The theology of Clark H. Pinnock and its effect upon Twentieth Century Evangelicalism.

This thesis is submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of

Doctor in Philosophy

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Preface

This thesis is primarily about the contemporary theologian, Clark H. Pinnock, and the theological journey that he embarked upon, which culminated in his unique contribution to the theological enterprise known as Open Theism. I have found his journey as interesting as his final destination, and my purpose is to demonstrate how Pinnock's theological odyssey both contributed to, and reflected, the fundamental changes within the modern Evangelical movement.

I argue throughout this thesis that Pinnock remained an Evangelical all of his life. Whilst many non-Evangelicals appreciated and endorsed aspects of his thinking, this dissertation locates Pinnock firmly within the Evangelical movement from the 1950s until the year of his death in August 2010, and therefore the focus of the thesis is upon Pinnock as an Evangelical theologian.

A further nuance must be added, in that the definition of what Pinnock meant by the term 'Evangelical' must be carefully delineated. In Chapter One, I outline both the common and the minimal beliefs held by all Evangelicals, but Pinnock was the product of an American-Canadian non-establishment Evangelicalism which was embraced by many Evangelicals in the United Kingdom including such groups as the Evangelical Alliance

and the InterVarsity Christian Fellowships (college Christian Unions).[1]

Historically, Evangelicals trace their roots back to the Reformation and, more so for the United Kingdom and American Evangelicals, back to the Puritan era. Puritan religion was, in general, the religion of the Reformed (Calvinist) churches of Western Europe during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.[2] Many Puritans left the Church of England and emigrated to America. Others stayed and remained within the established church, whilst yet others stayed and joined dissenters such as the Congregationalists or the Presbyterians.

From this brief outline, it can be seen that, even from its birth, the Evangelical movement had many different expressions. The historian Mark Noll wrote: "Evangelicalism is too loose a designation to ever have produced a tidy historical record . . . many Evangelicals have been active in mixed denominations where Evangelical emphases exist alongside other convictions."[3]

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[1] David Bebbington writes on how the Evangelical Alliance (EA) was formed in 1846 to bring together worldwide Protestants who were the spiritual heirs to the Evangelical Awakenings of the previous century. Pinnock, as a student in the United Kingdom, was involved with the EA, and remained with them when the ultra-Reformed (Calvinist) churches split from them in 1966 to form their Federation of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC). This was an obvious division within Evangelicalism but the separation was also set against a backdrop of the British Council of Churches covenanting for organic church union by Easter 1980. Neither of the former Evangelical groups wished to participate in that union although there were other Evangelicals who did. All in all, the Evangelical movement had many divisions but Pinnock was most aligned to the form of Evangelicalism that was linked to the EA whilst he was in the United Kingdom.
D. W. Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon & Moody* (Illinois: IVP, 2005), 21.
I. Randal, and D. Hilborn. *One Body in Christ: the History and Significance of the Evangelical Alliance* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2001), 247.

[2] M. M. Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism: A Chapter in the history of Idealism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 3rd Impression 1970.

[3] Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (Illinois: IVP, 2003), Vol. 1, 20.

Pinnock was initially involved with a Puritan legacy that rejected any mixed affiliation, that is with theological liberalism, and which adhered to Reformed (Calvinist) doctrine. However, the Evangelicalism that emerged post eighteenth Century in the United Kingdom resembled European pietism, and from the time of Wesley, pietism was also to play a major part in the development of Evangelicalism.

Pinnock, although starting out as a convinced Calvinist, was soon to become a part of what he would refer to as the 'big tent' of Evangelicalism. He wrote:

> I accepted uncritically post-fundamentalist Reformed Evangelicalism but I came to realise that there was a big tent of Evangelicalism in which many traditions came together - Lutherans, Reformed, Wesleyans, Baptists, Pentecostal and more. It was a movement not a theology, and it was a piety that held it together not a creed.[4]

Pinnock's theological journey moves from the Puritan focus to the Pietist perspective and beyond .Whilst many Evangelicals would not agree that Pinnock's Evangelicalism represents *their* approach; this thesis argues that Pinnock's version is representative of the significant changes within contemporary Evangelicalism.

Finally, although I believe Pinnock has been a catalyst for much good within Evangelicalism, I do consider his work to be very much a theology in progress. In particular, his Open Theism is far from convincing, yet on the other hand his excellent work on the Holy Spirit is rarely acknowledged by commentators. This thesis seeks to elicit those themes that emerged from Pinnock's theology which helped 'new Evangelicalism' become a relevant and meaningful expression of twenty-first century

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[4] B. L. Callen, *Clark H. Pinnock - Journey toward Renewal: An Intellectual Biography* (Indiana: Evangel Pub. 2000), 20- 21.
Throughout this thesis this book will be referred to by the initialism **JTR.**

Christianity, whilst reviewing other proposals by him which were undeveloped and contentious.

Introduction

An Evaluation and Assessment of Clark H. Pinnock's Theology, with particular reference to the Evangelical Movement of the late twentieth century.

This thesis looks at Clark Pinnock's theology and how it has had a major impact upon the reform of the Evangelical movement, particularly those Evangelicals who were influenced by Reformed (Calvinist) belief during the earlier twentieth century. I will show how Pinnock's theology was reflective of the changes within modern Evangelicalism. I will look at what those changes were; why Pinnock thought they were needed; and, the subsequent theological developments that those changes precipitated.

In Chapter One I am going to look at the key features of the reformist thinking that saw him change from being a young, conservative, Reformed theologian into a radical, post-Evangelical Arminian innovator. I will also show how Pinnock's innovations, though welcomed by many within Evangelicalism, were highly controversial within the ethos of the movement. Finally, I will be looking at a lot of the polemics which surrounded his theology. I will show that it was accurate for McGrath to call Pinnock "the catalyst for much rethinking within the Evangelical movement."[5]

I also propose to show in the first chapter how Pinnock's supposed catalytic reforms were embraced by other capable Evangelical theologians who were continuing a rather loose movement for change known as 'new Evangelicalism'. Whilst I will not be concentrating upon 'new Evangelicalism' as a movement, I will demonstrate how

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[5] This comment was made by a leading British Evangelical theologian, Alister McGrath.
Alister McGrath, "Particularist View: A Post-Enlightenment Approach," in *Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World,* eds. D. L. Okholm and T. R. Phillips (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. 1996), 129.

Pinnock's theology, and this movement for change, became inextricably linked and evolved into a clearly defined movement, ultimately identified as Post-Conservative Evangelicalism (PCE).[6] Although concentrating on Pinnock's theological journey, I will show how his theology was in many ways a facsimile of the changes that were occurring within the Evangelical movement of this period. In particular, I will look at how the mutual exchange and internecine struggles between Evangelical theologians, PCE and Pinnock helped shape Pinnock's ultimate thinking.

After relating how PCE evolved, I will then articulate how Pinnock further developed his theology, beyond the thinking of many post-conservative reformers into a radical free-will theological enterprise which became known as Open Theism. Open Theism is the final contribution Pinnock made towards the reform of Evangelicalism. I will explore and clarify the relationship between Open Theism and PCE. The final chapter of this thesis will analyse and assess the unique contribution that Pinnock's theology has made in the reform of twentieth century Evangelicalism.

This thesis will trace Pinnock's journey of Evangelical theological reform from four distinct, but interwoven, aspects. Each aspect is covered by successive and progressive chapters. I will show how there is a chronological link and a theological development both *within* each chapter and *between* each chapter. Although Pinnock's legacy as a theologian is as the originator of Open or Free-will theism, I will show that, whilst that theology is a unique contribution to the broader free-will debate and the contemporary theological enterprise, it is only within the *Sitz im Leben* of Western

[6] Throughout this thesis, PCE will be used as an initialism for either post-conservative Evangelicalism or post-conservative Evangelicals, depending upon the context.

Protestant Evangelicalism that the fuller picture of that which Pinnock sought to achieve can be seen. Pinnock's academic life is firmly located within the ebb and flow of the twentieth century Evangelical debates. This thesis will argue that whilst Pinnock is the innovator of Open Theism, his theology is best appreciated within the context of PCE.

A further, but continuing, question will follow in the wake of each of the four major aspects studied, and that question is whether Pinnock can be considered to be a *bona fide* Evangelical? Did Pinnock achieve his goal of Evangelical reform, or did he ultimately move beyond the parameters of Evangelical belief? I will argue that, in spite of introducing many non-Evangelical concepts and practices, Pinnock maintained the well accepted, but rather reductionist, criteria of the Bebbington quadrilateral of Evangelical priorities.[7]

Pinnock was a prolific writer, and I have had many primary and secondary sources to draw from. He has written key books on each of his major theological topics, and these books have all been re-printed, some receiving prestigious awards. I will be referring to these works throughout this thesis, but especially within Chapters Two to Four. These books record how Pinnock's theological enterprise evolved. Pinnock's key works will be critiqued in depth. I consider his major books to be: *Biblical Revelation: The Foundation of Christian Theology; The Scripture Principle; Tracking the Maze: Finding Our Way*

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[7] T. Gray, and C. Sinkinson eds. *Reconstructing Theology: A Critical Assessment of the Theology of Clark Pinnock* (Cumbria: Paternoster Press),18 n 56.
Bebbington's quadrilateral is looked at in chapter 1:1.
D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A history from the 1730's to the 1980's* (London: Routledge, 1989), 3*ff.*
Pinnock listed a number of sociological definitions for Evangelicalism as *'a loose coalition based on a number of family likenesses'*. He lists these resemblances as a commitment to the biblical message as the supreme norm; belief in a personal transcendent God who interacts with creation and acts of history; a focus on the transforming grace of God in human life, and the importance of mission.

through Modern Theology from an Evangelical Perspective; Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit; The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God and *Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God's Openness*.[8] One further source which should be acknowledged as a major reference is Pinnock's biography. Although the biographer Barry Callen comes from a different perspective and has a different goal to my objectives, the title of his book is a good summary of what this thesis sets out to achieve: Clark H. Pinnock - *Journey Toward Renewal: An Intellectual Biography*.[9]

With this in mind, I will commence Chapter One by looking at the start of Pinnock's intellectual, theological journey and examine the chronological framework from which his theology emerged. The historical setting and the *Zeitgeist* is important within this thesis, particularly once Pinnock's pneumatology began to mature.[10] His theology very much reflected the contemporary Evangelical theological scene. In the first chapter I will focus upon Pinnock's historical development, with him beginning his academic life during the 1950s as a capable and esteemed young conservative Evangelical theological prodigy. I will explore how this particular conservative Evangelical group followed the Calvinist or Reformed paradigm, and how their influence

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[8] C. H. Pinnock, *Revelation: The Foundation of Christian Theology* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971).
C. H. Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle* (Vancouver: Regent College Pub.1984).
C. H. Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze: Finding Our Way through Modern Theology from an Evangelical Perspective* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Pub. 1990).
C. H. Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove: IVP 1996).
C. H. Pinnock, (et al), *The Openness of God: A Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God* (Downers Grove: IVP 1994).
C. H. Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God's Openness* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001).

[9] Callen, *JTR*.

[10] I explore this subject in depth in Chapter Three.

was the preponderant influence at that time, within the American and United Kingdom independent Evangelical movement.[11]

In the Preface, I defined the nuance of Evangelicalism as Pinnock understood it, and I have subsequently used his interpretive grid throughout this thesis. However, in Chapter One, I look at significant academics whose own theological reforms challenged, and ultimately changed, Pinnock's epistemology and ensuing Evangelical theology. These theologians were all reformers, and mainly Evangelicals. Their location within the Evangelical theological spectrum ranges from the mild Evangelical social reforms of Carl Henry to the debatable Evangelical Arminianism of C. S. Lewis.

However, what I will be emphasizing is that these theologians deliberately, or otherwise, became part of a bigger picture for Evangelical reform. They had no idea how far their reforms would reach, and indeed some, like Carl Henry, regretted the process that they had become part of. In contrast, as the dissertation progresses, I will show how Pinnock wanted the reforms to go much further.

Also within Chapter One, I explore how this reform movement was initially simply called 'new Evangelicalism'. I will be tracing the emergence of 'new Evangelicalism' as a movement, and looking at its various metamorphoses into the much more defined development of Evangelical reform known as PCE. Because the man and the movement are intertwined, the relationship between the two will be a recurring theme throughout the thesis. However, the development of the movement, although correlated to Pinnock's

[11] C. H. Pinnock ed. *The Grace of God and the Will of Man* (Minneapolis: Bethany Pub. 1989), 27. Later in his life, Pinnock was to write of this time (the 1950s) within Evangelicalism as the period of the Calvinist hegemony. He wrote that neo-Calvinism enjoyed an elitist position within post-war Evangelicalism on both sides of the Atlantic and was the dominant theology with the Evangelical publishers, magazines, conferences, evangelists and youth organizations:

theology, is only researched with the primary focus of exploring Pinnock's reform of Evangelical theology.[12]

Pinnock's theological journey begins with him as a right wing,[13] Reformed Calvinist Fundamentalist[14] who makes an important step in his journey of reform by embracing the Evangelical Arminian position (which is essentially Wesleyan Evangelicalism).[15] Pinnock confessed that he wished that he had begun his Evangelical journey from a Wesleyan starting point, and I will be looking at how Evangelical Arminianism was the undergirding Evangelical epistemology throughout his theological enterprise. However, such a statement must be nuanced in as much as Pinnock's Open Theism is itself outside of Evangelical Arminian parameters. In the penultimate section of Chapter One, I will critique PCE showing both its continuity, and its discontinuity, with Evangelical Arminianism. I will also show how PCE and Open theists followed a similar trajectory of continuity and discontinuity between themselves.

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[12]George Barna, 2010 "Barna Group Pastor Poll." Available from http:// *www.barna.org.*
It is difficult to assess the theological leanings of Evangelicals, but in a recent survey by the respected American pollsters the Barna Group, it was found that 31% of Evangelical pastors said they were Calvinist or Reformed; 32% defined themselves as Wesleyan or Arminian and the remainder indicated that they were in a state of theological flux.

[13] M. J. Erickson, *The Evangelical Left: Encountering Postconservative Evangelical theology* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press).
Although terms such as 'right or left wing' can be subjective and difficult to standardise, I have chosen to retain these expressions since a key book against Pinnock's theology classified both him and PCE as 'left wing'. Since this work is well quoted by many Evangelicals holding different perspectives I will use this terminology and classify Pinnock as moving from the right to the left.

[14] Again, fundamentalism is a difficult term to find an agreed interpretation on. It is also an emotive term with negative connotations, but nevertheless it is an expression which Pinnock used many times with particular reference to Reformed Calvinism, or paleo-Calvinism, as he preferred to call it. Therefore I will continue to use both terms in reference to that particular group within right wing Evangelicalism.

[15] H. B. McGonigle, *Sufficient Saving Grace: John Wesley's Evangelical Arminianism* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2001).
A leading British Wesleyan scholar, Herbert McGonigle freely uses the expression *'Evangelical Arminianism'* to define both Wesley and his followers, and in contrast to other forms of Arminianism. Other Wesleyan scholars, such as Professors Henry Rack, John Walsh and John Briggs, endorse McGonigle's designation.

As a summary and overview of Chapter One, I propose to show how key Evangelical theologians, and historical theologies within Evangelicalism, helped to set the scene for Pinnock to become a radical, Evangelical theological reformer who forcefully presented his theological agenda for change.

In Chapter Two, I will move from looking at the motivational influences behind Pinnock's epistemology and investigate the specific doctrinal and theological changes that Pinnock made to his earlier theological enterprise. I will begin this chapter by using Bebbington's criteria for the defining of Evangelical belief. In particular, I will look at how Pinnock re-interpreted *The Scripture Principle* as previously understood by conservative Evangelicals throughout the earlier twentieth century. In keeping with that earlier position, Pinnock himself had written a contemporary conservative interpretation *Biblical Revelation*. This book was well received within the conservative community and reveals Pinnock as a young, staunchly convinced Calvinist.

Belief in the Bible as God's revealed word has been a cornerstone of Evangelical faith. To Evangelicals the key to spiritual authority lay within biblical teaching, and was known as the *sola scriptura principle.* As a conservative Evangelical theologian, Pinnock's interpretation of the *sola scriptura principle* led him to analyse and reject modern systems of hermeneutics and biblical criticism which, paradoxically, were to become a feature of his later theology. I will be analysing how Pinnock's belief in the divine nature of Scripture, and a rigid interpretation of what the concepts of total textual infallibility and inerrancy meant, changed with the passage of time.

I will compare Pinnock's conservative *Biblical Revelation* with his later book on biblical authority *The Scripture Principle.*[16] He wrote *The Scripture Principle* as a 'new Evangelical' or more precisely as an Evangelical Arminian, who was well on his way to becoming a PCE. *The Scripture Principle* could not be more different in its style and conclusions to his previous work. I will show how Pinnock wrote *The Scripture Principle* acknowledging the human character of, and subsequent flaws within, the biblical text. Further to this, I will show how, with his changed approach to the humanness of the Scripture Pinnock responded sympathetically, but cogently, towards modern biblical higher criticism. Finally, within this context of a Scripture principle, I will show how he retained, but redefined and reinterpreted, the definitions of inerrancy and infallibility.

Because his new Scripture principle was so radically different to his previous conservative position, I will show how this led to a new positive and eclectic relationship with different non-Evangelical theologians, and their theologies and views. In particular, I will show how Pinnock embraced many of the concepts of narrative theology, even to the point of being classified, by other Evangelicals, as an Evangelical narrative theologian.[17] Pinnock was also influenced by certain concepts of process thinking. I will investigate how this modern theology challenged his understanding of omniscience and God's relationship to the future.

This different view towards the humanness of the text, and the cultural context, led Pinnock to develop his emerging radical Evangelical theology. He began to articulate this

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[16] See footnote 4 for details of these books.

[17] D. Bloesch, "Clark Pinnock's Apologetic Theology," in *Semper Reformandum: Studies in Honour of Clark H. Pinnock,* eds. S. E. Porter and A. R. Cross (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2003), 248.
Donald Bloesch recorded how Pinnock had moved from being a Christian apologist becoming a Christian narrative theologian.

perspective in his seminal book *Tracking the Maze.*[18] This book was reflective of his endeavour to present a 'new Evangelical' approach towards modern theology. In the second part of the chapter, I will explore how the goal of Pinnock's new theological enterprise sought to form a non-foundationalist, postmodern orthodoxy.[19] I will look at a particular aspect of this enterprise, a call from Pinnock to establish a *manifesto for Evangelical critical liberty.*[20] This manifesto was essentially a challenge for Evangelical scholars to work with non-Evangelical academics to obtain the best possible exegesis of Scripture, in order to answer the bigger question of how theology and Scripture could be relevant within a post-modern culture. In moving down this trajectory, Pinnock opened himself up to accusations from fellow Evangelicals of theological accommodation, a charge which will be examined.

Pinnock's more open interpretation of the nature of the biblical text, led him to explore different understandings of God the Holy Spirit as the inspirer of the sacred text. In Chapter Three, I will be exploring Pinnock's pneumatology from a number of angles. I will show how his growing awareness of divine immanence caused him to make a reappraisal of Trinitarian doctrine as generally understood within the Western Church. I will also explore how his increasing understanding of the Spirit coincided with the charismatic awakening at the end of the twentieth century. I will look at Pinnock's *Spirit Christology* which he designated as a much needed balance to *Logos Christology.*[21] His

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[18] See footnote 4 for details.
[19] This was Pinnock's terminology on the dedication page of his *Tracking the Maze.*
[20] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle,* 143.
[21] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 80.
By *Logos Christology* Pinnock meant the interpretation of the Christ event primarily in terms of the divine logos. Pinnock's thesis was that *Logos Christology* had served theology well in the Greek world but he felt it eclipsed other aspects especially *Spirit Christology*; neglecting the Spirit as Creator and the work of the Spirit in relation to Christ.

new concept of the Spirit caused him to locate the major divine event as the Creation rather than the Incarnation. I will explore how, beginning with Creation, Pinnock understood the doctrine of prevenience as the preceding drawing power of God pulling *all* people towards God awareness. Such a perspective does away with any sense of predestination, and certainly rejects the Calvinist doctrine, held by some Evangelicals, of double predestination, that is either election to salvation and eternal life, or election to reprobation and eternal hell. As Pinnock's post-Arminian pneumatology is explored, I will show how this correlated with his growing emphasis upon a universal calling, and a free-will response. This synergism was contingent upon the human agent, and not upon the divine initiative.

I will show how Pinnock agreed with Eastern theologians that the rejection of the filioque was, in reality, also suppression and subordination of the work and ministry of the Spirit. Pinnock was impressed by Eastern Christianity, and used a number of their key concepts, such as perichoresis and theosis. He used them to great effect when he incorporated these doctrines into his Open Theism, and his understanding of the afterlife.

I will be leaving this chapter on the Spirit as a comparatively short section because the role of the Spirit is the bridge between Pinnock's previous Arminianism and his later Open Theism. The role of the Spirit is vital to the understanding of Pinnock's theological enterprise. I will emphasize how his Spirit theology fitted well into the charismatic era and helped him gain general acceptance with many Pentecostal and charismatic Evangelicals. I will show this by focusing on how Pinnock saw in the Charismatic and Pentecostal movements a genuine work of God the Spirit. He saw that they expressed, in part, the outworking of his theology regarding genuine human freedom and Spirit

Christology. What I will also show is how, from this point onwards, Pinnock found in pneumatology, a new expression and theological articulation for his changing views, which he subsequently expressed in the writing of a book on the theology of the Holy Spirit.

Unsurprisingly, this book was well received primarily, but not exclusively, within the Evangelical and Pentecostal and charismatic circles. In Chapter Three I will assess and comment on this book *Flame of Love.* It was at the conclusion of this book that Pinnock asked to be considered as a theologian who could help construct a charismatic theology.[22] This thesis will consider the impact of Pinnock's charismatic pneumatology upon his Evangelicalism, and his later invitation for Pentecostals, and Evangelicals seeking renewal, to opt for Open Theism as their dynamic model of God.[23]

From an Evangelical Arminian starting point, his revised Scripture principle, and his new approach to pneumatology, the building blocks for Pinnock's Open Theism were set in place. Open Theism was the fullness of his theological enterprise.

In Chapter Four, I will analyse Open Theism in two distinct but linking parts. The first part will consider Open Theism as a radical Evangelical revision of the doctrine of God from a post-Evangelical Arminian position. I will show how Pinnock's belief that God was not the *unmoved mover* of Aristotle, caused him to explore and reject much of Augustinian (Calvinist) teaching which he considered too indebted to Aristotelian and Greek thought. Pinnock concluded that much of the influence upon the early established church was based more on Hellenistic influences, particularly Plato and Aristotle, than

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[22] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 240.
[23] Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover,* 18.

upon the biblical account. I look at how Pinnock concluded that belief in a remote, immutable and impassable deity was not his picture of the biblical deity. Such a position did fit into his Openness understanding of God, which he saw as dynamic and relational.

I will show how his philosophical approach to the Openness debate was inexorably linked to the most controversial element of Open Theism, his rejection of the orthodox understanding of omniscience. I will explore how Pinnock saw God as operating within time, and how he believed that God's knowledge of future time was limited to the choices made by the free-will responses of the human agent. This meant that to Pinnock much of the future was unknown, even to God. I will show how Pinnock viewed the future as partly closed and partly open, which I will argue was a flawed, but relevant, argument concerning God and time. This position was called, with much justification, by Richard Rice -a critic of Open Theism- a *seminiscient* view. I will argue that Pinnock's seminiscient position is incompatible with the Evangelical Arminian position, which does believe that divine foreknowledge and freedom of the will are compatible. I will examine Pinnock's argument that there can be no compatibilist free-will if there is to be a genuine human freedom of choice.

To Pinnock an open future also answers certain questions regarding theodicy and the nature of evil, which will also be reflected upon in Chapter Four. All of the key debates regarding Open Theism were articulated by Pinnock in his final book *Most Moved Mover,* which was subtitled as *A Theology of God's Openness.*[24] Subsequently, *Most Moved Mover* will be critiqued.

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[24] See details in footnote 4.

In the second part of Chapter Four, I will examine further ramifications of Pinnock's Openness thinking which were in conflict with previous Evangelical thinking. First of all, I will look at Pinnock's pneumatological Inclusivism, which explores the soteriological question of whether there is salvation outside of Christ. Pinnock adopted a far broader basis for salvation than Evangelicalism had previously allowed for. He compared other religions to the Old Testament status of Judaism and developed a *theology of hopefulness* that saw, in the doctrine of prevenience, a salvific grace which treated sincere seekers from other religions as *holy pagans*. However, I will consider whether such optimism -which Pinnock terms 'cautious Inclusivism'- negates the uniqueness, or even the need, of Christ, or His atonement.[25] Also, I will look at the effect that such thinking has on the missiological endeavour as understood by Evangelicals in the past.

One point I will clearly present is that Pinnock brought Inclusivism onto the Evangelical agenda in a major way. However, I will consider how his emphasis upon the human factor in the *ordo salutis,* and his acceptance of much of the recapitulation theory did not gain him many plaudits from within the Evangelical community. I will consider the argument that Pinnock's Inclusivist thinking diminishes a clear doctrine of harmartiology.

In the final part of Chapter Four I consider the logical progression from Pinnock's Open Theism regarding Inclusivism, namely the post-mortem state. To Pinnock this included Conditional Immortality, or Annihilationism, and not eternal Hell as the final state of the unrepentant sinner. I will show how Pinnock built on the work of the British

[25] Section 4:8 considers Pinnock and the different theories of the atonement.

scholars John Wenham and John Stott in order to challenge Evangelicals to reject such a doctrine. I will show how such a position fitted into Pinnock's optimism regarding salvation, but I will also consider how different Pinnock's re-working of the doctrine of hell was from established Evangelical belief.

This thesis concludes with Chapter Five where I will summarize and assess how the building blocks of Pinnock's theology, as set out in each of the four previous chapters, came to a confluence in his Open Theism. I will then consider the effect of Pinnock's theological enterprise upon Evangelicalism, and I will reflect as to whether Pinnock achieved his stated goal of Evangelical reform. Finally, I will argue that I consider Pinnock as a contemporary Evangelical reformer and not a former Evangelical turned liberal theologian nor a heresiarch.

This thesis acknowledges that Pinnock has been a force for good in the reform of the contemporary Evangelical movement. However, from an Evangelical perspective his work is far from finished and his theories are in need of much more work by future Evangelical theologians. Nevertheless, Pinnock has introduced concepts and ideas into the Evangelical agenda that are ground-breaking for greater dialogue within the broader Christian community, and the furtherance of the whole Christian theological enterprise. It would be a tragedy if Pinnock's legacy was solely for him to be remembered as the instigator of a rather controversial Open Theism. His contribution to contemporary theology has been immense as this thesis now explores.

Chapter One

Chapter One

1:1 Pinnock's Evangelical Background and the precursors to his theological enterprise.

The focus of this thesis is an evaluation and assessment of Clark H. Pinnock's theology with particular reference to the Evangelical movement of the late twentieth century.

Donald Bloesch described Evangelical theology as a *theologia viatorum* (a theology of wayfarers) not a *theologia comprehensorum* (a theology of those who have arrived conceptually).[26] The term 'pilgrim theology' was a popular phrase within Reformed and Lutheran systems.[27] Clark H. Pinnock's pilgrim theology was undoubtedly an Evangelical *theologia viatorum*. His biographer Barry Callen entitled his book on Pinnock as a *Journey Towards Renewal.*[28] Pinnock became well known for progressing and changing contemporary Evangelical theology, as he himself journeyed and changed. His journey has taken him a long way from his initial Canadian conservative Evangelical roots, to his post-Arminian Open Theism.

The history of Pinnock's theological odyssey is a microcosm of the history of the second half of twentieth century Western Evangelicalism. Pinnock began his theological journey at one end of the Evangelical spectrum in Reformed Calvinism and mid- career he moved to the opposite end becoming an Evangelical Arminian.[29] By the close of the

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[26] D. G. Bloesch, "Essentials of Evangelical theology" Volume 1. *God, Authority and Salvation* (San Francisco: Harper, 1982), 19.
[27] J. Piper, J. Taylor, and P. K. Helseth, *Beyond the Bounds. Open Theism and the Understanding of Christianity* (Illinois: Crossway Books Pub. 2003), 211.
[28] Callen, *JTR.*
[29] Both of these topics (Reformed Calvinism and Evangelical Arminianism) are looked at in depth in sub-sections of this chapter.

century his theology had moved beyond the boundaries of Arminianism and had become a recognized leader of the contemporary Evangelical reform movement known as Post-Conservative Evangelicalism – PCE. Once again his own unique contribution to the theological enterprise went beyond PCE and evolved into Open Theism.

Throughout this thesis, I define contemporary Evangelicalism as Evangelicalism from the 1950's until the present day. This time span coincides with Pinnock's adult life (born 1937, died 2010). Pinnock has mirrored many of the key changes within contemporary Evangelicalism in his personal theological journey. Both Evangelicalism in general and Pinnock in particular have swung from a rather rigid theological conservatism, to a more open and charismatic position.

However, an important nuance must be added, Pinnock was seen by many fellow Evangelicals[30] as not simply reflecting moderate Evangelical change but as going well beyond any Evangelical boundaries, particularly in the articulation of his Open Theism. Whether Pinnock should be regarded as a bona fide Evangelical is explored throughout this thesis. Pinnock is adamant that he has sought nothing other than Evangelical reform, for a better articulation of the Christian faith.

Traditionally, Evangelicalism has found its doctrinal spectrum between the two historical points of Reformed Calvinism and Evangelical Arminianism. Pinnock's career

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[30] Pinnock by denominational affiliation has remained an Evangelical Baptist. Amongst his leading Baptist critics are Roger R. Nicole a native Swiss Reformed theologian and Emeritus Professor of Theology. He is a leading Baptist academic who presented the charges against Pinnock calling for his expulsion from the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) in 2003. Bruce Ware the Associate Dean at the Southern Baptist Seminary is another critic who has written an acclaimed critique of Open Theism *God's Lesser Glory* (2002). A further Baptist critic is Millard Erickson an ordained Baptist minister and theologian has written extensively against Pinnock's Open Theism in such books as *The Evangelical Left* (1997) and *What Does God know?* (2003). Finally and probably the most notable critic is a former Baptist pastor the leading Evangelical theologian and author Don Carson is included.

has spanned this spectrum but after embracing Evangelical Arminianism, he developed his unique Open Theism which went beyond the boundaries of Evangelical Arminian thinking. I propose to trace the contemporary Evangelical story and its paradigm shift and show how Pinnock's theological journey mirrors this change. I will analyse and show how Pinnock took key points within both the Reformed and the Evangelical Arminian perspectives and reinterpreted them in order to arrive at Open Theism via PCE.

In essence, the Evangelical movement was historically birthed at the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. Subsequently, *reformation* became a key concept within the ethos of Evangelicalism and Pinnock throughout his career has constantly made the claim that he is simply a reformer continuing in the Protestant tradition. Hence it was of no surprise that Pinnock's Festschrift (generally written by Evangelical theologians) was called *Semper Reformandum;*[31] obviously with an implication (from the authors) that Pinnock was continuing in the genre of the Protestant Reformers. However, to many other Evangelicals, Pinnock was no reformer but a heresiarch who had long left the tenets of Evangelical belief.

In order to assess Pinnock's Evangelical credentials, it firstly needs to be clarified as to what Evangelicalism is. With much approval, the contemporary historian David Bebbington has defined the basic distinctive of Evangelicalism as follows:

Conversionism - the belief that lives need to be changed
Activism - the expression of the gospel in effect
Biblicism - a particular regard for the Bible
Crucicentrism - a stress in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

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[31] Porter, and Cross, eds. *Semper Reformandum.*
This title is based on the Reformation slogan *ecclesia reformata et semper reformanda* (a church reformed and always reforming). Sometimes called *Reformed and Always Reforming.*

These 'isms' are termed by Bebbington as a 'quadrilateral of priorities that form the basis of Evangelicalism'.[32] However, whilst Bebbington's quadrilateral is now well quoted, it is rather minimalist and misses something of the subjective, experiential pietism which proves attractive for many Evangelical followers, including Pinnock.[33] Oliver Barclay rightly notes that the pietism of Evangelicalism is a major feature that is omitted by Bebbington. Pinnock, even from his conservative paleo-Calvinist days, used deeply devotional language, as can be seen in his early apologetic writings.[34] Pinnock's later PCE theology has an even stronger pietistic emphasis, developed initially through the influence of Wesleyan Arminianism:

> The cross can become a cold doctrine, the Bible a mere collection of precepts, and the new birth a merely psychological experience, if they all do not depend totally on a personal relationship with the living Jesus Christ himself. . . . John Wesley summed up his message when he said, 'I offered Christ to them'.[35]

Ultimately, Pinnock developed his devotional pneumatology from a number of sources including Wesleyan Arminianism, Eastern Orthodox writings and even charismatic encounters (including the healing of an eye).[36] This is readily seen in his theology of the Spirit in which he uses expressive, dynamic terms for the presence of God:

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[32] D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain. A history from the 1730's to the 1980's* (London: University Press, Cambridge, Reprint 1999), 2-3.

[33] Oliver Barclay was General Secretary of UCCF (IVF) 1964-1980. He was Secretary of Christians in Science U.K. and promoted Evangelical involvement in the academic and professional world. A leading Evangelical, Barclay, whilst accepting Bebbington's quadrilateral as an outline of Evangelical belief, was a critic who also believed they needed a more exact definition. Applauding Bebbington's perception in its emphasis of three doctrinal features (without which Evangelicalism becomes a vague set of attitudes) Barclay believed Bebbington still missed the essentially pietistic focus on the Christ-centred nature of the Evangelical position.

[34] For example *Set Forth You Case* (1967) and *A Defence of Biblical Infallibility* (1967).

[35] Oliver Barclay, *Evangelicalism in Britain 1935-1995 – a personal sketch* (Leicester: IVP, 1997), 1*ff.*

[36] Callen, *JTR*, 77.
Pinnock had suffered a detached retina that had left him blind in one eye but through prayer at a charismatic prayer meeting in New Orleans in 1967 he was completely healed. It was also the year that his only child was born thus making it a very significant time for him.

> Knowing the Spirit is experiential . . . speaking about God is meaningful only if there is an encounter with God at the back of it . . . my nondeterministic theology celebrates Pentecostalism as a mighty twentieth century outpouring of the Spirit. I think of this as the most important event in modern Christianity. . . . St John of the Cross (b 1542) aptly calls the Spirit a living flame of love and celebrates the nimble, responsive, playful, personal gift of God.[37]

Pinnock's pneumatology and his pietism are explored as a major feature of his theology in Chapter Three of this thesis.

However, in spite of the lack of pietism in Bebbington's quadrilateral, this thesis uses his four points as the criteria by which to assess Pinnock's Evangelical credentials. All of Bebbington's four points were relevant to Pinnock's theological enterprise, but the most influential area, which undergirded all of Pinnock's later thinking was in the area of Biblicism (which is assessed in detail in Chapter Two). Biblicism throughout this thesis is called *The Scripture Principle*. The Evangelical Scripture principle was fundamentally reinterpreted by Pinnock to present it as a radically open hermeneutic.

This thesis argues that Pinnock's theology emerged from his revised Scripture principle and his charismatic Evangelical pietism. However, apart from Pinnock's personal theological enterprise, the ultimate form of Evangelicalism which he subscribed to became known as post-conservative Evangelicalism - PCE. The first person to coin the phrase 'post-conservative Evangelical' was a colleague of Pinnock's and also an Evangelical reformer Roger Olson.[38] Olson defined the central Evangelical core of belief that Pinnock promulgated as:

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[37] Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, Introduction.
[38] Roger Olson, (1995) "Post-conservative Evangelicals greet the postmodern age," in *Christian Century* 112:15, 480-483.

> A commitment to the Bible as the supreme norm of truth for Christian belief and practice; a supernatural worldview that is centred in a transcendent, personal God; a focus on the forgiving and transforming grace of God through Jesus Christ in the experience of conversion; and the notion that the primary task of theology is to serve the church in its mission to make the grace of God known to the whole world.[39]

Such a statement appears a standard Evangelical agenda but that was not the case. First of all PCE was a product of cumulative developments and changes within contemporary Evangelicalism and involved many key players other than Pinnock.

The initial process of reform within Evangelicalism began in the 1950's when conservative Evangelicalism held the preponderant position. It was to this grouping that Pinnock belonged as a young academic Evangelical. Pinnock acknowledged this when he wrote of 'the Calvinist hegemony in Evangelicalism'.[40] Pinnock came to classify the Reformed Calvinists as either 'paleo-Reformed' or more often 'fundamentalists'. The reform movement became known simply as 'new Evangelicalism'.

Paleo-Reformed conservative and fundamentalist Evangelicals are to be found across the Protestant denominations. Although there are many types of conservative Evangelicals (including those who hold a more open and moderate Reformed Calvinism), Pinnock's theological career began with him as a traditional paleo-Reformed Calvinist and the majority of his later opponents were from this background. As Pinnock began his theological reforms, he moved away from Reformed Calvinism (which he saw, and referred to as Augustinianism) early in his career, but because he had already been established as a capable and prominent rising star within conservative Evangelicalism, his

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[39] Roger Olson, (1998) "The Future of Evangelical theology," in *Christianity Today,* 42, 40.
[40] Pinnock, *The Grace of God,* 16-17.
This work by Pinnock & written in 1989 was of great significance as is indicated by the title of Pinnock's chapter 'From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology'. Pinnock essentially saw Calvin as an Augustinian theologian.

defection from paleo-Calvinism met with an angry response. In addition, his first step away from Calvinism led to him embracing Evangelical Arminianism, which was adding salt to the wound, since Arminianism was regarded by the Calvinists as the primary major aberration of pure Calvinism.

