Egypt, then we, our children and our children’s children, would have been slaved to the Pharaohs in Egypt . . .’ The explanation goes on: ‘In every generation each one of us should regard himself as though he himself had gone forth from Egypt, as it is said (Ex. 13:8),’⁷¹

Thus, understanding what being baptized into Moses meant for the Old Testament covenant community is crucial for understanding what it means for the New Testament covenant community to have been baptized into Christ. Smedes articulates this understanding in the following manner.

The parallel is natural. At the Exodus, God destroyed the power of Egypt to keep Israel in bondage and to destroy it as the covenant community. At the crossing of the Sea, God introduced the people into the new situation. All this was oriented around Moses, the servant of Jehovah. At the cross, God defeated the spiritual powers who otherwise kept God’s people in bondage. At baptism, God initiates individuals into the new community. All this is oriented around Christ, the Servant of Jehovah.⁷²

Smedes concludes:

To talk about “being baptized into Moses” was for Paul a way of saying that one was initiated into the community created through Moses. And this was what is meant by being “with Moses” at the Exodus. Being baptized into Christ has the same pattern of meaning.⁷³

⁷¹ Smedes, *All Things Made New*, 143-44; *Union with Christ*, 103-04.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 104.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 104.

Because God's covenant community as a whole died with Christ and arose with Him, members of this community must consider themselves dead to sin and alive to God. They must "keep a mental record of [these] events for the sake of some future action."⁷⁴ They must remember they are no longer embedded in the old Adam solidarity, but in the new Christ solidarity. Their baptism should remind them of the transition they has made from the realm of the reign of sin and death to the realm of the reign of grace and life because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As Lewis Smedes observes:

When a person has been baptized into Christ's body, he has been identified by God and by the community as a member of the new creation of Christ. He has been taken into the believing, praying, worshipping, witnessing, serving, and expecting community. He has been brought into the communion where Christ's death and resurrection are proclaimed. He is now where the Spirit is at work through the ministries of the community. He is where the bread is being broken and the risen life of Christ shared anew. He is part of the new order of things. He is a member of Christ's body and has Christ as his head.⁷⁵

And he adds:

Baptism does not make faith irrelevant. It makes faith necessary. But baptism has its significance prior to faith and therefore is a visible sign which, along with the gospel, summons us to affirm what God has already affirmed: we are persons who died and rose with Christ.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Louw & Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 29: 4.

⁷⁵ Smedes, *All Things Made New*, 149-50. *Union with Christ*, 107-08.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 111. About the relationship baptism and faith, Smedes writes, "Baptism occurs in a context of faith, communal and personal. The body of Christ believes for, prays for, and loves the baptized person as a member of Christ. That is, baptism occurs in a community where the Lord is at work in His Spirit. The faith of other people, the faith of the community, the faith of his family is the context in which, first of all, a person is baptized. But his baptism needs for its final validity his own affirmation. He must consider himself to be a person who is in fact within the new life order whose Lord is Jesus Christ. He must, that is, *accept* the meaning of his own baptism. He must accept the sign of identification that God and the Church placed on his forehead. . . . A child with water poured on his forehead at play is not by that token baptized into Christ's death. The context of faith, before and after, is the *sine qua non* of a real and effective baptism because it is the context in which the new creation is recognized and accepted." See *All Things Made New*, 151-52; *Union with Christ*, 107-08. Here Smedes argues along lines of Kuyperian presumptive regeneration. Children are baptized on the basis of being presumed to be regenerate. If the opposite appears to be true when they grow up, their baptism is no longer considered to be valid baptism. Contra Smedes, I would say that children are baptized on the basis of God's covenant promises (e.g., they have died and arisen with Christ because they are members of the covenant community created by Jesus' death and resurrection). When members of the church do not respond in faith to these promises, the baptism remains real and valid because it was based on valid promises, but they lose their identification with Christ in his death and resurrection. This is comparable to a branch being broken off a vine

Thus, having died and arisen with Christ is positional reality that is the result of God's covenant promise and a vital reality that is the result of faith. The whole covenant community is positionally embedded in Christ's death and resurrection by virtue of God's covenant promise. Only those, however, who affirm or embrace this Christ-centered covenantal embeddedness through faith and repentance, experience the vitality of this Christ-centered, covenantal embeddedness.⁷⁷

Thus the sacrament of baptism enriches the church's understanding of this covenantal embeddedness. It declares that members of the church belong to a new order of life where, because of his death and resurrection, Christ is Lord. This new order of life involves being embraced by the same love the Father has for the Son and the Son has for the Father. This new order of being embraced by God's Father-Son love is visible in the church, making the church a sign or icon of the coming kingdom of God. At the same time, baptism summons members of the church to notice and affirm in faith what God has already affirmed, namely, that they have been embraced by God's Father-Son love because they were embedded in Christ's death and resurrection.⁷⁸

Excursus nine: being in Christ by virtue of God's covenant promise

This section noted that baptism symbolizes that members of God's covenant community have died with Christ to an old way of life and arisen with Him to a new way new life. It further noted that having been embedded in Christ's death and resurrection is both a positional embeddedness and a vital embeddedness. The whole covenant community

(Jn. 15:6). For this difference, see J. Kamphuis, *An Everlasting Covenant*, trans. G. Van Rongen (Launceston: Publication Organization of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, 1985).

⁷⁷ See excursus nine on being in Christ by virtue of God's covenant promise.

⁷⁸ Smedes, *All Things Made New*, 154; *Union with Christ*, 110-11.

has positionally died and arisen with Christ by virtue of the God's covenant promise. Only those, however, who affirm or embrace this Christ-centered covenantal embeddedness through faith and repentance, experience the vitality of this Christ-centered, covenantal identity.

In my theological tradition, having positionally been embedded in Christ's death and resurrection because of God's covenant promise is known as being (embedded) in Christ by virtue of the covenant promise. In his essay, "The Promise of the Covenant: Some Observations," C Trimp notes:

There is something unusual about the word 'promise.' In our daily conversations 'promise' usually means the pledge to do something in the future. But for the reformers of the 16th century the word had a different meaning. For them, the expression 'God promises' did not primarily point to a future act. Rather, they understood it to mean God speaking in the *present*: God proclaims the good tiding, the gospel of the acquittal in Christ Jesus. God's proclaiming is a speaking with a promise (like the German 'ver-sprechen'). In other words, *ad-dress*, speak *to*, proclaiming the gospel. At the moment of this address the salvation of Christ comes to us, yes, God Himself comes to us with salvation. Hence our custom of speaking about 'salvation in the form of promise,' what we in Holland call the 'belofte-karakter van het heil.'

Trimp then adds:

By this we do not mean that we obtain salvation in the future only. What we do mean is that the salvation of God reaches our heart and life *by means of God speaking to us*. If we take 'promise' to mean the pledge to do something in the future, then the concept of '*fulfilment*' is the corresponding concept. And a 'promise fulfilled' ceases to be a promise. But if we speak about 'promise' in the sense of the 'proclamation of the gospel of Christ,' then the corresponding concept is not primarily '*fulfilment*,' but '*acceptance in faith*.' For faith is listening, listening to the Word spoken by God, and accepting that Word as trustworthy. We are in fact at the heart of the Reformation. God's grace does not reach us in the form of some grace-substance, packaged in a sacrament. God's grace is His favourable disposition towards us. God opens His heart and offers us His love in the Word of His love. I could say: He grants us His grace in His good Word, the gospel.

Trimp concludes:

For in His work of salvation the Lord performed two things: according to 2 Corinthians 5:19, in Christ He was reconciling the world to Himself, *and* entrusted to man the *Word* of His reconciliation. That Word is the gospel: the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith (Romans 1:16).⁷⁹

This observation is important because this chapter noted that baptism symbolizes one's entrance into God's covenant community or Christian church where one has been sovereignly embraced by God's Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. Because of God's faithfulness to his covenant promises, his covenant community no longer is embedded in the realm of sin and death, but in the realm of grace and life because she has died and arisen with Christ. Consequently, God's covenant community participates in a new movement that is rolling towards the new heaven and new earth where all things will be made right and where Christ is all in all. This new status of the church is promised or declared to the whole congregation. Thus, the whole congregation is embedded in Christ by virtue of God's covenantal promise or declaration. This promise or declaration does not first need to be fulfilled in order for it to be true, but *is* already true by virtue of the covenant promise or declaration. This is what Trimp means when he speaks about the "belofte karakter van het heil" or "salvation in the form of promise." And this is what Trimp rightly noted was the heart of the Reformation: "God's grace does not reach us in the form of some grace-substance, packaged in a sacrament . . . [but] God opens His heart

⁷⁹ C. Trimp, "The Promise of the Covenant: Some Observations," in Reimer Faber (ed.), *Unity in Diversity: Studies Presented to Prof. Dr. Jelle Faber on the Occasion of his Retirement* (Hamilton: Senate of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches, 1989), 73-74. What Trimp says can be sustained from the Greek word that is translated "promise." In their article on *epangelo* and its cognates, Schniewind and Friedrich state that *epangelo* means "to indicate" or "to declare." Consequently *epangeleia* means "a declaration." Schniewind and Friedrich further note that Martin Luther uses "promise" for the Hebrew *dabar* and the Greek *lalein* such as in Gen. 18:19. See Julius Schniewind and Gerhard Friedrich, *epangelo* in Gerhard Kittel (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 4, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 576-77, 579.

and offers us His love in the Word of His love. . . He grants us His grace in His good Word, the gospel.”