Pinnock's subsequent theology caused outrage among the conservatives and it is from this group that most opposition to Pinnock came. In response, Pinnock's polemics usually had this paleo-Reformed group firmly in mind. This can easily be recognized in all of his books written post-1984, from *The Scripture Principle* through to *The Most Moved Mover*. He summed up the intense battle for the reform of Evangelicalism when he wrote: "it seems now that we (i.e. 'new Evangelicals') are being asked to choose between a paleo-Calvinist package with meticulous providence, compatibilist freedom and exhaustive foreknowledge and the open view of God package with general providence, libertarian freedom and a partly unsettled future."[41]

In Pinnock's later works, his primary target readership group are those Evangelicals who are still classed as conservative paleo-Calvinists, but who are unhappy with a growing number of issues within that expression of Evangelicalism. Pinnock wrote confirming what his reformist agenda was all about: "I proceed with the work of reforming fundamentalism in the continuing discussions between Augustinians and Arminians. It is part of the ongoing search for the fuller truth of God's Word . . . for every person grateful for my work; there is another who is appalled."[42]

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[41] Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover*, 180.
[42] Pinnock, 'Afterword' *JTR*, 272 n 22.
At the end of Callen's biography Pinnock made extensive comments in a number of appendices. This was a useful feature as it helped differentiate Pinnock's thoughts from Callen's conclusions.

Pinnock knew his work was controversial, but he also knew that there were many convinced Evangelicals who were seeking radical changes within Evangelicalism. Although Pinnock and PCE did radically alter Evangelical thinking, the foundations for his reform and the whole reform movement within modern Evangelicalism had commenced much earlier and in a much more irenic and relaxed setting.

1:2 The emergence of New Evangelicalism: Carl Henry and Clark Pinnock

From the 1950's many Evangelicals were dissatisfied with the lack of direction given by their conservative Evangelical leaders. They were unhappy with the pre-occupation and emphasis upon doctrinal correctness, which had emerged during the liberal-Evangelical debate of the first half of the twentieth century. Amongst this disillusioned group was a prominent theologian and acknowledged Evangelical leader, Carl Henry. From the 1950s to the 1980s Carl Henry called for fundamental change within Evangelicalism. Initially Henry had challenged Evangelicals over their lack of social concern (Bebbington's Activism) and reprimanded Evangelicals for their focus solely on theological matters. He published his concerns in his book *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism.*[43] Henry's book set out a programme of how Evangelicals should be bringing the fundamentals of the Christian faith to influence contemporary culture, and re-engage with practical social care and action. Ultimately this trajectory was to lead to the emergence of such well known American pressure groups such as the Moral Majority, and the Religious Right, but initially Henry's challenge was a wake-up call to Evangelicals for social activism.

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[43] C. F. H. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub, 1947).

As a young Evangelical, Pinnock was impressed with the tenor of Henry's *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism,* and in 1988 Pinnock co-authored a book offering his own views on Evangelical social reform.[44] Pinnock was later to acknowledge Henry as an author and theologian who had influenced him during the early days of his theological journey, particularly helping him develop an Evangelical rationalism. In fact, this was no one way relationship and Henry was most impressed with the young Pinnock's potential, and helped Pinnock gain his first academic position in America.[45] Pinnock was to ultimately separate from Henry, because of Henry's unwillingness to take 'new Evangelicalism' to further reform in theological areas; in Pinnock's own words:

> A number of us made an epistemological shift from hard to soft rationality or from modernity to post modernity . . . a shift from maintaining that the Christian truth can be proven by the canons of logic to the view that the truth is better represented by cumulative argument. That shift is visible in Bernard Ramm and myself but not in Carl Henry who stuck to his rationalism to the end.[46]

However, the winds of change were blowing within Evangelicalism. Certainly by the 1950s Henry was not the only Evangelical calling for reform. The prestigious and progressive new Fuller Theological Seminary was born out of similar aspirations. Fuller Theological Seminary was to epitomize the centre of academic learning for Evangelical reform. This was in contrast to the late nineteenth century Princeton Theological

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[44] C. H. Pinnock, *Freedom, Justice and Hope: Toward a Strategy for the Poor and Oppressed* (Illinois: Crossway Books, 1988).
This reflects Pinnock slightly later position not as a left wing Christian ideologist but as one who rejects Marxism as a caricature of Christianity 'offering a millennium without God', 74. Pinnock also commented that he had learned from the conservative Evangelical philosopher Francis Schaeffer in the early 1960s to emphasize theological and social concerns over political issues.

[45] Pinnock wrote that during the 1950s he immersed himself in the Calvinistic writings of Carl F. H. Henry. In turn Henry was instrumental in Pinnock obtaining his first lectureship in the USA. After meeting Pinnock in the U.K., Henry recommended Pinnock for a prestigious lectureship in New Testament at the large New Orleans Southern Baptist Seminary. Pinnock accepted and moved to the USA in 1967.
See also footnote 46.

[46] Clark Pinnock, "How My Mind Has Changed," in Callen, *JTR,* 229.

Seminary, which was regarded as the bastion and epitome of conservative Reformed faith.

Henry published his seminal book in the same year that Fuller Theological Seminary began (1947) and the gentle reformer was one of the founding faculty members of Fuller. The founding president of Fuller was Harold Ockenga, who was far more progressive in his reforms than Henry. Nevertheless, both Henry and Ockenga commented that Henry's book reflected the ethos of Fuller Seminary as that of reform within Evangelicalism.[47] Pinnock called Fuller 'the Evangelical flagship'.[48] An appreciation of the seminal influence of both Henry and Fuller upon the transformation of Pinnock's reformist thinking, is vital in tracing the emergence of Pinnock's later theology.

Initially, the reforms within Evangelicalism were merely called 'new Evangelical' thinking, but soon this definition broadened to become the embodiment of generic reforming Evangelicalism. The expression 'new Evangelical' was coined by Henry and ultimately encapsulated the sea change that was taking place within Evangelicalism around the 1950s. However, in December 1957 the Associated Press called Ockenga (not Henry) the originator of the term 'new Evangelicalism'. Ockenga argued that 'new Evangelicalism' needed to be distinguished from three other movements: neo-orthodoxy,

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[47] Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience,* Foreword, x.

[48] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze*, 119.
Pinnock chose his words carefully; he knew that within Evangelicalism the great citadel of Evangelical learning was considered to be Princeton Theological Seminary. This was the seat of contemporary Reformed theology and its expression in the form of Protestant scholasticism. For Pinnock to fly the colours of a new Evangelical flagship was a definitive statement of his separation from his conservative roots.

modernism (i.e. theological liberalism) and fundamentalism.[49] From this time 'new Evangelicalism' gained the status of a movement, but it was a distinct movement *within* Evangelicalism and it was distinct from the predominant paleo-Conservative movement, who were being referred to as *fundamentalists*.[50]

The 'new Evangelicals' were the first to acknowledge that they did not want to be defined as Evangelical fundamentalists. 'New Evangelicals' saw themselves as a separate Evangelical grouping, and rejected many aspects of Reformed fundamentalism. Ockenga argued that the difference between 'new Evangelicals' and Evangelical fundamentalism was primarily in the 'new Evangelical' application of biblical teaching. To him the biblical model was for all members of society, a universal application, not just for an elect, predestined people. This rejection of any predetermined salvific plan was to become a central feature of Pinnock's post-Arminian theology.

But in reality, this early Evangelical division was over far more than a single doctrinal issue. Ockenga was highlighting that far deeper Evangelical differences were surfacing. Pinnock, at this time although emerging as a paleo-Conservative apologist, was very much influenced by the winds of change that were blowing across society in the 60s,

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[49] R. P. Lightener, *NeoEvangelicalism Today* (Illinois, Baptist Press, 1978), 28.
H. Ockenga, 1958 "Fundamentalism," in *Christian Beacon,* 8.
An early Principal of Fuller Seminary, Edward Carnell argued that Protestant orthodoxy was not a subspecies of fundamentalism. He wrote that fundamentalism was 'an aberrant subtype of orthodoxy, orthodoxy gone cultic, characterized by ideological thinking which is rigid, black or white, intolerant and doctrinaire'.

[50] R. A. Torrey, and A. C. Dixon, eds. *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, reprint 2000), 4 Volumes.
Fundamentalism is a complicated concept, hindered by its pejorative usage today. Up to the 1960's fundamentalism was interpreted by Evangelicals as those who defended the fundamentals of traditional Evangelical faith. These beliefs had been consolidated and published in a number of volumes. Acceptance of these teachings was considered axiomatic for Evangelical faith. The four volume publication was simply called *The Fundamentals* published in 1917 and reprinted a number of times. It was written by internationally acclaimed Evangelical authors.

and these cultural changes were having a profound effect upon many young Evangelicals. In Pinnock's case he was soon involved with the likes of the 'Evangelical left' social reformer Jim Wallace and the activist Sojourners group.[51] Henry's 'new Evangelical' activism fitted well in to this Zeitgeist and it resulted in much social action.

Inevitably the cultural changes caused young Evangelicals to reconsider other allied shibboleths long held by conservative Evangelicalism. By 1960 a permanent and hostile break occurred over support for either the conservative fundamentalist tradition, or the 'new Evangelicalism' as represented by Carl Henry and Fuller Seminary.

New Evangelicalism was given a further boost with the publication of the new and influential *Christianity Today* magazine[52] which was very sympathetic towards the reform of Evangelicalism. A contentious article was published in Christianity Today entitled "Is Evangelical theology Changing?" This article described the worsening situation the fissure between 'new Evangelicals' and fundamentalists:

> Fundamentalism started well but soon after 1925 it began to be the catchall for the lunatic fringe, which is why to the man on the street fundamentalism became a joke. After World War II younger theologians . . . wanted a more positive emphasis . . . the fundamentalist watchword was "Ye should

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[51] M. Olasky, C. H. Pinnock, and P. Borthoud, *Freedom, Justice and Hope: Towards a strategy for the poor and oppressed* (Illinois: Crossway Books, 1998), 16*ff.*
Pinnock was completely caught up in Christian socialism and liberation theology in his early twenties but radically changed his mind as can be seen in his article *The Pursuit of Utopia.* He argued that although kingdom issues should be Christian concern, it was impossible to leave aside ideology. His fear was that Christian concern for the poor was being routed down the ideological tracks of collective economics, which he argued had a bad record in reducing the misery of the poor and was off beam in trying to equate the Kingdom of God with forms of communism or socialism. He came to see socialism as having appeal in political myth not empirical evidence. Ultimately he concluded that on theological grounds socialism and state control can never work because it was unrealistic about human nature and fallenness.

[52] D. G. Hart, *Deconstructing Evangelicalism: Conservative Protestantism in the Age of Billy Graham* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2004), 13*f.*
The Evangelical critic D. G. Hart argued that the emergence of the National Association of Evangelicals (1942), Fuller Theological College (1947), in *Christianity Today* magazine (1956) all helped new Evangelicals create a new religious identity labelled simply 'Evangelical'. The mouthpiece for 'new Evangelicalism' in *Christianity Today,* further distanced itself from fundamentalism, whilst it did not particularly denounce theological liberalism and more so neo-orthodoxy.

> earnestly contend for the faith," while Evangelicals emphasized "Ye must be born again." Accompanying this major shift . . . were innovations such as moving away from Dispensationalism, a positive view of science, an embrace of scholarship and social concern, reconsidering the role of the Holy Spirit and reopening discussions about the inspiration of Scripture.[53]

All of the changes mentioned were important to Pinnock and his disillusionment with fundamentalist Calvinism was gaining momentum. The break finally took place during the 1970s.

As early as 1971 Pinnock was seeking a systematic theology that was truly contemporary, culturally relevant and not rigidly foundationalist. The conservative Evangelical position was built on a strong foundationalism. Foundationalism became a key point in the split between PCE and conservative thinking. Both Pinnock and PCE saw Evangelical fundamentalists as foundationalist.[54] Fundamentalism has been accurately defined in terms of absolutism and strong foundationalism. [55]

Pinnock wrote of the way he wanted Evangelical theology to develop in his 1971 book *Towards a Theology for the Future*. This book (edited by Pinnock) brought together other progressive new Evangelical scholars including Bernard Ramm and Harold Ockenga. All of the contributors offered a constructive Evangelical proposal for the

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[53] George Marsden, (1956) "Is Evangelical theology Changing?" in *Christianity Today*, 162.

[54] S. J. Grenz, and J. R. Franke, eds. *Beyond Foundationalism. Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 8.

[55] H. A. Harris, "How Helpful Is the Term 'Fundamentalist'?" in *Fundamentalisms*, ed. C. Partridge, (Carlisle: Paternoster Pub. 2001), 14.

A good definition of Evangelical foundationalism has been expressed by the academic Harriet Harris (who is an authority upon Pinnock and PCE):

> Foundationalism is a type of model of how belief systems are structured. It holds that we have some basic beliefs, from which we develop non-basic beliefs, and the basic beliefs are immediate and therefore not justified by any other beliefs. Fundamentalists appeal to a foundation that must be true absolutely. . . . Protestant fundamentalisms fix as their absolutely true foundation an inerrant Bible. . . . They go 'back to the Bible', which they regard as self-authenticating authority for faith, and as an immediate communication from God.

future of Evangelical theology. Pinnock wrote specifically on the prospects for systematic theology, calling for a radical shake-up to the closed, foundationalist, scholastic paradigm which conservative systematic studies followed. Pinnock wrote:

> We would best honour Luther and Calvin by going directly to Scripture . . . rather than by slavishly imitating their systems. Theology has become stagnant and sterile when it is reduced to repetition and imitation. . . . Evangelical thinkers need to forge an expression of biblical faith which will have the power to grip our generation. . . . Our theology ought to arise out of and relate to the time in which we live. To fulfil our hermeneutical obligation, we must continually revise and redo our theology in relation to contemporary circumstances and cultural moods.[56]

Pinnock referred to good Evangelical theology as bi-polar. What he meant by this was that it needed to be faithful to divine revelation (i.e. Scripture) and yet sensitive to the need for effective communication (noting the theological and cultural moods of the day).[57] Such a view was in contrast to the fundamentalist, Reformed Calvinist position which liked to portray itself as stable and consistent, distant from cultural influences and change, uniquely the product of divine revelation.

From 1971, Pinnock chose to develop a non-foundationalist approach towards Evangelical theology, believing it allowed him 'to greet the postmodern emphasis on the particular and experiential'.[58] Pinnock and PCE were more concerned with removing boundaries than securing foundations. Ultimately, Pinnock was going to redefine his Scripture principle, particularly inerrancy and plenary verbal inspiration, in the light of

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[56] C. H. Pinnock, and D. F. Wells, eds. *Toward a Theology of the Future* (Carol Stream Ill: Creation House Pub.), 95.
[57] Ibid, 93.
[58] S. J. Grenz, *Renewing the Center: Evangelical theology in a Post-Theological Era* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 150.

his non-foundationalist belief. His later systematic theology *Flame of Love* reflected his non-foundational approaches towards Evangelical theology.[59]

Pinnock freely admits that his early adulthood was influenced by the methodology and the foundationalism of Reformed scholasticism. He quotes from the leading conservative authors who helped consolidate his initial Reformed thinking: "I immersed myself in the staunchly Calvinistic writings of John Murray, Martin Lloyd-Jones, Cornelius Van Til, Carl F. H. Henry, and James I. Packer."[60]

Throughout the early twentieth century, Reformed scholastic Princeton methodology and belief permeated and controlled much of Evangelical literature and teaching. Consequently, to conservative Evangelicals, theology from the Princeton Theological Seminary of the late nineteenth century was held in high esteem. It is important to note that the theology from Princeton was certainly honoured by the first 'new Evangelical' reformer Carl Henry. When Henry called for a 'new Evangelicalism', he envisioned a call back to social activism not a call to a complete theological revisioning of Evangelical theology.

Henry had unwittingly unleashed what was to be a cataclysmic process of Evangelical reform in both its theology and its praxis. Towards the end of his life Henry

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[59] See Chapter 4 of this thesis for an analysis of Pinnock's theology of the Holy Spirit. As a foundationalist Pinnock's early theological works follow the model of rational Protestant scholasticism. His early books *Set Forth Your Case* (1967); *Reason Enough* (1980) and *Biblical Revelation* (1971) are good examples of both his early thinking and contemporary conservative Evangelical foundationalism. Foundationalism led to a methodology which viewed faith as a rational assent to propositions deducted from Scripture. The subsequent systematic theologies that emerged from such a methodology held to a belief that only an inerrant Bible could give a reliable foundation for faith.

[60] Callen, *JTR*, 20.
In many of his works Pinnock makes reference to the conservative luminaries such as B. B. Warfield, Charles Hodge and A. A. Alexander. Reformed scholasticism regarded the Princeton Theological Seminary of the late nineteenth century as the epitome of academic Evangelical theology and Pinnock in his earlier days agreed with such a view.

retreated firmly back into conservative Evangelicalism. Ironically, the young academic he had helped to mentor in the 1960's, Clark Pinnock was not only about to become a radical Evangelical reformer himself, but he was to look back with disdain at Henry's return to fundamentalist Reformed Calvinism. Pinnock wrote of Henry: "Henry is preoccupied with epistemological issues, wanting above all else to get the heteronomous foundation firmly in place."[61]

With Henry's return to the conservative fold, plus his increasing age, his influence upon Evangelical reformers waned. The time was right for a new sort of Evangelical reformer to emerge, and that person was Bernard Ramm. His emphasis was far more comprehensive than Henry's. He embarked upon a radical root and branch reform and Ramm's model was to have a profound effect upon Pinnock's thinking and theology.

1:3 The Growth of New Evangelicalism: Bernard Ramm and Clark Pinnock

Bernard Ramm was to have a major impact upon Pinnock's thinking during the 1970s in a number of key areas. First of all, Pinnock found in Ramm an Evangelical academic with the ability to embrace modernity without losing Evangelical credibility. He wrote of Ramm (in Ramm's festschrift) in a most positive way, calling him a post-fundamentalist:

> Ramm is a quintessential post-fundamentalist theologian of the post-war period in America. . . . He wanted to make the conservative Protestant faith theologically profound and intellectually respectable . . . to defend classical theology in a non-obscurantist manner using the best tools of modern scholarship.[62]

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[61] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze,* 46.

[62] S. Grenz, ed. *Perspectives on Theology in the Contemporary World* (Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1990), C. Pinnock, 25.

Pinnock described Bernard Ramm (1916-1992) as a theologian who "represented the irenic spirit of an emerging 'new Evangelical' theology, and an Evangelical who was ecumenically aware, engaged with many of the intellectual issues of the day."[63] He admired Ramm as 'an Evangelical free from methodological fixation'.[64] Erickson who was a prominent critic of PCE called Ramm one of the first leaders of the post-conservative Evangelical left.[65]

Ramm came from a scientific background, and was able to interface the Bible with contemporary science in such a way as to encourage 'new Evangelicals' to move away from obscurantism, and embrace scientific and philosophical challenges in a positive and open way. Although Pinnock did not engage in scientific debate *per se*, Ramm's open methodology soon began to influence Pinnock's approach, not to science but to the contemporary challenges that the theological enterprise was facing.

Ramm's influence upon Pinnock was soon to be seen in a most unlikely Evangelical way. Ramm's admired Karl Barth's neo-orthodoxy and saw it as a model for Evangelicals to consider.[66] Conservative Evangelicalism was suspicious of neo-orthodoxy, but Ramm wrote that it should be considered as "the paradigm for Evangelicalism in the contemporary world, a restatement of Reformed theology written

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[63] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze*, 46.
[64] Quoted by Callen *JTR*, 47*f*.
[65] M. J. Erickson, *The Evangelical Left – Encountering Postconservative Evangelical theology* (Cumbria: Paternoster Pub, 1998), 30-31.
[66] B. Ramm, *The Evangelical Heritage. A Study in Historical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1973 reprint 1981), Chapter 7.
Barth was a controversial figure amongst Evangelicals and his theology was rejected outright by paleo-Calvinists and those influenced by Princeton theology. Ramm lists a number of reasons why Evangelicals should appreciate neo-orthodoxy. Amongst the reasons he cites is that neo-orthodoxy came out of liberalism and rejected it. He further argued that neo-orthodoxy regarded Scripture as the source and authority of Christian theology, and they returned to the writings of the Reformers, plus interacting with the whole history of theology.

in the aftermath of the Enlightenment but not capitulating to it."[67] Pinnock followed the lead of Ramm, and found much in the Barthian trajectory that he admired. Pinnock wrote: "Those paleo-Calvinists who stopped growing in their outlook beyond the guidelines of the Westminster Confession are to be contrasted with Reformed theologians such as Karl Barth who have made changes in Calvinism that I and many others consider essential."[68]

In 1983 Ramm wrote *After Fundamentalism.*[69] The controversial title is self-explanatory, and in the book Ramm unequivocally advocated Barth's methodology as an Evangelical model. Such a stance led to paleo-conservatives to declare Ramm outside of the Evangelical camp. However, by this time Ramm had a growing Evangelical following, and Barth was highly regarded by many other 'new Evangelical' academics at Fuller Theological Seminary. In fact Barthian studies became part of the curriculum.[70]

Although Pinnock could never be called either a Barthian, or neo-orthodox, since his Scripture principle was far more Evangelical than Barth's neo-orthodoxy allowed for, the Barthian influence can be clearly seen in his revised biblical hermeneutic that sought to reconcile faith with human knowledge. [71] Ideologically though, it was Ramm not Barth who had the greatest influence upon him. Pinnock found in Ramm, a capable and articulate leader who could think radical thoughts, change his theology and yet remain an Evangelical. Pinnock wrote of him: Ramm was one of those rare theologians who was

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[67] S. J. Grenz, and R. E. Olson, *20th Century Theology – God the Word in a Transitional Age* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1992), 307.
[68] C. Pinnock, (1999) "Response to Daniel Strange and Amos Yong," in *The Evangelical Quarterly,* 7:14 350.
[69] B. L. Ramm, *After Fundamentalism: The Future of Evangelical theology* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983).
[70] G. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Theological Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub.1987), Chapter10.
[71] This is developed in Chapter 2.

prepared to change his mind. He was dynamic and flexible embodying the maxim 'To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often'.[72]

As Ramm's version of 'new Evangelicalism' gained in its acceptability, so did Pinnock's momentum for change. Pinnock's biographer Callen commented that when Pinnock spoke of Ramm, he was always reflecting on how much he was indebted to him.[73] Pinnock wrote that Ramm epitomized a reformer of fundamentalism and its allied attitudes. Pinnock added that if the 'new Evangelical' Fuller Theological Seminary of the 50s and 60s had allowed Ramm (not Henry) to play a major role in its theological trajectory, then the stronghold of fundamentalist Reformed scholasticism would have been broken much sooner, thus helping 'new Evangelicalism' develop more quickly.[74] Pinnock, in his later reflections upon the reform of the Evangelical movement, wished that the progress had not been so slow. He wrote:

> . . . the Evangelical coalition from World War II had a goal of ridding the fundamentalist mindset of certain characteristics and patterns considered detrimental to the gospel. Amongst these characteristics are rationalism, Biblicism, sectarianism, traditionalism, otherworldliness, anti-intellectualism and the ghetto mentality. There was a lot more work than the original leaders (i.e. *of 'new Evangelicalism'*) like Carl Henry had imagined.[75]

Pinnock did build on the foundational work of Henry, but it was Ramm's influence that helped Pinnock inaugurate radical changes to the Evangelical enterprise. Bernard Ramm set the antecedents and influences that enabled Pinnock's theological journey to

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[72] Callen, *JTR,* 194.
A particular feature of Ramm's theology that Pinnock liked and commended was Ramm's willingness to change his mind. Throughout this thesis it will be seen that Pinnock's critics use this as a criticism. Pinnock saw it as maturity, his critics saw it as fickleness.
[73] Ibid, 38.
[74] C. Pinnock, (1985) "Fuller Theological Seminary and the Nature of Evangelicalism," in *Christian Scholars Review,* Vol.XXIII:1, 45-46.
[75] Callen, *JTR,* 270.
Pinnock added that he knew any true creative ferment would result in significant theological changes, but he realized that the task of reforming Evangelicalism would require change in orientation and substance.

begin in earnest. Ramm's epistemological shift took 'new Evangelicalism' to a new level of reform. To his conservative Evangelical critics, Ramm's legacy was seen simply as an embracing of theological accommodation and liberalization, but to Pinnock, Ramm became a marvellous mentor, who helped him pave the way for a 'new Evangelicalism' that could work with modern scholarship, and still develop a robust and relevant Evangelical faith.

1:4 Other early influences upon Pinnock's theology and the growth of New Evangelicalism

Apart from Ramm there were other significant influences upon Pinnock, which helped him further his radical review of Evangelical theology, and progress his journey towards a theology of Openness. So far this chapter has sought to emphasize how Pinnock, when firmly located within conservative Evangelicalism, was slowly being drawn into the reform movement initially called 'new Evangelicalism' particularly through the influence of the pioneer reformers Carl Henry and Bernard Ramm.

Another key figure of influence upon Pinnock was Francis Schaeffer. Although Schaeffer lived and died as a staunch conservative Evangelical, he helped Pinnock broaden his thinking beyond historical theological issues and deal with questions arising from the contemporary cultural challenges, both ethically and theologically. Schaeffer helped Pinnock develop his apologetic and philosophical skills.

As a young man, Pinnock was impressed by Schaeffer, who was renowned as an Evangelical apologist and leading Evangelical philosopher. Schaeffer sought to communicate to contemporary culture through film, art and philosophy and he was well

known as a campaigner for human rights.[76] He was the founder of L'Abri Fellowship in Switzerland. From 1961-63 Pinnock corresponded with Schaeffer and subsequently spent summers both as a student and as a worker at L'Abri Fellowship. Pinnock was impressed with Schaeffer's ability to remain an Evangelical yet address contemporary issues.[77] Pinnock in recording Schaeffer's influence upon him said:

> Schaeffer showed the young Evangelicals that fundamentalism was intellectually respectable. He made orthodox Protestant theology live and have relevance in the twentieth century. . . . He was a kind of Paul Tillich moving back and forth between the questions of the culture and the answers of Christianity . . . he was able to vindicate conservative theology in dialogue with the best and brightest in the liberal camp . . .[78]

The legacy that Schaeffer left to Pinnock was the capacity to face uncomfortable issues head on, and build up a convincing biblical and philosophical case. Pinnock further acknowledged a unique indebtedness to Schaeffer in his first book on Christian apologetics *Set Forth Your Case,*[79] in which Pinnock endeavoured to present evidence for Christianity in an intelligent manner, believing 'the heart cannot delight in what the mind rejects as false'.[80]

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[76] H. A. Snyder, *The Community of The King* (Illinois: IVP, 2004), 27*f.*
Schaeffer was especially concerned about the increase of abortion on demand and the concomitant increase of euthanasia, which he attributed to a monolithic acceptance of moral and epistemological relativism and the new secular humanism. Schaeffer's influence on the then leading right wing Evangelicals such as Pat Robertson, Tim LaHaye and Jerry Falwell was profound. Most Evangelicals saw Schaeffer as the intellectual leader of the Moral Majority and its Evangelical political impact of the New Christian Right in America. He was also highly regarded amongst Evangelicals in the U.K. Howard Snyder commented that Schaeffer became one of the most widely read Evangelical theological writers particularly following the publication of *The God Who Is There* (1968). He saw Schaeffer as bringing back to Evangelicalism the interrelatedness of culture to God's all encompassing plan.
[77] Callen, *JTR,* 27-28.
[78] C. Pinnock, "Schaeffer on Modern Theology," in *Reflections on Francis Schaeffer.* Ed. R. Ruegseggar (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 173-174.
[79] C. H. Pinnock, *Set Forth Your Case. An Examination of Christianity's Credentials. Studies in Christian Apologetics* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971 edition).
[80] Ibid, 11.

However, with the passage of time Pinnock was to take a vastly different route to Schaeffer particularly regarding *The Scripture Principle*. Schaeffer (like Henry) towards the end of his life did not embrace the radical reform of 'new Evangelicalism', but consolidated his conservative Evangelicalism. In fact he went on to help found the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy in 1977. This Council, although unsuccessful, attempted to make biblical inerrancy the badge of Evangelical authenticity.

In the same year that Schaeffer died (1984) Pinnock published his book *The Scripture Principle,*[81] which rejected Schaeffer's and conservative Evangelicalism's definition of inerrancy. This book highlighted Pinnock's shift in epistemology, and showed that he had parted company with both his old mentor, and his former conservative Evangelicalism. Nevertheless, Schaeffer's methodological approaches became a lasting feature of Pinnock's writings. Pinnock described this Schaefferian influence as 'an embrace of radical rationalism.

At the same time Pinnock was changing under Schaeffer, another paradigm shift was happening in his thinking. He described this as: "a move from Schaeffer's militant rationalism to F. F. Bruce's more bottom-up irenic scholarship and an engaging with C. S. Lewis' commonsense approach to Christianity with the ability to live with ambiguity."[82]

The British theologian F. F. Bruce was something of a paradox. By denominational affiliation he belonged to the fundamentalist Brethren movement, but by academic and theological influence he was recognised as an open and innovative theologian,

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[81] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle.*
[82] Callen, *JTR,* 58.

particularly in the area of biblical studies, where he was a renowned world authority. Pinnock studied under Bruce at Manchester University during the 1960s. Pinnock acknowledged that as a young fundamentalist in the Reformed tradition, he had been grounded in their scholastic approach to theology, but he added that the influence of F. F. Bruce had moderated that position.[83] This moderated position is particularly noticeable in Pinnock's *New Scripture Principle* in a distinct way.

Although from a conservative Evangelical background Bruce was no advocate of biblical inerrancy, and his Scripture trajectory was to have a great influence upon Pinnock's. In 1973, a scholar Dewey N. Beegle published a book entitled *Scripture, Tradition and Infallibility.*[84] In this book he directly criticized Pinnock's conservative book *Biblical Revelation,* for arguing that there were no insuperable problems to be found in Scripture. Although other aspects of this debate are explored in detail in Chapter Two, what is relevant at this point in the thesis was the fact that F. F. Bruce did not endorse Pinnock's views. Bruce commended Beegle's view, writing: "I endorse, as emphatically as I can, Beegle's deprecating of the Maginot-line mentality where the doctrine of Scripture is concerned."

Pinnock had too much respect for Bruce to simply challenge Bruce's commendation of Beegle's book. Pinnock knew that Bruce would not have made such a bold statement without a great deal of thought and consideration He knew Bruce would be aware of the effect his views would have within the worldwide Evangelical

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[83] Callen, *JTR,* 28.
Clark Pinnock, Interview with B. Callen, 18th April 1998 recorded in *JTR,* 24.
Pinnock further commented that it was B. B. Warfield who had 'made him' a theological rationalist believing that an inerrant Bible was the first principle for a rational system of Christian theology.
[84] D. N. Beegle, *Scripture, Tradition and Infallibity* (Westchester: Crossway Pub. 1974).

community. Therefore, there was no direct response to Bruce by Pinnock, but as Pinnock's biographer records (written with full co-operation from Pinnock). Bruce's comments had a significant impact upon Pinnock. Further, it was noticeable that within a few years, Pinnock had himself embraced Bruce's position.[85]

Until this time, Pinnock had been at the forefront of the *The Battle for the Bible* debate[86] and his book *Biblical Revelation: The Foundation of Christian Theology* became a classic work in support of a strict conservative Evangelical position.[87] Pinnock was going to regret writing *Biblical Revelation,* particularly when his expressed loyalty to the paleo-Reformed position was in doubt post-1973.

Once Bruce placed himself on the side of the reformers within Evangelicalism, a new internal Evangelical debate on *The Scripture Principle* began. Pinnock was faced with some stark choices. He made his first and most important step, to openly advocate wholescale reform of Evangelical theology. That is why Callen wrote: "By 1979 Pinnock had reassessed what the Bible claims for itself." In turn Lindsell wrote that "Pinnock has moved from the halls of Regent College to the liberal corridors of McMaster Divinity College."[88]

Pinnock was adamant that he was not becoming a liberal, he was simply realizing just how much Evangelicalism needed reforming, and within that realization he was now

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[85] Callen, *JTR,* 60.

[86] Throughout the early part of the twentieth century Evangelicals had battled with liberals over their lack of belief in a biblical authority. Until this time *sola scriptura* was interpreted by Evangelicals as belief in an inerrant and infallible scripture. When fellow new Evangelicals (post 1950) began to challenge this position, entrenched positions emerged. This all reached a climax with the publication of Harold Lindsell's book eponymously titled *The Battle for the Bible,* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976).

[87] "Christianity Today," February 9th, 1998. Quoted by Callen in *JTR,* 58.
In *Christianity Today* the editor wrote that "Biblical Revelation" was 'one of the best books on contemporary biblical inerrancy'.

[88] H. Lindsell, *The Bible in the Balance* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 36.

identifying where that reform should begin. For that he was indebted to the pioneering work of Henry, Ramm and Bruce.

Possibly, the last major influence upon Pinnock's thinking as a young man, came from C. S. Lewis. Although not even claiming to be an Evangelical, C. S. Lewis had a profound effect upon the Evangelical world circa the 1950s. Lewis became an orthodox Christian thinker, but his thoughts on such things as world religions, ecumenism and miracles troubled many conservative Evangelicals. Paradoxically, his public defence of orthodox Christianity outweighed these concerns and caused him to be generally admired within the Evangelical world. Pinnock was one of those Evangelicals who admired him, and saw in Lewis a "reasonable, commonsense approach to Christian belief that was enriched with wonderful visions and the ability to live with ambiguity."[89]

Pinnock wrote "I admired C. S. Lewis and I studied with F. F. Bruce both of whom were men of generous instincts."[90] Randy Maddox, the Wesleyan scholar, commented that Lewis helped Pinnock to consider both a broader aspect of biblical interpretation and the Arminian wing of Evangelicalism.[91] Furthermore (as is explored in Chapter Four), Pinnock was also influenced by Lewis' views on God's presence and salvation in people of other faiths. Pinnock openly acknowledged he was indebted to Lewis' Inclusivist model.[92] Lewis caused Pinnock to rethink concepts of Inclusivism and ecumenism.

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[89] Callen, *JTR*, 58.
[90] Pinnock, C. (2000) Postscript: "How my mind has changed," in *JTR*, 223.
[91] R. L. Maddox, *JTR*, Foreword.
[92] Callen, *JTR*, 251.
In the biography Pinnock commented that C. S. Lewis was a great favourite with Evangelicals but he was much more liberal in spirit than most of them.

Probably though, Lewis' greatest contribution to Pinnock's thinking, was in helping him to clarify how to live with ambiguity and paradox within the biblical text. He helped Pinnock learn how to deal positively with seeming theological contradictions, and to be far more open to the fact that many things could only be left within the mysteries of God. Reformed thinkers whilst acknowledging mysteries within God, were far more restrictive as to what those mysteries were.

In an interview later in his life, Pinnock was asked what had he hoped he had contributed to the contemporary theological journey. His answer was: "the ability to think new thoughts and try them out like C. S. Lewis, and the will to put old things in new ways like Francis Schaeffer."[93]

Pinnock's theological journey in the reform of Evangelicalism began as an eclectic event, influenced by Henry, Ramm, Schaeffer, Bruce and Lewis. The cumulative influence these theologians caused him to adopt a different model of Evangelicalism. It was not an unusual step for an Evangelical to look for a new model, but it was to prove the starting point from which a more dramatic theology would ultimately emerge. Pinnock was no longer following the Reformed Calvinist tradition, he was well on the road to become an Evangelical Arminian, and this thesis now explores the specific traditions or models of Evangelicalism that Pinnock embraced en route.

1:5 Pinnock in the Reformed Calvinist Tradition

To evaluate and assess Pinnock's theology with reference to the Evangelical movement, I propose to use Daniel Strange's working definition of the three key

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[93] Callen, *JTR*, 200.

traditions within contemporary Evangelicalism. Pinnock embraced these positions at different stages in his career. He calls these traditions: The Reformed-Calvinist Tradition; The Arminian Tradition and Post-Conservative Evangelical Theology.[94]

Daniel Strange was one of Pinnock's extensive commentators and an able critic. He is a British Reformed Calvinist academic, who has little time for new Evangelicalism.[95] Chronologically, Strange divided Pinnock's life into three stages corresponding with the traditions that Pinnock was involved with:

Stage 1 - Pinnock's Calvinist Paradigm up to 1970
Stage 2 - Pinnock's conversion to Arminianism from 1970-1986
Stage 3 - Pinnock's transition to free-will theism and the category of Openness from 1986 onwards.[96]

Whilst I will challenge this chronology at certain points, essentially I think that Strange has accurately summed up the ethos and number of key stages in Pinnock's theological development.[97] However, what I consider a major weakness in Strange's assessment is that he only considers Pinnock an Evangelical during the Calvinist paradigm. To Pinnock, each phase he passed through was helping him reform Evangelicalism, and his theological enterprise had this goal firmly in mind. Strange, on

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[94] Lindsell, *The Bible in the Balance*, 8-9.

[95] A cursory reading of Daniel Strange's monograph shows that it is written from a conservative Reformed perspective. In the foreword to Strange's book the Roman Catholic theologian Gavin D'Costa wrote of Strange coming 'from his own Evangelical Calvinist tradition'. Surprisingly, Strange makes no mention of 'new Evangelicalism' as a precursor to PCE or even as a reform movement within Evangelicalism. Strange appears reluctant to acknowledge that Pinnock was only one of many Evangelicals who came to reject the ethos of Evangelicalism as the prerogative of Reformed Calvinism. For instance, he briefly mentions Pinnock's mentor Ramm but only in the context of him introducing Barthian influence into Evangelical theology and not as a 'new Evangelical' leader. Similarly, Strange only writes of Carl Henry's theology in the context of Inclusivism and does not refer to Henry as a pioneer reformer of contemporary Evangelicalism and the inaugurator of 'new Evangelicalism'.

[96] Gray, and Sinkinson, eds. *Reconstructing Theology*, 4*ff*.

[97] For instance I would argue that the publication of *The Scripture Principle* in 1984 marked the emergence of Pinnock as an Evangelical Arminian and his separation from Reformed Calvinism. In 1975 he had published his first book on a defence of Arminian belief *Grace Unlimited*. Strange on the other hand chose 1986 as the transitional year arguing that it was the year Pinnock published an essay on his changing view of the doctrine of God. I believe the previous works mentioned were of far greater significance.

the other hand, considers any post-Reformed theology from Pinnock as aberrations from conservative orthodoxy. He denies that Pinnock's proposals were for the amelioration of Evangelical belief and regards Pinnock's theology as an alternative to Evangelical belief.[98] This thesis argues that Pinnock found within 'new Evangelicalism' a vehicle to express true Evangelical reforms. Strange correctly highlighted the key doctrines which Pinnock advocated in later life:

> Pinnock has often become the figurehead of many controversial issues which have confronted Evangelicalism in the last two decades; the role of other religions (as an Inclusivist); the nature of Hell (as an advocate of annihilationism); the charismatic renewal and the place of spiritual gifts (a strong advocate); and the doctrine of God (as a free-will theist).[99]

To Strange such beliefs were the antithesis of Reformed Calvinism and he called Pinnock an 'Evangelical maverick',[100] Pinnock replied that he believed good theology should always be 'in progress and contemporary relevant'. He further responded by arguing that a characterization of him as a maverick was dependent on the Evangelical eyes of the beholder. He wrote:

> There is room in Evangelicalism for many voices, for John Wesley as well as for Jonathan Edwards. . . . Some people prefer C. S. Lewis to J. I. Packer; others prefer Carl Henry to Bernard Ramm. . . . The Evangelical movement is bigger and richer than any of our schemes so let conversations continue and let us all grow.

But there was to be no peaceful dialogue between Pinnock and his Evangelical detractors, and the dispute became quite confrontational. Soon Pinnock labelled his conservative critics in a derogatory way, calling them either paleo-Calvinists or

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[98] Strange writes about Pinnock's theological journey as though he had left Evangelicalism, when he left the Calvinist Paradigm around 1970. What Strange does is to present the Calvinist paradigm as the only Evangelical model. He then critiques Pinnock's theological developments using paleo-Calvinism as the bench mark.

[99] D. Strange, (1999) "Clark H. Pinnock; The Evolution of an Evangelical Maverick," in *The Evangelical Quarterly*, 71:4, 325.

[100] Ibid, 325.

fundamentalists. In 1990 Pinnock wrote for the first time that he himself had begun his spiritual pilgrimage *as a fundamentalist.*[101] By Pinnock's use of the term fundamentalist he meant intransigent Reformed Calvinism or paleo-Calvinism. He uses all of these terms interchangeably and so they will be used throughout this thesis.[102]

Surprisingly though, his critic Daniel Strange endorsed Pinnock's use of this term 'paleo-Calvinist' on historical grounds, even preferring it to the adjective 'classical' Reformed Calvinist.[103] Although with the passage of time Pinnock did come to use both terms ('paleo-Calvinist' and 'fundamentalist') in a totally negative way, he was never referring to a militant millenarian fanaticism but rather to a stubborn yet highly developed conservative Protestant scholasticism. Pinnock's major complaint and frustration was that paleo-Calvinism simply never changed, and more so, never saw the need for change (only clarification).[104] On the other hand Pinnock's critics, (Reformed and otherwise) replied that Pinnock never stopped changing and always called his change progress.

Pinnock commented on paleo- Calvinism:

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[101] Callen, *JTR,* 19 n 9.

[102] Pinnock defined paleo-Calvinists as those who decided to stop growing in their outlook beyond the guidelines of the Westminster Confession. In contrast he referred to Karl Barth as 'a Reformed theologian who has made many of the changes in Calvinism that I and many others consider essential'. This was Pinnock's response to Daniel Strange and Amos Yong in *The Evangelical Theological Quarterly* 71:4, (Oct. 1999): 351. He repeated this claim in his book *Most Moved Mover,* 14.

[103] Daniel Strange, *The Possibility of Salvation Among the Unevangelised – An Analysis of Inclusivism in Recent Evangelical theology* (Cumbria: Paternoster Pub. 2002), 8 n 17.
Strange argued that many modern theologians within the Reformed tradition (such as McGrath, Berkhof and Brummer) have accepted the *Agreement of Levenberg,* (1973). To him Levenberg drastically revised Calvin's thought for example by rejecting double predestination. Strange therefore felt 'paleo' highlighted the historical position.

[104] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze,* 33.
Pinnock quotes the well-known saying of the Princeton theologian Charles Hodge who remarked that during his tenure at Princeton Seminary, neither he nor his colleagues brought forth a simple, original thought!

> The old Princeton orthodoxy was a major factor in the fundamentalist Evangelicalism of the 1920's . . . early in my career I myself advocated paleo-Calvinism and thus now have come to pose a special threat to its continuing defenders. Without intending it, my life experience has placed me in a position to help others become free of paleo-Calvinism, if they should want to . . .[105]

Pinnock acknowledged that, like Strange, when he was himself a paleo-Reformed Evangelical, he considered it the ideal, if not only, true form of Christianity:

> I was introduced in a natural way during the 1950's to the institutions of what is inexactly called 'Evangelicalism' in North America, a quasi-denominational world furnished with its own publishers, magazines, conferences, famous evangelists, youth organizations and the like . . . the dominating theology is Reformed or Calvinian . . . Calvinism theology enjoyed an elitist position of dominance within post-war Evangelicalism on both sides of the Atlantic.[106]

Located within Western paleo-Calvinism Pinnock could write that "it delivers a delicious sense of security, giving a great platform from which to assail those dreadful liberals who are such historicists."[107] But whilst it was true that the early part of the twentieth century had been taken up with Evangelicals (generally united), battling against theological liberalism, the theological scene had radically changed and from the 1950s the major Evangelical battle was for Evangelical relevance within a changing world.

Pinnock's early books were all written from a paleo-Calvinist perspective, and most of them were apologetic literature e.g. *Set Forth Your Case*, *A Defence of Biblical*

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[105] C. H. Pinnock, "Afterword" 10.8.99. Quoted in *JTR*, 269.

[106] Pinnock, *The Grace of God . . .*, 28.
The intransigence that permeated and is a feature of paleo-Calvinism was considered strength not a weakness by those within. They believed they were building on foundations that had stood the test of time. During the 50s & 60s Evangelical leaders such as Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Carl Henry and J. I. Packer all influenced and reinforced Pinnock's belief that Reformed Calvinism was Evangelical Christianity in its purest form. Pinnock wrote:

> Calvinist theology was and is a scholarly and historical system of Evangelical theology. Therefore it is no surprise I began my theological life as a Calvinist who regarded alternate Evangelical interpretations as suspect and at least mildly heretical.

[107] Ibid, 16-17.

Infallibility and the climax to this period in his life *Biblical Revelation.*[108] The early Pinnock as an apologetic theologian emphasized a basic congruity between faith and reason, believing that apologetics could present reasonable probabilities for faith, but not logical proofs. When writing as a paleo-Calvinist apologist Pinnock commented: "I see my task as that of Christian persuasion. I am in the role of a fair-minded lawyer seeking to convince the jury of the truth of the Christian message."[109]

The root metaphor of God the Judge is a common theme in Reformed thinking. It is directly linked to the classic theory of the atonement (penal substitution). However from the 1970s, Pinnock began to realise that a strict penal substitution led to a limited atonement, and a limited atonement, by its very name, excluded 'the whomsoever' of humanity.[110] Pinnock looked for different developed root metaphors to understand God. As will be explored, he found them firstly, in the metaphor of God as the loving, reconciling Father, and then in Christ as the second Adam. Both metaphors emphasized the drawing of all humanity back to God. These concepts are assessed later in this thesis.

Ultimately though, it was more than over root metaphors that Pinnock disagreed with the Reformed conservatives. He regarded Evangelical fundamentalists negatively as foundationalist,[111] and himself and the new Evangelicals as non-foundationalist. Whilst within the Calvinist tradition, Pinnock embraced their academic methodology, which was

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[108] C. H. Pinnock, "Set Forth Your Case," in *Studies in Christian Apologetics* (NY: Craig Press, 1967). C. H. Pinnock, *A Defence of Infallibility* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub, 1967), Pinnock, *Biblical Revelation.*

[109] C. H. Pinnock, *Reason Enough. A Case for the Christian Faith* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Pub, 1997), 17.

[110] Gray, and Sinkinson, *Reconstructing Theology,* 15.
He argued that the logic of a limited atonement is on the basis that Christ only suffered for the elect. Pinnock (and Arminians) believed Christ died for all, thus seeing the Atonement as a potential basis for universal salvation not particular salvation.

[111] Grenz, and Franke, eds. *Beyond Foundationalism,* 8.

built on a biblical foundationalism that took as its role model for articulation the rational orthodoxy of Protestant scholasticism. This methodology viewed faith more as a rational assent to propositions deducted from Scripture, and was therefore closely based on belief in a doctrine of plenary, verbal inspiration of Scriptural authority.

The systematic theologies that followed on from such a premise held to the belief that only an inerrant Bible could give a reliable foundation for faith.[112] Pinnock began his theological career believing in Christian truth as a body of infallible, biblical propositions, divinely revealed and set out in the historic Protestant Confessions and Creeds. He wrote that "these propositions elucidated the very mystery of human existence."[113] During his time as a paleo-Calvinist, Pinnock was a rationalist, an apologist who logically built his theology on Scriptural theses. Reformed Calvinism counted logic and rational debate of great importance. Pinnock wrote: "Apologetics along with dogmatics and ethics is one of the triad of intellectual disciplines that supported the edifice of Christian conviction."[114]

Certainly for Reformed Calvinists, and most conservative Evangelicals, the power of rational debate was always prominent. Any emphasis upon feeling or pietism (which was to become a feature of Pinnock's theology) was regarded with great suspicion.[115]

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[112] B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co. 1948), 5th Reprint.
The doctrine of inerrancy as expressed by Warfield became the classic Reformed Calvinists position in the twentieth century. Reformed theologies usually start their theology with the doctrine of Scripture often serving as a prolegomenon. Even contemporary Reformed systematic theologies commence with the pre-eminence of Scripture.

[113] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze,* 29.

[114] Ibid, 95.

[115] Although rationalism with its identification with humanism and atheism seems a strange bedfellow for conservative Evangelicalism, nevertheless great store was placed by them upon the reasonableness and common sense of Christian belief and a universal truth claim.

Reformed academics acknowledged that Old Princeton's emphasis was on 'right reason' and 'the primacy of the intellect' regarding matters of faith.[116]

Pinnock's first major book *Set Forth Your Case* is a classic example of Old Princeton's apologetics wedded to inductive Commonsense Philosophy: "The Christian gospel pleased both heart and head. It is a rational and intelligent faith. Therefore, it cannot be presented on the spur of the moment without much reflective thought. There is need for more serious regard for the philosophical and factual structure of the gospel."[117]

Partly because of his rationalism and foundationalism, Pinnock was to call his paleo-Calvinist stage 'a philosophical biblicism' that "offered divinely given propositional truths which could steer Evangelicalism away from relativism."[118] Such a position meant that Pinnock was initially a zealous defender of biblical infallibility and inerrancy.

Pinnock admitted that during his time within the Calvinist paradigm, he was preoccupied with apologetic certainty, and also acknowledged that he was a militant Christian rationalist. For example, the pessimism regarding human nature that is found

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[116] P. K. Helseth, *Reclaiming the Center,* 228.
This emphasis upon rationalism was a major factor in conservative Evangelicalism from the nineteenth century onwards. The Calvinists embraced Scottish Common Sense realism which was a popular philosophy at that time. Scottish Common Sense Realism as propounded by Thomas Reid (a not particularly religious man) has had a lot of research recently as to why the staunchly conservative. Reformed Calvinist academics of nineteenth century Princeton Seminary adopted it as their philosophical model for Evangelicalism. This thesis endorses the view that whilst there is probably an over exaggeration of the role of Common Sense thinking upon nineteenth century Evangelicalism, there is undoubtedly plenty of evidence to substantiate the claims that inductive Common Sense thinking reinforced Evangelical rational foundationalism. For example Harriet Harris commented:

> Thomas Reid's Enlightenment philosophy influenced British and American Evangelicals, shaping a dominant strand of Reformed thought in which faith was viewed as rational assent to propositions. This has resulted in biblical foundationalism.

[117] Pinnock, *Set Forth Your Case*, 9.
[118] Callen, *JTR,* 43.

within Pinnock's early mentor Francis Schaeffer's theology, is also reflected in Pinnock's early apologetics. Human fallenness is a basic tenet and emphasis of Calvinist belief, but as Pinnock embraced a more open approach to theology so a distinct lack of pessimism, regarding the human predicament, appears in Pinnock's later work; a point that did not go unnoticed by his critics.[119]

However, one legacy that Reformed thinking left with him throughout his career, was that Pinnock remained convinced apologetic methodology was an indispensable tool for evangelism. As an Evangelical, Pinnock saw rational apologetics as a useful aid in dealing with a pre-evangelism approach.[120]

On the other hand Pinnock realized that Reformed thinking and rationalism did not allow for contemporary manifestations of the miraculous or supernatural, and warned against any form of Christian mysticism. At first this left the young Pinnock unimpressed with any form of Pietism, but his theology was about to undergo a radical review.

The pinnacle of Pinnock's career as a Reformed Calvinist fundamentalist was the publication of his book *Biblical Revelation* (1971). In the Foreword to the 1982 reprint, Pinnock's contemporary and leading conservative Evangelical, J. I. Packer, wrote: "a triumph for Pinnock's first period. In a flurry of taut formulae Pinnock states and vindicates the historic Protestant view of Scripture . . . of the self-announcing God, against the non-cognitive, relativist idea of revelation."[121]

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[119] See Chapter 4 Part Two.
[120] Pinnock, *Set Forth Your Case,* 18.
[121] Callen, *JTR,* 42.
J. I. Packer, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God* (London: IVF, 1965).
Packer was a very capable articulate Reformed scholar who became prominent with his book on Scriptural authority.

It was indeed a triumph for Pinnock's first period of Calvinism, but rather ironically *Biblical Revelation* marked not just the climax, but the end of his paleo-Calvinist era, particularly as the influences and antecedents of 'new Evangelicalism' began to influence.

Pinnock's Calvinist paradigm slowly came to end post-1971, but in reality the building blocks for fundamental change had been in place for quite some time before, and his move towards an Evangelical Arminian model was not really a surprise to those who were following his work closely.

1:6 Pinnock in the Evangelical Arminian Tradition

Pinnock's Evangelical theological journey made the transition to Evangelical Arminianism post-1970. I have argued that Pinnock's Calvinist paradigm ended with the publication of his conservative Evangelical book *Biblical Revelation* in 1971. Strange goes much further and argues that Pinnock moved away from Evangelicalism with his 'conversion to Arminianism'. This thesis seeks to prove that Pinnock was not abandoning his Evangelical faith; he was simply embracing Evangelical Arminianism as a more helpful model for his evolving 'new Evangelicalism'.

By 1990 Pinnock was so far removed from his earlier Calvinism and his former conservative position that he disdainfully wrote of 'moving out of the fundamentalist ghetto.[122] To emphasize the point, he added that he wished he had started his theological

[122] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze*, 68.

journey as a Wesleyan[123] (which is synonymous with Evangelical Arminianism). Pinnock's late colleague, and leading PCE theologian, Stanley Grenz wrote in Pinnock's biography that Pinnock's life was "a fascinating intellectual journey from a quintessential Evangelical apologist to an anti-Augustinian (Calvinist) theological reformist."[124]

The factors, both theologically and culturally, which caused Pinnock to re-locate to the opposite end of the Evangelical spectrum can be traced in part back to antecedents previously looked at in this chapter. It is only by understanding Pinnock's Evangelical Arminian starting point, that his later, and more radical journey towards Open Theism could develop so quickly. So what were the Arminian theological factors that caused Pinnock to radically change?

The influence of Evangelical Arminianism upon Pinnock is profound. Its influence can be readily seen in key features of his later PCE theology such as in his soteriology, pneumatology, theodicy, pietism and his doctrine of God. In Pinnock embracing Evangelical Arminianism (essentially Wesleyan Arminianism) the way was made for him to develop his leading concepts of 'free-will theism' and his 'human bible'.

A key difference between Calvinism and Arminianism is in their respective emphases on either monergism (Calvinism) or synergism (Arminianism). The divine/human co-operation motif became increasingly significant as Pinnock embraced an Arminian synergistic theology. 'Free-will theism' is arguably a more accurate description of Pinnock's synergism. Whilst the synonym 'Open Theism' is a popular but

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[123] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze*, 68.
[124] Callen, *JTR*, Foreword.

post-Arminian feature, because of its now general usage this thesis uses Open Theism in preference to free-will theism.

Confirmation of Pinnock's embracing of Evangelical Arminianism was made public in 1989 when he wrote *The Grace of God and the Will of Man: a case for Arminianism.*[125] Such unequivocal language, and his recurring motif of journey caused Pinnock to refer to his embracing of Evangelical Arminianism as 'A Pilgrimage in Theology from Augustine to Arminius'. However, there is an important nuance that needs to be noted, in that Pinnock wrote that he could have referred to his journey as from Calvin to Wesley as much as from Augustine and Arminius;[126] Pinnock saw Calvin as essentially an Augustinian.

Another PCE theologian Roger Olson, writing on Evangelical Arminianism, acknowledged Pinnock as 'one of my mentors who very publicly switched from Calvinist theology to Arminianism'. Olson added that Pinnock went on to edit two volumes of essays defending classical Arminian theology.[127] In one of those books *The Grace of God and The Will of Man,* Pinnock clearly makes a case for Evangelical Arminianism. In this book Pinnock, with great significance, writes of five doctrinal changes he made during the 1970s. Each change Pinnock writes about is a direct rebuttal of one of the five Reformed doctrines which historically denied legitimacy to Arminianism as an Evangelical expression. These doctrines became well known in Evangelical circles by the acronym TULIP. Pinnock came to meticulously reject each of the Five Points of

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[125] Pinnock, ed. *The Grace of God.*
[126] Ibid, 15.
[127] R. E. Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2006), 8. The two books by Pinnock he was referring to was *The Grace of God and the Will of Man* (1989) and *Grace Unlimited* (1989) in which he writes that he wanted to give a louder voice to the silent majority of Arminian Evangelicals.

TULIP.[128]

Pinnock's response to TULIP was quite public and well thought out. He was nailing his Evangelical Arminian colours to the mast by attacking the heart of Calvinistic belief. Within the book Pinnock took each of the Calvinist points and argued against their position. In the doctrinal debate that followed, the future foundations for Pinnock's Open Theism were being laid. Therefore, this thesis assesses a number of Pinnock's Arminian responses to the Calvinist position.

The first of the five doctrines Pinnock challenged was that of total depravity (the T of TULIP). The Calvinists describe how it is impossible for any person of their own volition to call upon God. Calvinism teaches that only the predestined could call on God and the rest were lost in unbelief. In contrast, Pinnock argued as an Arminian that in the gospel story Jesus addressed people as free and responsible agents, who may or who may not call upon God as they willed, not as God decreed. [129]

How God awakened spiritual hunger in people has always been a contentious issue between Calvinists and Arminians. Pinnock following the Arminian path acknowledged that it was a human response to divine grace that awakened a need for God. Arminians called this awakening grace 'prevenient grace,' and the Calvinists called it 'common

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[128] Arminianism was declared heretical by the Calvinistic Synod of Dort in 1618. Ultimately Reform belief was summed up in what became known as the Five Points of Dort which the acronym TULIP stood for:

T – total depravity
U – unconditional election
L – limited atonement
I – irresistible grace
P – perseverance of the saints (i.e. believers)

[129] Pinnock, ed. *The Grace of God,* 22.

grace'.[130] Although Pinnock could see no developed doctrine of universal prevenient grace (as Wesley taught), he saw in the Scriptures (particularly in John's gospel) an emphasis on grace as the universal drawing power of God.[131]

Wesleyan teaching on 'a grace that goes before' agreed with Calvinism on a number of issues. They agreed that sin affected every human faculty making it impossible for humanity on its own to move towards God. This belief is the Calvinist doctrine of Total Depravity (the T of TULIP). However, from these points of agreement there was a fundamental point of disagreement. Wesley view was that prevenient grace was rooted in the Atonement, and by following these promptings one is responding to Christ.[132] However, Pinnock reinterpreted this Arminian understanding of prevenient grace, believing that any grace offered by divine overture must have salvific potential. Reformed belief on the other hand argued that there were different sorts of grace, and their belief was that common grace (their nearest equivalent to prevenient grace) was universal and indiscriminate, but it was not salvific.[133] Common grace was important for social life and civil order, but it was resistible. To Calvinists special grace was irresistible (the I of TULIP) but common grace was resistible.

However, Pinnock rejected the Reformed belief in two forms of grace. To him he followed the Wesleyan trajectory that taught there was one Spirit of grace and whether as prevenient or special, indicated the presence of God - God's presence is always

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[130] Strange, *The Possibility of Salvation,* 98*ff.*
[131] Pinnock, ed. *The Grace of God,* 22.
Pinnock says that what was decisive for him in reading the gospel story was the fact that the Scriptural appeal was obviously to people who were able to *choose* to respond not *destined* to respond.
[132] R. L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994), 65-191. See also footnote 140.
[133] Strange, *The Possibility of Salvation,* 99.

potentially salvific.[134] As Pinnock dwelt on the Wesleyan understanding of prevenient grace so his doctrine of the Spirit began to consolidate. Pinnock wrote: "The Spirit embodies the prevenient grace of God and puts into effect that universal presence of Jesus Christ. . . . From the Spirit flows that universal gracing that seeks to lead people into fuller light and love . . . Spirit supplies the prevenient grace that benefits every person."[135]

With a certain amount of irony, as Pinnock developed his pneumatology, he moved further away from Wesley's teaching on prevenience on two grounds. Firstly, he realized that whilst he agreed with the sentiment and the principles involved, he felt it was not a developed biblical doctrine. More so, he realized that the Wesleyan trajectory was not very far removed from Reformed belief in regard to particular election and limited atonement. As Pinnock became more convinced of a universalism in the Spirit's ministry, so he felt any restrictions on human free will did not do justice to the biblical account.

Pinnock did agree with the Wesleyan position that saw prevenience as a joining of the work of divine grace with the co-operation of the human spirit. This caused Strange to comment that: "Pinnock definitely believes that prevenient grace co-operates with the human will and believes that apart from grace there cannot be faith but faith is an authentic human response and act of co-operation."[136]

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[134] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 200.
Pinnock wrote that in the Reformed view common grace was a non-salvific gift to sinners. Common grace was seen as helping people better themselves thus diminishing the effects of total depravity. Pinnock argues that it is simply a way of getting around why depravity is not more radical than it is.
[135] C. Pinnock, (1996) "An Inclusivist View," in *Four Views on Salvation*, eds. Okholm, Phillips, 104.
[136] Strange, *The Possibility of Salvation,* 98.

However, Pinnock's synergism was ultimately to take him beyond both Arminian belief and Reformed Calvinism. To Calvinists there was nothing mankind could ever do to earn or even move towards God. Grace was only from God, given to undeserving recipients. Calvinists see the divine/human relationship as totally monergistic. Pinnock was soon regarded by the Calvinists as a neo-Pelagian in both the way he defined human freedom, and his emphasis upon human ability to freely access divine grace. This was not without justification. Pinnock's synergism gave more dynamic to the human contribution than to the divine; he openly stated that God voluntarily limited his power. Pinnock called the dichotomy between predestination and significant human freedom the *Calvinist antinomy.*[137]

Strange makes an astute observation when he writes: "In an analysis of Pinnock's change from Calvinism to Arminianism, the philosophical driving force was his changing concept of freedom."[138]

That freedom to Pinnock was increasingly synergistic. Through Arminian influence, Pinnock developed the concept of God offering to human beings an autonomy that encouraged people to genuinely and freely share in the creation of their own future. However, Pinnock's understanding of synergism was going well beyond Evangelical Arminian thinking. For instance, Pinnock argued that synergism was simply belief in individual free-will that chose to co-operate (or not) with God,[139] whereas the Wesleyan

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[137] Pinnock, ed. *The Grace of God,* 21.
[138] Strange, *The Possibility of Salvation,* 50.
[139] Maddox, *Responsible Grace,* 65*ff.*
This is different to the Wesleyan view of prevenient grace which believes that the initial promptings, desire and ability to respond were part of that grace which was made available by the Atonement.

view of prevenient grace held that the initial promptings, desire and ability to respond were part of that grace procured by the atonement.[140]

Historically both Calvinism and Arminianism had wrestled with the Calvinist antinomy, and it was highly unlikely that Pinnock and the new Evangelicals were going to solve these deep metaphysical issues in their lifetime, but ultimately his Open Theism was to attempt a new model. In his desire to provide convincing arguments for understanding divine synergism, Pinnock appeared to take away from the concept of salvation by grace alone (sola gratia),[141] by placing too great an emphasis upon human work and merit. Nevertheless, because of its teaching on prevenience and its emphasis on free-will choice, for a while Pinnock was content to remain within Evangelical Arminianism.

As a synergist Pinnock had to ask the question as to how human response fitted into the salvific picture: Has Christ unconditionally procured redemption irrespective of human response? To answer the question Pinnock looked deeply into Arminian models of the atonement. A strong Wesleyanism motif was Christ as the Representative Man – the Second Adam. This motif placed an emphasis upon love as a manifestation of God's nature. To Wesleyans the emphasis on the love of God resulted in restored fellowship and reconciliation.[142] Pinnock embraced this aspect of the Evangelical Arminian position. He

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[140] In correspondence with Dr. Andrew Cheatle, Liverpool Hope University. February 2011.

[141] *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms – Drawn principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology.* R. A. Muller, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985). Sola gratia.
The teaching of the Reformers and their scholastic successors was that grace alone through faith was the basis of salvation. In Reformed justification nothing is left to the human will or to human works. Synergism is effectively ruled out of the work of salvation and even faith is seen as a work of grace and cannot be considered as the result of human effort.

[142] H. Ray Dunning, *Grace, Faith and Holiness. A Wesleyan Systematic Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1988).

saw in this model a voluntary free-will choice to enter into a reconciled relationship with God. Pinnock would never go back to any theory of the atonement that took away from divine/human partnership. He felt Evangelical theology needed the greater Arminian stress on human appropriation of salvific faith and the Wesleyan relational categories of theology.[143]

By 1970, Pinnock was now convinced that "the grace of God was dependent, in part, on the human partner and their free will exercise of faith."[144] As Pinnock's theology developed, he began to clearly formulate further key concepts of his future Open Theism, especially reciprocity and conditionality.

Although never a fully persuaded Wesleyan, Pinnock began to feel comfortable that Evangelical Arminianism gave a more accurate biblical base and a far greater relevance to Evangelicalism. He was to find in Wesleyan Arminianism the Evangelical soul mate he had been searching for. During the 1980s, Pinnock (working from an Evangelical Arminian starting point) began to articulate his new found understanding of synergism, in a fresh appraisal of the divine attributes and free will. His belief in the relative autonomy of humanity, his rethinking of divine immutability, omniscience and the operations of God both inside and outside of time, all became foundational for the emergence of his Open Theism,[145] which was in reality his doctrine of God. However, Pinnock's doctrine of God was to go well beyond any previous held Evangelical doctrine of God.

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[143] Dunning, *Grace, Faith and Holiness*, 14-16.
[144] Pinnock, ed. *The Grace of God*, 17.
[145] Ibid, 23.

In 1989 Pinnock made it quite clear as to why he had written two books directly on Evangelical Arminianism: "I wanted to give a louder voice to the silent majority of Evangelical Arminians, to help them understand the theological route they are travelling, and to encourage others to speak up theologically."[146]

Wesleyan Arminianism with its emphasis on God as love was essentially a form of pietism. Wesleyan belief placed great emphasis upon Christianity as a 'religion of the heart' as much as a 'religion of the head'. As Pinnock embraced Evangelical Arminianism, and its emphasis on divine love, so his pietism became more pronounced. He could write: "Above all, God is love, and therefore expresses his power, not by having to control everything . . . but by giving humanity salvation under the conditions of mutuality. What concerns us is the deterministic kind of theology that subordinates God's love to the ideal of absolute power . . ."[147]

Pinnock believed that Christian piety assumed and built on reciprocity between God and humanity.[148] Robert Price commented that: "Pinnock's whole theological and apologetic structure is built on the foundation of piety. . . . Pinnock's own theology is profoundly, even fundamentally experience centred."[149]

In his defining PCE book *The Scripture Principle,* which is evaluated in Chapter Two, Pinnock (in the introduction) writes of religious experiences being at the heart of Christianity.[150] The climax to Pinnock's theology of pietism is to be found in his pneumatology as recorded in his book *Flame of Love.* It is worth noting that references to

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[146] Pinnock, ed. *The Grace of God,* 27.
[147] Ibid, xi.
[148] Ibid, 24.
[149] R. Price, (1998) "C. H. Pinnock: Conservative and Contemporary," in *Evangelical Quarterly,* 60:2
[150] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle,* xiv.

Wesley and pietistic thinking permeate the book. For instance he writes as a Wesleyan pietist would: "In theology, mind and heart-study and prayer – are both important . . . it is important to experience the Spirit and reflect on our experience. Knowing the Spirit is experiential, and the topic is oriented towards transformation more than information."[151]

This growing emphasis and understanding of pietism was in parallel to Pinnock's move away from the Calvinist transcendent God, and his embracing the Spirit immanence that Wesleyan Arminianism taught, and the Pentecostal and charismatic movements believed in.

One other aspect of Wesleyan theology which this thesis argues had a pervasive influence upon Pinnock's thought is to be found in his appreciation of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral.[152] Pinnock embraced the Wesleyan Quadrilateral calling it "a convincing historical theology that is highly relevant as a constructive proposal for our day. "[153] Pinnock's biographer Callen wrote of how Pinnock appreciated the breadth and balance of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral. Callen concluded that Pinnock embraced the Wesleyan Quadrilateral because it retained a biblical centrality whilst recognizing key roles for the experience of true transformation of the believer, and the continuing wisdom of the church's tradition (especially the Greek Fathers).[154]

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[151] Callen, *JTR,* 80.

[152] The Wesleyan Quadrilateral is a paradigm of how Wesley conceived the talk of theology. Wesley did not use the term and it was first used by Albert Outler in the late 1960's whilst he served on a commission for the United Methodist Church. He used it as an analogue to the familiar term used by Anglican and Episcopal churches from 1886. The Wesleyan Quadrilateral is different to the Anglican term and Outler thought it a useful way to highlight the complex interactions of the four sources of Wesley's theology – **scriptural authority** complemented by **tradition, reason** and **experience**. It has become a popular and well received term with reference to Studies on Wesleyan theology.
D. A. D. Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral. Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience as a Model of Evangelical theology* (Indiana: Francis Asbury Press, 1990), 21-23.

[153] Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral,* endorsements Pinnock.

[154] Callen, *JTR,* 181.

As late as 1999, in writing on the nature of Hell Pinnock commented that: "The Wesleyan Quadrilateral is a way of understanding theological method. I have put this method to work on a controversial subject, the nature of Hell. . . . I was surprised at how well it operated."[155]

A clear reference to the Wesleyan Quadrilateral is found in Pinnock's book *Tracking the Maze.* Chapter Eleven of Pinnock's seminal book is divided into the four segments of the Quadrilateral – Scripture, Tradition, Experience and Reason. Pinnock found within the framework of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, a suitable model for articulating his epistemology and his theological enterprise. In 1997, Pinnock was invited as a keynote speaker at the Wesleyan Theological Society Conference. Whilst he was there he commented: 'I have come to realize how Wesleyan my moves in method and theism are . . . I think we need to move to a larger concept of method as represented by the Wesleyan Quadrilateral and to a more dynamic model of the nature of God as intimated also in Wesley's thinking'.[156]

Closely linked to the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, Evangelical Arminianism left Pinnock with was a new approach to the Scripture principle. Pinnock wrote that from the 1970s, as he began to move away from the larger framework of Calvinism, he began to question the concomitant rationalism of Protestant scholasticism, and its subsequent interpretation of scriptural authority.[157] Following the publication of *The Scripture Principle* (1984), Pinnock made it quite clear that it was written from an Arminian

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[155] Callen, *JTR,* 260-261.
[156] C. Pinnock, (1998) "Evangelical Theologians Facing the Future," in *Wesleyan Theological Journal,* 181.
[157] R. C. W. Roennfeldt, *Clark H. Pinnock on Biblical Authority – An Evolving Position* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1993), Foreword xxx.

perspective which rejected the scholastic methodology: "The Bible in Arminian perspective is the kind of Bible much closer to the one we have been given than the imagined perfect book of scholastic theology. . . . An Arminian theology has its own way of thinking about things, including biblical inspiration and authority."[158]

To write like this made it clear that Pinnock's transition from a Reformed/Calvinist to an Evangelical Arminian was complete. However, his journey towards Open Theism and PCE was in many ways only just beginning.

1:7 Pinnock the Post-Conservative Evangelical

The third and final stage, that Strange saw in Pinnock's theological journey, was his transition to PCE from Evangelical Arminianism in 1986, and the development of Pinnock's Open Theism.[159] PCE is a much broader reform movement within new Evangelicalism although its theological roots are in Evangelical Arminianism.[160]

Daniel Strange corrected an earlier assessment of Pinnock, by stating that from 2002 Pinnock was recognized as 'the most prominent advocate of PCE'.[161] Pinnock's embryonic description of PCE was to call it postmodern orthodoxy. In essence PCE was epitomizing the latest paradigm shift within new Evangelicalism. B. E. Patterson wrote: "New Evangelicals became *the* Evangelicals to the American public at large. The new Evangelicals benefitted during the 1950's from the general revival in religious interest . .

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[158] Roennfeldt, *Clark H. Pinnock on Biblical Authority,* Foreword xxi.
[159] Gray, and Sinkinson, eds. *Reconstructing Theology,* 4.
[160] For instance both Kevin Vanhoozer and N. T. Wright have been called PCE.
[161] Strange, *The Possibility of Salvation,* 12.

. they wanted to affirm Evangelical theology (Protestant orthodoxy linked with American revivalism)."[162]

PCE was honed and shaped by other Evangelical reformers and in 1993, David Wells commented on PCE, highlighting some of those key people:

> The best known post-conservative Evangelical who has produced the most published material and over the longest period of time is Clark Pinnock. . . . John Sanders has been closely allied with Pinnock in the areas of salvation and the doctrine of God. Stanley Grenz outlined the agenda for restructuring of Evangelical theology in his *Revisioning Evangelical Theology.* Numerous other less well known theologians are to be found within the Evangelical theology group of the American Academy of Religion. Even the Evangelical Theological Society[163] now has a number of younger members who represent the post-conservative element.[164]

Darryl Hart was right that the sheer tenacity of 'new Evangelicalism' created a religious identity of simply 'Evangelical', and it was no longer paleo-Calvinist Evangelicalism.[165] Reformed Calvinism was being usurped from the Evangelical throne and its place was being taken by this evolving 'new Evangelicalism'. Following the demise of Bernard Ramm, 'new Evangelicalism' was being spearheaded by the likes of Pinnock, Stanley Grenz and Roger Olson. Olson wrote on the development of 'new Evangelicalism':

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[162] B. E. Patterson, *Carl F. H. Henry. Makers of the Modern Theological Mind* (Peabody: Hendrickson Pub. 1983), 37*f.*

[163] "Evangelical Theological Society," (2003). Available from http://www.etsjets.org/members/2003. The Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) was formed in 1949, appealing to moderate Evangelical scholars with an Evangelical perspective on biblical and theological studies. Pinnock became a member of ETS for over 35 years and saw it (along with NAE) as a potential, powerful institution for inaugurating Evangelical change. This didn't happen and in November 2002 a resolution was called within ETS to expel Pinnock (and other PCE) for their 'Open Theism' as a non-Evangelical theology. Even though the resolution was defeated it was not as unanimous as Pinnock expected. The pendulum appeared to be swinging against Openness theology. This resolution was commended by Roger Nicole, a charter member, who argued that the writings of Openness theology were incompatible with the inerrancy provision of the ETS Doctrinal basis. However, it took until November 2003 before ETS allowed Pinnock to **remain** a member.

[164] D. Wells, *No Place for Truth or Whatever Happened to Evangelical theology?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 207-71.

[165] Hart, *Deconstructing Evangelicalism,* 24.