Yet, what is already true in the covenantal promise or declaration needs to be believed. Faith is the primary correlate of promise, not fulfillment. Thus, when members of the covenant community embrace their being baptismal identity of having been embedded in Christ, their eyes will be opened and they will see that what was already positionally true in the covenantal promise or declaration has become a personal, life-giving reality in their lives.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Someone once illustrated the difference between being (embedded) in Christ by virtue of the promise and by faith in the following manner. He wrote, “There's always a danger in pushing the analogies that the Lord uses too far. But sometimes analogies are useful to explain abstract ideas.” He continued with, “When branches are grafted onto a vine, they do not immediately “take hold” of the vine. I suppose that a horticulturalist must use some kind of cloth or tape to keep the newly grafted branch onto the vine. It is connected to the vine from the outside by means of the cloth. It takes days or weeks before the plant actually “takes hold” of the vine. After one day, if the cloth or tape were to be removed, the branch would fall off because it hasn't taken hold yet. But eventually, it takes hold of the vine. It is no longer connected simply by the cloth, but it “clings” to the vine from within. And when it takes hold of the vine, it begins to draw the nutrients, minerals and water from the vine, and it begins to produce good fruits. If it should happen that a branch doesn't take hold of the branch, then it withers and dies, is fruitless and is cut off. He continued, “In a similar way, our children are grafted into the vine (Christ). By nature they belong to the vine of Adam, but they are cut off from the vine of Adam, and graciously grafted into the vine of Christ. How are they grafted into Christ? They are grafted into Christ by way of promise. Just like a branch is initially grafted to the vine by means of a cloth or tape, so our children are grafted into Christ by way of promise. And that is a rich and wonderful thing. If our children should die in their infancy, we have the comfort of their salvation, for they are saved in virtue of being grafted into Christ by way of promise. They may not have accepted that promise in faith yet. But they are saved nonetheless, because in their infancy their salvation does not depend upon faith, but upon God's promise. But as they grow older, they must be instructed in the Word of God, and their responsibility of reaching out to Christ and embracing Him in faith (cf. Article 22 Belgic Confession) must be impressed upon them. And by instructing them in both the gospel promise and the demand, the Spirit begins to work faith in their hearts. Through this faith, they begin to “embrace Christ”. They take hold of Christ, and so are grafted into Christ by faith (cf. Q/A 20 Heidelberg Catechism) First they were grafted into Christ by way of promise; and later they are grafted into Christ by faith.” He concluded, “Some of our children who are grafted into Christ by way of promise never take hold of Christ. God, in His electing good pleasure, chose not to confer on them the grace of the Spirit and the gift of faith. So even though they were grafted into Christ by way of promise, they do not reach out with the hands of faith and take hold of Christ, the vine. Thus they are fruitless, and they wither and die. And because they are dead and fruitless, they are cut off and become covenant breakers.” See Arthur Van Delden, at co-urc@yahoogroups.com. March 30, 2006.

2. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper also enriches a Christian's relationship with Christ. It does so because this supper is a remembrance of Christ, a communion with Christ and one another, an experience of forgiveness with Christ and one another, a renewal of our covenant commitment with God and one another, a meal at which we feed on the Lord Jesus Christ, anticipate that one day all things will be put right and joyfully give thanks to God.⁸¹

When we remember the Lord Jesus Christ, we enter into the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and have a personal encounter with Him through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 11:24).⁸² Furthermore, we also experience communion with Him, the host, at this meal, and with one another, symbolizing we are not only at peace with God in Christ, but also with one another (1 Cor. 10:14-17).⁸³ Moreover, we experience the grace of forgiveness as the crucified and risen Christ eats with sinners (Mt. 26:26-28). In doing so, we also extend this forgiveness to one another.⁸⁴ In addition, we renew the vows we made when we publicly professed our faith in the midst of the congregation.⁸⁵ As such, we renew our vows to live faithfully as God's covenant people in this world, demonstrating

⁸¹ I am indebted to Gordon Smith for this approach to the significance of the Lord's Supper. See his *A Holy Meal*.

⁸² Smith, 39. For the significance of remembering, see also Dan B. Allender and Tremper Longman III, *Cry of the Soul: How our Emotions Reveal our Deepest Questions About God* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1994), 151-152. Don Carson overlooks this important aspect of personal encounter contained in the biblical notion of remembrance. See Don Carson, "Essentials of Communion: The church has squabbled over many things regarding the Lord's Table, but there are six vital principles we can agree on" in Larry Perkins, "DMN 914 Seminar Outline: Day Three: Discerning the Body—Communion—the Core of Corporate Spiritual Formation," 4-5. For a partial overview over what the word "remembrance" means, see also Donald Bridge & David Phipers, *Communion: The Meal that Unites?* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1983), 20-22.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 48-51. This involves "discerning the body" or the true nature of the church fellowship, which members of the church at Corinth were not doing. Thus, to interpret this phrase as recognizing the real presence of Christ in the elements would be a complete *non sequitur* in the argument. See Richard Hays, *First Corinthians, Interpretation—A Bible Commentary for Preaching and Teaching* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1997), 200.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 59-60, 65-66. See also Leiva-Merikakis, 151.

⁸⁵ Because Smith is in a believer's baptism tradition, he speaks about the renewal of our baptismal vows. Because I am in an infant baptism tradition where we publicly profess our faith in order to gain access to the celebration of the Lord's Supper, I speak of the renewal of the vows made at our public profession of faith.

the future kingdom of God has already broken forth into the present as we embody and live out the values of this coming kingdom (Mk. 14:22-25).⁸⁶ We are able to do this because at the celebration of the Lord's Supper our faith has been nourished and strengthened as we fed on the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in faith (Jn. 6:35-38).⁸⁷

In addition, we are also able to do this because at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, we have anticipated eating at the Marriage Feast of the Lamb. This anticipatory celebration encourages us to continue to live in the broken and discouraging present until Jesus Christ comes again to make all things new and beautiful again.⁸⁸ And so, we continue our journey with joy and thanksgiving because at the celebration of the Lord's Supper we have also joyfully given God thanks for all the good gifts He has provided and given us in the Lord Jesus Christ (Ac. 2:42-47).⁸⁹

Thus, both the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper symbolize how a dis-membered and dis-embedded community has been re-membered and re-embedded into living with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, both baptism and the Lord's Supper encourage God's covenant community to affirm and embrace this re-membering and re-embeddedness in faith.

⁸⁶ Smith, *A Holy Meal*, 70-75.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 82-84. See also Leiva-Merikakis, 154, 156. While John 6 has sacramental overtones, it does not refer to the Lord's Supper as such. The Lord's Supper, however, does refer to John 6. See Jakob Van Bruggen, *Het Evangelie van Gods Zoon: Persoon en leer van Jezus volgens de vier evangeliën* (Kampen: Kok, 1996), 149; P.H.R. van Houwelingen, *Johannes: Het evangelie van het Woord in Commentaar op het Nieuwe Testament* (Kampen: Kok, 1997), 161-62; see also Bridge & Phypers, 17-20

⁸⁸ Smith, 92-95. See also See Bridge & Phypers, 26. See also Larry Perkins, "DMN 914 Seminar Outline: Day Three," 12.

⁸⁹ Smith, 99-105. It is impossible to know the precise form of first century Eucharistic worship. See Bridge and Phypers, 30. According to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "The more thankfully we daily receive what is given to us, the more surely and steadily will fellowship increase and grow from day to day as God pleases." See Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 50.

E. A relationship that affects every aspect of life

The apostle John writes, “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love” (1 Jn. 4:7-8). In writing like this, John teaches that the church is not just a fellowship of faith, but also a fellowship of love. Accordingly, he exhorts the members of the congregation to love one another. He supports this exhortation with three reasons. First, love comes from God clearly teaching that God is the generator of his own love. Second, everyone who loves has been born of God reaffirming that God is the One who moves a person to love Him. Third, everyone who loves knows God teaching that love within the church is a manifestation of having a personal, interactive relationship with God. Moreover, all three reasons are true because God is love.⁹⁰

About God being love, C. H. Dodd has noted:

In the Old Testament there is little or no speculation about the nature of God as He is in Himself. He is known to men in His actions as the Creator of the world, Ruler of mankind, and the King and Savior of His people. History is the field of His self-revelation, and communion with Him is conditioned by obedience to His commands. Accordingly, the Word of God is not primarily the communication of knowledge about the divine nature; it is active energy by which the world was made and sustained, and by which men are called into active fellowship with God in carrying out His purpose. If therefore we ask what God is, the answer must be given in terms of what He does.

Dodd adds:

Now Christianity takes over this Hebrew conception of the ‘living God.’ It is implied in the Gospel teaching about the Kingdom of God; for the idea of the Kingdom of God is essentially dynamic, not static. The Kingdom is something that *comes*, as an event in history. Its coming means that God has acted, for the fulfillment of His purpose. The Kingdom of God came

⁹⁰ For this paragraph, I am indebted to L. Floor, *De leer van Christus: Praktisch commentaar op de brieven van Johannes* (Heereveen: Groen, 2002), 127-29.

with Christ.⁹¹ Consequently, the character of his action is to be discovered from the life, teaching, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. If this is to be put in terms of the ‘Word of God’ (as defined in the Old Testament), it may be expressed in the proposition that ‘the Word was made flesh’ in Jesus Christ. . . The Word of God to men is love [Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 4:9—immediately after 1 Jn. 4:8 which tells us that God is love]; the coming of His Kingdom is an act of love. Hence, if we ask, What is God’s nature? the answer must be given in terms of love. . . [Thus] the Christian, who believes that God loves the world, may define God as love; not meaning thereby to identify God with an abstraction, but meaning . . . that His ‘essence’ is to love.

Dodd concludes:

We are now in a position to say what is implied in the statement ‘God is love,’ over and above what is implied in the statement ‘God loves’ The latter statement might stand alongside other statements, such as ‘God creates,’ ‘God rules,’ ‘God judges’; that is to say, it means that love is *one* of his activities. But to say ‘God is love’ implies that *all* His activity is loving activity. If He creates, He creates in love; if He rules, He rules in love; if He judges, He judges in love. All that He does is the expression of His nature, which is—to love.⁹²

⁹¹ Using this citation does not imply agreement with Dodd’s realized eschatology regarding the kingdom of God. The point of comparison is God revealing Himself in his action.