> Gradually, throughout the 1950s and 1960s a relatively diverse movement of post-fundamentalist Evangelicalism began developing its own distinctive theology that represented a blend of Protestant orthodoxy and pietism with an element of revivalism. . . . Some 'new Evangelicals' leaned closer to pietism and revivalism. . . . This shaky Evangelical coalition was by the 1980s sparring over which one represented true Evangelicalism. One wing has been labelled the Puritan-Princeton paradigm of Evangelicalism and the other the Pietist-Pentecostal paradigm.[166]

Roger Olson became the leading exponent of PCE and commented on its formative roots:

> Postconservative theology has not simply popped up out of nowhere; it is rooted in the experiential and Pietist side of the Evangelical movement and does not employ a scholastic methodology. It is indebted to Arminian Baptists such as Clark Pinnock and Stanley Grenz who stand on the shoulders of Wesleyan theologians such as Henry Knight and Kenneth Collins.[167]

PCE was by the late twentieth century regarded as a powerful growing Evangelical reform movement. It was no longer the small and diverse movement which Olson first described it as in 1995.[168] Olson agreed with Pinnock's definition of the Evangelical boundary changes that PCE made. In Pinnock's festschrift Olson summarised the beliefs of PCE as: (1) thoroughly and authentically Evangelical; (2) embraces a vision of critical and generous orthodoxy; (3) believes in experience rather than doctrine as the enduring essence of Evangelical Christianity; (4) expresses discomfort with foundationalism and embraces critical realism; (5) has a strong interest in dialogue between diverse groups of theologians; (6) has a broad and relatively inclusive view of Evangelicalism; (7) has a relational view of reality, including a relational vision of God's being; and (8) holds an Inclusivist attitude toward salvation.[169]

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[166] R. E. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology. Twenty Centuries of Tradition and Reform* (Downers Grove, IVP, 1999), 594.
[167] Olson, *Reforming and Always Reforming*, 52.
[168] See footnote 168.
[169] Porter, and Cross, eds. *Semper Reformandum*, 16-137. Olson.

So from 1960 onwards, the Reformed Calvinist hegemony within the Evangelical coalition was breaking up, and the new Evangelical reform followed the Pietist – Pentecostal paradigm. From 1980 onwards, this version of 'new Evangelicalism' was being called Post-conservative Evangelicalism. Justin Taylor in tracing the history of PCE concluded: Roger Olson referred to postconservatism in 1995 as a 'small and diverse movement', a movement in its infancy, and in 2002 as a mood (not a movement). In 2003 he clarified that by calling it 'a movement of mood; a paradigm shift without organization'.[170]

However, PCE was a movement, a part of the chronological and linear development of 'new Evangelicalism'. PCE was a paradigm shift at the very heart of contemporary Evangelicalism.

Although himself a key leader of PCE, Olson regarded Pinnock as 'a model of PCE'.[171] He called Pinnock this in Pinnock's festschrift, and added a further comment on PCE as an Evangelical reform movement: Post-conservatism has a major unifying motif of a commitment to ongoing reform of Evangelical life, worship and belief in the light of God's Word.[172]

Pinnock himself first used the term PCE in 1990, where at first he juxtaposed it with 'postmodern orthodoxy'.[173] However, it was only a short time before PCE became the more popular expression to describe the latest development of 'new Evangelicalism'.

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[170] Justin Taylor, (2002) "An Introduction to Postconservative Evangelicals" Available from http://www.conservativesonline.org/journals.
[171] Porter, and Cross, eds. *Semper Reformandum*, 16.
[172] Ibid, 17.
[173] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze*, 63*ff*.

Pinnock called PCE a contemporary *via media* within Evangelical Christianity. He hoped it would become a middle ground for ecumenical unity. He sought to expand the appeal of PCE beyond Evangelical borders. He cited Vatican II as 'massively important example for illustrating post-conservative theology'.[174] In fact Pinnock believed PCE would appeal to moderate Christians of all denominations, particularly when non-Evangelicals saw the boundaries of Evangelical theology being adjusted.[175] In *Tracking the Maze* Pinnock listed key areas where PCE had redrawn the Evangelical boundaries, and reshaped their identity, in order to appeal to a much broader Christian constituency.

The first area Pinnock highlighted as a new Evangelical boundary was the open view to the humanity of the Bible, and to the critical methods of explaining it, that PCE held. Simultaneously, he reasoned that PCE had a greater flexibility regarding the meaning of the inerrancy of Scripture. He began to define the inerrancy of Scripture in terms of the biblical purpose, rather than a literalness of each word. [176] He also highlighted that PCE were now prepared to talk about diversity in biblical hermeneutics, and also discuss the legitimacy of theological pluralism.

Although some liberal Evangelicals had already travelled down this road, the Evangelical group that Pinnock was appealing to had been far more conservative in their outlook, and such emphases were challenging the very ethos of the *sola scriptura* principle. Pinnock wanted his postmodern orthodoxy to involve meaningful dialogue

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[174] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze,* 63.
Pinnock was genuinely impressed by Vatican II believing it revealed a spirit of openness to modernity and was a model of moderate orthodoxy'. Pinnock did not start his first usage of the term PCE mentioning Vatican II by coincidence. It was a well thought out strategy to put a wider gulf between him and the Evangelical conservatives. He was offering almost a coalition between PCE, Catholic moderates and even post- liberal Protestants.
[175] Ibid, 67.
[176] These themes are explored in detail in Chapter 2.

with all Christians of every shade of belief. Pinnock hoped a broad ecumenical coalition would appear within PCE, but in reality those who became involved were mainly Evangelicals.

Also from the 1970's onwards, many embryonic PCE were looking for a culturally relevant and experiential faith. In the contemporary charismatic movement both of these objectives were partially met. Pinnock encouraged PCE to draw deeply from charismatic and Pentecostal renewal,[177] and in a remarkable way Pinnock (considering his earlier background) was welcomed and embraced within Pentecostal and charismatic circles.

All of Pinnock's reforms were rightly called Openness thinking. It was of no surprise that Pinnock was soon debating about the nature of deity, and the need to place more emphasis on the Openness of God within the temporal process.[178] All of this was leading to the formation of his Open Theism.

Pinnock was adamant though that PCE was post-*conservative* not post-*Evangelical.* In a play on his critics' comments he wrote that paleo-Calvinism was "more conservative and less Evangelical."[179] Olson went on to write a book carrying that very title[180] and in it he argued that conservative Evangelicalism had become too rational and foundational since the Enlightenment.[181]

Pinnock certainly agreed with Olson's sentiments, and openly rejected the conservative Evangelicals for offering 'proof beyond doubt' which based that proof upon

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[177] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze,* 68.
[178] Ibid, 67.
[179] Porter, and Cross, eds. *Semper Reformandum,* 17.
[180] R. E. Olson, *How to be Evangelical without being Conservative* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008).
[181] Ibid, 81.

propositions gleaned from an inerrant and infallible Scripture. Pinnock emphasized the human and fallible dimension of *The Scripture Principle* to such an extent that Daniel Strange called PCE 'a theological left position birthed out of a reaction to the conservative position on biblical inerrancy'.[182] However the biblical inerrancy debate was only one part of the PCE Evangelical reform package.

PCE began to reject the overall *Evangelical Myth of Certainty teaching*[183] that was a feature of Reformed Evangelical belief and was the basis of Evangelical foundationalism. PCE prided itself on holding to a mosaic of belief (coherentism).[184] In the PCE coherentist mosaic, there was a lot of room for uncertainty, including that of an inerrant and infallible biblical text. However, Pinnock argued that some truth is certain and knowable (on the basis of Scripture and the presence of the Spirit) but there is much that remains mystery. Mystery is not a problem within PCE thinking, and it is not regarded as a weakness to voice opinions of doubt. Pinnock wrote "there are depths of mystery that cannot be accessed by reason alone and cannot be captured altogether in cognitive ways."[185]

It was true that Pinnock's belief in PCE coherentism was as much a weakness as strength. Even though PCE rejected foundationalism, PCE never offered a unified,

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[182] The re-defining of inerrancy was a result not a cause of a rejection of the Reformed/Calvinist epistemology.
[183] D. Taylor, *The Myth of Certainty: The Reflective Christian and the Risk of Commitment* (IVP, 2000).
[184] Grenz, *Renewing the Center*, 199*ff*.
Coherentism as interpreted by PCE was a belief that a corpus of beliefs are interconnected without resting on a foundational base. Each belief is connected and supported by its neighbours making a network that is interdependent. To coherentists, Christian doctrine is a web or mosaic of belief linked together to give a specific Christian worldview.
[185] Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, 13.

alternative epistemology and agreed that 'they may never do so'.[186] It appeared that the internal Evangelical debate was ultimately between the rational certainty of the foundationalists and the relativism of the coherentists. Pinnock emphasized that to PCE truth claims were no longer based on the presuppositionalism gained from an infallible Scripture, but on the power of the open and free Spirit who guides into all truth. Such a position reflected the charismatic influence upon Pinnock: "Theology must always be more than rational . . . the Spirit is God's face turned towards us and God's presence abiding with us, the agency by which God reaches out and draws near."[187]

Pinnock was taking the Evangelical emphasis on biblical certainty, and replacing it with a dynamic concept of the Spirit who gives life as opposed to the 'letter that killeth'.[188] Pinnock argued that he was appealing to a living faith in the Holy Spirit's guiding presence. His critics claimed he was appealing to relativism and subjectivism. Pinnock argued that the Spirit's leading was not subjectivism, but a genuine divine encounter.

PCE emphasized that the Bible is the instrument of the Holy Spirit and not the other way around. Reformed Calvinism believed divine self-disclosure as revealed through the Scriptures could be clearly set out in theologies and creeds.[189] To Pinnock and PCE such thinking was flawed, since it reversed the divine order by placing the written text of

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[186] R. E. Olsen, *Reformed and Always Reforming. The Post-conservative Approach to Evangelical theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 134.
[187] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 13-14.
[188] 2 Corinthians 3:6.
[189] C. F. H. Henry, *Towards a Recovery of Christian Belief* (Wheaton's Crossway Books, 1990), 55. This statement was made by the 'first new Evangelical' Carl Henry. Henry wanted mild reform not the radical theological revision new Evangelicalism was making even in his lifetime.

Scripture over and above the Spirit as the Divine guide and interpreter;[190] the instrument above the source. He argued that conservative Evangelicals often collapsed the Spirit into the Bible, thus leaving exegesis as wooden and stilted.[191]

Pinnock did not want to play an either/or game with Spirit experience and doctrine, but he emphasized the Evangelical Arminian focus of personal encounter as a distinctive contribution of Evangelicalism – transformation more than information (Bebbington's Conversionism). Olson picked up on this theme and stated that the emphasis of PCE was on transforming experience (which he calls conversional piety). He wrote:

> Apart from conversional piety, authentic Evangelicalism does not exist even where doctrinal correctness is present. And that where right experience (orthopathy) and right spirituality (orthopraxy) are present in Jesus centred living, authentic Christianity and even Evangelical faith may be present even if doctrinal correctness is not yet fully present . . .[192]

Conversional piety as a soteriological sign was rejected outright by paleo-Calvinists. To Calvinists correct knowledge, rationally deduced from the biblical account was an essential part of the *ordo salutus*. Their logic was clear, without a foundational emphasis upon right doctrine the trajectory followed would led to subjectivism; a Schleiermacher route ending up in theological liberalism. However, in reply to such accusations, PCE responded that conversional piety could never be called liberal, because of its high view of Scripture, Christology and its emphasis upon the Holy Spirit.

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[190] S. J. Grenz, *Revisioning Evangelical theology: A Fresh Agenda for the Twenty-first Century* (Downers Grove, Ill; IVP, 1993), 79.
[191] Ibid, 117.
[192] Olson, *Reformed and Always Reforming*, 84.

Pinnock had dialogued, and agreed with the conclusions of the Pentecostal scholar Steven Land who wrote: To do theology is not to make experience the norm, but it is to recognize the epistemological priority of the Holy Spirit in prayerful receptivity.[193]

The flexible, prioritizing of a 'Spirit led' Evangelical belief system by PCE was called a 'chastened rationality'.[194] The goal of PCE was to seek a balance between a rigid propositionalism and a liberal antinomianism that had no boundaries. The chastened rationality sought for by Pinnock and PCE was placed within a cultural, and contextual approach to theology. This led to an eclectic and symbiotic relationship between PCE and culture. This emerging PCE theology was termed a Pilgrim theology.[195]

A motif of spiritual journey was often ascribed to Pinnock's theology. To PCE, Pilgrim theology seeks to relate the Christian faith to specific historical and cultural contexts, but within a biblical paradigm. They believed that the historical confessions of Christian faith should be viewed within their cultural contexts. Pinnock did this by looking at what he called the text and context poles of theology.[196] Scripture, culture and context expressed in a narrative style became the major threads of Pinnock's methodology. One of the salient features of this PCE pilgrim theology (and in contradistinction to conservative Evangelicalism) was belief that doctrines are always subservient to the biblical narrative and consequently held lightly.

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[193] S. J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passions for the Kingdom* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 38.

[194] Olson, *Reformed and Always Reforming,* 138.
The PCE alternative of a chastened rationality denied the claims of certainty that Reformed conservative Evangelicals brought to the debate and instead PCE offered a coherence of belief. This coherence was located within a complex web of Evangelical belief. This web included storied truth and relational trust. Olson argued that for the PCE theologian their task was to strengthen each relationship:

> . . . to make the web of beliefs stronger by tightening up its coherence with an eye to the culture and letting Scripture and tradition play crucial roles.

[195] Grenz, Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism,* 16.

[196] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze,* 13, see Chapter 2, 1.

But how was this goal going to be achieved? Pinnock found the answer in the epistemology of narrative theology. He was enthused by narrative theology[197] and expressed his embrace of it in this way: 'Theology should be viewed as a secondary language that reflects on the meaning of the primary story rather than as a doctrinal system that encourages people to pretty well dispense with the story'.[198]

Narrative theology helped Pinnock focus on the message rather than on doctrine; the Bible could now become the instrument of the Spirit, and not the other way around. Pinnock could now place the Spirit above the written word, and still remain an Evangelical.[199] Storied truth became a prominent feature amongst PCE authors.

PCE wanted to present an Evangelicalism that was primarily relational and non-fundamentalist. An example of this is found in the Evangelical attitude towards the charismatic phenomena. To Reformed Calvinists their belief is that the canon of Scripture is closed and charismata ceased with that closure, and therefore any subsequent manifestations of the miraculous had to be considered counterfeit, delusional and definitely subjective. To PCE, the Openness of Scripture (not the canon of Scripture) and belief that the Holy Spirit is still working is evident not just in salvific ways but also in

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[197] This is explored further in looking at Pinnock as a narrative theologian in Chapter 2.

[198] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze,* 182.
Olson in defining PCE as post-foundationalist quoted from Rodney Clapp who described 'new Evangelical' theology as:

> 'moving from decontextualized propositions to traditioned storied truths, from absolute certainty to humble confidence; from mathematical purity to the rich if less predictable world of relational trust'.

Pinnock reflected this change in his shift from his earlier apologetic theology to a pneumatological narrative theology where the emphasis was far more on the story of personal experience rather than on appeal to logical reason and the ontological claims of the faith.

[199] Olson, *Reformed and Always Reforming,* 135.
The focus on narrative and Pilgrim theology caused Olson to believe that PCE had developed a chastened rationality and also a critical realism that was contra to the commonsense realism and scholasticism of conservative theology which seemed to him to place reason, above faith and revelation making evidence and logic as priorities for belief in the gospel.

dynamic revivals, healings and other manifestations of charismata. Pinnock stated: "If miracles cannot happen, we need not bother to open the text of the New Testament or consider the force of the evidence."[200]

To PCE, experiential charismata was evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence and manifestation. To Reformed conservative Evangelicals, the charismatic movement was spiritually illusory and false. Callen was to observe that Pinnock by 1981was 'one with the charismatics in their heart dimension of the faith'.[201] PCE was a charismatic expression of the Evangelical movement.

1:8 The relationship between PCE and Pinnock's Open Theism

By the 1990s PCE emerged as a new approach within the evolution of 'new Evangelicalism'. Pinnock was clearly identified as a leading PCE, but the climax to his theological enterprise had still not been realized. Pinnock was about to make a unique contribution to contemporary theology and that was with his articulation of Open Theism. Whilst Pinnock is obviously a PCE, and also an Open theist, is PCE and Open Theism one and the same thing? Pinnock's colleague, John Sanders an Open theist, academic and author from a Methodist background wrote that "Open Theism was a relational model of God which saw God granting significant freedom to humans to co-operate with or work against God's will for their lives." Sanders added that "God enters into dynamic, give-and-take relationships with people."[202] However, Open Theism called for a more radical

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[200] Pinnock, *Towards a Theology,* 111.
[201] B. Callen, (2003) "Clark H Pinnock: His Life and Work," in *Semper Reformandum,* eds. Porter, and Cross, 1-15.
[202] J. Sanders, *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence* (Downers Grove Ill: IVP, 1998), 207.

interpretation of the divine/human relationship model, far more radical than PCE allowed for.

Pinnock developed his Openness doctrine of God, maintaining mutuality and reciprocity with humanity. The Openness concept of freedom permeated all of his key books. He saw real freedom not as the compatibilism of the Arminians[203] but as a freedom whereby humanity makes choices without any divine intervention or knowledge. He wrote: The Bible seems to portray more genuine interaction and relationality in God's dealings than theological determinism allows. Therefore, it would seem that we need a better model of divine sovereignty than that of total control.[204]

Pinnock's mature thinking regarding Open Theism climaxed with the publication of his book *Most Mover Mover* in 2001. The subtitle of the book was *A Theology of God's Openness*.[205] This was a much more measured and less polemical presentation of his beliefs, than some of his earlier works had been. At the end of the book Pinnock wisely concluded was that the Open view was 'a research programme not a settled model'.[206]

Pinnock realized with hindsight that his Open Theism appeared to have left most Evangelicals with an either/or choice between two stark contrasting Evangelical positions. In his words those options were: ". . . to choose between a paleo-Calvinist package with meticulous providence, compatibilist freedom and exhaustive

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[203] Quoted by Callen, *JTR*, 144.
A compatabilist view of free-will is where free-will is regarded as compatible with divine determinism. As long as a person is not coerced by forces outside of one's volition then compatabilists believe a person is 'free'.
[204] C. Pinnock, (1996) "God's Sovereignty in Today's World," in *Theology Today*, 53:1, 16-18.
[205] Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover*.
[206] Ibid, 179.

foreknowledge and the open view of God package with general providence, libertarian freedom, and a partly unsettled future."[207]

Not all PCE were happy with these options. Not only did these themes distance him from the Evangelical Arminians, who had been generally supportive towards his reforms, but now a number of PCE were concerned regarding his doctrine of omniscience. However, although saddened by this Pinnock was not deterred, and soon his Open Theism further explored and propounded other controversial Evangelical views on topics such as, Inclusivism, post-mortem encounters and the nature of Hell.[208] Pinnock's ability and sheer doggedness definitely won many Evangelicals over to his way of thinking, but Open Theism somewhat sidelined him from the bigger PCE reform movement, which was soon to move in other directions. Daniel Strange was correct in saying Pinnock published too quickly[209] and his Open Theism gained a life of its own away from new Evangelicalism.

In the immediate context of this overview of Pinnock's theology and the antecedents to his Open Theism, Pinnock offered reforming Evangelicals a new theological proposal and approach to the doctrine of God.[210] He presented a reforming methodology and epistemology to make Evangelicalism of contemporary relevance.

However, Gabriel Fackre (the narrative theologian to whom Pinnock dedicated his book *The Scripture Principle*) reviewed Pinnock's earlier books on Open Theism - *The Openness of God* and *Unbounded Love.* Whilst he was sympathetic to Pinnock's Open

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[207] Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover,* 180.
[208] See Chapter 4.
[209] D. Strange, (2000) "Clark H Pinnock: The Evolution of an Evangelical," in *Reconstructing Theology,* eds. Gray, and Sinkinson, 1- 19.
[210] Olson, *Reformed and Always Reforming,* 201.

Theism he highlighted a number of key issues that he thought would prove points of caution and conflict. The first issue Fackre raised was regarding Pinnock's over simplification of the human freedom versus divine sovereignty debate. The second issue Fackre noted concern about, was the need of Open theists (in their desire for cultural relevance) to avoid what he termed 'cultural captivity' when focusing on divine immanence. He felt Pinnock was becoming too dependent on making Evangelicalism a part of the contemporary cultural situation. Pinnock and Open theists needed to remember that there was closure as well as Openness in any true doctrine of God.[211]

Avoiding cultural accommodation was a very real challenge to Pinnock. Pinnock appeared rather gullible at times when dialoguing with contemporary theologians. He seemed too eager to embrace thinking which from an Evangelical position was obviously flawed. For instance, he embraced concepts of process theology to such an extent that he was classified as an Evangelical process thinker, and had to emphasize publicly, that he was not a process theologian, and was never likely to be so.[212] In a similar way, he was profuse in plaudits towards the charismatic and Pentecostal movement, whilst in reality he was deeply removed from key aspects of Pentecostal historic belief over such topics as pre-millennial eschatology and contemporary prophecy.

Open Theism was the unique contribution Pinnock made to the theological enterprise, but it is a wrong conclusion to assume that PCE and Open Theism are synonymous. Most PCE were not fully persuaded Open theists. In his latter years Pinnock focused more on Open Theism than developing PCE. In the fullness of time

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[211] Gabriel Fackre, "An Evangelical Megashift? The Promise and Peril of an Open View of God," in *Christian Century*, (May 3, 1995) : 485-487.
[212] Gray, *Reconstructing Theology*, 142*ff*.

Pinnock became known as an Open theist rather than as a leading pioneer PCE which does not do him justice.

1:9 Summary of Chapter One

This chapter has laid down the antecedents of the people and theologies which helped Clark Pinnock in the reform of the Evangelical movement of the twentieth century. Pinnock's transformation from 'a quintessential Evangelical apologist to anti-Augustinian theological reformist'[213] was part of the bigger picture of Evangelical reform. Pinnock was not a lone pilgrim on this theological journey. Pinnock was guided on his travels by other reformers who were also anxious for change. At first the reform movement was known simply as 'new Evangelicalism' but Pinnock's reforms became known as Post-Conservative Evangelicalism:

> Pinnock has often become the figurehead of many controversial issues which have confronted Evangelicalism in the last two decades (of the twentieth century): the authority of Scripture (as a limited inerrantist); the role of other religions (as an inclusivist); the charismatic renewal and the place of spiritual gifts (a strong advocate); and the doctrine of God (as a free-will theist).[214]

Pinnock summed up his Evangelical reforms: 'soteriological restrictivism was challenged in *A Wideness in God's Mercy* (1992); biblical rationalism and scholasticism was critiqued in *The Scripture Principle* (1984) and *Tracking the Maze* (1990); theological determinism was disputed in *The Openness of God* (1994)'.[215]

What could well be added to this list would be his other books such as *A Wideness in God's Mercy* (1992), which addressed the issue of religious pluralism and Inclusivism.

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[213] Callen, *JTR,* xxii.
[214] D. Strange, (1999) "Clark H. Pinnock: The Evolution of an Evangelical Maverick," in *The Evangelical Quarterly*, 71:4, 325.
[215] Callen, *JTR,* 271.

His *Flame of Love* was a wonderful, contemporary theology of the Holy Spirit. His conditional view on Hell he articulated in *Four View on Hell* and the climax to his theological endeavour was his definitive theology of Open Theism found in the *Most Moved Mover*.

This thesis now examines and evaluates Pinnock's theology as Evangelical beginning with his Scripture principle.

Chapter Two

Chapter Two

2:1 Pinnock's New Scripture Principle: An Introduction

Chapter One examined the precursors to Pinnock's reforming Evangelical theology and evaluated it as a development of the 'new Evangelicalism' that emerged from the mid-Twentieth Century. This chapter looks at Pinnock's approach towards his revised theological enterprise, and assesses whether his epistemological methodology remained within an Evangelical paradigm or not. The key argument that Pinnock used to validate his claim for Evangelical legitimacy was his use of *The Scripture Principle - sola scriptura.* The importance of a Scriptural foundation for the Evangelical theological enterprise must not be underestimated, and therefore this chapter looks in depth at Pinnock's revived Scripture principle. In particular I will review Pinnock's understanding of key concepts such as inerrancy and the humanness of Scripture.

In Chapter One it was pointed out that this thesis acknowledges Bebbington's quadrilateral of Evangelical belief as a criteria for assessing Evangelical legitimacy.[216] One of the four key points of Bebbington's criteria is what he terms *Biblicism.* Biblicism is the Evangelical belief in the Reformation *sola scriptura* emphasis of biblical authority as the highest point of appeal for Christian doctrine. Without a high view of Scripture, any claim for Evangelical allegiance becomes non-negotiable. Pinnock's theology, including Open Theism, needed to be cogently, if not convincingly, argued for along a Scriptural trajectory.

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[216] See Chapter 1:1.

Pinnock was well aware of this, and his epistemological claims all have reference to a Scripture principle. He believed his theology offered a *via media* or middle way between the biblical text and its theological interpretive context[217] 'a middle channel in conserving the treasures of the past with a liberal searching for new ways to express God's grace'.[218]

Text and context became important concepts for Pinnock's theological enterprise. He calls these positions the two poles of theology. He argues that in order to communicate the God given message in a contemporary context these two poles have to be correlated perennially – the Christian message and human existence.[219] Pinnock wrote:

> The primary hermeneutical responsibility of Christian theology is to bring the two horizons of text and context into fruitful dialogues. . . . The fate of Christian theology always has to wrestle with this particular problem . . . theology is compelled to be bipolar and in a certain sense dialectical . . . the fundamental issue for theology is always to correlate these two poles of text and context, message and existence . . .[220]

However, for Pinnock to discover such a *via media*, he came to the conclusion that the contemporary biblical context pole must pay cognizance to both culture and the thinking of non-Evangelical theologians. Evangelical theology had become rather introverted, dismissive of any aspect of the Christ and culture motif. Pinnock rejected such a narrow approach. In 1998 he wrote: "We are being called to strive for the dynamic

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[217] Callen, *JTR*, 132.
[218] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze*, 7.
[219] Ibid, 13.
[220] Ibid, 13.
Pinnock adds that he is somewhat embarrassed at the similarity to Hegel's model of thesis, antithesis and synthesis to his text/context dialectic.

equilibrium of continuity and creativity that characterizes great theology. . . . More like a pilgrim than a settler, I tread the path of discovery and do my theology en route."[221]

But doing theology en route, to many Evangelicals was more like doing your homework on the bus, and whilst Pinnock's aspirations and even direction were commendable, often his conclusions were limited and, as will be seen, simply reactionary.

Pinnock's mature understanding of the biblical text pole was to become foundational to all of his subsequent theology. Pinnock saw a number of important theological functions that emerged from a Scripture principle. Firstly, he saw the theology had an ecclesial function to perform. He did think it important that the Church should explore and articulate the vision of the believing community to the community at large. He believed that Church leaders needed to be attentive to developments in Christian doctrine within their contemporary world and context.[222] Christian leaders - not just Evangelicals - needed to realize that the major threat to Christian faith was not from heretics and dissidents within, but from those outside who either misunderstood or rejected Christianity. Pinnock therefore argued that Christianity needed to be persuasive and relevant within the post-modern context. This required Christian leaders developing a generous orthodoxy towards each other. Pinnock's 'new Evangelicalism' proactively reached out to other Christians, even those who held to no Scripture principle.

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[221] R. Olson, and C. Pinnock, (1998) "A Forum: The Future of Evangelical Theology," in *Christianity Today*, 42-43.
[222] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze*, 4.

This broader ecumenical route that the 'new Evangelical' Pinnock took, led him to follow the trajectory of Carl Henry's social activism and argue that there was a societal application of a Scripture; a biblical challenge for Christians to be salt and light in the community. He termed this trajectory *social sanctification.* He appreciated the Wesleyan teaching regarding social sanctification.[223] He saw social sanctification in contrast to Christians fostering a privatized faith.[224] He believed his Scripture principle revealed a challenge for Christians to hold society at large together, by offering a vision of what is right and true. [225]

To Pinnock, salt and light meant invigorating the moral and spiritual roots of the Christian heritage for the benefit of all members of the community. He therefore called for a greater biblical emphasis by preachers and teachers upon the renewal of communities and societies. Pinnock referred to this social sanctification as 'putting the sacred back into the naked public square of culture'.[226]

Closely allied to his belief in societal sanctification was Pinnock's belief that his Scripture principle endorsed the missiological function of theology. In fact he wrote that mission is the mother of Christian theology.[227] PCE took on board this challenge and developed powerful innovative missiological praxis using contemporary music, media and communications.

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[223] See Chapter 1 – *Pinnock the Evangelical Arminian.*
[224] See Chapter 1, 8 n 11.
[225] See Chapter 1:2 Carl Henry and Clark Pinnock.
[226] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze,* 4.
[227] Ibid, 5.

Pinnock called exclusivist Evangelical attitudes the 'smug monopolar methodology that only talks to itself'.[228] He saw the Scriptural principle as a challenge for missiological opportunity to correlate the biblical text within the context of divergent communities. Indeed even at this stage the seeds of Pinnock's later Inclusivism and Pluralism were being planted.

To achieve such goals, Pinnock had to take the 'new Evangelical' constituency with him. In part he did this by emphasizing that his Scripture principle was not just a passing fad, but a fresh contemporary expression of biblical faith. In saying that, Pinnock's appeal to the sacred text was genuinely of great importance to him. He was a biblical scholar by training and his writings are full of biblical references; all of his future theology came out of his new revised Scripture principle.

Roennfeldt wrote that Pinnock's evolving theological views on biblical authority can be divided into three periods.

1. Defending biblical authority from his conversion to 1971
2. Obeying biblical authority from 1971-1977
3. Rethinking biblical authority from 1977 onwards

Another researcher on Pinnock's theology, Mary J. High also divided Pinnock's life into three different eras:

1. 1937-1970 a 'Formative Period'
2. 1970-1980 a 'Transitional Period'
3. 1980-1989 a 'Contemporary Period'[229]

Finding difficulty in agreeing with the date of Mary High's transitory period, Roennfeldt preferred to use the terms, the 'early' and 'later' view of Pinnock, which he

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[228] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze*, 6.
[229] Roennfeldt, *Biblical Authority*, 141 n 3.

linked to the publication of *Biblical Revelation* and then *The Scripture Principle.* I think Roennfeldt's is the best evaluation since *Biblical Revelation* marks the close of Pinnock's paleo-Calvinist fundamentalist stage, and *The Scripture Principle* marks the start of his 'new Evangelical' journey and the emergence of PCE. However, both chronologies bring out correctly three key transitional stages in Pinnock's theological thinking.

During his formative period, which was when he defended the traditional understanding of biblical authority, he wrote *Biblical Revelation,* Alan F. Johnson writing about Pinnock claimed *Biblical Revelation* was of the highest calibre for understanding the Reformed position on biblical authority:

> *Biblical Revelation* is more up-to-date and to-the-point than Packer's *Fundamentalism and the Word of God,*[230] more theologically astute than Packer's *The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture* offered more comprehensiveness than Shelly's *By What Authority?* and Ramm's *Protestant Biblical Authority* and *Special Revelation and the Word of God.*[231]

This powerful endorsement indicates just what a strong conservative Evangelical scholar the young Pinnock was regarded as. Even, fourteen years later, that is just after Pinnock's *The Scripture Principle* was published, Packer could still write in a foreword to Carl Henry's magnum opus,[232] *God Revelation and Authority* that: "one could read Pinnock's lean and fast-moving book (i.e. *Biblical Revelation*) as an introduction to Henry's juggernaut, like an armoured car clearing the path for a tank."[233]

As late as1982 in a reprint of *Biblical Revelation,* Packer still warmly endorsed Pinnock and his book. However, by 1999 when a faculty position in Christian Spirituality

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[230] Packer, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God.*
[231] Roennfeldt, *Authority,* 145*f.*
[232] C. Henry, "God, Revelation and Authority," 6 Vols. (Waco TX: Word Books, 1986) : Volume 6 foreword.
[233] Roennfeldt, *Biblical Authority,* 146.

at Regent Theological College Vancouver opened up, Pinnock was considered for the post, but the offer was dropped because Packer opposed the candidacy.[234] Packer was no longer supportive, not just because of Pinnock's new Scripture principle, but also because of Pinnock's developing Open Theism, which emerged from Pinnock's new theological enterprise. Packer did not consider either the book or Open Theism evangelical.[235]

Packer commented that Pinnock 'walked by himself,' but Pinnock was hardly travelling alone. Alister McGrath commented that Pinnock "has been the catalyst for much rethinking within the Evangelical movement."[236] Daniel Strange went further and stated: "Perhaps Pinnock's lasting legacy to the Evangelical community will be that his work raises perennial questions concerning the nature and identity of Evangelicalism itself."[237]

Whether that was a compliment remains unclear, but the truth was that Pinnock was in the vanguard of fundamental Evangelical transformation and he was not walking in isolation. His theology was making a major impact upon Evangelical thinking. Roennfeldt asked a most pertinent question: Have some of Pinnock's shifts of opinion affected his view of the Bible, or has his view of Scripture precipitated some of his changes.[238]

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[234] Roennfeldt, *Biblical Authority,* 46 n 82.
[235] Packer was further distanced from Pinnock's over his views on annihilationism, soteriology and omniscience. A gulf developed between Packer and Pinnock that grew wider with the passage of time. Just two years after his endorsement of the *Biblical Revelation* reprint when Packer looked at the manuscript for *The Scripture Principle* (1984), he disconcertingly commented that 'Pinnock, in spite of his knowledge of the issues and relevant literature has a tendency to walk by himself'.
[236] A. McGrath, (1995) "Response to Clark H. Pinnock," in *More Than One Way? Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World,* eds. T. Phillips, and D. Okholm, 129.
[237] Gray, and Sinkinson, eds. *Reconstructing Theology,* 16.
[238] Roennfeldt, *Biblical Authority,* 139.

Although not an easy question to answer, without Pinnock's journey towards Evangelical Arminianism and the theological issues that it raised, it was highly unlikely he would have radically rethought either his Scripture principle, or embraced 'new Evangelicalism' in such a pioneering way.

The conservative Calvinist, Daniel Strange called Pinnock "one who is always ready to give an opinion often before he has thought through all the implications."[239] Strange did have a point, Pinnock was trying to be both theologically innovative and yet maintain a Scriptural principle. He often struggled to do both. By the mid 90s, he was writing that good theology required both fidelity (to Scripture) and creativity,[240] and this was a dilemma which he constantly faced.

Pinnock wanted Evangelical reform to make the words of Jesus not just quantitatively grasped, but qualitatively understood. He believed that Evangelical faith should lead to biblical truth becoming fresh and alive for each generation. What Pinnock did achieve was to make the paleo-Calvinists rethink their methodology, particularly as they saw their loss of influence within the larger Evangelical community as the Twentieth Century moved on. Gavin D'Costa was quite correct to state that Pinnock's works had caused a major volcanic eruption within Evangelical circles.[241]

2:2 Pinnock's New Scripture Principle: An Outline

Pinnock clearly embraced the movement for change within Evangelicalism. Although it would have been easier for him to develop his theology outside of

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[239] Gray, Sinkinson, eds. *Reconstructing Theology*, 17.
[240] Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, 216.
[241] Strange, *The Possibility of Salvation*, Foreword G. D'Costa.

Evangelical circles, he was journeying along the road of Evangelical reform finding a number of fellow travellers *en route* who also held to a Scripture principle and appreciated that good theology was not confined to the past.

Pinnock's initial reform of the Scripture principle was to dismantle it and then re-assemble it within a contemporary context. He was in a unique position to do this having produced a highly acclaimed conservative book on the subject. In 1971 he published *Biblical Revelation – The Foundation of Christian Theology*[242] and this was a classic work in the style of a conservative Evangelical author. As he became a journeying reformer, his position and views radically changed. He produced another book which redefined both scriptural authority and the Scripture principle. Pinnock's fundamental re-appraisal of the Scripture principle can be clearly seen in the publication of the eponymously titled *The Scripture Principle*.[243] This presented a much more open and pneumatological position regarding the Bible and significantly redefined the definition of inerrancy. Above all it introduced the human dimension into the debate on biblical authority in a way that conservative Evangelicalism would never consider.[244]

Throughout his whole theological odyssey Pinnock has held to a belief in divine revelation as the cornerstone of true faith. Although he came to reject what he called the

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[242] Pinnock, *Biblical Revelation.*
[243] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle.*
[244] His critics considered that Pinnock's position could only lead to a latitudinarianism that could never reveal Scripture as an authoritative guide for faith. In other words conservative Evangelicals considered Pinnock a liberal from this point onwards.

philosophical biblicism[245] of conservative Evangelicals, he embraced instead what he called a *simple* biblicism that was not tied to a rigid foundationalism. He wrote: "simple biblicism is the basic instinct that the Bible is supremely profitable and transforming. . . . *Without being free of every difficulty* the Bible nevertheless bears effective witness to Jesus Christ . . . simple biblicism is not overly anxious about erecting rational foundations . . ."[246]

Pinnock's simple biblicism was not seeking to take away from belief in authentic and historical divine revelation, but he was appealing for less emphasis on conservative literalness in an inerrant and infallible text. He saw the enemies of faith as relativism and scepticism,[247] not those who saw inaccuracies in certain parts of the text. His 'simple biblicism' accepted mystery, discrepancies and humanity in the biblical record, and he no longer felt he had to channel great energy into arguing for a perfect text. Pinnock quoted and reinterpreted a classic Reformation motto '*finitum non capox infiniti* – the finite is not capable of the infinite' in a much broader context.

As Pinnock reworked both the content of revelation and its praxis, he rejected the Reformed systematic biblical model built on propositional truths. He introduced into new Evangelical theology a fresh look at Christianity as a dynamic movement of the Spirit. Pinnock taught that in dependence on the Spirit the Bible was a more than capable guide to faith, life and freedom. To Pinnock the Scripture text was not primarily to mediate

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[245] Philosophical biblicism assumed the primacy of the intellect and this helped Common Sense Realism have so much appeal to conservative thinking as it was absorbed into Protestant scholasticism. Philosophical biblicism tended to offer proposals and answers for all ectypal or creaturely knowledge. This was expressed in the systematic theologies and Confessions of Evangelical belief. Philosophical biblicism believed there was an unavoidable relationship between theology and philosophy.

[246] C. Pinnock, "New Dimensions in Theological Method," in *New Dimensions in Evangelical Thought*, D. Dockery (Downers Grove, IVP, 1998), 200. (emphasis added)

[247] Callen, *JTR*, 47.

propositions expressing doctrinal truth, but rather to point to and lead to a divine encounter. Harris expressed it well: "For many Evangelicals a bifurcation exists between the objective account of faith given in Scripture, and the Holy Spirit's ministry through Scripture. The objectivity of the text is held over and against the subjective means by which the Spirit makes possible an individual's acceptance of the faith."[248]

Revelation to Pinnock involved more than the intellect, they also encompassed the will and the affections.[249] To Pinnock the Bible was not just a book on divine facts, but also the means through which people could come into a transforming divine relationship through an encounter with the Spirit of God. Pinnock avoided identifying the Bible solely with revelation, which he saw as bibliolatry, and regarded revelation instead as that which the Bible points to, but does not necessarily explain. In other words, to him the Bible was not a soteriological necessity but it was epistemologically crucial.[250] Salvation was possibly without biblical knowledge, but biblical knowledge provided basic understanding of the salvific event. Pinnock regarded the Bible not as a book free of perplexing features, but one that essentially bears effective witness to the Saviour.[251]

So although Pinnock held to the standard Evangelical position that God spoke through the Bible, and the Bible revealed a knowledge and understanding of salvation through Christ, Pinnock began to interpret biblical authority primarily in cognitive terms rather than in functional ones. This meant that he argued that the locus of authority in

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[248] H. A. Harris, *Fundamentalism and Evangelicals* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 189.
[249] D. G. Bloesch, *Holy Scripture: Revelation, Inspiration and Interpretation* (Downers Grove, Ill. IVP, 1994), 48.
[250] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle*, x.
[251] Ibid, xix.

theology was in divine revelation, and not the rationality of either human reason or (somewhat surprisingly) religious experience.[252]

In Pinnock's later works he made it clear that he rejected his past conservative rationalism, partly because, to him, it had failed to highlight the dynamic nature of revelation through an encounter with the Spirit, and consequently confined revelation to the pages of Scripture. Pinnock's new Scripture principle emphasized a Bible saturated by the Spirit. (One third of his *Scripture Principle* is on the Spirit). Pinnock was moving towards a pneumatological biblicism.

Allied to his growing charismatic Scripture principle, Pinnock also emphasized that the Bible had a real humanity and its consequential weaknesses. Pinnock used the example of the early Christian Monophysite debate to highlight his understanding of the Bible as a divine/human book. The Monophysite debate centred on the humanity and divinity of Christ. Pinnock in *The Scripture Principle* endeavoured to show the Bible as both a human and yet divine book. However, Pinnock had to avoid giving any misunderstanding that he believed the Bible was partly the Word of God, and partly the word of human authors; Evangelical belief argued that it was both at the same time. To Reformed Evangelicals, Pinnock's new Scripture principle had a lack of emphasis on the divine. Pinnock wrote much about the humanity of the text and, unlike most Evangelicals, dismissed any exaggerated claim to textual perfection.[253] Conservative criticism was not without some justification, and even Pinnock's sympathetic colleague

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[252] Harris, *Fundamentalism and Evangelicals*, 188.
Pinnock's pietism is an important feature of his theology and is developed throughout this thesis.
[253] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle*, 99.

Donald Bloesch wrote[254] that Pinnock had a tendency to treat Scripture as a totally human book with a divine focus.[255]

However, it was wrong of Bloesch to argue that Pinnock *only* saw a limited divine focus or influence, Pinnock saw Scripture as divine communication, and he was trying to avoid the ancient docetic error of denying true humanity at the expense of true divinity: "The *via media* lies in the direction of a dynamic personal model that upholds both the human initiative and the human response. We want to allow for a human element in the composition of Scripture, but also a strong role for the Spirit to ensure that the truth is not distorted by the human receptors."[256]

Bloesch appears to overlook Pinnock's strong emphasis on the divine Spirit as the divine one who lifts Scripture above the level of simple human inspiration. Pinnock's over emphasis on the *human* Scripture is usually in response to his Evangelical conservative critics. Pinnock's balance in this matter can be seen in his vociferous opposition to the lack of *any* Scripture principle amongst many modern theologies.

In reality, Pinnock throughout his Evangelical journey has maintained a high view of Scripture. His belief is that the Spirit was the ultimate author of the biblical account. However, from a strict Evangelical position Pinnock does come across as diminishing the divine authority within the Scripture text. To his critics this was confirmed when he began to redefine the Evangelical shibboleths of infallibility and inerrancy.

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[254] Bloesch was no intransigent conservative critic but a leading Evangelical scholar who was an Evangelical reformer and a friend and former also colleague of Pinnock. However, Bloesch concur with the conservative view that Pinnock is far too optimistic about the human condition in the light of the biblical account.
[255] Bloesch, *Holy Scripture*, 312 n 63.
[256] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle*, 103-4.

2:3 Pinnock's New Scripture Principle: Pinnock's Inerrant Journey

The classical Protestant answer as to the source of Christian authority is the revealed Word of God, the Bible.[257] Pinnock wrote in 1990 that 'tradition and philosophy are important but of the greatest importance is Holy Scripture', and therefore any theological model should be consonant with this primary standard.[258] A Scripture principle was central to his theology.

Pinnock believed Scripture was the unique source of revelation, and other sources were subordinate to it. Protestant scholasticism used two Latin terms to express the primacy of Scripture: '*norma normans* – a rule that rules' and '*norma normative* – a rule that is governed (by Scripture)'. *Norma normative* was applied to other revelatory media in Pinnock's case Reason, Tradition and Experience, (that is, the Wesleyan Quadrilateral).

Ray Roennfeldt in his published dissertation on Pinnock's work wrote that from his youth Pinnock had a deep interest in Scriptural studies and this led him into apologetics.[259] As a book Roennfeldt's dissertation was entitled *Clark H. Pinnock on Biblical Authority – An Evolving Position*. However, the traditional Evangelical view on Scripture was far from an evolving position, it was very static. The whole structure of Reformed Calvinism was constructed from the belief that the text of Scripture was inerrant and infallible. Inerrancy and infallibility were established features of early-twentieth century Evangelical faith. In many ways as the Twentieth Century progressed,

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[257] J. M. Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith: A Comprehensive and Readable Theology*, (Leicester: IVP, 1986), 47.
[258] Gray, and Sinkinson, eds. *Reconstructing Theology*, 82.
[259] Roennfeldt, *Clark H. Pinnock on Biblical Authority*, 78.
See also J. I. Packer, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God*. Packer's book was probably the best known contemporary work on this subject during the latter part of the twentieth century.

fundamentalism tried to display the badge of inerrancy as the core belief of Evangelicalism.[260] However, Pinnock and PCE rejected that conservative Evangelical view but argued that they maintained belief in Scriptural authority.

Pinnock, as a young Evangelical theologian, knew that to conservative Evangelicals a denial of biblical inerrancy was almost a denial of Christ Himself. Hart, writing on the articles of faith of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), observed that even at the start of the twenty-first century top of the list was inerrancy.[261] Nevertheless, Pinnock was unhappy with the traditional understanding of inerrancy. At first Pinnock decided on a subtle approach to deal with the issue, he decided to retain the term inerrancy, but redefined just what the term meant. Pinnock gradually redefined inerrancy as an aspect of truthfulness; the Bible is true in its meaning, but not necessarily in the literalness of the text.

Mark Noll acknowledged that belief in the truthfulness of the Bible involved a number of subsidiary convictions *viz a viz* about the nature of the Word, the character of religion and the structure of epistemology.[262] Evangelical self-definition hinges upon a specific conception of Scripture much more than a specific approach to research or

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[260] Packer, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God.*

[261] Hart, *Deconstructing Evangelicalism*, 132.
Until the middle of the twentieth century inerrancy was considered axiomatic within Evangelical circles. Essentially inerrancy was equated with the veracity of God and God's words. Scriptures such as John 10:25 (the Scripture cannot be broken) and John 17:17 (Your word is truth) were examples of how inerrancy was regarded *a priori* from the text. Scriptures were not regarded as trustworthy and reliable because they were inerrant but were regarded as such because they were the Word of God. In the words of the Reformer John Murray (whose writings Pinnock immersed himself in during the 1950's):

> If the testimony of Scripture on the doctrine of Scripture is not authentic and trustworthy, then the finality of Scripture is irretrievably undermined. . . . The rejection of the inerrancy of Scripture means the rejection of Christ's own witness to Scripture.

[262] Ibid, 145.

methods of criticism.[263] To Evangelicals the Bible is both trustworthy and true. Its focus is on faith and practice, a revelation between God and humanity that gives guidelines for righteous living.[264]

In 1967 as a conservative Evangelical, Pinnock argued that the real issue was the truth claim implicit in the doctrine of biblical inspiration. He saw this as important particularly as higher criticism was gaining influence and causing doubt as to there being any normative significance for the Scriptures.[265] However, by the time Pinnock wrote *The Scripture Principle*, he was still arguing for this same truth claim but with an important nuance. He now argued that the paleo-Reformed position hindered the need for a Scripture principle, by making the biblical account epistemologically mechanical and rationally restrictive.[266] Instead Pinnock was now calling for an epistemological priority of the Holy Spirit as the author of Scripture.[267]

What he wanted was an epistemological shift from hard to soft rationality, or in his own words 'from modernity to post-modernity'. Pinnock's use of the term *inerrancy* radically changed. He defined inerrancy in more irenic, generic term(s) of *trustworthiness* or *truthfulness*. In addition, he stopped speaking about the infallibility of Scripture calling it a 'non- and unhelpful sentiment'. This was in complete contrast to Pinnock's earlier position when he wrote a book on biblical infallibility called: *'A Defence of Biblical*

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[263] M. A. Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism. Evangelicals, Scholarships and the Bible in America* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), 142.
[264] Ibid, 143.
[265] Callen, *JTR*, 53.
[266] Ibid, 75.
[267] Ibid, 81.

Infallibility'.[268] In this book he wrote of '*infallibility*' as the main expression for the dependability of Scripture.[269]

G. R. Lewis reviewing Pinnock's earlier *Biblical Revelation* called it "the most vigorous scholarly statement of verbal, plenary inspiration since B. B. Warfield."[270] However, in a letter to Roennfeldt in 1992, Pinnock commented that his book *Biblical Revelation* would soon be out-of-print, and he did not want it to be re-issued. This was because Pinnock's views on inerrancy and infallibility had radically changed.[271]

By the time of *The Scripture Principle* Pinnock's redefining of inerrancy, whilst unacceptable to many conservative Evangelicals, was finding resonance amongst other reforming Evangelicals. For instance, Donald Bloesch wrote: "I am not among those who wish to give up inerrancy and infallibility when applied to Scripture, but I believe we need to be much more circumspect in our use of these and related terms. Scripture is without error in a fundamental sense, but we need to explore what this sense is."[272]

For conservative inerrantist the debate centred more on the meaning of error, rather than definitions of truth. To Reformed thinking it was unequivocal; error meant mistake

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[268] C. H. Pinnock, *A Defence of Biblical Infallibility* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1967), quoted by Roennfeldt, 145 n 2.

[269] LaSor stated that the opposite of inerrancy was not errancy but fallibility – total fallibility of the Bible in matters of faith and practice:
W. S. LaSor, "Life Under Tension – Fuller Theological Seminary and The Battle For The Bible." (Theology, News and Notes – Fuller Theological Seminary, 1976), 23. Quoted by Feinberg in *Inerrancy*, ed. N. L. Geisler, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. 1980), 292.

[270] G. R. Lewis, "Eternity," (January 1972), 50. Quoted by Daniel Strange, *Reconstructing Theology*, 3.

[271] J. I. Packer, *God has Spoken* (London: H. & S, 1993), 103.
Packer goes on to say: Rightly understood Infallibility' (*infallibilitas*) signifies the quality of neither deceiving nor being deceived. 'Inerrancy' (*inerrantia*) means freedom from error of any kind; factual, moral or spiritual. In the biblical context infallible goes back to the English Reformation. Both words, though virtually synonyms, take colour from the context in which they were used. 'Infallible' suggests Scripture determining a faith commitment, whilst 'inerrant' evokes the thought of Scripture undergirding orthodoxy.

[272] D. Bloesch, *The Future of Evangelical Christianity* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), Foreword.

and the Bible was without mistakes and therefore Pinnock, and PCE, were using semantics to deny the plenary accuracy of the biblical account.

'Inerrancy', Pinnock stated, 'was relative to the intentionality of Scripture and an artificial standard must not be imposed'. Pinnock argued that the degree of textual precision was determined by the cultural milieu.[273] For instance, Pinnock argued that inerrancy allowed for the literary form to distinguish between the *fact* of what the biblical authors said (*veritas citationis*) and the *truth* of what they wished to express (*veritas rei citatae*).[274]

But to conservative thinking, no matter what limitations the biblical authors had, they believed that any textual flaw no matter how small or trivial portrayed God as inspiring lies, fraud or deception. Pinnock considered such statements as knee-jerk reactions in support a wooden foundationalist hermeneutic. He wrote:

> Just because the text has been brought into a canon of Scripture . . . it does not follow that the truth is equally distributed in all parts of the Bible. . . . It is wrong to snatch a text from Scripture and pay no attention to the place where it was found. . . . The flat book approach to reading the Bible leads to unbalanced thinking, characteristic of fundamentalism . . .

Pinnock also pointed out that the Bible did not attempt to give the impression that it was flawless in historical or scientific ways. This was consistent with his new position on literary forms of higher criticism. Pinnock argued that it was no denial of the Scriptural principle to believe that God simply used writers with human weaknesses in a particular

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[273] Pinnock, *Biblical Revelation*, 75.
As an example, Pinnock quoted the parable of the mustard seed, which is called in the Bible, the smallest seed (Mt. 13:31). Pinnock wrote that this story was true to how he regarded the principle of inerrancy. The biblical account needed to be read as a parable and was perceived as such by the then listeners. However, in reality he argued the mustard seed as a botanical fact was not the smallest seed. Pinnock cites other examples from the recorded speeches of Job which have a spiritual truth but not a literal accuracy.
[274] Ibid, 78.

age. Pinnock reasoned that divine truth and revelation was not hindered by human deficiencies.[275]

Pinnock first expressed his expanded and changing views on the inerrancy debate and the humanness of Scripture in 1982, when he gave the Payton Lectures at Fuller Theological Seminary.[276] Pinnock was enlisted by Fuller to counter Hal Lindsell's conservative understanding of the nature of Scripture[277] and Pinnock was asked to give his lecture within a 'new Evangelical' setting. The Payton Lectures were given and provocatively entitled "Holy Scripture and Divine Treasure in **Earthen** vessels." (emphasis added). This was quite indicative of Pinnock's changing views on the humanness of Scripture. From this time Pinnock became known as a *limited inerrantist*, and he accepted this term in preference to being classed as a non-inerrantist. This was rather an irony, since Pinnock himself had previously described limited inerrancy as 'a slope not a platform'.[278] The slope he referred to was a slide to biblical obscurity. However, Pinnock argued that he did not see himself as limiting inerrancy but expressing it in a fuller, if rather nuanced way. He wrote:

> For historical reasons inerrancy has come to symbolize in our day that full confidence that Christians have always had in the Scriptures. . . . Inerrancy has to take into account the literary genre of language being played in any given passage. Truth has to be evaluated in context. . . . Inerrancy is relative to the intent of Scriptures, and this has to be hermeneutically determined. . . . Inerrancy is a term with strength and flexibility. We need it because it highlights the conviction that the Bible tells the truth when it speaks. . . . If

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[275] Pinnock, *Biblical Revelation*, 99.
[276] H. Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub, 1976).
[277] Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 278.
Through both his book and the magazine *Christianity Today* Lindsell attacked the 'new Evangelical' Fuller for what he perceived as its increasing latitude towards biblical authority.
[278] Pinnock, *Biblical Revelation*, 80.
Roennfeldt notes that *Biblical Revelation* (1971) was an expansion on Pinnock's Tyndale Lecture on Biblical Theology (1966), convened by the Tyndale Fellowship for biblical Research, quoted in *Biblical Authority*, 144.

> inerrancy means that the Bible can be trusted to teach the truth in all it affirms, then inerrancy is what we must hold to.[279]

A *nuanced inerrantist* as an expression was first used at the international Evangelical Lausanne Congress in1974.[280] Pinnock claimed he saw a 'nuanced inerrancy' in the works of his former mentor F. F. Bruce, and also in the works of G. C. Berkouwer and George F. Ladd.[281] Nuanced inerrancy, to both Pinnock and PCE, meant accommodating the text within the culture and age in which it was written.

Pinnock's Payton Lectures at Fuller Theological Seminary, epitomized the raging academic internecine struggle within Evangelicalism regarding Scriptural veracity.[282] The net result of the whole *Battle for the Bible* debate was an emergence amongst Evangelicals for a growing preference for the term 'biblical authority' rather than 'inerrancy'.[283]

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[279] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle,* 125.

[280] D. Reid, "Lausanne Covenant," in *Concise Dictionary of Christianity in America,* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1995),
T. Dudley-Smith, *John Stott- A Global Ministry* (Leicester: IVP, 2001), 209-210.
The Lausanne Congress on world evangelisation followed the lead set by the 'new Evangelicalism' of Carl Henry in his reprimand of Evangelicals for their lack of a social Evangelical concern. (Bebbington, "Evangelicalism in Modern Britain," 266). The Congress (officially called the International Congress on World Evangelism) was a child of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. It opened on 16th July 1974 with some 2,500 members from 150 countries plus some 1,300 other participants including observers, consultants and guests. The Lausanne Covenant was a statement drafted by the International Evangelical gathering framed by John Stott. It was set out in fifteen articles that articulate Evangelical belief that has been widely accepted.

[281] C. Pinnock, (1978) "Evangelicals and Inerrancy: The Current Debate," in *Theology Today*, 35, 66-67, quoted by Roennfeldt *Biblical Authority*, 63 n 2.

[282] The debate on the Scripture principle and biblical authority became known, by the eponymous title 'The Battle for the Bible'. The book was written by Harold Lindsell a former conservative member of Fuller's staff who resigned from Fuller because of its acceptance of new Evangelicalism and its rejection of the traditional understanding of inerrancy.

[283] C. Rene Padilla, ed. *The New Face of Evangelicalism. An International Symposium on the Lausanne Covenant* (London: H & S, 1976), 33.
Such an anodyne statement meant different things to different people across the Evangelical spectrum. The whole Scripture debate centred around the question of the authority and trustworthiness of the Bible. Evangelicals believing Scripture as reliable, trustworthy and inerrant rejected any form of liberalism which treated Scripture purely on a human level and doubted that it had any divine authority. This approach was confirmed at the international Evangelical Lausanne Covenant Conference 1974. The concluding statement said 'the Bible is without error in all that it affirms and the only infallible rule of faith and practice'.

Pinnock's Payton Lectures became the forerunner of his book *The Scripture Principle.*[284] *The Scripture Principle* became a benchmark for the next stage of Pinnock's 'new Evangelical' journey. All of Pinnock's theological enterprise and his emerging Open Theism have foundational roots in *The Scripture Principle.* Pinnock and Fuller Seminary were furthering 'new Evangelicalism' along a nuanced inerrantist trajectory.

Critiquing Pinnock's *The Scripture Principle* the Wesleyan theologian Randy Maddox also chose to call Pinnock a nuanced inerrantist. He wrote that the *Scripture Principle* was "the most nuanced and critically aware exposition of biblical inerrancy available."[285] On the other hand Pinnock's critics were not slow to remind him of his own earlier quote that "inerrancy is dying the death of a thousand qualifications."[286]

Pinnock's limited (nuanced) inerrancy had no difficulty accepting that the biblical account contained minor errors, myths and legends. He accepted frailties in the transmission of the text by the human authors. To Pinnock such difficulties no longer presented any major difficulty to him. He wrote:

> What could truly falsify the Bible would have to be something that could falsify the gospel and Christianity as well. It would have to be a difficulty that would radically call into question the truth of Jesus and His message of good news. Discovering some point of chronology in Matthew that could not be reconciled with a parallel in Luke would certainly not be any such thing.[287]

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[284] Gray, and Sinkinson, eds. *Reconstructing Theology,* 18.

[285] Pinnock and his colleague Donald Bloesch were in agreement in describing their limited or 'nuanced inerrancy' as:

> The Bible contains the perfect Word of God in the imperfect words of human beings. It is better to speak of ambiguities and inconsistencies in the Bible even imperfections, rather than error. The reason is that what the Bible purports to tell us is not error. While it employs modes of expression that are now outdated, the meaning/content that it conveys transcends both culture and history. The Bible is imperfect in its form but not mistaken in its intent.
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> Callen, *JTR,* 65 n 72.

[286] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle,* 225.

[287] Ibid, 129.

The result of Pinnock's new theological enterprise meant that he no longer needed to concentrate on such things as harmonizing biblical accounts. Pinnock's Scripture principle found him unperturbed and adamant that there were apparent legends and numerous symbolic features in the Bible. He simply asked Evangelicals to face up to these facts and not fear that this was the start of the road to the denying the miraculous.[288]

Pinnock's constant theme has been to emphasize that the Bible is authoritative and reliable. He rejected any view that labelled him either as a liberal or as one who sees the Bible as essentially a human construction. By the time of *The Scripture Principle* Pinnock clearly expressed his new position that the Bible itself was essentially non-technical and Christ-centred. He argued that the Bible does not make a technical inerrancy claim, but nevertheless he argued that inerrancy should be retained as a term because it is essentially related to the truthfulness of the Bible as 'a metaphor for the determination to trust God's word completely'.[289]

Pinnock's view was that the stronger overriding Christological picture was the leit-motif of *The Scripture Principle*, and that was not diminished by discovering controversial confusing biblical passages or historical discrepancies. Pinnock argued that individual stories (particularly in the Old Testament) needed to be seen within a larger Christological and eschatological context. Using Christ as the key to understanding the heart of Scripture, Pinnock was further demonstrating his Evangelical credentials.

Pinnock's Evangelical hermeneutics is built on a belief that biblical inerrancy applies to the whole of Scripture, but not necessarily its parts; for he believed the whole

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[288] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle,* 122.
[289] Quoted by Callen, *JTR,* 53-54.

was greater than the sum of the parts.[290] However, such an approach whilst plausible has an inherent weakness. Pinnock is clearly in danger of implying that there is a canon within the canon. It would have aided Pinnock's argument had he given greater emphasis to a re-classification of biblical genre, rather than an editorial redaction of difficult passages. In his own words:

> Each of the circumstantial perspectives of Scripture has a role to play in deepening our own understanding into the full-orbed fullness of truth. . . . The very diversity of Scripture helps us avoid becoming lopsided and unbalanced . . . God's word is many-sided and inexhaustible.
> The task of interpretation is to deal with the whole world of the text in its totality[291]. . . making a place for Spirit-led interpretation that makes use of the inexhaustible possibilities of the text . . . the Bible gives licence to a fair degree of hermeneutical pluralism.[292]

The imperfections that Pinnock agreed were in the biblical text, he identified as the weaknesses of transmission of secondary authors, not the divine originator. He argued that the biblical account focused on a distinct concentration upon the covenantal revelation of God.[293] Pinnock as a limited or nuanced inerrantist was comfortable to concentrate on the trustworthiness of Scripture rather than holding to fight battles over a strict position of a Scripture without error. He encouraged Christians to stick with more modest biblical claims and not concentrate on perplexing biblical difficulties. In fact his ultimate claim was that 'we all have to work with an imperfect Bible'.[294]

Pinnock's inerrant journey did cause conservative Evangelicals to reconsider their position. J. I. Packer surprisingly agreed that the terms *infallibility* and *inerrancy* could be

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[290] Porter, and Cross, eds. *Semper Reformandum*, 288.
[291] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle*, 186.
[292] Ibid, 196.
[293] Ibid, 58.
[294] Ibid, 60.

discarded 'providing Scripture is spoken of as altogether true and trustworthy.'[295] Pinnock had no difficulty agreeing with Packer and concluded: Once we recall how complex a hypothesis inerrancy is, it is obvious that the bible teaches no such thing explicitly. What it claims is divine inspiration and a general reliability.[296]

In conclusion, Evangelicals asked the question of Pinnock: how can one know what is truth and what is error within an imperfect Bible? Pinnock's answer was that a new understanding of the role and ministry of the Holy Spirit would lead and guide into all truth (John 16:13). Pinnock's appeal was for Evangelicals to embrace a *Spirit-led hermeneutic* for understanding the Scripture principle.

2:4 Pinnock's New Scripture Principle: Pietistic and Ecclesial Influences

Pinnock's Reformed critics regarded his Scripture principle as a Pelagian interpretation, arguing that it was based more on human logic and emotion than upon a genuine work of the Holy Spirit. In response, Pinnock emphasized the role of the Spirit in guiding the Church to confirm truth as revealed in the biblical text. Pinnock began to justify his understanding of the Scripture principle, not just as a direct appeal to Scripture, but also on appeal to the leading of the Spirit who illuminates Scripture in contemporary challenging situations. Pinnock was adamant that a fullness of Scriptural interpretation came from true believers in the Church who were filled with the Spirit.[297] He was not promoting specialists in religion 'who are often engaged in academic, arcane debate about detail and who have conspired to leave the Spirit out of hermeneutics, leading to a

[295] Packer, *God has Spoken*, 102.
[296] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle*, 58.
[297] Ibid, 173.

lifeless interpretation and application of the text.'[298] Pinnock was calling for a much broader based leadership in the Church, not one limited to academic criteria.

Pinnock knew that to express such a view would be considered a pietistic hermeneutic, and would expose him to the charge of human subjectivity. He tried to pre-empt this argument by writing extensively about the dangers of subjectivity.[299] He argued that the greater danger Evangelicalism faced was not that of subjectivism, but what he called Pharisaic legalism. By this he meant a legalism that defended the Bible according to some rational objective standard. Of course he was referring to the paleo-Reformed Evangelicals who maintained fervent belief in inerrancy and infallibility. He emphasized that the major purpose of the Scriptural text was for the transformation of the reader, not the gaining of objective information for correct doctrine.

Contrary to what his critics said, Pinnock sought to place divine revelation above human experience, which he argued was possible through a Spirit-led reading of the biblical text. He reasoned that the Spirit makes the Bible living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword (Heb. 4:12) not merely a subjective opinion. In other words he was appealing for the Bible to be read devotionally, rather than academically. Writing on biblical authority, he commented: The real authority of the Bible is nor scholarly exegesis of the text, open only to an elite, but the Word that issues forth when the Spirit takes the Word and renders it the living voice of the Lord.[300]

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[298] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle,* 174.
[299] Ibid, 20-25.
[300] Ibid, 156.

Pinnock's early defence of the text as primarily divine revelation was increasingly being replaced by his emphasis on spiritual experience as the foundation of both biblical interpretation and theological understanding. His pietism emerged in part as a reaction against the intellectual approach of the Protestant scholastic methodology, but it was also in part a response to the Wesleyan Arminian influence which he had embraced. Pinnock was fascinated by the charismatic movement (which had Evangelical Arminian roots) and found it a spiritually awakening experience.[301]

Pinnock became convinced that Christianity needed a new move of God the Holy Spirit.[302] From the early 1907s, Pinnock began to write articles defending the charismatic movement as a genuine work of grace. For instance, he wrote in *Christianity Today* a number of articles and in particular one entitled "The New Pentecostalism: Reflections by a Well-Wisher "which he followed up with "Opening the Church to the Charismatic Dimension."[303] His biographer commented that: "Without question Pinnock has been on a spiritual journey that he refuses to separate from his theological work. His persistent intent has been to retain a good balance between revealed and experienced truth."[304]

But did Pinnock maintain a good balance between revealed and experienced truth? Whilst he undoubtedly believed in his new charismatic Scripture principle, he came across as believing that all of his opinions were both Spirit-led and biblically based. This view was difficult to agree with, since the biblical basis for some of his points was at

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[301] Callen, *JTR*, 77.
[302] To Pinnock this movement was nothing other than a genuine spiritual awakening. Part III of his *Scripture Principle* was entitled *Sword of the Spirit*. In this section Pinnock wrote about the Word and Spirit operating together. He argued quite correctly that in previous debates regarding biblical authority any emphasis on the Spirit had been noticeably absent.
[303] C. Pinnock, (1973) "The New Pentecostalism," in *Christianity Today*.
C. Pinnock, (1981) "Opening the Church to the Charismatic Dimension," in *Christianity Today*.
[304] Callen, *JTR*, 82.

times rather attenuated, and seemed almost proof-texting particularly regarding some of his more radical views.

Pinnock was seeking to articulate mutuality between the operations of the divine Spirit upon the human spirit, in order to make revelation effective in people's lives.[305] He expressed it as follows: "What is needed is an encounter with God in and through the text and discernment as to what God is saying to us now. Meaning is not limited to the original intent of text but from the interaction of the Spirit and the Word."[306]

From 1984, Pinnock began to stress that contemporary readers of the Bible needed to listen for fresh meanings from the Spirit. He taught that the Spirit is still journeying with people, and therefore true spiritual pilgrims must ever remain open to fresh insight and guidance for their travels. Pinnock was aware that he had to steer a middle course between uncontrolled subjectivity which annuls biblical authority and leads to fanaticism, and an exclusion of the Spirit from any process of fresh interpretation and application.[307]

Pinnock noted specific processes that showed how this middle course of mutuality between the Word and the Spirit could be achieved. Firstly, he argued that to simply recognize the Scriptures as the Word of God is itself a gift of faith. Pinnock encouraged Christians to see how relevant the Bible is in providing a measure of understanding to face the difficult questions of life. Pinnock expressed it as 'evidences of the kind that cohere with the grammar of ordinary life'. For Pinnock the true charismatic reader would

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[305] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle,* 161.
[306] Ibid, 163.
[307] Callen, *JTR,* 209 n 93.

interpret Scripture in new and innovative ways. His teaching on the Spirit led to further innovations:

> The Spirit was given to lead us into all truth even in new contexts that will arise. The Spirit will help us see the gospel in an ever-new light . . . ancient texts must be read in a *spirit of openness* (emphasis mine) to what God might be now saying: how shall we understand the finality of Jesus Christ in the sphere of world religions? Ought women to be elders in the church? What does creation mean in relation to scientific theory?[308]

Pinnock referred to the external evidences of general revelation in God's workmanship in creation and history.[309] He reasoned that although both the internal and external factors of faith could not be infallibly established, they offered a far more rational account of the world than non-belief did.

As Pinnock embraced an Evangelical Arminian pietist soteriology he had to change his root metaphor for the nature of God from the forensic metaphor used by Reformed Calvinists.[310] Evangelical pietism used biological metaphors such as the *new life*, the *new man* and *regeneration*[311] and Pinnock's root metaphors began to change accordingly.

Pinnock began to write extensively about the role of the Church in understanding biblical authority. He was not looking at the Church from an organizational or structural perspective, but he believed that the Church needed a new pietism to face contemporary challenges. He saw this as the same dilemma Luther faced:

> Is the gospel and salvation based upon the Word and work of God, or is it founded upon human wisdom and achievement?[312] Luther emphasized that the objective side of revelation and the authority of the Bible had nothing to

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[308] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle,* 171.
[309] Ibid, 166.
[310] See Chapter 1:6. Pinnock even recommended the Radical Reformer the Anabaptist Thomas Muntzer as an example of one who stressed the importance of the inner word as an example of a powerful pietism.
[311] V. Bacote, L. C. Miguélez, and D. L. Okholm, eds. *Evangelicals and Scripture* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004), 84.
[312] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle,* 27.

> do with bibliolatry or rationalism but it had everything to do with keeping the Church upon the apostolic scriptural witness.[313]

To Pinnock, the apostolic scriptural witness was the ministry of the Holy Spirit. As Pinnock became more charismatic so he saw the cruciality of both the Spirit and the Church for giving a correct understanding of revelation. Pinnock reasoned that verbal communication was a marvel of human existence which God delighted to use, and the Bible assumed that God had communicated in human speech and creaturely modalities to make the relationship between God and people fully personal.[314] He emphasized that it was *only* through the ministry of the Holy Spirit that the Church could proclaim the will of God.

During the 1980s, Pinnock articulated his understanding of the interaction between Word and Spirit. Chapter Seven of his *Scripture Principle* was written on this very topic. Pinnock saw the Bible and the Church in a similar symbiotic relationship to the Word and the Spirit. He reasoned that the Bible needed the Church as a bulwark to preserve, interpret and proclaim the gospel message. Pinnock was unequivocal in his continued belief that the Bible is the Church's book, and that there was a direct link between the authority of the Bible, the work of the Spirit in the community of believers and the authority of the Church. However, Pinnock was concerned that the Church could follow a trajectory that led to a Scripture principle shaped more by human traditions, than by the inspiration of the Spirit. He expressed the ideal relationship between Scripture and the Church as: The church can fall into error and needs the Bible to measure herself by. In

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[313] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle*, 27.
[314] Ibid, 28.

turn, the church serves the canon by continuing in the truth and faithfully proclaiming the Word of God.[315]

It was rather strange that an Evangelical was adopting the role of the Church as an important principle, but Pinnock was convinced that ecclesial tradition was a defence against individualism and heresy. This position led to Pinnock's positive appraisal of both ecumenism and ecclesiology. He argued that 'new Evangelicalism' should appreciate a richness of the Christian heritage beyond Evangelical boundaries. Pinnock appealed to all Christians and Evangelicals in particular to broaden their concept of who belonged to the Church.

For the ecclesial journey, Pinnock knew it needed Spirit-led leaders who were believers in the primacy and authority of Scripture. Pinnock encouraged others to elevate the role of the Spirit[316] and not subordinate Him to the role of a divine helper. He wrote:

> Scriptures contribute mightily to the strengthening and vitalizing a people. Inspiration is part of a larger action of the Spirit in forming and sustaining community. Scriptures very richness and variety supplies a standard that is capable of being used to guide the church on its journey. . . . The Bible is prime testimony to God's self-disclosure. Inspiration secures a classic text through which the Spirit can continue to speak. . . . We can speak of an inspiration of text *and* reader.[317]

The guidance of the Spirit to Pinnock was more than a call more than general ethics. He saw the operation of the Spirit as a dynamic personal model that honours both the divine initiative and the human response, by bringing the Bible to life in both the individual and the Church.

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[315] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle,* 82.
[316] See Chapter 3.
[317] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle,* 228.

But Pinnock's view of the Church and his pietistic hermeneutics were not the major issues of controversy amongst Evangelicals. His major challenge was to convince the Evangelical constituency that the humanness of the biblical text did not mean a diminishing of biblical authority.

2:5 Pinnock's New Scripture Principle: The Humanness of Scripture

The Reformed Calvinist position on Scripture strongly emphasized the divine authorship and inspired inerrant content. As the pace of Pinnock's journey towards a 'new Evangelicalism' quickened, he began to focus not so much on the divine trajectory of the text, as upon the human receptors and authors. Most Reformed Calvinist biblical exegesis played down the human element believing that nothing should take away from God's glory summed up in the Reformation slogan – *soli Deo Gloria.*

There was a genuine concern that any focus upon synergism could well result in an elevation of the human dimension. Reformed Calvinist theology believed that because of the inherent fallenness of humanity, the ability to know, or find God apart from through divine revelation was not possible. The authors of Scripture were considered to be simply vehicles or channels of divine revelation, and their honour was simply to be elected as a divine channel. According to the Reformed Calvinist paradigm if fallible human beings were responsible for the written divine text in anything other than a passive role, then the biblical account must be deemed perfunctory and therefore unreliable and errant. Essentially they saw the divine relationship as both monarchical and monergistic.

In his books *Tracking the Maze* and *The Scripture Principle* Pinnock began to argue that the Scriptures were not just a product of divine monergism, but were a product of a synergism whereby the authors co-operated with the divine call.

Pinnock began to interpret the humanness of Scripture in non-conservative ways. In particular, he explored just what was human and historical, and what was divine and transcultural in the text. He wrote of an appreciation of how humanity with all its failings and limitations was chosen as a vehicle by God to reveal Himself through. He compared this understanding to the Incarnation, arguing that the divine birth necessitated human co-operation. God had to be accommodating for the finite to grasp anything of the infinite (*humanum capax infiniti*).[318] The human had to be a willing, free and active partner in the divine plan. Pinnock wrote: The prime theological issue which became evident in our survey of options on biblical authority is the need to maintain with equal forces both the humanity and divinity of the word of Scripture.[319]

He further argued that the biblical writers used the vocabulary and semantic ranges available to them within their own culture and context.[320] He agreed with the conservative Evangelicals that the biblical authors were used as vehicles of revelation, but he concluded that although the revelation was divinely inspired the human channels often used the language of earth to explain the truths of heaven. He reasoned that human language was adequate, in spite of being flawed at times. Also, he pointed out that

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[318] Roennfeldt, *C. H. Pinnock on Biblical Authority,* xxiii.
[319] C. Pinnock, "Three Views of the Bible in Contemporary Theology," in *Biblical Authority,* ed. J. Rogers, (Waco: Word Pub. 1977), 71.
[320] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle,* 107.

language was further complicated, when theological and ethical teachings were intertwined with ancient language and culture.