⁹² C. H. Dodd, *The Johannine Epistles* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1946), 107-110. See also Floor, 129. Contra Nathan MacDonald, “From Augustine to Arminius, and Beyond,” in Tony Gray and Christopher Sinkinson (eds.), *Reconstructing Theology: A Critical Assessment of the Theology of Clark Pinnock* (Carlisle, Cumbria, UK; Paternoster, 2000), 27 who states, “. . . John’s primary concern in 1 John 4 is not to define who God is, but to indicate what love is. . . Thus to explain God’s nature by love, and not love by God’s nature is to seriously misunderstand what John is doing.” MacDonald means that the expression “God is love” means “all that is love, God is.” Murphy adopts this interpretation of 1 Jn. 4:8. In the light of the well reasoned interpretation given by Floor and Dodd of 1 John 4:8, I see no compelling reason to adopt MacDonald’s and Murphy’s interpretation. Moreover, even if John’s primary concern is not to define who God is, but what love is, this does not mean that that his definition of love has no implications for God’s nature. Also contra R. C. Sproul who posits that “God is love” is a Jewish way of saying that God is extremely and profoundly loving in his actions. See R. C. Sproul, *Now That’s a Good Question* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale, 1996), 6. It is unnecessary for Dodd to draw the conclusion that because all that God does is an expression of his nature of love, that “the wrath of God” in Romans 1 does not refer to God’s attitude to humankind, but to “an inevitable process of cause and effect in a moral universe.” See C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, 2nd ed. (London and Glasgow: Collins, 1959), 47-50. Cf. Tony Lane, “The Wrath of God as an Aspect of the Love of God” in Kevin J. Vanhoozer (ed.), *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better: Theological Essays on the Love of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 144. Lane’s thesis that a love that does not contain a hatred of evil (cf. Rom. 12:9 and 10) “is not the love of which the Bible speaks . . . because God’s love itself implies his wrath. Without his wrath God is simply not loving in the sense that the Bible portrays his love.” Ibid., 139. Lane goes on to show how God’s wrath is good for the maintenance of good order in society and for other people. Thus, he writes, “There may be situations, such as with God’s wrath against the impenitent in the final judgment, where wrath expresses love without expressing love for its object.” Ibid. 167. There may be a link here to what was stated in this chapter about God showing wrath to the reprobate “to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory (Rom. 9:22-23). Because the essence of God’s nature is love, the essence of our nature ought to love too. Without love, God would be nothing. Without love,

Augustine derived his doctrine of the Trinity from this majestic fact that God is love. According to Him, because God is love, there must be more than one Person in the Trinity. Thus, Augustine taught that the Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father and the Holy Spirit is the bond of love between them. Moreover, this love is not confined within the Trinity itself, but is the source of all love. Reflecting on God being love (1 Jn 4:8 and 16), Leiva-Merikakis writes, “[This] means that there is nothing in his Being or actions that is not motivated by his desire to give himself and bestow eternal life and bliss—first the Father as eternal source, begetting the Son and breathing forth their Spirit, then the Blessed Trinity coming to dwell within us.”⁹³ Thus, this love of the Father for the Son and the love of the Son for the Father through the bond of the Holy Spirit is a love that by nature is not focused on self, but the other. In short, it emanates or radiates from oneself to the other.

We see the Father radiating this love for his Son at his baptism and transfiguration when He publicly declares that Jesus is the delight of his life (Mt. 3:17; 17:5). Likewise, we see the Father radiating this love for his Son when He gives Him a name that is above every other name that “at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11). We see the Son radiating his love for the Father when He says that He can do nothing by Himself, but only what He sees the Father doing (Jn. 5:19). Likewise we see the Son radiating his love for the Father when He says that his ultimate mission on earth is to glorify or make the Father visible (Jn.

we are nothing either. There clearly is a priority of love because of the essence of God being love. Had Murphy taken that into consideration, he would not have written: “When Pinnock relays the Johannine statement ‘God is love,’ it is not made clear why this assertion should form the locus of our understanding of God’s constituent nature and essence. Following our shared *canonical critical* approach, we might ask why *this* text is supremely privileged over other ‘God is’ texts such as ‘God is King . . . ‘God is holy’ . . . God ‘is’ many things in the *whole* of Scripture, not just love. A reason must be given why love should be made the primary ‘is’ of God if the canonical critical approach demands that the Bible as a constitutive whole be read *analogia fidei* (that is, in the light of other texts).” Murphy, 114-15.

⁹³ Leiva-Merikakis, 129.

12:27-28a). We see the Spirit radiating his love for the Father when He teaches us to pray, “*Abba, Father*” and when He bears witness with our spirits what we are children of God (Rom. 8:15, 16). Likewise, we see the Spirit radiating his love for the Son when He teaches God’s covenant community to confess Jesus as Lord (1 Cor. 12:3).

Each of the three Persons of the Trinity, who radiate their love for one another to one another, invite us into their eternal community of love. Thus, the Father reconciles the world to Himself in Jesus Christ and sending out messengers into the world with this good news of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19). The Son calls human beings to come to Him, learn from Him and receive rest for their souls. The Holy Spirit regenerates human beings, enabling them to see and enter the kingdom of God (Jn. 3:3, 5).

Historically, being invited into the eternal community of love and join them in radiating their love has been referred to as the perichoresis.⁹⁴ In his *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places*, Eugene Peterson describes this as follows:

The dance is *perichoresis*, the Greek word for dance. The term was used by our Greek theologian ancestors as a metaphor to refer to the Trinity. *Perichoresis*, wrote Karl Barth, “Asserts that the divine modes of existence condition and permeate one another mutually with such perfection that one is as invariably in the other two as the other two are in the one.” Imagine a folk dance, a round dance, with three partners in each set. The music starts up and the partners holding hands begin moving in a circle. On signal from the caller, they release hands, change partners, and weave in and out, swinging first one and then another. The tempo increases, the partners move more swiftly with and between and among one another, swinging, and twirling, embracing and releasing, holding on and letting go. But there is no confusion, every movement is cleanly coordinated in precise rhythms (these are practiced and skillful dancers!), as each person maintains his or her own identity. To the onlooker, the movements are so swift it is impossible at times to distinguish one person from another; the steps are so intricate that it

⁹⁴ For two websites devoted to the perichoresis, see <http://www.perichoresis.org/> and <http://www.perichoresis.org.au/index.php>

is difficult to anticipate the actual configurations as they appear: *Perichoresis* (*peri* = around; *choresis* = dance).⁹⁵

Thus, by inviting us into their eternal community of love, the three Persons of the Trinity are inviting us to move or dance with them so that we allow them to permeate and inhabit the different spheres of life through us as they permeate and inhabit one another. The purpose of this movement or dance is the glorification of God through the summing up and gathering together of all things in the new heaven and on the new earth under Jesus Christ who is the heir of all things through whom and for whom they were created (Eph. 1:11; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2).⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Eugene Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 44-45. In their *Greek-English Lexicon*, Liddell and Scott indicate there are two Greek words that look very much alike. The first is the verb *perichoreo* meaning “to go around” with its cognate noun *perichoresis* meaning “rotation.” The second is *perichoreuo* meaning “to dance around” with no cognate noun listed. Thus, there is no philological warrant for suggesting that *perichoresis* means “dance” in classical Greek literature. See Henry G. Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 1393-94. The situation is the same with regard to patristic Greek. Lampe’s *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* informs us that *perichoreo* means “interchange” when used referring to the two natures of Christ and “interpenetrate” when used in reference to the actions of the three Persons of the Trinity. The cognate nouns mean the same. This same lexicon informs us that *perichoreuo* is used as “to dance around” but lists no uses with regard to the Trinity. See G.W.H. Lampe (ed.), *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 1077-78. I am indebted to my supervisor Larry Perkins for these keen classical and patristic Greek observations. See Larry Perkins, “The Dance is Not Perichoresis” (Langley: ACTS, 2006). Karl Barth also uses *perichoresis* in the patristic Greek sense of “interpenetration” and not “to dance.” See Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I/1 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1969), 425. However, because of the current understanding of *perichoresis* as the three Persons of the Trinity dancing with one another, this study uses *perichoresis* to refer to both “interpenetration” and “dancing.” In addition, when this study speaks about God’s covenant community being drawn into this Trinitarian movement or dance, it is not referring to being drawn into the inner movement of the Trinity itself into which no human being can ever go, but the outer movement of the Trinity as this manifests itself in creation and redemption. The mutual indwelling of one another has been compared to our identities being constituted by our relationships with others so that others “dwell” in us and we “dwell” in them. It has also been compared to the past “dwelling” in the present and the future “dwelling” in the present. See Peter Leithart, “The Dance of God, The Dance of Life” at www.leithart.com.

⁹⁶ All things refers to the renewal of all things (Mt. 19:28) for which creation is groaning (8:18-21) because then God’s two creations—his church and his universe—will be unified under Christ. Contra the universalistic interpretation of Markus Barth. See Markus Barth, *The Broken Wall: A Study of the Epistle to the Ephesians* (Chicago: Judson Press, 1959), 110. Cf. John Stott: *The Message of Ephesians in The Bible Speaks Today* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 44. The essence of God being love in the manner as described in this chapter is not at odds with the goal or *telos* of creation being the glory of God. Murphy think that if God created humankind for the purpose of drawing them into his Trinitarian love life that then one can not say that God created humankind for the purpose of glorifying Himself. See Murphy, 114-117. I wonder to what extent this assumption influenced his interpretation of 1 Jn. 4:8 (God is love does not mean that the essence of God is love but that all love is God is). If one takes into consideration that “God’s glory” is a revelatory act and all God’s activity is loving activity (Dodd: “If He creates, He creates in love; if He rules, He rules in love; if He

F. A mysterious relationship

The Scriptures refer to God's plan of salvation as a mystery or a secret. About the use of this word, H. Krämer writes:

In order to understand the term [mystery] properly, the full range of meanings that developed up to the time of the NT must be taken into account. From the Greek concept of μυστήριον [= mystery] comes a strictly esoteric [= private, hidden, secret, supernatural] sense of an experience that is inaccessible to human reason, as well as the theme of life from death. Out of the Jewish tradition comes a less stringently esoteric and the transcendent, humanly inaccessible *mystery* of God, which is historically set in action by God himself in his acts of salvation and judgment in the past, present, and future, which already now has been made evident to the one who is all and will be made evident to all on the last day. In terms of content, μυστήριον [= mystery] refers primarily to the saving acts of God in Christ. . . .

Fundamental to the use of μυστήριον [= mystery] in the NT is the basic meaning of the Greek word: "that which is unspeakable," i.e., inaccessible to natural reason (but accessible to faith). As a result, the term is ambiguous; assertions regarding its specific content must be made on the basis of the respective context. The conceptual tradition of Jewish apocalyptic (the hidden and then revealed *mystery*) plays a prominent role here. The Greek elements that the word bears also must be considered, for they are retained even when the word is a translation for Hebrew terms.⁹⁷

Thus, Jesus says to his disciples that "the secret (μυστήριον) of the kingdom of God has been given to [them]. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables" (Mk. 4:11). Paul proclaims "the mystery of God" and speaks "God's wisdom in a mystery" (1 Cor. 2:1 [NRSV], 7 [NASB]). He writes about the mystery of not all sleeping, but being changed—"in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet" (1 Cor. 15:51-52); the mystery of Israel having "experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the

judges, He judges in love. All that He does is the expression of His nature, which is—to love.") one can conclude that God's glory is the revelation of his loving activity which is the manifestation of his essence of love. This conclusion is possible because the integrative motif of the Scriptures is the communitarian love life of the Trinity embodied in God's covenant community, while the orienting motif of the Scriptures is the eschatological glory of God that is breaking forth into the present through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. Murphy's difficulty appears to stem from the fact that he makes the integrative motif of the Scriptures the glory of God while he should have made the glory of God the orienting motif.