Pinnock concluded that reading the text in a contemporary setting, needed to filter human language and cultural limitations from divine revelation. He argued that in the unfolding biblical story, God's truth was not given all at once. God had to educate His people to lift them to a higher moral and spiritual plane, but that was not achieved in one day, or even at a particular time. It was only with the Incarnation and Resurrection that the cumulative effect of divine progressive revelation completed Biblical revelation, and revealed the gospel metanarrative.

Pinnock argued for both a detached objectivity, and a need to recognize the principle of progressive revelation when reading the Bible. His call for a detached objectivity was in answer to liberal questions which challenged such things as aspects of divine justice in the Old Testament. Pinnock argued that such questions often misunderstood the cultural context. For instance, it could be God's warning against theological and moral laxity in Israel and the dire effects of sin that did not sit well with modern readers. Pinnock wrote: "We are not in a position superior to the Bible. God's Word comes to us in human language and there are features in it incidental to its teaching purposes. But in all things necessary that the Bible wishes to teach, it is true and coherent and possesses the wisdom of God."[321]

[321] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle,* 111.

In other words, Pinnock was arguing that it was not right to sit in judgement on the text or measure it by contemporary standards of appropriateness.[322] However, whilst rejecting their lack of a Scripture principle, Pinnock agreed with the theological liberals that the Bible used a wealth of literary forms, including myth and legend to convey divine mystery.

> Pinnock agreed that many biblical stories were mythical, simply symbolic of the realm of transcendence - and should not be taken as a literal reference, but as a primitive literary form. In his book *Tracking the Maze*[323] Pinnock's view on how he felt Evangelicals should deal with contemporary theology was articulated. He openly dialogued with many theologians liberal and orthodox. His writings are full of quotes by many authors across the whole spectrum of Christian views. Unlike most Evangelicals, he assessed the content of contemporary scholarship, neither dismissing it out of hand nor moving to the defence of the Evangelical position. He simply assessed and often assimilated many aspects of non-Evangelical writers.[324] In many ways, Pinnock saw all theologians in a similar way to how he viewed the biblical authors as inspired, but flawed people, who expressed truth in part.

As an example of Pinnock's approach to liberal thought in the humanness of Scripture debate, he developed a dialogue with Delwyn Brown a liberal theologian during the 1980s. This relationship grew and resulted in public debates and the co-authoring of a book on Evangelical-liberal issues. The book was called *Theological Crossfire.*[325] For Pinnock this was not polemical, he appreciated much of what Brown had to say, and incorporated some of Brown's ideas into his own thinking. Delwin Brown made a telling comment regarding Pinnock's willingness to listen and appreciate other perspectives: The

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[322] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle,* 115.
In the fullness of time it is hard to consider that Pinnock argued along such conservative lines. When his doctrine of annihilationism matured he argued *against* hell precisely by appealing more to ethics and rationalism rather than to divine justice or the biblical accounts or the gravity of sin.
[323] The subtitle of *Tracking the Maze* was: *Finding Our Way through Modern Theology from an Evangelical Perspective.*
[324] See for example 2:6:2 Pinnock and Narrative Theology and 2:6:3 Pinnock and Process Theology.
[325] C. H. Pinnock, D. Brown, *Theological Crossfire: An Evangelical/Liberal Dialogue* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 10.
One result of this successful venture was that it actually paved the way for a similar (and popular) debate in the U.K. between the leading Evangelical John Stott and the liberal David L. Edwards.

work of Clark Pinnock represents conservative Christianity's insistence on the central importance of the Bible and if such a tradition generates from within a self-critical creativity for the sake of current credibility and mission then Pinnock represents this exploration in its most compelling form.[326]

Writing about their dialogue Pinnock said:

> . . . to correlate the Christian message within human existence . . . Evangelicals are relatively more preoccupied with the message pole and liberals relatively more with the pole of human existence. Evangelicals treasure a truth deposit (i.e. Scripture) that we believe we must guard, while liberal theologians are creative people who are willing to run the risk of being discontinuous with Christian tradition.[327]

Pinnock wanted 'new Evangelicals' to grasp that accepting a human dimension to the Scriptures did not equate to the denial of biblical truth. Pinnock wanted to explain that understanding the humanness of the text helped explain difficult biblical passages.

Plaudits between Pinnock and Brown were more than mutual appreciations, and from the 1980s onwards Pinnock was being listened to, and appreciated beyond Evangelical circles. Indeed it was Brown who after reading Pinnock's *The Scripture Principle* commented that the book was as much an internal self-criticism of conservatism as it was an external critique of liberalism.[328] This was a fair assessment but Brown didn't appreciate that *The Scripture Principle* was articulating a new Evangelical Scripture principle.

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[326] D. Brown, (1989) "Rethinking Authority from the Right," in *Christian Scholars' Review*, 19:1, 66.
[327] Pinnock, and Brown, *Theological Crossfire*, 11.
[328] Callen, *JTR*, 66.

Pinnock pursued the view that the text was based on a canon in which the truth unfolds gradually and dialectically.[329] He argued that the fullness of biblical truth came from a diversity of authors, whose very diversity was an example to Christians of how one could avoid becoming lopsided and unbalanced, intolerant of other people's views.[330] Pinnock saw the Bible as divinely inspired, yet incarnated in human speech and culture. He called on Evangelicals to face up to the human limitations within the biblical text: "A text that is word for word what God wanted in the first place might as well have been dictated for all the room it leaves for human agency."[331]

Pinnock began to debate with those Evangelicals who dismissed the human agency, arguing that they were perpetuating the docetic heresy regarding the Christological human/divine tension. In direct response to that accusation, the Reformed Calvinist scholar Gordon Lewis argued that in all the human writing processes, the authors were supernaturally overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, not in a mechanical way but as one mature loving person guides the immature person. Lewis was reflecting the traditional position that what was written in human language was in reality also divine.[332] Pinnock's response to Lewis was to argue that his view was simply still an expression of a mechanical dictation which left no room for human agency. Pinnock wrote: "God does not decide every word that is used but He works in the writers in such a way that they make full use of their own skills and vocabulary in communicating the divine word."[333]

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[329] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle,* 186.
[330] Ibid, 186.
[331] Ibid, 101.
[332] Geisler, ed. *Inerrancy,* Lewis, 228.
[333] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle,* 105.

The debate ended when Lewis wrote that Pinnock had finally rejected his conservative position. Lewis said that when he read *The Scripture Principle*: Pinnock made a crucial distinction in 1971 (i.e. in *Biblical Revelation*) between the human and the sinful, or erroneous. He spoke strongly against "the puerile maxim: 'To err is human – Scripture is human – therefore Scripture errs'. For error is no more required of the Bible's humanity than sin is of Christ's."[334]

What Lewis was reminding Pinnock of was how his 'earlier self' had proposed a more acceptable Evangelical maxim along the lines of: "To err is human but God gave the Scripture by inspiration – so that it does not err."

Lewis was restating the Reformed Evangelical position that God overruled the human weaknesses in a supernatural way and Pinnock's new Scripture principle was in danger of denying divine control. Pinnock (like PCE) maintained that he rejected the liberal view that the Bible was simply a human book with all the failings of such writings. He believed that Scripture was God's Word, but he also believed that God willed the human characteristics of the text allowing the Spirit to speak through the text to the reader:

> God uses writers with weaknesses and still teaches the truth of revelation through them. It is irresponsible to claim that in doing so God Himself makes a mistake. What God aims to do through inspiration is to stir up faith in the gospel through the word of Scripture, which remains a human text beset by normal weaknesses.[335]

Pinnock whilst acknowledging that God achieves His goals without 'doing violence to the human through human weakness and historicity', realized that if all the emphasis is

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[334] G. Lewis, "The Human Authorship of Inspired Scripture," in *Inerrancy*, ed. N. L. Geisler, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. 1980), 230.
[335] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle*, 100.

put on human authorship and its literary gifting then there was a real danger of denying divine inspiration. He tried to redress the balance by moving towards a dynamic hermeneutic. He wrote:

> In relation to Scripture, we want to avoid both the idea that the Bible is the product of mere human genius and the idea that it came about through mechanical dictation. The *via media* lies in the direction of a dynamic personal model that upholds both the divine initiative and the human response. We want to allow for a human element in the constitution of Scripture, but also a strong role for the Spirit to ensure that the truth is not distorted by human receptors.[336]

Once again it was in the role of the Spirit that Pinnock found answers and therefore it was, therefore, not surprising that from this time he began to develop a distinct theology of the Holy Spirit.[337]

The dual authorship of Scripture – divine breath and human pen is what Pinnock termed '*confluency*'. He wrote of a divine providence that did not dehumanize the human agents,[338] but made them genuine authors and not simply pen-men.[339] He emphasized that it was consistent for God and man to both be significant agents simultaneously in the inspiration process – God the principal cause and the writers the free instrumental cause.[340] However, Roennfeldt, who was not an Evangelical, writing about Pinnock and Scripture felt that Pinnock moved too far towards the human emphasis: 'Pinnock emphasizes the role of the human in Scripture production to such an extent that one may

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[336] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle,* 203*f.*
[337] Pinnock, *Flame of Love.*
[338] Pinnock, *Biblical Revelation,* 93.
[339] Ibid, 94.
[340] Roennfeldt, *Biblical Authority,* 193.

wonder what the actual role of the Spirit was'.[341]

Obviously Roennfeldt did not feel Pinnock placed enough emphasis on the Spirit and too much of an emphasis upon human capabilities. Nevertheless, Pinnock was adamant that he felt that the biblical message, the metanarrative, was not diluted by a focus on the human dimension.

In conclusion, in spite of Pinnock's rejection of his earlier view that the text was perfect and the human influence transitory, he still maintained a high view of Scripture. Furthermore, although he attributed failings and contradictions to the human element and presents a good case for understanding the humanness of Scripture text, his argument has some obvious flaws. Apart from the debate as to whether he is presenting a canon within a canon (a charge he vehemently denied), the more basic question that needs answering is: Can the words of men really be the words and the accurate message of God?

The internal Scriptural witness is an endorsement of the Bible as God's voice and not man's interpretation. For instance such biblical phrases as 'Thus says the Lord', 'The Holy Spirit spoke through the prophets' or 'I have put my words in your mouth' indicate the Bible as claiming to be inspired and a product of God's creative power and self-disclosure. Divine inspiration can allow for the inadequacy of human language but Pinnock tends to focus too much on the finitude of the human agent to explain weaknesses in the biblical account. Such a position contradicts the ancient Christian belief that God can inspire authors to convey transcendent realities.

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[341] Roennfeldt, *Biblical Authority,* 331.
Bloesch, *Holy Scripture*, 312 n 63.
Bloesch also commented that although Pinnock spoke of the confluence of the divine and human in Scripture, with the passage of time he placed a greater emphasis on the human aspect.

Pinnock's over emphasis on the human shortcomings within the Bible helped him find an answer to some biblical difficulties, but in doing so he unwittingly detracts from confidence in the text. It would be a fair assessment to conclude that the 'new Evangelical' Pinnock placed too much emphasis upon the human aspect of Scripture.

2:6 Pinnock's New Scripture Principle: Narrative and Process Theological Influences

Pinnock maintained that he held to a high view of Scripture, yet to many Reformed Evangelicals Pinnock went beyond Evangelical boundaries. However, Pinnock considered himself a 'new Evangelical' reformer, picking up the baton of Carl Henry and Bernard Ramm. To this end, in 1990 he published a seminal book *Tracking the Maze*[342] which, as previously mentioned, he wrote to help Evangelicals find their way through the perplexing theological options that were on offer. The book was reflective of the stages and challenges that Pinnock had himself faced, as a journeyman along the road towards Evangelical reform.

Pinnock argued that Christian theology in general was drowning in a sea of human opinions, and modern trends that had lost touch with all biblical and historical roots.[343] Whilst Pinnock lamented that in much modern theology the basic grammar of faith was being altered in significant and important ways, he nevertheless gave a positive endorsement to contemporary theologies which grappled with the difficult questions of modernity. [344]

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[342] Pinnock, *Tacking the Maze*, Preface.
[343] Ibid, Preface.
[344] Ibid, Preface.

Two modern theological approaches in particular had a powerful effect upon Pinnock's thinking - *narrative theology* and *process thinking*. By far the most significant of these was narrative theology. Narrative theology proved a vehicle through which Pinnock could express a firm, but not too rigid biblical belief. It proved a useful bridge from his earlier rather pedantic, apologetic approaches towards a freer 'new Evangelical' expression.

Pinnock and Narrative Theology:

Pinnock's theological enterprise looked afresh at biblical historicity. He argued that it was important to understand that the Bible was written long before the time when a clear line was drawn between that which was strictly historical and that which was simply story-like narrative.[345] Legend is a universal literary form, and Pinnock knew that Evangelicals were almost scared of talk of legend within the biblical context, in case it opened doors to a denial of a Scripture principle.

To Evangelical minds legend was an emotive word; it appeared to embrace such concepts as demythologizing, an emphasis upon anthropology and sociology and a denial of miracles or anything supernatural.[346] Pinnock pointed out that in facing squarely the human face and literary style of the Bible,[347] the disputed hermeneutical tools of higher criticism actually helped differentiate between historical truth, and expressions of divine mystery, as seen in legend like features.

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[345] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle,* 119.
[346] Ibid, 121.
[347] Ibid, 122.

The cumulative result of such an emphasis by Pinnock was that he found resonance with narrative theology, which was addressing similar difficulties. The PCE theologian Roger Olson, agreed that Pinnock and PCE in general had welcomed many insights gleaned from narrative theologians. Olson wrote that God was the master story teller, whose stories as recorded in Scripture reveal much about God's nature and essence.[348] Pinnock expressed narrative theology as 'drawing truth out of the story from the biblical account':

> By acting in history to save humanity, God has drawn back the veil of mystery and disclosed a portion of who He is. . . . It is theology's task to reflect on the meaning of this in history, drawing out truth of the story without replacing it . . . revelation is historical and cognitive not just a human experience aimed at an ethical project for moral renewal . . .[349]

It would be true to say Pinnock saw the whole Bible as a divine oracle. Pinnock wrote that the Bible existed to tell a grand story, and its central purpose was as a storybook;[350] an epic story of redemption, grounded in history and narrated in Scripture.

Pinnock's narrative approach[351] was in stark contrast to the Reformed Calvinist emphasis towards the Bible as a source book, which provided propositional doctrinal statements to build faith upon. Pinnock wrote that Scripture was more than a set of

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[348] Porter, and Cross, eds. *Semper Reformandum,* 27.
[349] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 224.
[350] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze,* 171.
[351] Grenz, and Olson, eds. *Twentieth Century Theology,* 271.
Narrative theology emerged in the 1970s and teaches that faith joins the personal story with the transcendent/immanent story of the religious community and ultimately expresses the narrative of divine action in the world. Narrative relies upon truth as textual coherence and a theology of how people learn to perceive in reality. However, there is no one narrative theology. L. Gregory Jones wrote that 'there is not so much a distinct position known as narrative theology, as there is a variety of ways in which theologians have argued for the significance of narrative for theological reflection'.
L. Gregory Jones "Narrative Theology" in *Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Modern Christian Thought,* ed. A. E. McGrath (Oxford: Blackwell Pub. Ltd, 1998).

timeless truth dropped from heaven,[352] and should not be regarded as an encyclopaedia of general knowledge.[353]

A leading British Evangelical scholar Alister McGrath,[354] (who was quite supportive towards Pinnock) welcomed the role that narrative theology could play in the theological task. McGrath particularly found resonance with Pinnock's narrative view of the Old Testament, which saw narrative as a tool for understanding the unfolding revelation of the nature and character of God.[355]

Pinnock began to embrace the narrative approach to Scripture, initially through the works of H. Richard Niebuhr. To Niebuhr the witness was narrative in form 'and illuminated our self-understanding, making sense of the story of our life'.[356] Niebuhr also believed that Scripture was not simply articulating a set of abstract principles:[357] Narratives are based in history, in actions, enabling us to avoid thinking of Christianity in terms of universal abstractions and instead to ground it in the contingencies of our historical existence.[358]

Such concepts appealed to Pinnock, and part of what he called his *manifesto of Evangelical critical liberty* was a call for contemporary relevance, an up- to date story.

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[352] Porter, and Cross, eds. *Semper Reformandum,* 28.
[353] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze,* 171.
[354] G. Jones, "Narrative Theology," in *Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Modern Christian Thought,* ed. A. E. McGrath, Oxford: Blackwell Pub. Ltd. 1998).
The leading pioneer narrative theologian Hans Frei wrote of how the obsession with historicity often meant missing the meaning of the text. Frei agreed that a significant feature of Enlightenment biblical hermeneutics was to deny the narrative character of Scripture and simply try to extract conceptual information.
[355] A. E. McGrath, *A Passion for Truth. The Intellectual Coherence of Evangelicalism* (Leicester: Apollos, 1996), 173-174.
[356] H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Meaning of Revelation* (NY: Macmillan, 1960), 32-66.
[357] Ibid,
[358] McGrath, *A Passion for Truth,* 108.

Pinnock believed in the truth of the biblical metanarrative (*theodrama*), as he considered that the metanarrative gave meaning to doctrines.[359] Pinnock saw that the role of theology was to expand the biblical story and explain its meanings. He rejected any argument that saw narrative as simply a primitive way of expressing the philosophy of religion. He quite succinctly expressed his view: "Heresy is something that ruins the story and orthodoxy as theology should keep the story alive and devise new ways of telling it."[360]

Another reason he rejected his earlier propositionalism was that he felt it took away the focus from the power of the metanarrative. He saw doctrinal reflection as a secondary source to the primary story of God's love and power. The narrative of salvation was not primarily a rational system of truth, or even a source of ethical absolutes. It is the telling of the Christian story (which speaks to all human needs) in whatever culture or even religions of the world it is told.[361] Pinnock recognized that this narrative approach was an appeal to the heart, for a response to follow Christ.[362] Narrative was therefore an aid to Pinnock's pietism.

Pinnock was constantly exploring new ways to balance the *text* and the *context*. The life context of Scripture was important, and he wrote that every generation read the Bible in dialogue with its own vision and cultural presuppositions. Therefore, he reasoned that for contemporary Christians to balance the text and context poles, there was a need to come to terms with the prevailing world view: "Today we are reading the Bible afresh but in the twentieth-century context . . . making peace with the culture of modernity

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[359] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze*, 183.
[360] Ibid, 183.
[361] Ibid, 184*f*.
[362] Ibid, 185.

experiencing reality as something dynamic and historical. The time is past when we can be naïve realists in hermeneutics."[363]

In 1998 he wrote about his aspirations: "I am striving for the dynamic equilibrium of continuity and creativity that characterizes great theology . . . I am more like a pilgrim than a settler, I tread the path of discovery . . ."[364]

In striving after good theology from creative thinking (particularly the creative aspects of narrative theology), Pinnock was influenced by Gabriel Fackre. Fackre was a theologian who held to an orthodox belief in biblical Christianity, but had a unique narrative interpretation of Christian doctrine. Pinnock was so impressed with Fackre's approach that he dedicated his influential book *The Scripture Principle* to him.[365]

Certainly the literary style of *The Scripture Principle* is vastly different to Pinnock's earlier apologetic style of writing. However not all of Pinnock's former fellow reformers were happy with Pinnock's embrace of a narrative approach. Donald Bloesch stated lamentably that Pinnock had moved from his early apologetic theology to a narrative theology which emphasizes the story of personal experience, rather than urging

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[363] Pinnock, ed. *The Grace of God,* 27.
[364] C. Pinnock, (1998) "Clark H. Pinnock and Roger Olson, A Forum: The Future of Evangelical theology," in *Christianity Today,* 42-43.
[365] Porter, Cross, eds. *Semper Reformandum,* Bloesch, 248.
In turn, Fackre went on to favourable review Pinnock's later books *The Openness of God* and *Unbounded Love.*

for the credibility of ontological claims.[366] He felt that Pinnock's whole-hearted embrace of a narrative theology was at the expense of doctrinal accuracy. Nevertheless, Pinnock recorded how impressed he was with Fackre's interpretation of narrative theology, his grammar of the Christian faith and his cultural-linguistic enterprise.[367]

Pinnock endorsed Fackre's view that the crucial task of the theological enterprise was to translate the Christian story in a way that it enters the thought world of its hearers.[368] Pinnock wrote that Scriptural authority was primarily in the fundamental witness to God's self-disclosure in history carried down in words.[369] He wrote that: "Christian theology requires faithfulness to the bible because Scripture is its primary source and alone gives it access to revelation of the salvation story. To put it bluntly, theology that does not accord with the scriptural witness should not be considered Christian theology."[370]

However, whilst Pinnock gave such a wholehearted endorsement to the methodology of narrative thinking there were fundamental differences between Pinnock and other leading narrative theologians such as Frei and Paul Ricoeur. Most of the disagreement centred on the issue of the historicity of the biblical stories. To PCE and

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[366] Bloesch, *Holy Scripture*, 33.
Bloesch did agree that in spite of the narrative influence Pinnock still retained a measure of his original apologetic nuance. Pinnock wrote:

> Even in his more mature thought the apologetic cast of Pinnock's theology remains. His championing of Open Theism is rooted in the apologetic concern to reach the outsider. The goal of his kind of narrative theology is to expose the inconsistencies in the stories of the hearers, so that they might become more open to the metastory in the Bible.

Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze*, 180 n 1.
[367] G. Fackre, *The Doctrine of Revelation: A Narrative Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 26.
Fackre wrote of the need for new priorities for the effectiveness of Christianity:
Unlike modernity, the first goal of theology should not be apologetics but an interpretation of the storied world of the canon, read typologically with special reference to the micronarrative within it.
[368] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle*, 218.
[369] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze*, 172.
[370] Ibid, 176.

Pinnock (even in his radical moments), the essentials of Christianity are grounded in historical fact, yet to most non-Evangelical, narrative theologians, existential interpretations were quite adequate.[371]

Pinnock was not afraid to challenge the weakness that he saw in narrative theology, he wrote: "A gospel modulated to the pitch of twentieth century thought will not in the end ease the problem of communication. It will only mute the sound of revelation itself and end up in total silence."[372]

Nevertheless, Pinnock was much taken with the ethos of narrative thinking and believed that it could be adopted as an Evangelical biblical paradigm. He came to regard the primary task of theology as exploring and telling the narrative of the Christian story.[373]

Pinnock devoted a whole chapter in his *Tracking the Maze* to recording the 'epic story of redemption enshrined in its sacred texts'.[374] He added that:

> The essence of the gospel is the biblically narrated epic story of salvation through Jesus Christ. There has always been a basic narrative proclamation of the good news in Jesus Christ that has stayed recognizably the same amid all the diversity through all the centuries. The truth for Christians lies in this narrative. Their grammar and speech is structured around it. Here is the norm, the rule of faith. This is how fidelity is tested. Faith is a response to this story and to its promises.[375]

Pinnock is offering neither an existential narrative interpretation, nor a rational explanation, regarding Christianity. He is calling for a response by faith to the truth of the

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[371] Bloesch correctly noted that a lot of narrative theology can be seen as an attempt to evade historicity, miracles and their metaphysical implications, but Pinnock simply rejected this non-supernaturalist interpretation and has never dismissed the historical facticity, particularly of the New Testament events.
[372] Pinnock, *A Defence of Biblical Infallibility*, 31-2.
[373] Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, 222.
[374] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze*, Chapter 10, 153 (Amplify).
[375] Ibid, 154*f*.

Christian message. However, faith by itself was never enough in Pinnock's arguments, it had to be faith in the Christian story – a wrong story leads to a wrong directed faith, full of vain superstitions and cruel illusions. His concern was not just *a* faith but *the* faith.[376]

He rejected fideism which he saw as docetic in tendency, part authoritarian and part existential.[377] Pinnock believed in presenting cogent arguments for faith, and he argued that faith could never be created or induced.[378] Faith was no existential leap into the dark, but rather a walking into the light of divine revelation as revealed through the Scriptures.

To Pinnock valid authority needed credentials, and the New Testament insisted that the Christ event bore a universal truth claim upon which faith could be built.[379] Pinnock reasoned that the validity of Christian theism rested on its historical credentials, going so far as to say if the gospel could not be sustained by historical data, it could not be sustained.

To Pinnock sees faith as destroyed if it did not have historical foundations.[380] Pinnock saw in the conversion story of C. S. Lewis's a wonderful example of how he had come to understand faith. Rather than a dramatic divine encounter, Lewis was gradually overwhelmed with the accumulated evidences for Christianity. These evidences ultimately dispersed his atheism.[381] To Pinnock such a conversion was in keeping with

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[376] Callen, *JTR*, 121.
[377] Pinnock, *Biblical Revelation*, 44.
This is a major point of difference he has with Barth whom he regarded as the foremost exponent of fideism in the twentieth century.
[378] Ibid, 42.
Barth, he argued, was 'allergic to Christian evidences'
[379] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze*, 44.
[380] His apologetics held to an Evangelical defence of Scripture that was based on historical evidence witnessed by many (e.g. he cites Acts 17:31; Rom. 1:4; 1 Cor. 15:14 as examples of first-hand accounts).
[381] C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy* (London: Fontana, 1955), 223-224.

his new understanding of a gradually unfolding narrative, that is to say, true faith emerges through good apologetic reasoning, historical evidence and a powerful narrative.

Although Pinnock did admit that there were things in the Bible that are history-like but unlikely to be historical,[382] his ultimate theological enterprise was based upon what he considered the greatest historical fact-the Resurrection, as recorded by eye witnesses. Therefore, to Pinnock although the Samson or Elisha stories while never offering the same sort of historical value as the Exodus or Resurrection, nevertheless did not diminish the Scripture principle. To those who are puzzled as to what is a narrative and what is a myth, Pinnock replied: Some Christians put a great deal of stock in a version of rational certainty and fear than any discovered myth would prove a loss to their faith. This is because their hope rests not on the story of salvation but on the Bible being a book free of legendary elements.[383]

Pinnock constantly stresses that the ultimate point of the biblical narrated story is soteriological - salvation through Christ.[384] This is the metanarrative, the epic story of redemption:

> Revelation, if historical, can only be passed on in its integrity if it is fixed in written documents, permitting the church as a social institution to be normatively guided by its ly grounded narrative . . . the Bible exists to tell a grand story, and its central purpose as a storybook. It is not appropriate to regard it as an encyclopaedia of general information or the source of disparate and incidental infallible facts. . . . The Bible exists to tell the Christian story and to testify to the decisive events in its narrative.[385]

In *Tracking the Maze,* Pinnock endorses narrative as the primary vehicle for expressing truth and meaning for Christianity, and he rebukes Evangelical academic

[382] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze,* 158.
[383] Ibid, 160-161.
[384] Ibid, 154.
[385] Ibid, 171-172.

theology for more or less ignoring the narrative form of revelation: "looking for truth in doctrine rather than narrative, even though the Bible is a story book, theology has not focussed in that direction, enamoured instead by a rationalist ideal."[386]

Pinnock rejected the Protestant scholastic methodology which set rigid parameters for understanding the biblical account, and argued that doctrine was simply a tool to tell the story better, not become the climax of the story.[387]

Pinnock's use of narrative theology as part of his theological enterprise and expression of the Christian faith became well recognized. Stanley Grenz wrote: "Clark Pinnock along with George L. Stroup and Gabriel Fackre have defended or experimented with the implications of the concept of narrative for the systematic presentation of the Christian story."[388]

Pinnock was convinced that the narrative trajectory was a powerful tool, helping the Church, as a faith community, to express its belief: The power of the story explicates its meaning to God's people on the move. It uses the biblical story in the context of the community to make sense of life and put people in touch with the divine mystery.[389]

Pinnock as a narrative thinker was conscious that theology must be viewed in its relationship to the story of God's action in history. Christian identity is formed out of a connection between theology and the faith community. Pinnock believed the faith community expressed its relationship with God through symbols and narrative found in its sacred documents. The emphasis upon personal histories and the Bible as narrative has

[386] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze,* 182.
[387] Grenz, Olson, eds. *20th Century Theology,* 273.
[388] Ibid, 273.
[389] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 227.

grown in influence amongst Evangelicals.[390] Pinnock as an Evangelical narrative theologian has made a major contribution to that growth.

Pinnock and Process Theology:

The other major contemporary theological influence upon Pinnock, or more accurately upon his Open Theism was *process theology*. Although narrative theology was beyond doubt, the most influential modern influence upon his theological enterprise, he is best remembered for the influence that process theology had upon him. There is certainly an exaggeration by his critics of this influence. Pinnock was well aware of the shortcomings of process thinking from an Evangelical biblical perspective. Nevertheless, Pinnock was still to find himself classed as a process thinker mainly, because of Open Theism's appreciation of such thinking, particularly in relation to the doctrine of omniscience. To many Evangelicals, Pinnock was not considered an Evangelical reformer, but the originator of Open Theism. They were well aware that Open Theism was indebted to a number of key motifs which process thinking holds to.

During the 1990s, Pinnock made a statement that appeared to imply that he had left Evangelical theology behind: How can a theologian be aware of the humanity of the Bible, of historical and cultural relativity, of the flow of history as a natural process – hold on to traditional convictions.[391]

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[390] S. J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Cambridge U.K.: W. B. Eerdmans Pub. 1994), 22.
[391] C. H. Pinnock "Post-fundamentalist coming to terms with modernity." in *Perspectives on Theology in the Contemporary World* (Marcon, Ga: Mercer Univ. Press, 1990), S. J. Grenz, ed. 15.

But Pinnock had not abandoned Evangelicalism; he was simply no longer equating traditional conservative convictions with true Evangelical faith. Pinnock whilst holding to a Scripture principle was also looking for a rational theology that understood the modern experience and philosophy of change. This drew Pinnock's attention towards process theology. As with narrative theology, Pinnock's most thorough analysis of process theology is found in *Tracking the Maze.*

Pinnock commended process theologians such as Whitehead, Cobb and even Altizer, because of their dealing with the nature of God within a changing modern world. Most Evangelicals had dismissed process thinking, particularly since it did not rely on, or even value special revelation.[392] Pinnock though believed that creation was "a process within which God is coming into being, in an upward and forward movement of history towards consummation, which will be the reconciliation of God and the world."[393] Pinnock liked process philosophy's endorsement of such a trajectory:

> a God, who exists within the world and who is calling us to go forward. We experience a teleological pull for which we need to posit a God of love and persuasive power, a God who can remember all experiences, envisions all possibilities, and weaves them together in an everlasting process of self-actualization.[394]

Pinnock admitted that it was through the process philosopher Charles Hartshorne that he learned to re-think how God could change operationally, in response to a changing creation. He also felt indebted to Hartshorne because he helped clarify his thinking on just what genuine human freedom meant.[395] He summed this up: "God has

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[392] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze,* 137.
[393] Ibid, 138.
This was a comment by Teilhard de Chardin which appealed to Pinnock in his belief in a progressive revelation by God to mankind.
[394] Ibid, 138.
[395] Callen, *JTR,* 149.

used process thinkers to compel me to change certain ideas that I had and bring them up to scriptural standards . . . if Evangelical theologians refuse to recognize the moments of truth in process thought, they will force many to accept process theology . . ."[396]

Pinnock struggled to influence his process thinking partners to work by Scriptural standards and ultimately it was their lack of a Scripture principle that proved an insurmountable obstacle for Pinnock. From the process side, there was no need of a Scriptural principle since religious difficulties were answered by existential reinterpretations.[397] All this left Pinnock having to do some eclectic cherry picking from the process thinkers, although he continued extensive dialogue with them throughout his academic life.[398]

Pinnock's involvement with process theism was not quite an excursus, but he soon returned to his major goal of Evangelical reform; having imbibed some process concepts along the way. Pinnock went so far as to write that ultimately he found process theism compromised, and somewhat paradoxically reductionist in its expression of freedom He argued that in the end process thinking proved too much of an extreme correction to the weakness of the classical theism it sought to replace. Pinnock's final critique of process thinking was: "God is not the ground of the world's existence and has no final control over what is going on. . . . A God who is neither the creator nor redeemer of the world does not deserve to be called God. The God of process theology is vastly inferior to the

[396] Callen, *JTR*, 146.
[397] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze*, 26.
[398] Callen, *JTR*, 82.

God of the Bible and Evangelical experience."[399]

So Pinnock, as a reforming Evangelical, rejected all but the bare bones of process thinking. At the most it could be said that Pinnock had a guarded relationship with process theology, but little more than that.

Pinnock's biographer Callen considered that the origin of Pinnock's involvement with process thinkers began when the previously mentioned theologian Delwin Brown (who was a process theologian) reviewed Pinnock's book *The Scripture Principle* in 1984.[400] Consequently, this led to extensive dialogue between them and teaching opportunities for Pinnock at the Iliff School of Theology where Brown became Dean. Ultimately the relationship led to a dialogical book being published jointly[401] by both theologians. In this book Pinnock confirms that his relationship with process theology is conditional. He wrote that the religious reform he sought had to be consistent with a belief in biblical authority, and according to this criteria process thinking was lacking:

> I do not think it is enough to assign God the role of experiencing and remembering everything, to make God the final organizer of what comes to him from the world (i.e. *process view*). According to the biblical message, God takes the initiative in the history of salvation. I want to replace a static view of God with a dynamic view; it cannot be any dynamic view but must be the dynamic theism of the scriptural witness.[402]

Pinnock in his theological innovations looked for a dynamic model that was based on a Scriptural principle, and process theology ultimately did not meet that need. In

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[399] C. Pinnock, "Between Classical and Process Theism," in *Process Theology*, ed. R. Nash (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1987), 313-325.
Pinnock added that his belief was that the Trinitarian relational model depicted God as one who could be affected by the world thus giving a more plausible response to the world's suffering. He said that he liked the way in which Trinitarian theology could match process theology's witness to God as being related to and being affected by the world without requiring one to adopt process metaphysics.
[400] Callen, *JTR*, 147. Also see 112*ff* in this thesis.
[401] Pinnock, and Brown, *Theological Crossfire*, 95.
[402] Ibid, 96.

conclusion, he wrote that the God of the Bible displayed openness to the future that neither the traditional view of omniscience nor process thinkers accommodated.[403] He sought for a middle way between the classical view which over-emphasized God's transcendence above the world, and process theism which presented a panentheism, a radical immanence of God who was dependent and part of the world.

The climax to Pinnock's dialogue with process theologians came about with the publication of the book *Searching For An Adequate God.*[404] This he co-edited with the process theologian John B. Cobb Jr. It contained contributions from both Openness and process theologians. In the Introduction, both Pinnock and Cobb highlighted many of their similarities, but were both honest about their differences. Pinnock commented that both groups of theists valued natural theology, and appreciated the contribution of process philosophy has made to modern versions.[405] Pinnock also agreed that, unlike modern philosophers, process thinkers made the love of God a high priority and a central theme.[406] Pinnock was obviously impressed with the process concept of God's interactive and dynamic relations with the world, and also their belief in both human self-determination and divine persuasion. This fitted neatly into his growing synergism and elevation of the human factor in the divine relationship. Pinnock concurred that both theologies rejected any notion that God was an absolute being who was unaffected by the

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[403] Callen, *JTR,* 242.
[404] B. John Cobb Jr, and Clark H. Pinnock, eds. *Searching For an Adequate God – A dialogue between Process and Free Will Theists* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).
Cobb is a respected authority on process theology. His best known works are:
J. B. Cobb Jr, and D. R. Griffin, *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976).
J. B. Cobb Jr, *A Christian Natural Theology: Based on the Thoughts of Alfred North Whitehead* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974).
[405] Cobb Jr, and Pinnock, eds. *Searching For an Adequate God,* ix.
[406] Ibid,

world, or that God determined the course of events unilaterally. Further, Pinnock acknowledged that there was common agreement on the future being open and not predetermined or closed.

Pinnock and process thinkers also held a common belief that created beings affect God, even to the point of agreeing that God Himself suffers when things go wrong. God was not impassive and remote. Allied to this was a joint belief by both parties that libertarian freedom and genuine evils exist. This impressive list of common ground would on its own be seen as a blue print for Open Theism apparently endorsing process thinking, and indeed is part of the reason that Pinnock was labelled an Evangelical process thinker.

However, the reality was that there were far more fundamental differences than similarities that outweighed the making of any lasting coalition. Pinnock made it very clear from the start that there were major difficulties between the groups, which mainly centred around lack of any Scripture principle and the lack of any biblical theology. Also, the process position is a form of panentheism that meant process thinkers did not see God as existing apart from the world and therefore they did not believe in the orthodox position that God freely created the world *ex nihilo*. This, to Pinnock rejected their position believing that it left little room for divine initiatives, especially in the history of salvation.[407] Pinnock's summation regarding process theology was quite simple: We can *adapt* a metaphysics but we should not *adopt* one. We can utilize process insights to help us communicate the Christian faith without accepting the total system.[408]

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[407] Cobb Jr, and Pinnock, eds. *Searching For an Adequate God,* x.
[408] Ibid, xi.

Adapting not adopting is a good slogan for Pinnock's relationship with process theology. In response to Pinnock's critique of them, John B. Cobb argued that process theists believed that theology could only be convincing to the modern person if it made contact with both contemporary scientific and historical knowledge and not remain locked in the past. Cobb argued that to process thinkers, God and the world were constantly evolving moving beyond biblical categories. He argued that process thinkers saw changing cosmologies and evolution as progressing beyond ancient limitations.[409]

In contrast, Pinnock's theology held to the Evangelical and orthodox belief that God created the universe by divine fiat and belief that all creation depended on God for existence. Pinnock felt that the reductionism of process thinking devalued the creative role, and indeed the whole concept of God. In fact, William Hasker (a PCE theologian), believed that process thinking gave the strong impression that Creativity itself became the ontological ultimate, with 'God and the World instrumentalities through which Creativity achieves its task'.[410]

However, the final straw in Pinnock's rejection of process thinking was their lack of any emphasis or discussion on salvation. This soteriological gulf separated Pinnock from his process dialogical partners. As an Evangelical, Pinnock believed that God created, acted and communicated through many modalities of divine revelation to authenticate both the messengers and the divine message of salvation. Pinnock ultimately put his belief in an Evangelical Scripture principle and a theological enterprise that believed in the biblical God. He placed the biblical message above the metaphysical and

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[409] Cobb Jr, and Pinnock, eds. *Searching For an Adequate God,* xiv.
[410] Ibid, 224.

philosophical reasoning of process theology. It is rather unfair that many critics have equated Pinnock as a sort of Evangelical process theologian, and not considered him as a pioneer Evangelical reformer who simply liked some of the process ideas.[411]

To classify Pinnock as a process theologian is a caricature, although it is accurate to conclude that its influence, although exaggerated, became part of his seminal thinking.

2:7 Pinnock's Manifesto for Evangelical Critical Liberty

By 1984, with his new and open Arminian approach towards theology and with the publication of his seminal book *The Scripture Principle,* the 'later' Pinnock challenged all Evangelicals to look at and for powerful new readings of the Bible. Unlike the general trend within Evangelicalism, he encouraged students to use the hermeneutical tools of higher criticism as an aid, providing those tools did not dismiss biblical authority as irrelevant.[412] He called this open Evangelical approach a manifesto for Evangelical critical liberty.[413] Pinnock pointed out that his manifesto was based on a belief in a Scripture principle that was also committed to facing squarely the human face of the Bible with its concomitant weaknesses. [414]

In his manifesto for Evangelical critical liberty, Pinnock made it clear that his proposal was not simply a facade for a dressing up of critical theological theories to

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[411] For instance his staunch conservative critic Don Carson criticizes Pinnock 'as an Evangelical theologian inclined towards accommodation along the lines of process thought that wants to emphasize God's personhood whilst dismissing his absoluteness'.
D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God - Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Leicester: Apollos, 1996), 225.
[412] Whilst conservative Evangelicals endorsed textual or lower criticism other hermeneutical tools of higher criticism were regarded with suspicion and simply tools of liberal latitudinarianism.
[413] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle,* 143.
[414] Ibid, 122.

enable a scholar to remain both an Evangelical and an academic,[415] but a genuine call to work at the best possible exegesis in the company of other non-Evangelical scholars. His purpose was clear: 'in order that those hypotheses which confirm the veracity of Scripture will persist, and those hypotheses that denigrate it will become apparent to all'.[416]

Pinnock was not naive and acknowledged that he was quite aware that many non-Evangelical biblical critics are sceptics and anti-supernaturalists, who see the Bible as disparate documents with no overarching divine plan, or having divine inspiration; even doubting as to whether there is any divine revelation at all. In spite of this, Pinnock felt that there was much to be gained for the theological enterprise by mutual sharing of knowledge and insights: "Criticism is negative when it closes itself to the wonderful deeds of God, but not when it asks in a reasonable way about the specifics of the claims to which it is fundamentally sympathetic."[417]

Pinnock nailed his colours to the Evangelical mast, and argued that he believed that divine revelation was at the heart of *The Scripture Principle*:

> The divide today falls between those who accept the finality of the incarnation and the normative authority of the Scriptures, and those who reduce all theological concerns to human ones and locate God's Word in the words of universal man. It is a very old controversy does God save man, or does man save himself? . . . Revelation for modern theology boils down to a non-conceptual experience whose significance is a matter of personal conviction.[418]

Pinnock's manifesto for Evangelical critical liberty asked the bigger question, as to how theology and Scripture could be relevant within a post-modern culture, and so he

[415] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle,* 143.
[416] Ibid, 143.
[417] Ibid, 150.
[418] Pinnock, *Biblical Revelation,* 108.

wrote: How can Christian Scripture that emerged in a particular ancient context exercise a normative function for culturally diverse incarnations of Christian theology? How do we access the story, and how do we interpret it properly?

Pinnock tackled the place of tradition, social context, historicity and culture in theology in his manifesto. He wanted to face contemporary challenges head-on: "I got up the courage to bite the bullet and ask the normative question: What is the essence of Christianity? I wanted to ask it in a fresh way. . ."

Pinnock was called an *ecumenical Evangelical* on a number of occasions for this very reason,[419] and as an ecumenical Evangelical Pinnock believed that a fusion of Christian beliefs did not have to end in theological compromise. To discover the essence of Christianity, Pinnock felt that he needed to look beyond Evangelical constraints.[420]

In his journey of change from being a separatist, fundamental, conservative Evangelical towards becoming an ecumenical Evangelical, Pinnock discovered a special kinship with the thinking of the narrative theologian Hans Frei. He wrote:

> Hans Frei once told Carl Henry that his deepest theological desire was for an emergence of a 'generous orthodoxy' that would both blend and transcend previously quarrelling elements of liberalism and Evangelicalism . . . a speaking the truth in love that joins commitment and compassion, text and context.[421]

Pinnock was impressed with such a sentiment, it fitted perfectly into his reformed Evangelical ethos. However, whilst Pinnock's writings do reflect such a *generous*

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[419] Porter, and Cross, eds. *Semper Refermandum,* Bloesch, 258.
[420] Pinnock constantly argued that an appreciation of the tools of higher criticism resulted in a better hermeneutic. 'New Evangelicalism' was more positive towards three key features of contemporary theological thinking: the humanness of Scripture, an acceptance of inaccuracies within the received text and an engagement with contemporary culture.
[421] Callen, *JTR,* 214.

orthodoxy, to many conservative Evangelical critics he was often both too generous and hardly orthodox in the views he expressed.

2:8 Conclusion and Summary of Pinnock's New Scripture Principle and his Theological Enterprise

Pinnock's Scripture principle was indebted to insights gained from narrative theology, and his Open Theism was consolidated by certain concepts gleaned from process thinkers. Nevertheless, Pinnock retained a high view of Scripture, and has consistently rejected conclusions that disagreed with the biblical account. He agreed with orthodox Evangelical belief that biblical authority was primarily a fundamental witness to God's self-disclosure in history, recorded in words:[422] "Christian theology requires faithfulness to the bible because Scripture is its primary source and alone gives it access to revelation of the salvation story. To put it bluntly, theology that does not accord with the scriptural witness should not be considered Christian theology."[423]

However, Pinnock concluded that inspiration and inerrancy were far more 'open and permissive' terms than he had previously thought.[424] His rejected his former conservative definition of inerrancy, and 'the crudity of the polemics that accompanied the term'. He wanted to reject the term *inerrancy* altogether, but decided that inerrancy was a metaphor for the determination to trust God's Word completely and the need to be clear in belief about biblical authority. Therefore on these grounds, he chose to retain the expression and consequently he still wrote about the *inerrant Scripture*[425] although

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[422] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze,* 172.
[423] Ibid, 176.
[424] Ibid, 225.
[425] Ibid, 225.

preferring to speak of scriptural authority. Pinnock regarded himself as a nuanced inerrantist although his critics with much justification defined him as a limited inerrantist.

Any debate over inerrancy should really become a debate about the veracity and trustworthiness of Scripture. Pinnock accepted the accuracy of the overall biblical story rather than denying its veracity because of minor details. To him the ultimate biblical focus was salvific, and arguments over minor discrepancies took away from this focus.

Pinnock believed that a contemporary understanding of the Spirit brought a new dynamic to biblical hermeneutics and Evangelicalism. This allowed Pinnock to conclude that although the canon of the Bible was complete, revelation by the Spirit and fresh insights have not ceased. With the passage of time this position has become mainstream thinking among PCE and 'new Evangelicals'. They hold to a belief in the essential unity of the Spirit and the Word which allows for a much greater emphasis upon experiential encounters; a position which Reformed Evangelical thinking would not accept.

The life context of Scripture was important to Pinnock, and he wrote that every generation reads the Bible in dialogue with its own vision and cultural presuppositions, and subsequently has to come to terms with the world view of its day: "Today we are reading the Bible afresh but in the twentieth-century context . . . making peace with the culture of modernity experiencing reality as something dynamic and historical. The time is past when we can be naïve realists in hermeneutics."[426]

However, Pinnock tried to steer away from too much accommodation with culture, as he had genuine concerns about where non- liberalism would end up.

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[426] Pinnock, ed. *The Grace of God*, 27.

Pinnock saw biblical authority as functional, "the Bible points us to the story of salvation and facilitates it coming alive in our experience as it is mixed with faith."[427] Pinnock came to a position where he saw truth as a process of conversation and refinement, emerging dialectically from a Scripture principle. However, he saw this as a dialogue within the whole Christian community, not just within Evangelicalism. He was determined that the conversation should not be limited to academics. Gary Dorrien summed up the changes:

> As a respected elder figure . . . Pinnock supported the post-modern Evangelical claim that it was time for Evangelicals to move beyond the categories and defensive positions established by the modernist/fundamentalist conflict. . . . With each book Pinnock inched further away from Evangelical fundamentalism.[428]

Pinnock was indeed moving away from Evangelical fundamentalism. He began to appreciate the Bible as a *Spirit filled* dynamic narrative with different literary genres and different human authors. He began to argue that the impact of the foundationalism of Reformed conservative Evangelicalism, was the neglect of its internal pietistic spirituality. Pinnock wrote that Evangelicalism had become more an intellectual assent to propositions than a living experiential faith.

As Pinnock looked at what kind of divine activity the Holy Spirit was involved in, he, like other PCE, concluded that there were many kinds inspiration: the prophetic, the scribal and the writers of poetry and narrative. Therefore, Pinnock defined biblical inspiration not as one single divine activity, but a complex superintendence by the Holy Spirit over all of creation.

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[427] D. Bloesch, *Holy Scripture*, 233 n 166.
[428] G. Dorrien, *The Remaking of Evangelical theology*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 145-146.

Pinnock saw in that divine activity of the Holy Spirit a presiding over the preparation and production of the Scriptures, in spite of the limitations of the human receptors.[429] He argued that each part of Scripture must be viewed in complementary relationship with the rest; otherwise there would be a distortion of the total picture.[430] Furthermore, to PCE a basic Reformed and fundamentalist error was their restriction of the operation of the Spirit to the biblical pages. In fact Pinnock called this bibliolatry.

Although Pinnock wrote that inspiration was found in the organic sum of Scripture, he argued that each part was divinely inspired but not necessarily each in the same way. This kaleidoscope approach to him was a reflection of the many-sidedness of the human authors. It is important to grasp how the divine/human dichotomy was at the heart of his theological enterprise. He expressed his later belief as belief in genuine human freedom in the midst of divine activity. For example he wrote: Every segment is inspired by God, though not in the same, way, and the result is a richly variegated teacher, richer for all its diversity. The very differences are what enable the Bible to speak with power and relevance to so many different people and to address the many-sidedness of the human condition.[431]

To Pinnock this is the essence of Evangelicalism. It is all about, a relevant biblical message available to all people and cultures through the operation of the Holy Spirit. To his critics (and with some justification), Pinnock's elevation of the human dimension was at the expense of the divine influence. Nevertheless, it is true to say that Pinnock's 'new

[429] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle*, 64.
[430] Ibid, 4-5.
[431] Ibid, 64.

Evangelicalism' in the form of PCE, has emerged as a creditable Evangelical response to post-modernity.[432]

For Pinnock, his theology received its dynamic from a new understanding of the Holy Spirit. Pinnock's pneumatology became the bridge between the theory and the practice of his new Evangelicalism. This thesis now considers and argues that Pinnock's doctrine of the Spirit became the most significant feature of his theology.

[432] R. Olson, (2006) "The Stanley Grenz Memorial Lecture." Carey Theological College, Canada Lecture 2, March 12-13.

Chapter Three

Chapter Three

3:1 Pinnock's Pneumatology: An Introduction

In this thesis I argue that the greatest contribution Pinnock made to contemporary theology was his articulation of Trinitarian theology and his elucidation of pneumatology. This chapter explores how Pinnock's theology of the Holy Spirit evolved. His pneumatology was built on his revised Scripture principle which, as Chapter Two explored, gave him a freer and more open approach to the theological enterprise.

By the 1970's Pinnock's understanding of *The Scripture Principle* as a basis for his Evangelical theology had irrevocably changed. His emphasis was no longer a defence of the traditional conservative view on inerrancy and infallibility. His nuanced inerrancy emphasized the hearing and obeying of truth as found in the metanarrative, rather than upon an apologetic defence of doctrine. This approach became the ethos of his biblical hermeneutic. Pinnock was now more concerned with the *spirit* of the biblical text than the correctness of the *letter.* Pinnock argued for a veracity that focused on the soteriological aspects of Scripture. He rejected any approach that was dependent and focused upon the literal accuracy of the text as a means to validate propositional statements.

Pinnock began to reason that Scriptural reliability was primarily about bringing the reader to know and love God and be nurtured in that relationship. Such an epistemological approach was ideally suited to his embracing of a pietistic narrative theology, which accepted the accuracy of the overall biblical story but was not particularly concerned about seeming contradictions or mythical accounts. This allowed

him to retain belief in the historicity of New Testament events, particularly the Resurrection, and equally so reject stories such as Lot's wife or Elisha's axe as matters of historical facticity.

As Pinnock moved further away from traditional conservative Evangelicalism, he regarded inerrancy first and foremost to mean an expression of trustworthiness. To him the Bible was trustworthy in its metanarrative. The traveller needs a reliable map and Pinnock firmly believed that his Scripture principle endorsed the Bible as a reliable map for the journey through life. He understood though that to read the Bible needed the Spirit's illumination: Religious experience needs good theology the way a traveller needs a reliable map.[433] So to Pinnock both the Scripture and an encounter with the Spirit were part of the map he needed for his theological journey.

Because the humanness of the authors occasionally came to dominate aspects of the text, Pinnock appealed to the role and ministry of the Holy Spirit as the divine guide and interpreter of God's Word. The Pentecostal-Charismatic movement emerged during the latter half of the late twentieth century. Pinnock acknowledged that its teaching on the divine and active guidance by the Spirit had personally impacted his life. He wrote: "The celebration of a charismatic Pentecostalism is a mighty twentieth century outpouring of

[433] Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, 12.

the Spirit. I think of this as the most important event in modern Christianity."[434] The interaction between the Word and the Spirit became foundational to his theology.

He began to see that openness to the Spirit affirmed his belief in progressiveness of revelation. By this time he accepted that revelation had not ceased with the closure of the canon of Scripture. He was convinced that new truth was breaking forth from God's Word through the illumination of the Spirit. Added to this, was his belief, gleaned from Evangelical Arminianism, that religious experience was an essential part of the Christian life. He rejected his earlier Evangelical emphasis which placed greater emphasis upon rationalism rather than pietism.

In taking this route Pinnock rejected his previous conservative *a priori* belief in a biblical interpretation that followed a predictable pre-set plan. Pinnock's new theological journey was to take him into the Wesleyan and Eastern Orthodox Christian world which emphasized a Spirit Christology that was relational and transforming.[435] He embraced the relational theism of Pentecostalism. He believed such a relational model of God was a wonderful biblical motif[436] since it was reflective of the Trinity as a divine community.

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[434] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 18.
Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality.*
Steven Land the Pentecostal academic has written a fine account of the origins of the Pentecostal/ charismatic movement which he writes were drawn from:

> The streams of Pietism, Puritanism, Wesleyanism, African-American Christianity and nineteenth-century Holiness Revivalism form a confluence which has today become a sea of Pentecostal believers.

Pinnock's eclectic theology of the Spirit draws from many of these sources.
[435] Callen, *JTR,* 178.
Callen records that Pinnock took this position through reading the original texts of Eastern Orthodoxy in his search for a more dynamic perspective on the Holy Spirit.
[436] C. Pinnock, (1999) "Divine Relationality: A Pentecostal Contribution to the Doctrine of God," in *Azusa Street Lecture,* April 20. Regent University, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

This chapter now explores how Pinnock's embrace of a modern pneumatology, in conjunction with his revised Scripture principle (Word and Spirit) took his theological enterprise into a charismatic dimension and developed a fresh up to date theology of the Holy Spirit. To achieve this goal I have divided this chapter into a number of key sections based on three key aspects of Pinnock's pneumatology: the dynamic immanence of the Spirit; the ontological Trinitarian relationality expressed as perichoresis; the transformational or sanctifying work of the Spirit or theosis.

3:2 Pinnock's Developing Pneumatology: Divine Dynamic Immanence

Because Pinnock's form of 'new Evangelicalism' was open and embracing towards the new pneumatological emphasis upon the Holy Spirit, plus the fact that he unashamedly embraced the Charismatic movement, he made an offer in *Flame of Love* to become its theologian.[437] This was no tongue in cheek offer, he felt their experiential pietism was uplifting, but, he felt (with much justification) that their theology was rather lacking in articulation. It would be true to say that even though the relationship didn't see

[437] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 240.
Pinnock in writing of his gratitude for being touched by charismatic renewal wrote that he hoped his book would help in the construction of a charismatic theology.
Pinnock stated that his 'spiritual roots were warmly pietistic and my sympathies charismatic', 223. He added that he would like to see the Pentecostals in the ranks of the new pietists with their making of the Holy Spirit as central to biblical thinking, 266 n 4.
Pinnock wrote his dissertation in 1963 (under F. F. Bruce) when he was apparently a strong Reformed Calvinist far from any pietistic or Arminian influences. Yet his doctoral dissertation had around one-third of it looking at the 'all determining significance of the work of the Spirit in believers and in the church'. To which Callen added:

> In the coming decades he would be one of the prominent of all Evangelicals worldwide who would argue such a thesis and its implications . . . joining the Apostle Paul in seeking to teach the Church that to be "in Christ" through the presence and power of Christ's Spirit is essentially what it means to be a Christian.

any formal recognition given to Pinnock as a *bona fide* charismatic theologian; he became a regular contributor and speaker at Charismatic and Pentecostal events.[438]

Pinnock criticized Mark Noll's well respected book 'Scandal of the Evangelical Mind'[439] not for its content, which was about the lack of Evangelical influences in science and politics, but for its lack of critique of Evangelical theology, particularly with reference to the doctrine of the Spirit. Pinnock had picked up on an important point. By the late twentieth century, it was quite acceptable within the Evangelical theological academy to focus and challenge a lack of social and political activism by Evangelicals, but to emphasize and appreciate any positive aspects of Pentecostal or charismatic theology was considered naïve, simplistic and unproductive. Pinnock turned this position on its head and argued that it was contemporary Evangelical theology itself that had tended to be shallow and uncreative particularly regarding any fresh insights on the doctrine of the Spirit.[440]

It was of little surprise that Pinnock's theology of the Spirit *Flame of Love* was well received within Pentecostal and charismatic circles. The Pentecostal scholar Amos Yong wrote that Pinnock's *Flame of Love* (1996) signalled 'a renaissance of pneumatology,

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[438] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 10.
G. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub.1994), 1.
His personal charismatic experiences, such as the healing of his eye, found him even more in sympathy to the Pentecostal and charismatic renewal movements and their emphases on the Spirit's immanent presence. However, Callen notes that the relationship between Pinnock and the charismatic movement was not new. The Pentecostal scholar Gordon Fee opened his detailed tome God's Empowering Presence quoting from Pinnock's unpublished doctoral thesis. The concept of the Spirit in the Epistles of Paul.
[439] M. A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994).
[440] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 17.

particularly since it presented a pneumatological theology that functioned hermeneutically to the theological enterprise'.[441]

In studying the Spirit and Scripture following a pneumatological hermeneutic, Pinnock was drawn towards Orthodox and Wesleyan theologians.[442] He increasingly distanced himself away from the Augustinian influences upon Evangelicalism.

Pinnock had written that the Reformed Calvinist view of revelation was 'cognitive and propositional which imperils flexibility'.[443] He debated that the Western church had placed its emphasis on the sermon and the clergy at the expense of the moving of the Spirit, 'setting up barriers to the Spirit and stifling the voices that speak of openness, celebration and transformation'.[444]

In Chapter One it was put forward that the radical social and political changes of the 60s left their mark upon theological reflection in general and (for the purpose of this thesis) Pinnock in particular. There were two key areas in which Pinnock sought to reflect a much broader Christian (and arguably societal) perspective and debate of the Spirit's continuing revelation and presence. First of all in the gender debate, Pinnock considered whether the solely masculine descriptions given to the nomenclature of the Spirit was accurate. In *Flame of Love,* Pinnock discussed what the best terminology was in describing the person of the Spirit. He wrote a sub-section of his Introduction entitled

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[441] Porter, and Cross, eds. *Semper Reformandum,* 208.
[442] Such as the Cappadocian Fathers and Irenaeus and Ignatius of Antioch.
[443] Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze,* 73.
He argued positively that Moltmann in his *Spirit of Life* was also striving to recover a more experiential basis for the doctrine of the Spirit.
[444] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 11.

'He, She or It?'[445] The Hebrew term for Spirit (transliterated *rûaḥ*) grammatically is usually feminine. It is the New Testament *pneuma* which is grammatically neuter and therefore tends to be translated 'it'.[446]

Pinnock went on to quote from Christian sources where the Spirit is grammatically understood as feminine.[447]

Although Pinnock agreed with the view that God is above gender, he concluded that gender description though limited, is still a useful aid for human understanding aspects of the nature of God. It appeared that Pinnock felt a feminine facet was missing from the depiction of God:

> Something in me wants to use the feminine pronoun. It seems to capture the gracefulness of Spirit. Politically, it also says to feminists in the church that we are concerned. . . . This is clearly an issue that requires further discussion and thought. Although my study will generally use the masculine pronoun, I hope it will be read in the light of the concerns I have outlined.[448]

Pinnock with a degree of reluctance generally retained the masculine usage of Spirit. He decided that whilst feminine qualities within the biblical language should be noticed, to use the femininity of the Spirit in opposition to the non-femininity of the Father and Son would create more problems that it would solve.

However, Pinnock was wrestling with another question of nomenclature of the Spirit and that was whether to use the definite article before the noun *Spirit* or not. He

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[445] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 15.
[446] However, Pinnock does acknowledge that the Johannine references to the Paraclete are masculine and he also notes that in Latin 'Spirit' is masculine. He therefore believes that the Western tradition has furthered the use of the masculine pronoun for the Spirit.
[447] Pinnock referred to Aphrahat (a fourth century church father from Syria) in his Demonstration 6:14 where Spirit in Syria was feminine. He also commented that Conger, Moltmann, John O'Donnell all proposed thinking of the Spirit in feminine ways.
[448] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 17.

concluded that there are biblical texts that say God *is* spirit and there are some that say God *has* a Spirit. Pinnock throughout *Flame of Love* has many references to the Spirit without using the definite article, but he decided that since the answer was open ended in general he continued to use it.[449]

Reference to the Spirit can mean either God's presence or the third Person of the Trinity or as Pinnock put it 'when Jesus says that God is Spirit, he is not saying God is ghostly but that God is the power of creation that can give life to the dead'.[450] Pinnock was firmly focused on the present, immanent ministry of the Spirit in the world.

However, this debate was not about Pinnock looking for a radical immanence within God, it was more about Pinnock's growing rejection of an emphasis upon a remote, transcendent God. Such a God, Pinnock argued, was the product of neo-Platonic influence upon Western Christianity.[451] This was not the biblical God that Pinnock was writing about.

To Pinnock, neo-Platonism was also behind the liberalism that associated 'spirit' simply with a general and abstract influence of God in the world. Pinnock argued that Spirit was more than a remote, persuasive power; He is a distinct Person in the Godhead.

Both the gender issue and the use of the definite article were by-products of Pinnock's debate regarding divine transcendence and divine immanence: "How . . . do we

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[449] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 24.
[450] Ibid, 25.
[451] See Chapter 4:2.

maintain an affirmation of transcendence in a culture whose mood is radical and relentlessly immanentist?"[452]

To Pinnock divine immanence was a call back to the experiential, the pietism of Evangelical faith: "It is quite possible that we are dealing, not so much with a failure of the intellect, as with a failure of experience, an alienation from the experiential roots of Christianity."[453]

His developing pietism led him to argue for both analysis and contemplation in undertaking the theological task: "The heart does not supply us with new information but leads to a deeper acquaintance with the divine mysteries and a finer sensitivity to their timeliness. . . . Let theologians observe times of silence in God's presence as the elders and the angels do in heaven'. Rev. 8:1."[454]

His belief that the Spirit is known by prayer as well as by study was again a direct challenge to conservative Evangelicals to practise a theology that was more than rational; it had to be experiential and transformational.[455] However, Pinnock did not reject the transcendent aspect of God completely; he knew that would leave him open to charges of being an Evangelical process theologian. To avoid this, Pinnock appealed both to the immanence and the transcendence in God. He wrote: "Most essentially, the Spirit of God

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[452] Grenz, and Olson, eds. *Twentieth Century Theology,* 169.
[453] Porter, and Cross, eds. *Semper Reformandum*, 259.
[454] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 13.
[455] W. A. Hoffecker, *Piety and the Princeton Theologians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981). Hoffecker, a Reformed historian has argued against the Princeton theologians and their followers as focusing solely on scholastic rigour at the expense of piety and devotional experience but nevertheless Reformed Calvinism has a distinct lack of warmth towards any spiritual experience.

is transcendent and divine, not mere flesh; it is the energy of life itself and is present in nature and in history."[456]

Nevertheless, Pinnock as a new Evangelical focused mainly on the immanent God and so he wrote at the conclusion of *Flame of Love*:

> The spiritual vitality so evident in Scripture is rare and thin in the religious circles I inhabit. The atmosphere is restrained and the style highly cognitive; expectations are rather low regarding the presence of the kingdom in power. I thirst to experience the reality of the Spirit in my heart and church. I am tired of spiritless Christianity with only rumours and occasional glimpses of wonder and signs.[457]

Another positive side effect of charismatic immanence upon Pinnock was that it helped him to understand change as a positive event, and not a sign weakness and of uncertainty. In contrast, conservative belief prided itself on its unchanging reformed heritage. His pneumatological approach helped him explore different ways in which the Spirit could help correlate God's Word and meet contemporary challenges.[458] Pinnock saw experientialism as an important part of the true faith: "It is important to experience the Spirit and reflect on our experience. . . . Knowing the Spirit is experiential . . . orientated toward transformation more than information. . . . Speaking about God is meaningful only if there is an encounter with God back of it."[459]

Pinnock located any genuine experience of God as an experience of the Holy Spirit. He described the person and role of the Holy Spirit at the conclusion of his book:

> We need to view the Spirit as the bond of love in the triune relationality, as the ecstasy of sheer life, overflowing into a significant creation and new creation, as the power of incarnation and atonement, as the power of new

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[456] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 14.
[457] Ibid, 24*f.*
[458] C. H. Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy: The Finality of Jesus Christ in a World of Religions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. 1992), 247.
[459] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 18.

> community and union with God, and as the power drawing the whole world into the truth of Jesus.[460]

Pinnock is arguing that the role of the Spirit is to help correlate God's word with the Christian struggle with modernity.[461] He argued that Christians should find God in relationships, culture and history rather than in any existential leap of faith: "We discover questions and insights in culture that lead to faith and that corroborate faith. The universe raises the questions of God's existence, and faith provides the answer."[462]

Of course an emphasis upon immanence has its own inherent dangers, not just of thinking like process thinkers but of being aware that experientialism always carries the risk of domesticating the Spirit to the point where God becomes subjective statements or as in the case of Christian liberalism, the Spirit becomes a principle of life; reducing the status of the term Christian to that of the good citizen.[463] Pinnock strongly disagreed with those theologies which denied the Spirit as anything other than an impersonal influence. Pinnock did not want to be associated with theological liberalism that avoided a Trinitarian theology.

To help achieve this goal, he debated for a theology of the third article in which the place of the Spirit arose from a tertiary role to a position of priority within the Godhead.

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[460] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 247.
[461] Ibid, 230.
[462] Porter, and Cross, eds. *Semper Reformandum,* 258.
[463] J. Visser, (2003) "The Holy Spirit & the Church in Modern Canadian Protestantism," in *Semper Reformandum,* eds. S. Porter, and A. Cross, 232-246.
In John Visser's contribution to Pinnock's festschrift he issued a challenge for theologians to consider this danger. His concern was that a focus just on divine immanence could lead to a vagueness regarding transcendent realities.

Pinnock quoted the Cappadocian Father Gregory of Nyssa: "He who draws the Spirit draws both the Son and the Father along with it."[464]

To Pinnock's understanding of the Spirit meant he no longer regarded the Spirit in a tertiary role within the divine hierarchy. He focused on the Spirit as the Lord of Creation. Pinnock writing on the creative role of the Spirit said that the Spirit was aptly named the *Lord and giver of life* in the Nicene Creed:

> The phrase calls us to think of Spirit as active in the world and history, especially in its development and consummation. The universe in its entirety is the field of its operations, which are so fundamental for Christology, ecclesiology, salvation and more . . . the Spirit is present everywhere, directing the universe towards its goal, bringing to completion first the creational and then the redemptive purposes of God.[465]

Pinnock's full doctrine of the Spirit emerged in 1996 as a book *Flame of Love – A Theology of the Holy Spirit.* His publisher called it his *magnum opus.* Carl E. Braaten from the Centre for Catholic and Evangelical theology wrote: "Here is a harvest of recent developments in theology – Spirit-Christology, Trinitarian doctrine, theosis-soteriology, sacramental spirituality, charismatic renewal and interreligious dialogue."[466]

Pinnock deals with the topics mentioned by Braaten but in very differently to the approach usually taken by Evangelicals and (surprisingly) Pentecostals. For instance, Pinnock's eclecticism, his ecumenical examples and his cultural, contextual contemporaneity are all to be found in the book. These were no mere anecdotes or examples to justify his theses; they were part of his theological enterprise.

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[464] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 33
[465] Ibid, 50.
[466] Ibid, Introduction.
It was received to much acclaim from such luminaries of Jürgen Moltmann, Donald Bloesch and fellow PCE Stanley Grenz and Roger Olson.

Until *Flame of Love* was written, Pentecostal and charismatic theologies had tended to reflect the conservative Evangelical style of scholastic systematic theologies, with the addition of such things as charismatic gifts and a section on the baptism in the Spirit. Pinnock took it from a very different perspective.

Pinnock wrote that his theology of the Spirit in *Flame of Love* was:

> A systematic theology of the Spirit . . . that is a doctrinal exploration seeking to discover fresh applications and insights . . . dipping into Catholic and Orthodox traditions in ways I had not done before . . . (drawing on) Evangelical values from the Reformation and experience of modern Evangelicalism, yet continuing a search for nondeterministic theology. Furthermore, it is charismatic in celebrating Pentecostalism . . .[467]

Pinnock became most comfortable within Pentecostal spirituality[468] although he remained a Baptist by denominational affiliation. In Pinnock's developing theology many of the features of Pentecostal spirituality became prominent.[469] Although it was true that Pinnock was drawn to many Christian sources in his search for an authentic contemporary voice of the Spirit, he was very much at ease in charismatic home groups, Pentecostal conferences and even at the controversial Toronto Airport Church where he was at times an invited speaker. However, Pinnock's quest was essentially theological not denominational.

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[467] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 18.

[468] V. Synan, *Aspects of Pentecostal-charismatic origins* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1975). This book by a Pentecostal historian gives a well researched account of the pietistic roots and sources of the twentieth century Pentecostal and charismatic movements.

[469] W. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (London: SCM Press, 1972), Part Two.
Also, W. J. Hollenweger, "After Twenty Years' research on Pentecostalism," in *International Review of Mission,* January 1986, 3-12.
Walter Hollenweger characterises the major features of Pentecostal spirituality as an orality of liturgy based on narrative of theology and witness. Hollenweger saw a maximum participation at all levels of prayer, reflection and decision making with an inclusion of dreams and visions into personal and public forms of worship by the corporate assembly not just a priesthood. Hollenweger added that there was also an understanding of the body/mind relationship that is formed by experiences of correspondence between body and mind. Pinnock did not castigate such features.

Pinnock seeks to develop a unique Spirit Christology that is set within a context of worship, pietism and charismatic theology.[470] Pinnock's theology of the Spirit was reflective of the twentieth century charismatic movement and he goes a long way to achieve a fresh understanding of divine, dynamic immanence.

However, within that divine immanence, Pinnock saw a Trinitarian functionality and relationality. To Pinnock God in the world was reflective of the ontological Trinitarian relationality which in turn meant a strong focus on divine Trinitarian community.

3:3 Pinnock's Pneumatology: Trinitarian Relationality and Perichoresis

Pinnock's understanding of the ontological Trinitarian relationality was expressed as perichoresis. Pinnock's pneumatology was greatly influenced by the Wesleyan and Eastern focus of the Spirit as 'the bond of love in triune relationality', and the subsequent drawing of all believers into a meaningful divine relationship. Pinnock explored how this divine relationality could help Christian theology be outworked in the contemporary cultural context. He concluded that since the Spirit was the agent of all relationship building that must include building relationships within the cultural setting. Pinnock wrote that theology must be faithful to revelation, yet must also speak about contemporary things. Doctrines, he argued, should be timely witnesses, not timeless abstractions.[471] He wanted to show how theology must hold to a Scripture principle and at the same time listens to what the Spirit is saying regarding everyday challenges.

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[470] Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, 232.
[471] Ibid, 215.

Millard Erickson understood what Pinnock was seeking to achieve and so he wrote: Pinnock strives to give a coherent statement of the doctrines of the Christian faith, based primarily upon the Scriptures, placed in the context of culture in general, worded in contemporary idiom, and related to issues of life.[472]

Pinnock actively pursued this goal, but he knew that he had to be careful not to let the theological context became subsumed to the cultural aspects.

Pinnock believed that to truly listen to the Spirit would lead to a greater understanding and affirmation of core Evangelical belief within society. He expressed the way in which the Spirit could change both the Church and society: "Pneumatology is the principle of an ecclesiology of a communion which assumes local cultures and initiatives into a unity, not of mere uniformity but of a coherent harmony."[473]

Pinnock called this change a transformation into Christlikeness. To think of salvation as a journey was a natural progression that followed on from his growing pietism. He could now write about soteriology from a pneumatological starting point:

> Salvation from the standpoint of the Spirit should be viewed in relational, affective terms. . . . The Reformers emphasized the sinner's change of status from guilty to not guilty rather than on personal union with God . . . salvation is multifaceted but the goal is glorification and union with God. . . . To think of salvation in this way is to recover what the early (Greek) theologians called *theosis*.[474]

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[472] M. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Pub, 1983), Vol.1, 31.
Erickson was at first taken with Pinnock's early reforms but as PCE evolved he became a trenchant critic particularly over PCE teaching on Scripture, God and Salvation.
[473] M. Dhavamony, (1995) "The Christian Theology of Inculturation," in *Studia Missionalia*, 44, 42. Quoted by Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism*, 3.
[474] Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, 49-50.

Pinnock's pietistic emphasis was now more concerned with how a person was in the process of relationship with God and man rather than with the individual assurance of sins forgiven.

Pinnock expressed the view that he was indebted to Eastern Orthodox theology in helping him rethink the pre-eminence of the penal substitutionary theory of the atonement[475] had been given in Western Christianity. He explored other models of atonement from the Eastern Church. These models made transformation central. Pinnock wrote:

> The penal theory may be wrong headed, yet something like it may be true. It is important to propose a correction but not an overcorrection. Like Eastern Orthodox theologians, I do not see humanity's relationship with God a primarily legal one or the atonement as primarily penal. . . . The Spirit's task in atonement is to form Christ in us and change us into His likeness.[476]

Here is a key to unlock Pinnock's later thinking. Pinnock changed his root metaphors to describe God; the focus was no longer on God the Judge but on Christ the Transformer. Ultimately Pinnock favoured Irenaeus recapitulation model of the atonement, with its emphasis on salvation as a reconciling act that was available through the participatory journey of Christ as the last Adam.[477]

Pinnock's biographer Callen observes that it was from 1985 onwards that Pinnock (through his Wesleyan influences) started to move towards Eastern Christianity. He felt that Pinnock was impressed with Orthodox theology because it was more a practical

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[475] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 153.
He was beginning to explore how atonement although a unique Christ event had universal application:

> Atonement is reconciliation and speaks to us of the loving relationality into which the Spirit is drawing people. Spirit is bringing us into intimacy with the Father through the Son, who is sharing His divine sonship with us. . . . That is what the church fathers meant when they said 'God became man, that man might become God'.