⁹⁷ H. Krämer, *mysterion* in Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider (eds.), *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 2 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990), 446, 449.

Gentiles has come in” (Rom. 11:25); “the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints” and “the glorious riches of this mystery”, which is Christ living in the church, the hope of glory (Col. 1:26-27). He writes about the mystery of God’s will “to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment, namely, to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ” (Eph. 1:9-10); the mystery that “through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 3:3, 6); the mystery of husband and wife becoming one flesh being a symbol of Christ and the church becoming one flesh (Eph. 5:31-32). He writes about “the mystery of godliness”, the Christ event, being undeniably great (1 Tim. 3:16).⁹⁸

As we saw, there are two aspects to the word *mystery*: a Jewish historical aspect and a Greek subjective aspect, both aspects usually being present with the Jewish historical aspect frequently being dominant. With regard to the former aspect, the mystery of Christ and the church becoming one flesh is obviously mysterious because this is a reality that ultimately transcends human understanding. Reflecting on this, Lewis Smedes asks:

How can a person who lived nearly two thousand years ago radically change a human life here and now? How can Jesus of Nazareth *radically* affect us, as persons, to the depths of our being? How can He reach out over the great span of time that divides us from Him and change us so profoundly that we can become ‘new creatures’ in Him?⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Krämer writes, “In 1 Timothy, the formal, somewhat ceremonial use of μυστήριον should be understood in the sense of ‘ineffable [= inexpressible beyond words] ultimate ground (root, basis)’ of a particular conduct.” He then goes on to say that in 1 Tim. 3:16, this inexpressible ground is the Christ-event described in the hymn. See H. Krämer *μυστήριον*, 448. Thus, Christ is not only the embodiment of what godliness is all about. He is also the One who now fills us with his own godliness through his Spirit in a manner that is more easily experienced than described in word.

⁹⁹ Smedes, *All Things Made New*, 7; see also his *Union with Christ*, xi. Elsewhere Smedes writes, “In short, the present reality is the reality of union with Christ. And union with Christ is the experience of people who are introduced into the new age, with Christ as Lord. The remainder of this book attempts to grope inside the mysteries that the idea of union with Christ contains. Groping is the best we can do, but perhaps we will be able to lay our hands on at least some of the outlines of this enormous reality.” See *All Things Made New*, 42; *Union with Christ*, 25.

Reflecting on his own questions, Smedes writes:

Does the Jesus of the past become, in fact, the Jesus of the present? The Apostle Paul says that He does. And this is the difference between His influence and that of any other influential person. He touches us here and now, not merely by the ripples of the historical currents He once set in motion, but by entering into union with us personally. Union with Christ—this is the sum and substance of the Christian person’s status, the definition of his relationship to Jesus, the large reality in which all the nuances of his new being are embraced.¹⁰⁰

Moreover, this relationship between Christ and the church is mysterious, i.e. transcends our understanding because becoming one flesh logically entails a sort of monistic merging of the church embedded with Christ so that our humanity is absorbed into Christ. But this is not so. While we are united with Christ, we are also distinct from Him. These two truths have to be kept in a dialectical tension. According to James A. Fowler, this union involves “living with contradictory opposites and finding completeness and totality only in the counterbalance of the two, allowing a dynamic interchange and interplay of the two concepts to challenge and balance each other.”¹⁰¹ Norman Grubb, the British missionary living at the turn of the 20th century, articulates this dialectical tension and balance as follows: “It is the life of union, the one with The Other, distinct from each other, yet one in each other, interpenetrating.”¹⁰² Elsewhere he writes, “. . . the human self is for ever a container, a co-operator, a manifestor, but never the One in Himself.”¹⁰³

The relationship is mysterious too because the church or a Christian is not in control of God living his life in and through them in Christ through his Spirit, but God Himself is. Our task, according to Fowler, is to “actively make the choice of faith to be receptive and

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 7; Ibid., xi.

¹⁰¹ James A. Fowler, *Union with Christ* (Fallbrook, Cal: CIY Publishing, 2003), 6; see also 15, 16.

¹⁰² Norman P. Grubb, *The Liberating Secret* (Philadelphia: Christian Literature Crusade, 1955), 16

¹⁰³ Ibid., *The Deep Things of God* (Fort Washington: Christian Literature Crusade, 1958), 11

available to all that God wants to be and do in us by the grace-dynamic of the Person and work of Jesus Christ.” According to him, “In obedience we ‘listen under’ the guidance and direction of God’s Spirit to discern His course of action; how He desires to enact His Being in our behavior.”¹⁰⁴ In other words, as others have rightly observed, our task is to pay “absolute, unmixed attention”¹⁰⁵ to the wind of God’s Spirit, enabling us to hear “a new voice sounding from beyond all human chatter.”¹⁰⁶ We should set Jesus always before us and ourselves always before Him listening for the “Word which emerges out of silence”¹⁰⁷ that enables us to see “in time the repetition of the dynamic inner life of the triune God”¹⁰⁸ in the various spheres of life in which we live.¹⁰⁹

III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BEING EMBEDDED WITH CHRIST IN THE FATHER THROUGH THE ADVANCE INSTALLMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A. Identification with Christ

Being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit entails identification between Christ and those who are in Him. While on earth, as the bearer of the Spirit of God, Christ embodied or represented God’s hope for the world by announcing that the kingdom of heaven is near (Mk. 1:14-15). He embodied this hope as prophet, priest and king. As today so also then, there was a lot of spiritual darkness. There

¹⁰⁴ James A. Fowler, *Christianity is not Religion* (Fallbrook, Cal.: CIY Publishing, 1998), 139.

¹⁰⁵ Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace*, repr. ed. (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), 105.

¹⁰⁶ Henri J. Nouwen, *Reaching Out* (New York: Image Books, 1986), 113.

¹⁰⁷ Rubem Alves, *The Poet, The Warrior, The Prophet* (London: SCM Press, 1990), 3.

¹⁰⁸ This illuminating phrase comes from Jonathan Edwards. See Sang Hyun Lee, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), 212.

¹⁰⁹ In the light of the other nine aspects of living with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit, this mystery aspect to union with Christ should not be pushed too hard as to leave us without any understanding and foundation or form an excuse for escapism or the evasion of reality. Thus—as the learning experience workbook demonstrates—practical suggestions can be given to cultivate an intentional, ontological union with Christ that ultimately transcends human understanding.

was considerable religious activity, but very little real faith. As a result, many of them were disoriented as to the meaning and purpose of their lives. In this spiritual disorientation and darkness, Jesus prophetically shone with the light of the gospel of the kingdom, calling the people to believe and follow Him as the orientation point of their lives (Mt. 5-7). At that time, there was also a lot of brokenness, pain, sorrow and need. Jesus served the people in a priestly manner by healing a lot of brokenness, alleviating a lot of pain, giving comfort in a lot of sorrow and filling a lot of need (Mk. 5:1-20). In doing so, He gave the people a foretaste of what life would one day be like on the new earth (Rev. 21:4). Moreover, He paid for the condemnation that their sin created, and the brokenness that it caused. At that time, there was also a lot of injustice because people were enslaved to themselves and the powers of this world. As the people's Messiah king, Jesus broke the power of this slavery by defeating the devil and sin on Calvary's cross (Col. 2:15).

Members of the church share in Christ's anointing (Ac. 2:17; 1 Jn. 2:27). This means that as Jesus fulfilled his messianic or Christ ministry as prophet, priest and king, members of the church fulfill their ministry as prophet, priest and king, too. In this way, Christ draws them into his own life and work and continues his ministry in and through them as they represent Him to our world as He did to his. Consequently, it can be said that Christians are where Christ is and Christ is where Christians are. Karl Barth articulates this when he writes:

If, in the fellowship between Christ and the Christian and the Christian and Christ, it must be maintained . . . that we have an encounter in time between two personal partners who do not lose but keep their identity and particularity in this encounter, then the 'in' must indeed indicate on both sides that the spatial distance between Christ and the Christian disappears, that Christ is spatially present where Christians are, and that Christians are spatially present where Christ is, and not merely alongside but in exactly the same spot.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV/3 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1961), 547. Cf. Smedes, *All Things Made New*, 87-90; 165-171; *Union with Christ*, 63-65; 120-124.

Thus, being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit entails being where the action of Christ is going on. It is doing things together with Christ.¹¹¹

Because being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit entails identification between Christ and those who are in Him, it is understandable that Paul writes, “For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink” (1 Cor. 12:13). Likewise, it is understandable that he writes, “His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms” (Eph. 3:10). In his *The Message of Ephesians*, John Stott comments:

The church as a multi-racial, multi-cultured community is like a beautiful tapestry. Its members come from a wide range of colorful backgrounds. No other human community resembles it. Its diversity and harmony are unique. It is God’s new society. And the many-coloured fellowship of the church is a reflection of the many-coloured . . . wisdom of God.

So then, as the gospel spreads throughout the world, this new and variegated Christian community develops. It is as if a great drama is being enacted. History is the theatre, the world is the stage, and the church members in every land are the actors. God himself has written the play, and he directs and produces it. Act by act, scene by scene, the story continues to unfold.¹¹²

As the church makes the manifold wisdom of God known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, it also makes this wisdom known to the world. And this wisdom is God’s hope for the world because it involves learning to live embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit, the ultimate yearning of humankind and the goal of all of history.

¹¹¹ Smedes, *All Things Made New*, 87-88; *Union with Christ*, 63-64.

¹¹² John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1979, 123-24. If God wrote the play, directs and produces it, then He is also the primary actor.

Excursus ten: Jesus as the image of God and the glory of God

Jesus is the image of God, the radiance of God' glory and the exact representation of his being (Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3). Jesus whole mission on earth was to glorify the Father by shining Him forth and being the Father on display. Thus, Jesus also *functioned* as God's image, representing God by embodying his divine nature. Jesus embodied God's divine nature in the following eight ways.¹¹³ First, Jesus embodied God by withdrawing Himself in order to engage Himself. He withdrew Himself and spent time in isolation in order to be nourished and refreshed through fellowship with his heavenly Father (e.g., Lk. 5:16; 6:12-13; Mk 1:35; Mt. 14:23). Once He had been strengthened in isolation, He entered into the thick of things and engaged Himself with the people the Father placed on his path.¹¹⁴

Second, Jesus embodied God's divine nature by entering into the story of being remembered and re-embedded into the Trinitarian life and resisting the principalities and powers of his day that opposed healing of humankind. Thus, we constantly see Jesus resisting the spiritual leaders of his day who placed all sorts of obstacles in the way of his proclamation of the kingdom of heaven as the new world order (e.g., Mt. 12:1-14; 16:1-12; 21:23-46; 23:1-36).¹¹⁵

Third, Jesus embodied God's divine nature by joining his Father on his journey of remembering and re-embedding and subverting the principalities and powers that opposed this

¹¹³ For the eight points that follow, I am partially indebted to the keen insights provided by Charles Ringma in a course he co-taught with Darrell Johnson called "Evangelism, Globalization, and Cross Cultural Ministry" accessed at www.regentradio.net. Eight ways is not meant to be exclusive, but inclusive. Thus, Jesus may very well have manifested the image of God in more ways than the ones listed.

¹¹⁴ Someone who can help us understand a contemporary spirituality of this double movement of isolation and engagement is Thomas Merton. See Charles R. Ringma, *Seek the Silences with Thomas Merton: Reflections on Identity, Community and Transformative Action* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2003); "Thomas Merton: The Recluse Missioner" at www.regentradio.net.

¹¹⁵ Someone who can help us understand a contemporary spirituality of resistance is Dietrich Bonhoeffer. See, for instance, his *The Cost of Discipleship*, rev. ed., trans. R. H. Fuller and Irmgard Booth (London: SCM Press, 1964) and his *Life Together*. See also Charles R. Ringma, *Seize the Day with Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2000).

re-membering and re-embedding. Jesus exposed the fallen powers of his day for what they were, and announced and embodied a whole different way of expressing power and personal relationships (e.g., Mt. 5-7; 10; 13; 18; 25).¹¹⁶

Fourth, Jesus embodied God's divine nature by liberating those who were oppressed. He demonstrated that God was not only concerned about the personal transformation of individuals, but also about the transformation of families, institutions and urban realities This lies at the heart of his announcement that he had come to usher in the year of the Lord's favour also known as the Year of Jubilee (Lk. 4:19). As such, Jesus was the embodiment of the kingdom of God.¹¹⁷

Fifth, Jesus embodied God's divine nature by assisting the poor. Already in the Old Testament we read that the poor are not to be neglected (e.g., Dt.15:7-8). Likewise, we read that they are not to be treated unjustly (e.g., Ex. 23:6; Dt. 24:14-15). In fact, we read that they are to have special rights and privileges (e.g. Ex. 23:11; Dt. 14:28-29), cared for (e.g. Ps. 82:3-4) and helped generously (e.g. Dt. 15:9-11). Jesus' attitude to the poor is to be seen in the light of this Old Testament context (e.g. Lk. 4:18-19; Mt. 15:32; Jn. 13:29).¹¹⁸

Sixth, Jesus embodied God's divine nature with his prophetic witness. In the Old Testament, prophets were called by God to declare his will to the people. They did this by acting as an intermediary between God and the people (e.g., 1 Sam. 7:9), heralding impending judgment (e.g., Jnh. 3:6) and advocating repentance (e.g., 2 Ki. 17:13) by doing what is good: acting justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with their God (Mic. 6:8).

¹¹⁶ Someone who can help us understand a contemporary spirituality of subversion is Jacques Ellul. See Charles R. Ringma, *Resist the Powers with Jacques Ellul* (Colorado Springs: Pinon Press, 2000).

¹¹⁷ Someone who can help us understand a contemporary spirituality of liberation is Segundo Galilea. See Charles Ringma *Cry Freedom with Voices from the Third World* (Oxford: Lion Publishing, 1998).

¹¹⁸ Someone who can help us understand a contemporary spirituality of assisting the poor is Mother Teresa. See Charles Ringma, *Washing the Feet of the World with Mother Teresa* (Colorado Springs: NavPress Publishing Group, 2004).

Prophets also gave advice (e.g., Zech.. 7:2-3) and encouragement (Jer. 29:4-7). They spoke with the authority of God often announcing their words with “Thus says the LORD” (e.g. Jer. 32:36). Jesus prophetic ministry has to be seen in the light of the Old Testament context. Thus, we read of Jesus understanding Himself as a prophet (e.g. Lk 13:31-35), being anointed by God’s Spirit as a prophet (Jn. 3:34), speaking with the authority of a prophet (e.g. Mk. 1:22; 3:28). In addition, we read about Jesus announcing coming blessing from God (e.g., Jn. 7:37-40) and coming judgment and woe from God (e.g., Mt. 11:20-24). Thus, we also hear Jesus calling people to repentance (e.g., Mt. 4:17) by doing what is good: promoting justice, mercy and faithfulness (Mt. 23:23).¹¹⁹

Seventh, Jesus embodied God’s divine nature with his vulnerability. When God enters into a covenant relationship of love with his people, He constantly has his love spurned and rejected. Jesus shows what the rejection of God’s love is all about when He publicly ministers among the people of God. Constantly He was reaching out to the people in love, but continually this love was misunderstood and rejected by many. The climax of Jesus showing God’s vulnerability was his death on Calvary’s cross. That is where Jesus showed what God’s love for humans ultimately looks like. It is a love that is so strong that Jesus is willing to sacrifice his own life so that those who believe in Him might have life and have it to the full (John 10:10). In addition, Jesus showed his vulnerability in his being tempted as we are in every respect with the exception of sin (Heb. 4:15), his offering up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to God (Heb. 5:7), his having to learn obedience from what he suffered (Heb. 5:8). Moreover we see Jesus’ vulnerability when He is moved with

¹¹⁹ Someone who can help us understand a contemporary prophetic witness is Desmond Tutu. Tutu shows us what it is like to look at a corrupt system from the inside with a biblical worldview about understanding the purposes of God regarding humankind being made in the image of God living together in community. See, for instance, his *Crying in the Wilderness: The Struggle for Justice in South Africa*, ed. John Webster (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982).

compassion (e.g. Lk. 7:13), weeps at Lazarus' tomb (Jn. 11: 35) and weeps over Jerusalem (e.g., Lk. 19:41-44).¹²⁰

Eighth, Jesus embodied God's divine nature by joining God on his journey of re-membering and re-embedding by shepherding the flock of God, seeking the sheep who are lost. Jesus spoke of Himself as being the good shepherd (Jn 10:1-21). In the gospels, we see Jesus enabling people to lie down in green pastures (e.g. Mt. 11:28-30), leading them beside quiet waters (e.g., Jn 4:1-26), restoring their souls (e.g., Mk 2:1-12), guiding them in paths of righteousness (e.g., Lk. 19:1-10), comforting them in the valley of the shadow of death (e.g., Jn 11:25-26), preparing a table for them in the presence of their enemies (e.g. Jn 6:1-13), anointing their heads with oil (e.g. Jn 8:1-11) and pursuing them with his goodness and love (e.g., Lk. 15:1-32).¹²¹

This excursus is important for this study because it shows us what being re-membered and re-embedded into the life of the Father looks like. Consequently when the Holy Spirit re-members and re-embeds God's covenant community into the life of the Father by being a member of the body of Christ, she will embody God's divine nature in a way that is strikingly similar to how Jesus embodied this divine nature.

¹²⁰ Someone who can help us understand a contemporary spirituality of vulnerability is Henri Nouwen. See, for instance, his *Creative Ministry* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1978); *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (New York: Image Books, 1986); *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1989); *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society* (New York: Image Books, 1990); *The Return of the Prodigal: A Story of Homecoming* (New York: Image Books, 1994); *Bread of the Journey: A Daybook of Wisdom and Faith* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997); *Sabbatical Journey: The Diary of his Final Year* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1998); *Finding My Way Home: Pathways to Life and the Spirit* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 2001). See also Charles Ringma, *Dare to Journey with Henri Nouwen* (Colorado Springs: Pinon Press, 2000); *The Seeking Heart: A Journey with Henri Nouwen* (Orleans, MA: Paraclete Press, 2006)

¹²¹ Someone who can help us understand a contemporary spirituality of care is Jean Vanier. See, for instance, his *Becoming Human* (Toronto: Anansi, 1998); *Seeing Beyond Depression* (New York: Paulist Press, 2001); *Drawn into the Mystery of God through the Gospel of John* (New York: Paulist Press Publishing, 2004).

B. The experience of being embedded in Christ and Christ embedded in his body

Being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit not only entails identification with Christ. It also involves the experience of being embedded in Christ. In fact, it is precisely because the church is embedded in Christ that she is able to embody or represent Him and be where He is. Whereas God's people were once embedded in Adam because Adam represented them, now they are embedded in Christ because as the second Adam He represented them (Rom. 5:12-21). More precisely, because Christ represented them, they are embedded in the crucified, risen, ascended and enthroned Christ (Eph. 2:1-10). In his *The Message to Ephesians*, John Stott describes this experience as follows:

Fundamental to New Testament Christianity is this concept of the union of God's people with Christ. What constitutes the distinctness of the members of God's new society? Not just that they admire or even worship Jesus, not just that they assent to the dogmas of the church, not even that they live by certain moral standards. No, what makes them distinctive is their new solidarity as a people who are 'in Christ'. By virtue of their union with Christ they have actually shared in his resurrection, ascension and session. In the 'heavenly places', the unseen world of spiritual reality, in which the principalities and powers operate (3:10; 6:12) and in which Christ reigns supreme (1:20), there God has blessed his people in Christ (1:3) and there he has seated them with Christ (2:6). For if we are seated with Christ in the heavenlies, there can be no doubt what we are sitting on: thrones!¹²²

This is a concrete reality that those who are in Christ can experience every day of their lives. John Stott observes:

Moreover, this talk about solidarity with Christ in his resurrection and exaltation is not a piece of meaningless Christian mysticism. It bears witness to a living experience, that Christ has given us on the one hand a new life (with a sensitive awareness of the reality of God, and a love for him and for his people) and on the other a new victory (with evil increasingly under our feet). We were dead, but have been made spiritually alive and alert. We were in captivity, but have been enthroned.¹²³

¹²² Ibid., 81.

¹²³ Ibid.

Jesus Himself comments on the vital importance of this experience of being embedded in Christ. In John 15:1, He describes Himself as the embodiment of what Israel as the church was supposed to be when He calls Himself the vine and his disciples the branches. He then exhorts his disciples to remain in Him by keeping his commandments so that He will remain in them and his Word will remain in them (Jn. 15:7, 10). Only if they remain in Him can they bear fruit (Jn. 15:4-5). In fact, it is only by remaining embedded in Christ that Jesus' disciples will show themselves to be his disciples (Jn. 15:8).

Paul also highlights the importance of the church being embedded in Christ when he writes, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Cor. 5:17). With his death and resurrection, Jesus Christ created a new situation on earth that is nothing less than a new creation. By having died and arisen with Christ, the church participates in this new situation and can consequently be called a new creation. She no longer lives outside of Christ, living in the flesh, under the law or in sin, but in Christ in righteousness, under grace and in the Spirit.¹²⁴ She is in this new creation *where* dis-membered and dis-embedded people are re-membered and re-embedded into the Trinitarian life of God. This re-embedded new creation has its origin in God's electing love (Eph. 1:4; 2:10).¹²⁵ Lewis Smedes describes this new situation well when he writes:

In all this, I have been trying to suggest that being 'in Christ' means being part of a program as broad as the universe and as deep as life. This new creation is not merely the renewal of individuals, though this must be given its due. . . . The design of Christ's new creation is far too grand, too inclusive to be restricted to what happens in my soul. No nook or cranny of history is too small for its purpose, no cultural potential too large for its embrace. Being in Christ, we are part of a new movement by His grace, a movement rolling on toward the new heaven and new earth where all things are made right and where He is all in all. We are, of course, still vitally a part of history, the

¹²⁴ Smedes, *All Things Made New*, 90-108; *Union with Christ*, 65-78.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 117-26; *Ibid.*, 85-91.

world, and its community. But it is just *this* world which is hastening toward and ‘groaning for,’ not its final annihilation but its final redemption. All that characterizes the old, the passé, the defeated, will be swept out; but what belongs to God will be renewed and reunited in Christ.¹²⁶

Yet, being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit not only involves the experience of being embedded in Christ. It also entails the experience of Christ being embedded in members of God’s covenant community. Jesus often described his relationship with the Father as one of mutual indwelling. This is *how* dis-membered and dis-embedded people are re-membered and re-embedded into the life of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. For instance, He says, “On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you” and “I in them and you in me” (Jn. 14:20; 17:23). Consequently, He says that He draws his life from the Father (Jn. 6:57), knows his Father (Jn. 10:15), is loved by his Father, remains in the love of his Father and keeps his Father’s commandments (Jn. 15:9-10), is given glory by his Father (Jn. 17:22) and is one with his Father (Jn. 17:22).

This mutual indwelling or embeddedness of the Father and the Son is meant to be a template of the mutual indwelling or embeddedness of the Son and his disciples. Thus, as Jesus and the Father indwell and embed one another, so Jesus and his disciples indwell and embed one another (Jn. 14:20; 17:21, 23). Consequently, just as Jesus draws his life from the Father, his disciples draw their life from Him. Moreover, just as Jesus knows his Father, his disciples know Him (Jn. 14:14). Furthermore, just as Jesus is loved by his Father, remains embedded in his Father’s love and keeps his Father’s commandments, so his disciples are loved by Jesus, remain embedded in his love and keep Jesus’ commandments (Jn. 15:9-10). In addition, just like the Father gives glory to his Son, so Jesus gives his glory to his disciples

¹²⁶ Ibid., 127-28; Ibid., 92,

(Jn. 17:22). Likewise, just as Jesus is one with his Father, so may his disciples be one (Jn. 17:22).¹²⁷ In this way, they can embody or represent the Father as his image just as He embodies or represents the Father as his image.

This embodiment of the Father through mutual indwelling or embeddedness occurs through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. Just before Jesus ascended into heaven, He encouraged his disciples and said, “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you” (Jn. 14:16-17). As the Father was active on earth through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament (Gen. 1:2; Ps. 33:6; Job 33:4; 34:14-15; Ps. 139:7-12), so Jesus is now active in his church (and the world) through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament.¹²⁸ This relationship between Jesus and the Spirit is so close that Paul can write that Jesus Christ became a life-giving spirit and the Lord is the Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:17).¹²⁹ Moreover, he can use the expressions “Spirit of God” and “Spirit of Christ” interchangeably (Rom. 8:9). Consequently, he writes that members of the church are sealed in Christ and the Spirit (Eph. 1:13; 4:30), consecrated in Christ Jesus and in the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 1:2; Rom. 15:16), righteous in Christ and in the Holy Spirit (Phil. 3:8-9; Rom. 14:17), have life through Christ and the Spirit (Eph. 2:1; Rom. 8:11), have hope grounded in Christ and the power of the Spirit (1 Cor. 15:19; Rom. 5:5), and no longer

¹²⁷ I am indebted to J. M. Burger for highlighting these similarities. See his forthcoming *Being in Christ* (Kampen: Kok).

¹²⁸ Smedes, *All Things Made New*, 70-77; *Union with Christ*, 49-54.

¹²⁹ N.T Wright comments, “. . . Christ, *already* the last Adam, *becomes* life-giving spirit at the resurrection.” See his *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 33. Contra James Dunn who writes, “As the first Adam came into existence . . . at creation, so the last Adam (as such) came into existence . . . at resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20-2; Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:18). For Paul ‘the resurrection marks the *beginning* of the humanity of the Last Adam’.” See J.D.G. Dunn, “1 Corinthians 15:45—Last Adam, Life-giving Spirit” in Barnabas Lindars and Stephen S. Smalley (eds.), *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament* (Cambridge: University Press, 1973), 140.

are under the law of sin and death, but under the law of Christ and the Spirit (Rom. 10:4; 8:2). Moreover, he commands members of the church to stand fast in the Lord and the Spirit (Phil. 4:1; 1:27), rejoice in the Lord and have joy in the Holy Spirit (Phil. 4:4; Rom. 14:17), live in Christ and walk in the Spirit (Col. 2:6; Eph. 4:3), be called into fellowship of Christ and be blessed with the fellowship of Christ (1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Cor. 13:14). In addition, he writes that he speaks the truth in Christ and in the Spirit (Rom. 9:1; 1 Cor. 12:3).¹³⁰ Jesus proleptically dispensed this Spirit when He breathed on his disciples and told them to receive the Holy Spirit (Jn. 20:22). On the day of Pentecost, He poured out this Spirit from heaven (Ac. 2:33). Paul explicitly refers to this Spirit as the advance installment (*arrabon*) (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14).¹³¹

Paul reflects upon this experience when he writes, “For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:19-20). Consequently, in obedience to God, he now makes known the glorious riches of the mystery of Christ embedded in the church through his Holy Spirit (Col. 1:25-27). In addition, he prays that members of the church may increasingly be rooted and established in this mysterious presence of having Jesus Christ embedded in them through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit and together with all the saints may discover how wide, long, high and deep the love of this mystery of being embedded with

¹³⁰ Smedes, *All Things Made New*, 62-63; *Union with Christ*, 44-45.

¹³¹ For an excellent essay on the Spirit as the advance installment, see Hendrikus Berkhof, “De Geest als voorschot,” in Jean-Jacques Suurmond, *‘Och, ware het gehele volk profeten!’: Charismatische-theologische teksten* (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 1992), 69-84.

Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is (Eph. 3:16-19; cf. Jn. 17:26).¹³²

Excursus eleven: the advance installment of the Holy Spirit

Central to this study is that God's covenant community is embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. It noted that being embedded with Christ in the Father means that God's covenant community participates in the reciprocal love relationship between the Father and the Son. All this happens through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

In order to come to some measure of understanding of being drawn into and participating into the Trinitarian relationship, it is good to remember that from all eternity and for all eternity the Father begets the Son and the Son is begotten of the Father. This means "throughout all eternity the Son draws his life from the Father, and the Father shares his life with the Son."¹³³ Thus, "the first person of the Trinity is the Father of the Son, and the second person is the Son of the Father."¹³⁴ This is the primary movement within the Trinity.¹³⁵

Where is the Holy Spirit in this relationship? According to the Nicene Creed, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.¹³⁶ This is the second movement in the Trinity alongside the primary movement. This second movement is a movement of the Spirit

¹³² When Paul speaks about "being in Christ," this is so-called apostolic shorthand for "being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit." The same applies to "Christ being in him" and "he being in the Spirit" and "the Spirit being in him." In each case, the shorter phrase I shorthand for expressing reciprocal, Trinitarian embeddedness.

¹³³ Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 373.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ See "The Nicene Creed" at <http://www.surreycovenantreformed.com/>. This procession is both an immanent and an economic procession.

that binds the Father and the Son together in love.¹³⁷ Karl Barth has made some insightful comments on this second movement within the Trinity. He writes:

But what is the meaning here of “procession,” . . . It is not accident or carelessness that the concept is one which in itself might also be applied to the origin of the Son from the Father, that therefore it actually does not indicate the differentia of the origin of the Holy Spirit in particular, but really and strictly just asserts that alongside of the generation of the Son . . . the Holy Spirit possesses in God this “somehow” different procession of its own.

He continues:

The peculiarity of this procession compared with the first [i.e., the eternal generation of the Son] may be indicated by the concept of “breathing,” *spiratio*, but, strictly speaking, merely indicated. For how is breathing to be distinguished from generation, if by both is to be indicated with equal unconditionality the eternal genesis of an eternal mode of God’s existence? Would not every thinkable and assignable distinction inevitably lead to the denial once more, either of the divinity or of the independence of the divine mode of existence of the Holy Spirit? The difficulty with which we are here faced is indeed insuperable.¹³⁸

Because the Holy Spirit is the bond of fellowship between the Father and the Son, He is the One who draws God’s covenant community into the reciprocal love relationship between the Father and the Son. Yet, in this life, He only proceeds from the Father and the Son as the advance installment or down payment (*arrabon*) of this bond of fellowship. Just as a down payment on a mortgage is an advance installment of the rest of the money that needs to be paid for a house, so the Holy Spirit is the down payment or advance installment of the

¹³⁷ This does not make the Spirit an impersonal product of the Father and the Son. If it does, then the Son is the personal product of the Father. In both cases, the second and third Persons of the Trinity lose their full deity. If this is not the case for the Son, then this is not the case for the Spirit either. See also the Karl Barth quote that follows.

¹³⁸ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I/1, 543. Barth concludes, “The *ignoramus* which we must admit regarding the distinction between generation and breathing which has got to be asserted, is thus the *ignoramus* which we must admit regarding the whole doctrine of the Trinity” According to Barth, only if God were not God, could a definition be given. See *Ibid.*, 545. It should be noted that Barth speaks of “modes of existence” and not “persons” because he believes that speaking of more than one person in the Trinity undermines his belief that God can have only one personality. Thus, Barth links God’s personhood with his *ousia* rather than with the three *hypostases*. See Stanley J. Grenz, *Rediscovering the Triune God: The Trinity in Contemporary Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 43. My citation of Barth does not imply my agreement with his terminology on this point.

fullness of Trinitarian life that awaits us when we go to be with the Lord at death and when we receive new bodies on the day of the Lord's return. This study intentionally speaks about an *advance* installment and not a *first* installment (although this is also correct) because *first* installment has a *temporal* emphasis while *advance* installment has an *ontological* emphasis. Thus, when this study speaks about the *advance* installment of the Holy Spirit it is intentionally highlighting this ontological aspect of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, this intentional speaking of the *advance* installment of the Holy Spirit also helps in understanding that this advance installment was smaller in the old (administration of the) covenant than in the new (administration of this) covenant. Furthermore, it should be noted that this advance installment of the Holy Spirit is not an impersonal deposit of the Holy Spirit, but the advance installment of the Spirit of sonship or the Spirit of his Son (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6).

C. Conformity to Christ

The significance of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit involves being identified with Christ and experiencing being embedded in Christ and Christ being embedded in his body. It also involves being conformed to Christ, i.e. being conformed to the character and behavior of Christ.

Conformity to Christ is what being re-membered and re-embedded into the Trinitarian life of God *looks* like. Conformity to Christ is the purpose of the Father's love. Thus, Paul writes, "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers" (Rom. 8:29). Conformity to Christ is also the purpose of the Son's work of redemption. Therefore, Paul writes:

For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit (Rom. 8:3-4).

Moreover, conformity to Christ is the purpose of the Spirit's work of regeneration.

Consequently, Paul writes, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Gal. 5:22-23). Because conformity to

Christ is the goal of the Father's love, the Son's work of redemption and the Spirit's work of regeneration, we groan for its full manifestation in the renewal of all things (Rom. 8:23-25).

Likewise, the Spirit groans for the (full) manifestation of this conformity. Accordingly, Paul

writes, "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot

express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit

intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will" (Rom. 8:26-27). Because conformity

to Christ is the reason why the Spirit groans with us, we can rest assured that conformity to

Christ is the reason why all things work together for good for those who love God and are

called according to his purpose, for the reason all things work together for good is conformity to Christ (Rom. 8:28-29).

Conformity to Christ includes being regenerated from living a self-generated life to living a God-generated one by being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. Paul alludes to this when he writes that he is once again in the pains of childbirth for the churches in Galatia until Christ is formed in them (Gal. 4:19).

When members of the church had become Christians, they had received the Holy Spirit and had begun the Christian life by being embedded with Christ in the Father through the

advance installment of the Holy Spirit. Somehow, they had lapsed and tried to live the Christian life by human effort (Gal. 3:1-5). Paul, however, will not let this slide because living the Christian life can only be lived one way and that way is the God-generated way of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. In short, it is living the Christian life through the Spirit of sonship or the Spirit of his Son (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6). This is what conformity to Christ is ultimately about.¹³⁹

Living a God-generated life embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit lies at the heart of the new covenant. Just as the new commandment of love is not strictly speaking a new commandment (Jn. 13:34-35; cf. Lev. 19:17-18), but an enhanced version of this commandment, so the new covenant, strictly speaking, is not a new covenant but an enhanced version of God's one eternal covenant (Heb. 13: 20).¹⁴⁰ This eternal covenant or marriage relationship always remains in existence, but has not always been administered in the same way. Much like a father's relationship with his children remains in existence no matter how old they become, his way of relating to them differs depending whether they are children, teenagers or adults.¹⁴¹ In much the same way, God relates to his covenant people in a different way in the Old Testament than in the

¹³⁹ To try to live the Christian life through self-generated effort would entail that Christ has died in vain (Gal. 2:21). Because Paul does not want this to happen, he labors *again* like woman in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in them (Gal. 4:19). Thus, it is possible for Christians to fall from enabling grace or to refuse to live by what God told Paul, namely, that his (enabling) grace is sufficient for him (2 Cor. 12:9).

¹⁴⁰ J.I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1993), 89. About the new commandment of love, F.F. Bruce writes, "The commandment of love was not entirely new . . . but by his teaching and still more by his example (cf. verses 14, 15 above) Jesus imparted a new depth of meaning to it." And he adds, "When the commandment is taken up and repeated in 1 John 2:7, 8, it is called 'no new commandment, but an old commandment which you had from the beginning', but at the same time 'a new commandment as it has come to be truly in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.'" See F.F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, 294.

¹⁴¹ See J. Van Bruggen, *Annotations to the Heidelberg Catechism*, trans. A.H. Oosterhoff (Winnipeg: Premier, 1991), 15-16.

New.¹⁴²

According to Jeremiah 31, one of the essential features of this new or better covenant is that God will perform a new act of creation and treat his covenant people in a mature, adult manner by embedding his law in their minds and embedding it on their hearts (Jer. 31:31). This was also God's intention in the old covenant (e.g, Deut. 6:30; Ps. 37:31; 119:11), but this never materialized in the lives of most of the people because of their uncircumcised hearts or plugged "noticer." Instead of noticing or realizing that living in the covenant of grace was ultimately a matter of the heart, most people reduced covenant life to a life of external conformity to rules and regulations. In the new covenant, however, this would no longer be the case. As mature adults, God's people would no longer make walking in the ways of the LORD a matter of external conformity, but one of internal motivation as they lived God-generated lives of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. Ezekiel refers to this new covenant reality as having their hearts of stone removed and having them replaced with hearts of flesh. In these hearts of flesh, God's Spirit lives, breathes and generates his people to follow his decrees and be careful to keep his laws (36:26, 27).

Jeremiah also refers to this as all members of the covenant no longer needing to be taught to know (*yada*) the LORD, because they all will know the LORD. This does not mean that in the new covenant there will no longer be any need for academic instruction, because knowing the LORD does not first and foremost refer to this academic knowing through academic instruction. Instead it refers to personal heart knowledge where all members of the

¹⁴² Cf. what was mentioned about the Father active on earth through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and Jesus being active in his church (and on earth) through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament in section III. B: The experience of being embedded in Christ and Christ being in his body.

covenant are personally and intimately acquainted with the LORD.¹⁴³ Just like you do not have to say to people who have suffered first degree burns, “Know pain,” because they are personally and “intimately” acquainted with pain, so in the new covenant there will be no need to say to the people, “Know the LORD,” because they are personally and intimately acquainted with the LORD. Consequently, Jesus can say, “Whenever¹⁴⁴ he [the good shepherd] brings out (or drives out)¹⁴⁵ all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice” (Jn. 10:4). And, “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— just as the Father knows me and I know the Father” (Jn. 10:14-15a). That’s what life is like in the new covenant: as the Father knows Jesus and Jesus knows the Father, so God’s new covenant people know Jesus and the Father because they are embedded together with Jesus in the Father.¹⁴⁶

D. Resting in Christ

Being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit involves being identified with Christ, experiencing being embedded in Christ and Christ being embedded in his body and being conformed to Christ. It also involves resting in

¹⁴³ R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer and Bruce K. Waltke (eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 366:848.

¹⁴⁴ Gr: *hotan* in an indefinite temporal clause means “whenever.” See Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 206.

¹⁴⁵ Gr: *ekballo*: “to drive out.” Leon Morris comments, “It is the word used of expelling the formerly blind man from the synagogue in 9:34 and may form a link between the two narratives. But not too much can be made of this as the sense is different. There the false leaders expelled the men (*sic*: man). Here the rightful shepherd compels the sheep to leave the fold, but for their good. The word does have about it the air of force. Left to themselves the sheep might not go in the right way, but the shepherd constrains them. He uses force if necessary to ensure that their best interests are served.” See Leon Morris, *The Gospel of John in The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 503. The fact that even though the sheep know the Lord they still sometimes need to be driven or “forced” into a certain direction underlines the eschatological nature of the language Jesus uses. See also the next footnote.

¹⁴⁶ Since the description of the new covenant is ultimately an eschatological reality, one should not draw the conclusion from this description that the church in the new covenant today is made up only of believers. This will only be the case when Christ returns. Thus, as the church in the old covenant was made up of believers and unbelievers, so this is also the case in the new covenant. See, e.g., “Infant or Believer’s Baptism: Should We Baptize Our Children?” in Richard L. Pratt, Jr. (ed.), *Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 1931.

Christ. This is how being re-membered and re-embedded into the life of God begins. It is noteworthy that after God created humankind and gave them their task and calling, that the first day after their creation and calling is the Sabbath, the day of rest. Thus, humankind begins its work with a day of rest, not work. In this regard, Karl Barth rightly asks:

Can we really understand the holy day before we have understood the working day and its command, its many commands? Ought not 'rest' to be earned by preceding work? Should not what we say about it be in terms of what has already been said about work? The question may seem obvious but it must actually be reversed. Can we understand the working day, the day of labour in relationship to our fellow-men, or any of its commands, before we have understood the holy day? Can we hear the Law before we have heard the Gospel? Can man view and tackle his own work under the command of God without first as the same command of God enjoins, pausing, resting and keeping holy-day in the sight of God, rejoicing in freedom? Can he value and do justice to his work except in the light of its boundary, its solemn interruption? Is not this interruption the true time from which alone he can have other time? Is not the paradoxical 'activity' of the holy day the origin of all the other activity which seems to have better reason for this designation?¹⁴⁷

This rest points back to the rest God Himself took on the seventh day after He had completed his work of creation.¹⁴⁸ As Derek Kidner points out, this is "the rest of achievement, not inactivity, for [God] nurtures what He creates; we may compare the symbolism of Jesus 'seated' after His finished redemption (Heb. 8:1; 10:12), to dispense its benefits."¹⁴⁹

Since God rested on the seventh day, He commands his covenant people to rest on this day too (Ex. 20:8-11). In fact, God makes the Sabbath a sign of his covenant with them so that they may know that He is the God who is with them to sanctify them. Thus, as the tree

¹⁴⁷ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III/4, 50-51. According to Barth, the Sabbath commandment explains all other commandments or all the other forms of the commandment to love God and one's neighbour. See *Ibid*, 53.

¹⁴⁸ Not the creation of humankind, but the divine rest is the completion of creation. See, Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III/1, 222.

¹⁴⁹ Kidner, *Genesis*, 53. See also Barth who interprets God's resting as "celebrating, rejoicing and in freedom establishing His special lordship over the finished creation." See Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III/4, 53. John Piper's book on future grace would have had a stronger basis if he had anchored the concept of future grace in the Sabbath. The subject index of the book does not even contain this word. See John Piper, *Future Grace: The Purifying Power of Living by Faith in Future Grace* (Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah Publishers, 1995).

of life symbolized that God would continue to generate his own love life into humankind if it would surrender to Him in faith, so the Sabbath symbolizes this same promise if God's people would enter into this life and rest with God in faith on the Sabbath.¹⁵⁰ This should not surprise us because God is the one who carried them on eagles' wings and brought them to Himself. In addition, God is the one who daily fed them with manna so that they would learn to live not in their own strength, but in dependence upon Him (Ex. 16:21-26; Dt. 8:3). Thus, in order to enter into this Sabbath and enjoy its rest, God's people need to rest from their own work and rest in God and his provision (Heb. 4:9). This resting has everything to do with what the Scriptures call the fear of the Lord.

Yet, the Sabbath rest not only points back to the rest God Himself took on the seventh day after He had completed his work of creation. It also points forward to the Sabbath rest at the consummation of human history. About this Sabbath rest, Hermann Friedrich Kohlbrügge writes:

Could God have rested if He had not done all these things with a view to Christ? Or did He not know that the devil would soon spoil all creation, including man? But as God created heaven and earth through Christ or in Christ, so He has created all things with a view to Christ. On the seventh day God was well pleased with His Son. He saw creation perfect through Christ; He saw it restored again through Christ; and He therefore declared it to be finished, and rested.¹⁵¹

Karl Barth rightly comments:

There is no avoiding an eschatological explanation of this rest. God does not only look upon this present of His creation, nor does He only look back to that which He did in creating it. God knows its future. And He knows more, and more gladdening things, about the future of the work which is finished before Him, than is to be seen in the present state of the things themselves, or than the saga can indicate with a description of this coming into being.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ Humankind in paradise thus had a double promise of their lives being generated and supplied by God: the tree of life and the Sabbath.

¹⁵¹ Cited by Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III /1, 222.

¹⁵² Ibid.

Jesus embodies this eschatological rest and pulls it forward into the present. Thus, He calls out to the people of his day, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Mt. 11:28-30). When we enter into this rest through faith, He makes us share in the blessings of salvation He has earned for us by enabling us to rest with Him in the bosom of the Father and rest in the love of this Father-Son relationship (1 Jn. 1:18; Cor. 1:30). Thus, the Christian life of being re-membered and re-embedded into the life of God begins by resting in Jesus Christ and being receptive to the Father's loving activity in Him through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.¹⁵³ In this way, we increasingly discover more of the mystery of the God-generated life of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

IV. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has identified ten characteristics of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. First, being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is an intimate covenantal relationship that the Scriptures compare to a marriage. God generates his own Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit into this intimate relationship or covenant community. God's intention for doing this is that his covenant community will glorify Him as his image, i.e. embody this divine Father-Son love or divine nature through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit to creation. This covenant community would be

¹⁵³ Dan Stone and David Gregory, *The Rest of the Gospel: When the partial Gospel has worn you out* (Corvallis: One Press, 2000), 245-251.

able to do this by remaining embedded in God's Father-Son love through complete dependence upon this love. In doing so, she would experience wholeness and integration because she remained embedded in the gravitational center of its life.

Second, even though God's intention in entering into covenant with a community of people was to generate his Father-Son love in her so that this community could glorify Him by embodying his divine nature in complete dependence upon Him, this community rejected God's intent. Instead of glorifying God by remaining embedded in God's Father-Son love, it glorified itself by separating itself from this love because it wanted to generate its own life. God, however, does not want his covenant community to glorify herself by separating herself from his Father-Son love and generate her own life. Consequently, He sends his own Son into this world who glorifies Him by embodying his divine nature so that whoever believes in or into Him is re-embedded into the Trinitarian life and able to glorify God again by embodying this Trinitarian life through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. This is possible because Jesus took on our human nature by becoming a member of the human race and, as the mediator of the covenant and sacrament or image of God, remained embedded in his Father's love through complete dependence, allowing his life to be generated by the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. Thus, Jesus' incarnation, life and death enables God's covenant community to glorify God by being embedded with Him in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. Since Jesus manifests the full possibilities of what it means to be a partaker of God's nature and embody this nature, being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is enjoyed in a deeper way than it was enjoyed before the coming of Christ.

Third, in order for God's covenant community to glorify God by embodying God's divine nature, her members need to remain embedded in God's Father-Son love by personally embracing this love in Christ through repentance and faith. The receptive posture of remaining embedded in God's Father-Son love through faith was also the posture that characterized Jesus' life. It is precisely through this receptive posture that God's Father-Son love is received into one's inner being or soul.

Fourth, the sacrament of baptism enriches the understanding of God's covenant community of being embraced by God's Father-Son love for it declares that members of God's covenant community are embedded in a new order of life where, because of his death and resurrection, Christ is Lord. This new order is visible in God's covenant community, making this covenant community the sign or embodiment of the coming kingdom of God. At the same time, baptism summons members of God's covenant community to affirm in faith what God has already affirmed, namely, that they have been embraced by God's Father-Son love because they were embedded with Christ in his death and resurrection. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper also enriches the understanding of God's covenant community of being embraced by God's Father-Son love because she is a multifaceted symbol of this love for God's covenant community in the death and resurrection of his only-begotten Son.

Fifth, when God's covenant community remains embedded in God's Father-Son love through faith, this community learns to move or dance with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit because she is interpenetrated with the love of this divine, Trinitarian community. Consequently, as this divine love is not focused on itself, but radiates out from itself, so too the love of God's covenant community radiates out from herself and interpenetrates or permeates the different spheres of life.

Sixth, being embedded in and interpenetrated by the Persons and love of the Trinity and dancing with these three Persons is—although revealed and made known in the Scriptures—a mystery that transcends human understanding. Instead of God’s covenant community merging with Christ in the Father in some sort of monistic manner, she remains distinct from the Father, Son and Holy Spirit even though she is united to them.

Seventh, when God’s covenant community remains embedded in God’s Father-Son love and is interpenetrated by this love, Christ draws this community into his own life and work so that where she is, Christ is too. Thus, she does things together with Christ and represents Him to the world.

Eighth, when Christ draws God’s covenant community into his own life and work, she participates in a new movement that is rolling towards the new heaven and new earth where all things will be made right and where Christ is all in all. The Holy Spirit is the One who draws God’s covenant community into this movement so that she is embedded in Christ and Christ is embedded in her. This mutual indwelling of God’s covenant people being in Christ and Christ being in it parallels the mutual indwelling of the Father in the Son and the Son in the Father.

Ninth, when Christ draws God’s covenant community into his own life and work through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit, through faith her “noticer” is changed so that she conforms to the character and conduct of Christ because she has the “noticer” of Christ. This being conformed to Christ includes being daily regenerated from living a self-generated life to living a God-generated life of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. This is the heart of what living in covenant with God is about and is more characteristic of the new covenant than of the old.

Tenth, the more God's covenant community is conformed to the character and conduct of Christ, the more she learns to rest embedded with Christ in the Father by lying with Him in the bosom of the Father. This is not only a reminder of the Sabbath rest enjoyed in the Garden of Eden, it is also a foretaste of the Sabbath rest that will be enjoyed at the consummation of history. Thus, being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is living the eschatological life in the present.

This chapter also digressed with eleven excursus.¹⁵⁴ The first excursus on the image of God and the glory of God showed how the functional aspect of the image of God and glorifying God or embodying his divine nature are intrinsically connected. The second excursus on the soul showed how God had created human beings in such a way that He is able to enter into their lives with his Father-Son love and embed Himself in their lives. Moreover it showed the multidimensional and highly mobile nature of the soul. The third excursus on the soul and "openness to the world" expanded on what was discovered in excursus three by showing that human beings have been created with a biological capacity to be open to God and be ontologically re-embedded into the Trinitarian life. The fourth excursus on the image of God and the soul showed how the peculiar nature of the soul relates to the substantive and relational aspects of the image of God. The fifth excursus on the Fall into sin showed that one of key effects of this Fall into sin is the dis-membering and dis-embedding of life from the gravitational center of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. The sixth excursus showed how the mind first functions as a noticing mind or perceiving mind that registers before it begins to think about what it has notice, perceived or registered. The seventh excursus on the will showed that the will is the mind choosing according to its desires and is thus located in the mind.

¹⁵⁴ The plural of excursus is either excursuses or excursus.

Moreover, this excursus showed that because the will is the mind choosing according to its desires, there is no such thing as an uncaused or bare free will. The eighth excursus showed that because there is no such thing as an uncaused, bare free will, God regenerates human beings in a monergistic manner. Furthermore, this excursus showed that when God regenerates human beings in a monergistic manner, he does not violate the human will, but liberates it and gives it its true freedom. The ninth excursus showed that God's covenant promise is a covenant declaration that refers to a present reality of being embedded in Christ. The tenth excursus showed eight particular ways in which Jesus manifested being the image of God by embodying God's divine nature. Thus, we do well to look to Jesus for what an embedded spirituality of living with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is about. The eleventh excursus showed because the Holy Spirit is the bond of fellowship between the Father and the Son, He is the One who draws God's covenant community into the reciprocal love relationship between the Father and the Son. Yet, in this life, He only proceeds from the Father and the Son as the advance installment or down payment of this bond of fellowship. This is, however, a guarantee of a fullness of fellowship that awaits God's covenant community.

The identification of these ten characteristics of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit and the digressions by way of eleven excursus enables us to offer a biblical solution to the various forms of affective detachment or dis-embeddedness Christian's experience in their relationship with God. This is important because the general hypothesis of this study is that it appears that many Reformed Christians not only do not experience what living a God-generated life of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is, but

also do not intentionally live this kind of life. Instead of living a God-generated life of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit, many Christians appear to live dis-embedded, self-generated lives. However, going through a ten-week learning experience meant to equip (young) adults to live a God-generated life will serve as a stepping stone in moving them from this kind of self-generated, dis-embedded living to more God-generated, embedded living with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

Yet, since we are not the first to read the Scriptures, we should also listen to the voice of the Spirit as that comes to us in the tradition of the church of all ages. Listening to the voice of the Spirit in the tradition of the church alerts us to potential dangers and points out promising possibilities. Thus, the next two chapters listen to this voice of the Spirit in the various ecclesiastical traditions.