[476] Ibid, 106.
[477] C. Pinnock, (1998) "A Bridge and Some Points of Growth," in *Journal Pentecostal Theology,* 13, 52.

endeavour instead of a theoretical science, which Pinnock felt conservative Evangelicalism had become:[478] Pinnock's shift towards the Eastern mind was essentially by way of Wesleyanism. As his theological categories became more relational and dynamic and his pietism developed so his sympathy for the teaching themes of Eastern Orthodoxy grew.[479]

Nowhere was this more obvious than in Pinnock's understanding gained from the Orthodox and Wesleyan teaching on salvation, sanctification and the imago dei.

Pinnock was taken with that aspect of Orthodox belief that saw an emphasis upon God's grace as the empowering of humans to a more therapeutic holistic view of the Christian life. Pinnock's synergism meant that he held to a belief in genuine human free-will decision which was not influenced by any divine decree. It was Eastern orthodoxy that convinced Pinnock to reject any doctrine of grace that denied genuine human freedom.[480] Orthodox thinking confirmed his Arminian belief that salvation was an operation of both grace and the human will, working in a synergistic mutuality.[481] Pinnock placed great emphasis upon the unhindered power of individual choice.

But it was not just the divine/human relationship as understood by Orthodox that Pinnock was taken with. Orthodoxy opened his eyes to new aspects of the ontological Trinitarian relationships that could affect human relationships with the divine. Regarding Trinitarian relationality again Pinnock quoted from many of the Eastern Fathers:

> Ontological life with one another in relationship is God's own everlasting experience. It is God's nature to love eternally as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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[478] Callen, *JTR*, 83.
[479] Ibid, 142 n 38.
[480] See Chapter 4, Part 1.
[481] Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, 106.

> The giving and receiving of love goes within God's very being. God is a community, a relational and intersubjective reality. That is why God delights in family, friendships and in relationships in homes, in churches and in society. . . . The persons of the Trinity are what they are in relationships with each other . . . or, as the ancient image has it, the three persons of the Godhead are united in an exquisite and exuberant dance.[482]

The Trinitarian dance will be explored shortly but Pinnock believed that the recovery of Trinitarian relationality, in the form of a social analogy was an important rediscovery for the Church.

There were a number of key reasons for this. First of all, Pinnock believed it highlighted that God is divine and everlasting love and for such love to manifest it has to be *interdependent* and *not Unitarian*. Secondly, this meant to Pinnock an understanding of how God as a triune, loving community imparts that communal Trinitarian fellowship to believing people by the ministry of the Holy Spirit.[483]

A Trinitarian social analogy that drew people into the divine essence helped Pinnock understand Creation as a voluntary loving choice made by God to expand the divine community.[484] This explains why Pinnock (and PCE theologian) saw community

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[482] Pinnock, *The Holy Spirit*, 41.

[483] Ibid, 39.
This is one of the reasons Pinnock rejected process theology because he argued that process theology posited the necessity of creation for God to actualize Himself and to fight off loneliness. In other words it was not divine *love* but divine *need*. Pinnock dismissed such a trajectory and his book written as a dialogue with process theists records this.
Cobb Jr, and Pinnock, eds. *Searching for an adequate God.*

[484] Pinnock sums up his appreciation of the social analogy of Trinitarian relationality with reference to the Wesleyan Quadrilateral:

> It seems to me that the social Trinity makes a great deal of sense in relation to Scripture, tradition, experience and reason. I do not appreciate people saying how obscure and illogical the doctrine of the Trinity is.

Pinnock believed that theology need not be obscure and needed to be understood by non-specialists. In his understanding of the divine dance and the divine community he believed he had found a pragmatic model and motif that described Trinitarian relationality and the contemporary role and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

as a very important part of the divine plan.[485] The mutuality of relationships is a reflection of how much God values human fellowship. Pinnock spoke of how human and divine relationships "release the highest and the best, which egocentric pursuits don't allow for."[486] Pinnock also reflected on how a Trinitarian social analogy reflected his other pursuit, the balance between divine immanence and divine transcendence.

Trinitarian interdependence was expressed by Orthodox theology as the doctrine of *perichoresis.* Pinnock was taken with this teaching on perichoresis as an expression of relational ontology. He liked the description ascribed to John of Damascus of perichoresis being 'the divine relationship as the dance of Trinitarian life; a loving mutuality and relationship that belonged to the essence of God'.[487]

The emphasis though of perichoresis was not on the dancers but their intertwining actions[488]:

> It makes perfectly good grammatical sense to speak of a perichoresis of **movements,** though the theological tradition has referred to a perichoresis of divine subjects. . . . Dance was a widespread early image for the participation of all created being in God. Plotinus envisaged the cosmic dance . . . the never ending dance of the angels around the throne of God was, according to Basil the Great, a ring dance (choreia) . . .[489]

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[485] S. J .Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. 2000). So Grenz masterful book (which Pinnock endorsed) offers to PCE, a systematic theology of how the community of God should be an integrative faith community and not a collection of individuals:

[486] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 39. "The Holy Spirit as a Distinct Person."

[487] Ibid, 31.
Pinnock wrote that Gregory of Nazianzus (329-89) was the first to capture the mystery of triune life using the image of dance (perichoresis).
Although, according to Fiddes, historically, perichoresis was a description of the relationship which exists between the divine and human natures in Christ. He also argues that 'perichoresis' was not derived from 'perichoreo – to dance around' but that the Latin equivalent 'circumincessio' was applied as a metaphor to the Trinity during the Middle Ages to describe 'perichoresis' as a divine dance.
P. S. Fiddes, *Participating in God. A Pastoral Doctrine of the Trinity* (London: D. L. & T, 2000).

[488] Fiddes, *Participating in God,* 71.
Fiddes describes this as an encircling of each other, in an interweaving of ecstatic movements.

[489] Ibid, 73. (emphasis added).

Pinnock picks up on the theme of perichoresis and speaks of the Trinitarian fellowship as the inter-Trinitarian dance which overflows in love to all creation: One might think of Spirit as choreography the dance of creation by analogy to what he does in the fellowship of the sublime Trinity.[490]

Pinnock goes on to speak of all to speak of all creation joining in the dance, together reflecting God's triune love. Pinnock summed up his understanding of perichoresis as:

> God's self-expression is free and playful. Ontologically distinct, God enters into the world and received pleasure and derives value from it. The joy comes from the love of the Trinitarian community now echoed in a world capable of interpersonal love. God's purpose was to have creatures in His image with whom He could be united in love. . . . Creation has value for both God and humanity in a dialectical way . . .[491]

Pinnock's emphasis on divine unity overflowing into creation is an important feature for understanding his emphasis on the power within the community of faith. The communal connection between the divine and the community of faith becomes a central feature of PCE thinking: "As we live in fellowship with God, each other and our environment – as we live as community – we show what God is like."[492]

Trinitarian relationality to Pinnock meant that a shared life was basic to the nature of God: "God is perfect sociality, mutuality, reciprocity and peace. As a circle of loving relationships, God is dynamically alive." The goal for believers was to join in and reflect the dance of Trinitarian life.

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[490] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 56.
[491] Ibid, 57.
[492] S. J. Grenz, *Created for Community connecting Christian Belief with Christian Living,* 2nd edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004), 298.

Pinnock saw a weakness in classical, Western understanding of the doctrine of God which analysed God apart from the Trinity and thereby lost sight of the Trinitarian relationality. Callen wrote that in *Flame of Love,* Pinnock in his systematic theology discussed the church before the subject of soteriology, because of this conviction that Christian formation occurs fundamentally in divine community outworked within the life of the church. Pinnock believed that the church was a communal event in the ongoing history of the Spirit's ministry.[493]

To Pinnock Trinitarian inter-subjectivity, mutuality and reciprocity became what he called the 'divine consciousness'.[494] From this understanding of divine consciousness Pinnock developed his Spirit hermeneutic. This Spirit hermeneutic had a specific goal in mind:

> I invite us to view Spirit as the bond of love in triune relationality, as the ecstasy of sheer life overflowing into a significant creation, as the power of creation and new creation, as the power of incarnation and atonement, as the power of a new community and union with God, and as the power drawing the whole world into the truth of Jesus.[495]

Pinnock challenged Evangelicals to resist simply understanding Christianity as a personal ideal of life. To Pinnock, true Christianity was much more than that; it was a drawing into the divine life of a triune God in fellowship with the community of faith.[496] However, perichoresis and the drawing into the divine essence was only a part of an even bigger process known as theosis.

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[493] Callen, *JTR,* 133.
[494] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 36.
[495] Ibid, 247.
[496] C. Pinnock, (1994) "The Holy Spirit as a Distinct Person in the Godhead," in *Spirit and Renewal: Essays in honour of J. Rodman Williams*, ed. M. Wilson, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press), 34-41.

3:4 Pinnock's Pneumatology: The transformational and sanctifying work of the Spirit-Theosis

This drawing into God as a participatory journey was called by Orthodox Christianity *theosis.* After looking at Pinnock's understanding of divine immanence, and then his understanding of Trinitarian relationality expressed in perichoresis, the third aspect of Pinnock's pneumatology which is now explored is his interpretation of theosis as the spiritual journey.

Pinnock's theological enterprise was indebted to both Orthodoxy and Evangelical Wesleyanism. In researching the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification, Pinnock was drawn into those Eastern Orthodox theologians whose doctrine of theosis helped Wesley formulate his understanding of sanctification.[497] Theosis is virtually a facsimile of Wesley's *grand depositum*, or his doctrine of sanctification. The Methodist scholar Randy Maddox concluded that the closest resemblance between Orthodoxy and Wesley lies 'in their respective doctrines of deification and salvation.'[498] The Methodist theologian Randy Maddox wrote in Pinnock's biography that: "Pinnock was part of the Arminian wing of Evangelicalism which appreciated the distinctive theological emphasis of Eastern Christianity."[499]

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[497] Evangelical Alliance ACUTE Commission, (2001) *Evangelicals and the Orthodox Church.*
S. N. Gundry, ed. *Three Views on Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Pub, 2004).
D. B. Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Christianity: A Western Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994).
S. T. Kimbrough Jr, *Orthodox and Wesleyan Spirituality* (New York: St. Vladimir's Press, 2002).
Over recent years a growing number of researchers, particularly American Wesleyan scholars, have acknowledged the links between Wesleyan Evangelical Arminianism and Eastern Orthodox theology. Although Pinnock was drawn to *theosis* and *perichoresis* there are other features which Wesleyan theology drew from as well such as the hesychast tradition.

[498] R. Maddox, (1990) "John Wesley and Eastern Orthodoxy," in *Asbury Theological Journal,* 45:2, 39. Pinnock's interpretation of the doctrine of theosis is discussed in detail in 3:3.

[499] Kimbrough, ed. *Orthodox and Wesleyan Spirituality,* 39.

An Orthodox priest Fr. Thomas Hopko also commented on the link between Orthodox and Wesleyan spirituality:

> Neither Orthodoxy nor Methodism is Augustinian in the essential ways Lutheranism and Calvinism are. Neither Methodism nor Orthodoxy has been influenced by Augustine's writings. Neither has a tradition of scholastic theology . . . both had a synergistic understanding of human co-operation with divine grace.[500]

Pinnock's theology fits perfectly into this description – synergistic, non-Augustinian and non-scholastic. It is quite accurate to say that the doctrine of theosis correlated well with Pinnock's doctrine of sanctification. Pinnock wrote: One aspect of sanctification is maturing believers as hearers of the Word of God . . . not as isolated individuals but as members of the community of God. "Let us cast aside rigidity and that 'know-it-all attitude' and open ourselves to more light that God can shed on His Word and the human situation."[501]

So Pinnock gave prominence to sanctification in the *ordo salutus.* His earlier Reformed Calvinist position gave priority to individual soteriological justification. To conservative Evangelical thinking; *justification* is located at the beginning of the *ordo salutus* and is directly linked to a judicial model of the atonement.[502] However, Pinnock is very clear that he is no longer looking for justification as the starting point for growth in spiritual maturity. He is embracing a new motif for salvation one which sees salvation as an ongoing sanctifying journey through life. An important Arminian nuance must be

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[500] Kimbrough, ed. *Orthodox and Wesleyan Spirituality,* Foreword.
[501] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 218.
[502] T. Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1963), 56.
Essentially this debate between justification and sanctification is the difference between the Greek and Latin approaches. Latin (Western) more juridical influenced by concepts of Roman Law and Greeks (Eastern) understood theology more influenced by worship and liturgy. The Latin emphasis is that of Christ the Victim and the Greek emphasis is on Christ the Victor. The Latin's emphasis was on redemption and the Greek emphasis was on deification (theosis).

added to this and that was the belief that salvation was no longer assured solely on the grounds of justification, but was conditional upon continuing the salvific journey towards union with God.[503]

However, there was a subtle difference between Orthodox theosis and Wesleyan sanctification. Sanctification as interpreted by Wesleyan Arminians placed an emphasis upon the spiritual transformation here on this earth. On the other hand, the Orthodox doctrine of theosis placed its emphasis on a later post-mortem work of transformation, even assimilation into Christlikeness.[504] Nevertheless, both Evangelical Arminians and Orthodox theologians place deification as the ultimate goal of the Christian life.

As such concepts as theosis were formulating in his mind, Pinnock changed his root for metaphor God. His emphasis was now on God as the loving, reconciling Father. He found his new motif best expressed by the parable of the prodigal son. To Pinnock the story of journey and forgiveness was about the relationship between God and people; a journey of love, reconciliation and friendship. This inspired him to write about theosis: "The Spirit summons us to a transforming friendship with God that leads us to sharing in the triune life. This divine work characterizes the last days before the new creation. To

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[503] Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 224.
It needs to be noted that a key feature of difference between Calvinist and Arminian thinking is that Calvinism places an emphasis on predestination with the consequence that salvation can never be lost. On the other hand Arminians believe it is only as the spiritual journey continues that salvation is secure.
[504] The Orthodox Fathers differentiated between *image* and *likeness*. Image (John of Damascus) indicated rationality and freedom whilst likeness indicated assimilation to God. Image related to human free will, reason and moral responsibility but image refers to humans as God's offspring with a unique contact point or communion with the Creator. Proper use of this communion makes a human 'like' God – a god by grace, "I said you are gods and sons of the Most High," Psalm 81:6.

think of salvation in this way is to recover what the early theologians called *theosis*, a participation in the divine nature."[505]

From this time onwards journey to union with God became a prominent theme in his writings. Pinnock acknowledged that sanctification leading to deification was not a transformation into God's *essence* but a union with *divine energies* (or divine will).[506] In contrast to process thinking, Pinnock's theosis believed that the divine-human union was a union that believed in the retention of individual uniqueness, whilst still becoming part of the divine likeness. Here, again Pinnock reflected the Orthodox view of the Trinity that although God's essence was ultimately a divine mystery, it was nevertheless a mystery of unity in diversity.[507]

More important, Pinnock now understood that the redemption of humanity was part of that diversity that was one day going to become part of the divine unity. Pinnock incorporated this aspect of theosis into his later Inclusivism. This helped Pinnock try to circumnavigate the thorny issue of the uniqueness and necessity of Christ alone for salvation.[508] However, at the time of writing *Flame of Love* (1996) Pinnock still believed that it was *only* in union with Christ through belief in His unique death and resurrection that the participatory journey to God could take place.

This divine-human union although not an ontology of essence was still a true divine-human partnership which Pinnock described as a perichoretic, a Trinitarian dance

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[505] Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, 150.
[506] Ibid, 154.
Pinnock is clear that theosis or divinization is neither pantheism nor panentheism because it is a union in which the distinction between Creator and creature is maintained.
[507] Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 237.
[508] See Chapter 4 part 2.

with believers as adopted partners in the eternal dance.[509] Pinnock rejected any predetermined doctrine that did not involve ongoing change. To him his theology of the Spirit was an exhortation for the community of faith to continue in a lifelong, sanctifying journey of transformation:[510] When we start with the Father, we dwell on the Creator and ground of all being. When we start with the Son, we dwell on the Saviour and Messiah. When we begin with the Spirit, we dwell on the power that transforms human life.[511]

To Pinnock his *ordo salutis* was ultimately a transforming journey into the divine likeness Orthodoxy and Wesleyan Arminianism helped him rethink about the immanent presence of God as a *creatio continua;* the Spirit 'continually creating and ceaselessly active in all aspects of life'. To Pinnock, divine relationality expressed in perichoresis and in the sanctifying, transformational work of theosis[512] was the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit which his theology of the Spirit sought to articulate.

3:5 Pinnock's Pneumatology: A constructive Trinitarian theology

Pinnock's final articulation of his theology of the Spirit is found in his book *Flame of Love.* This was a constructive, Trinitarian systematic theology starting from a pneumatological perspective. However, it is important to note that whilst *Flame of Love*

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[509] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 154.
See 3:
[510] Ibid, 156.
[511] C. Pinnock, (2004) "The Recovery of the Holy Spirit in Evangelical Theology," in *Journal of Pentecostal Theology,* Vol.13, No.1, 6.
[512] Both the divine transcendence and divine immanence affirmed the distinction between the essence and energies of God. The Orthodox Church endorsed this doctrine in councils at Constantinople in 1341, 1351 and 1368.
Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Christianity,* 69.
Pinnock also found in Orthodox apophatic approach to the ontological essence of God a satisfying answer to the divine dichotomy of transcendence and immanence. He liked the Orthodox approach that found agreement between the transcendent unknowableness of the Godhead and the hesychastic understanding of the revealed will or energies of God.

expressed Pinnock's pneumatological journey, it was neither a classic Pentecostal nor a charismatic systematic theology and it did not follow their methodology. It was Terry Cross (a Pentecostal professor) who aptly first called Pinnock's Spirit theology a *constructive* theology – in that it built a doctrine which is essentially a Trinitarian, pietistic theology of the Spirit.

Cross concluded that Pinnock's pneumatology provided a bridge, not a dichotomy between the mind and the heart. He endorsed Pinnock's view on pietism which asked the question about the lack of spirituality and prayer in both academia and the Church: "Spirit was not primarily an intellectual belief for early Christians but a dynamic fact of experience. . . . Christianity is not a religion of intellectual reflection with little affective impact."[513]

Pinnock sought to show that truth was not a noetic, narrow view of reason promulgated in the academy but devoid of faith and prayer.[514] Pinnock's constructive, Trinitarian theology elevated both the theory and the praxis of pneumatology within an Evangelical setting.

One recurring Evangelical emphasis Pinnock makes is that it is only through an individual and personal encounter with the Lord that the spiritual journey begins.[515]

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[513] T. Cross, (1998) "A Critical Review of Clark Pinnock's "Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit," in *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, Issue 13.
[514] Cross, *JPT*, 27*f*.
[515] Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, 226.
The core belief of Pinnock's 'new Evangelicalism' was that any person could have a genuine encounter with the living God through Jesus Christ:

> Revelation is neither human transformation alone nor belief in a set of propositions on a variety of topics (*i.e. conservative Evangelicalism*). It is our introduction *to a Person* . . .

Pinnock was seeking a dialectical encounter between the objective pole of head knowledge and the subjective pole of a heart encounter.

Pinnock's pneumatology was increasingly distancing itself from the Western Augustinianism of Reformed Evangelicalism. By 1996, along with the promulgation of his new theology of the Holy Spirit, Pinnock was inexorably demolishing the Augustinian model. His radical Open Theism was built antithetically against key points of Augustinian theology.[516]

3:6 Pinnock's Pneumatology: A summary

Pinnock's constructive Trinitarian theology is an excellent contemporary theology of the Holy Spirit. It was rightly called his *magnum opus* and its emphasis and trajectory elevated the role and ministry of the Spirit from a tertiary and impersonal level to a place of equality and uniqueness of function within the Trinity.

To Pinnock, the role of the Holy Spirit is to be found in the transformation of believers into the image of God. To explain this process of divinization Pinnock went beyond his Evangelical Arminian teaching on sanctification and drew upon their original sources which were mainly adapted from Eastern Orthodox Christian belief. In particular this thesis argues that Pinnock drew up the key Orthodox doctrines of divine immanence and relationality expressed as *perichoresis* and the sanctifying and transformational ministry of the Spirit in *theosis.*

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[516] See Chapter 4.

Pinnock found in the charismatic movement of the later twentieth century an expression of the Holy Spirit which ideally suited his growing pneumatological articulation. Although Pinnock saw limitations within the theology of the charismatics and Pentecostals, he wrote that his ideas were less valued among Evangelicals than they were among Pentecostals.[517]

Pinnock embraced an experiential, charismatic Pietism which he had developed from an Evangelical Arminian starting point and made it a stated goal. In his theology of the Spirit Pinnock wrote of the experience of a dynamic, transforming Spirit and he commented in *Flame of Love* on how his own encounters with the Spirit helped equip him for this particular theological odyssey: "This book reflects my faith journey . . . I thirst to experience the reality of Spirit in my heart and church. I am tired of a spiritless Christianity with only rumours and occasional glimpses of wonders and signs. . . . I hope the book helps people to grow in understanding the Spirit."[518]

Pinnock's constructive pneumatology (as it was appropriately termed)[519] is a very good theology of the Spirit. Although it struggled to combine the devotional and academic aspects, it is well ahead compared to other contemporary works of that genre.

Pinnock held to a belief in the Godhead as pure relationality which wants to bring all of creation into an eternal dance of love.[520] Ultimately, Pinnock's theology was a

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[517] C. Pinnock, (1998) "A Bridge and Some Point of growth: A Reply to Cross and Macchi," in *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, 13, 49.
[518] Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, 247*f*.
[519] See 3:4.
[520] F. Macchia, (1998) "Tradition and the Novum of the Spirit: Review of C. Pinnock's Flame of Love," in *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, 13, 31-48.

theology from below; a Spirit Christology that placed its emphasis upon the social and cultural elements of Christ's identity and mission.

Pinnock acknowledged his indebtedness to Pannenberg and Moltmann who along with the Wesleyan and Orthodox influences, gave him new insights into the cosmic dimensions of the Spirit.[521] Through a cosmic or universal approach to the Spirit Pinnock gained a much wider understanding of the Spirit's operations in creation and history, not confining pneumatology to the church and its community.

In the following Chapter Four I will show how this universal operation of the Spirit was interpreted by Pinnock in further unrestrictive ways which consolidated into Open Theism, the climax to his theological enterprise. Nevertheless, Pinnock's theology of the Holy Spirit was a remarkable and stimulating pneumatological approach to contemporary Trinitarian theology.

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[521] C. Pinnock, (1998) "A Bridge and Some Points of Growth," in *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, 13, 51. Pinnock wrote:

> It was Pannenberg who first convinced me of this foundational truth and Moltmann has reminded me of it in so many of his writings.

Chapter Four

PART 1

PART 2

Chapter Four

PART ONE

4:1 Pinnock's Openness Theology – Precursors

In this chapter, the climax to Pinnock's theological enterprise known as Open Theism is analysed and assessed. Open Theism is the final expression of Pinnock's theology, and the previous chapters have looked at the theological foundations upon which Open Theism is built. Pinnock was far more flexible and open in his thinking than Evangelicalism usually allowed for, particularly as he moved beyond Arminianism and developed his pneumatology.

In exploring Open Theism and assessing its theology, I will look at its key areas in two distinct, but allied parts. In the first part, I will look at the precursors which made up the building blocks of Pinnock's Openness epistemology and his theological enterprise. In the second part of this chapter, I will review the subsequent developments of Pinnock's theology- namely his Inclusivism and his views on Conditional Immortality (annihilationism). These aspects have been chosen because they have proven to be the most controversial issues within the Evangelical community.

Essentially, Open Theism is Pinnock's revised doctrine of God.[522] I will be looking in Part One at the pertinent aspects of Pinnock's doctrine of God that most differ from the traditional and earlier, Evangelical paradigms which are:

1. A rejection of an Augustinian worldview

[522] Pinnock defined the doctrine of God as 'a distillation of what we believe God has told us about Himself in the Bible'. He did not believe the Bible presented a systematic doctrine of God but he did believe it provided the building blocks for such a doctrine to emerge.

2. A rejection of traditional Evangelical understanding of divine omniscience
3. A rejection of an emphasis upon divine monergism in the free will debate.

From around 1980, Pinnock's increasing synergism meant that he began to consider a greater role and dynamic for the human partner in the ordo salutis. In fact (in a critical paper) John Tangelder, a Reformed scholar, argued that: 'Pinnock placed a greater emphasis on the humanness of Scripture and the work of the Holy Spirit'.[523]

Although Tangelder meant this as a criticism it was a truism that Pinnock would have agreed with. Cultural relevance, the humanness of Scripture and the work of the Holy Spirit were the distinctives of his 'new Evangelicalism' which became the foundational beliefs for his Open Theism.

As Pinnock grew in his conviction that the role of the Spirit in the church and the world (Creation) had been seriously underplayed, he began to reconsider what it meant for humans to have a real relationship with a transcendent God.[524] It was only through exploring what such a synergistic partnership meant that Pinnock's free will theism or Openness theology was articulated. He expressed his doctrine of God as both a criticism of classic Christian theism and also as a criticism of the 'earthbound gods of modern thought'.[525] Pinnock wanted Evangelicals to know that his critics were wrong, and that he did draw a line as to how much of modern theological thought he was willing to take on board.

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[523] J. Tangelder, (2002) "The Teaching of Clark Pinnock." Available from http://*www.banneroftruth.co.uk/articles*.
Tangelder was a Reformed Missionary in the Philippines.
[524] Callen, *JTR*, 136.
Pinnock did realize that to reject an extreme divine transcendence meant he had to be careful not to endorse a radical immanence - which he acknowledged (here) was the weakness of most process theologies.
[525] Callen, *JTR*, 139.

The whole issue of what human freedom meant became key in Pinnock's thinking. He was persuaded that there was a genuine two-way relationship between a transcendent God and humanity. If there was no free and open relationship, then the logic of Reformed predetermined divine choice must prevail. However, Pinnock was convinced that the biblical account showed there was genuine freedom of the will. He furthered this belief with an understanding of prevenient grace as salvific and universally available for all people[526] not just an elect or predestined group. This post-Arminian approach was to have a profound effect upon his thinking. The confluences of the divine and the human radically altered his Evangelical views on divine election and free will. Pinnock recorded how he had wrestled with the divine-human dichotomy for a long time. His conclusion was, a 'determinist kind of theology that subordinates God's love to the ideal of absolute power' was harmful and unpleasant, with theoretical and practical consequences.[527] Pinnock acknowledged how the New Testament scholar and British Methodist I. Howard Marshall's first book was a very important influence upon him in the divine-human debate.[528]

Pinnock also acknowledged that whilst he was teaching on the book of Hebrews early in his career, he found his Calvinist views on 'the perseverance of the saints changing'.[529] He concluded that whilst he embraced Augustinian Calvinism, he had

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[526]See Chapter 1:6 of this thesis.

[527] Pinnock, ed. *The Grace of God,* xi.
This book was a collection of essays from different Arminian perspectives and it is interesting to see how many of the views expressed here in this early work (1989) gradually made their way into Pinnock's theology.

[528] I. Howard Marshall, *Kept By The Power of God: A Study of Perseverance and Falling Away* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1969).

[529] Pinnock, ed. *The Grace of God,* 17.
Pinnock stated that this took place around the 1970's whilst he was teaching at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

neglected the biblical account of the dimension of reciprocity and conditionality. By 1990 he concluded that thinking in a deterministic, predestinarian way had taken away from genuine human freedom and responsibility.

Pinnock therefore decided to leave 'tight system of deterministic theology'[530] and replace it with a theology that 'presented the gospel in exciting and effective new ways'.[531] Pinnock wrote that he could only have come to this conclusion and advocate such a transition because of his new pneumatological understanding:

> . . . Spirit is the bond of love in the triune relationality, the ecstasy of sheer life overflowing into a significant creation, as the power of creation and new creation, as the power of incarnation and atonement, as the power of new community and union with God, and as the power drawing the whole world into the truth of Jesus.[532]

Ecstasy of life, and power within community were not expressions used by conservative Reformed Calvinists. Understanding reciprocity and mutuality in the divine-human drama became key features in Pinnock's defence of his revised doctrine of God. Pinnock finally articulated his Open Theism in his book *Most Moved Mover* (2001).[533] In this book Pinnock debated the whole concept of omniscience. He argued that God does not know the future exhaustively and infallibly. Pinnock felt his Open Theism was an extension of his doctrine of the Spirit. Pinnock believed his Open Theism enabled him:

> . . . to draw a 'metaphysics of love' from the biblical narrative of God's covenant relationship with the world and interprets it as pointing ineluctably to God's self-limiting power and knowledge . . . interpreting biblical statements about God's unchanging nature. . . . In the light of the powerful biblical drama of God's interactive relationship. . . . God changes His mind, repents or relents, is surprised and even grieves in that unfolding, dynamic relationship.[534]

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[530] Callen, *JTR*, 211.
[531] Ibid, 211.
[532] Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, 247.
[533] Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover*.
[534] Olsen, *Reformed and Always Reforming*, 177.

Pinnock was offering no small nuance to Evangelical thinking. He was pushing back the boundaries of Evangelicalism so much, that even a number of post-conservative Evangelicals began to feel uncomfortable with his trajectory.[535] PCE and Open Theists were no longer synonymous.

4:2 Pinnock's Openness Theology: A rejection of the Hellenistic Influences of an Augustinian worldview, particularly regarding Time and the Divine Attributes

Pinnock ended his academic career as Professor of Systematic Theology.[536] Historically written, systematic theology usually commences with the doctrine of God. Daniel Strange marked the year 1986 as the transition point in Pinnock's doctrine of God. Strange wrote:

> . . . it was in this year (1986) that he began to publish material explicitly on the doctrine of God, the first essay being 'God limits His knowledge'. . . . Pinnock's metaphors of God now revolved around the ideas of a loving parent and a personal relational God who was involved in reciprocal 'give and take' relationship with His creatures.[537]

Pinnock wrote that by the 1980s he had to rethink the doctrine of God, particularly in the area of the divine attributes.[538] Pinnock felt strongly about the negative influence of Greek philosophy upon conservative Evangelical Christian theology. The first chapter of his book the *Most Moved Mover* (which was Pinnock's magnum opus on Openness Theology) was entitled 'Overcoming a Pagan Inheritance'.[539]

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[535] Olsen, *Reformed and Always Reforming,* 176.
[536] At McMaster Divinity College, a key Baptist institution in Hamilton, Ontario.
[537] Gray, Sinkinson, eds. *Reconstructing Theology,* 9 n 32.
Strange comments that it was in 1986 that Pinnock 'went public' and published an article entitled "God limits His knowledge".
[538] Pinnock, ed. *The Grace of God and the Will of Man,* 23.
See also section 4:3.
[539] Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover,* Chapter 2 "Overcoming a Pagan Inheritance."
This theme of this chapter is so important to Pinnock that virtually one quarter of the book covers this aspect.

Pinnock stated that he had become troubled by the influence of Greek philosophy upon Augustine and the subsequent model it provided for Christian theism. He wrote that the Hellenistic emphasis upon the Deity as timeless, changeless, passionless, unmoved and unmoveable was not the Hebraic biblical picture. He understood the biblical model as portraying a dynamic, interactive and personal God.[540] Pinnock became uncomfortable with what he saw as the excessive accommodation within classical theism towards Hellenistic culture, at the expense of the biblical account. To him, the Hellenistic influence offered a negative view of historical change with concepts such as pure actuality, timelessness and changelessness negating the value of history.[541]

Pinnock began to address this problem by deconstructing those aspects of Augustinian thinking he considered overly dependent upon Hellenistic thinking. First of all, he looked at the concept of divine immutability and its Platonic background. His conclusion was: "The God of the Bible is relational and changeable in His interaction with His creatures. The Word 'became' flesh – praise God for His unchanging changeability!"[542]

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[540] Pinnock, ed. *The Grace of God,* 23*f.*
Initially Pinnock referred to his new doctrine as Free Will Theism but soon the debate expanded to the nature and the attributes of God. He pinpointed the time that he seriously began to rethink the concept of the divine attributes to the early 1980's. He had begun his career by winning scholarships to both Harvard and a British Commonwealth university for the quality of his work on Ancient Near East studies. Such a foundation made him acutely aware of the influence of Greek philosophy and its difference to the account. He said that he realized that the biblical account showed how God had made creatures with relative autonomy and he became aware that he could not reconcile that fact with the remoteness of the divine nature according to Christian theology influenced by the classical Greek way of thinking.
[541] Pinnock, ed. *The Grace of God,* 24.
To Pinnock the Greek world had a negative view of historical change and the passage of time and therefore conceptualized deity in non-dynamic language.
[542] Ibid, 24.
Pinnock felt that the Platonic idea that a perfect divine being would not need to change had left the church a legacy in which God was understood as being incapable of emotional responsiveness. The created can respond to the Creator but not the other way around. In particular as Pinnock's charismatic pietism developed so his growing awareness of the divine human interaction increased.

Building on what he saw as the changeability of God according to the biblical account, Pinnock then began to explore the Augustinian concept of God as timeless. He wrote that he had been well aware of philosophical objections to a timeless deity, but now he had come to realize "how strongly the Bible itself speaks of God as operating from within time and history."[543]

Inevitably this issue became contentious. Pinnock's critics made a very good case against him, insomuch as he appeared to confine God within time, and did not focus on the deity who was above and beyond time.[544] Paul Helm was probably the most convincing critic to expose this weakness in the Openness debate.[545] He defended the traditional view that God is atemporal; absolutely timeless and is completely independent of the existence and nature of the universe. Helm accused Open theists of trying to contain God within time. Helm makes a cogent argument that the fullness of God's life makes timelessness the most appropriate mode of His being.

It does appear that for Pinnock's arguments to be most effective, God has to be contained within time. Such a position gives a contradictory understanding of God as the One who created both the universe and time itself. Even Pinnock's emphasis on synergism is time bound and necessitates a form of equivalence between God and

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[543] Callen, *JTR*, 241.
Pinnock believed that the God of the Bible is one who can look back to the past, relate to the present as present, and make plans for what is yet to happen. On this basis he felt that to portray God as a timeless deity did not make a lot of sense. He wrote extensively on this in an afterword to his biography.
[544] G. E. Ganssle, ed. *Four Views: God & Time* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2001).
J. K. Beilby, and P. R. Eddy, *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2001).
This aspect of the debate is well covered in two books. Most of the contributors but not all are not sympathetic towards Pinnock's view of time:
[545] Ganssle, ed. *Four Views: God & Time*, 28*ff*.
Helm writes on the rationale for a timeless eternity which is based on the idea of divine fullness or self-sufficiency. A belief in divine temporality leaves God subject to the vicissitudes of temporal life and that is incompatible with divine sovereignty. Open Theism does confine God with time bound restraints and does not emphasize Him as the 'High and lofty One who inhabits eternity' Isaiah 57:15.

humanity. Pinnock's reductionism and use of anthropomorphisms often portray God and humanity in equivalence.

However, Helm does concede that the language of atemporality (which he referred to as eternalism) was indebted to neo-Platonic thought:

> It may be that the conceptual apparatus of eternalism owes much to the language of Neo-Platonism; it is undoubtedly true that the classical formulas of orthodoxy owe much to the language of Greek metaphysics. . . . But it would be hasty to suppose that the use of such language signals a takeover of biblical ideas by pagan ideas[546]

Those who focused on divine a temporality wanted to highlight that even the language of the Bible was limited when it spoke of such issues as ontology, or the metaphysics of eternal realities. Their fear was that Pinnock and the Open theists were too dependent upon human language as a means to an end. This was quite an irony, the conservatives were talking about the limits of the biblical text and Pinnock was developing a theology which needed a literalness of interpretation.

Soon other aspects of God and time began to challenge Pinnock - in particular how much God knows about future events. He reasoned that if God granted genuine free will to his creation, then future decisions were unknown even to God Himself. He acknowledged that traditional teaching on omniscience was often of great magnitude and achievement, but Pinnock believed it was ultimately limited. He debated that it was limited because it held to Greek presuppositions such as unchangeability and unconditionedness. Pinnock argued that such an innate bias led to fresh biblical thinking on genuine human freedom being stifled.

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[546] Ganssle, ed. *Four Views: God & Time,* 32.

In reality, Open Theism did not teach about an omniscient God, it taught of a *seminiscient* God to whom the future is partly known and partly unknown.[547] I believe the term seminiscient does seem an appropriate description of the Open Theism position. Pinnock's understanding of omniscience meant he saw divine knowledge as present knowledge but not exhaustive foreknowledge. To him the future will include undecided human choices and undecided divine response.[548]

Pinnock argued that in its desire to interact within the environment, the early church synthesized with many of the Greek thinkers. This was compounded by the fact that the early church wanted to distance itself from its Jewish roots and its Hebraic ethos. Pinnock's summation of early church history was that the Church ended up with a world view that saw God more as the Unmoved Mover of Aristotle, rather than as Jesus, the One moved with compassion by human weaknesses and sorrows. Pinnock believed that the correct biblical hermeneutic was an affirmation that the biblical God was personally involved in history and dynamically interactive in the life of His creatures and creation.

To Pinnock a God who was seen as both transcendent and separate from the world, accredited with divine attributes such as impassibility and immutability, was more akin to Hellenistic pagan and philosophical notions of *apatheia*.

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[547] Gray, Sinkinson, eds. *Reconstructing Theology*, 142.
The description of Open Theism as *seminiscient* was first introduced by Timothy George in a paper 'What God knows' presented to the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) of America. George is a prominent Evangelical theologian who is also the executive director of the influential magazine *Christianity Today*. George was not sympathetic towards Open Theism and the term was used in a negative way. However, it is true to say that *seminiscient* is something of a misnomer because Open Theism does not deny that God has a knowledge of the future and can accommodate any course of action made by the choice of people. Open Theism argues that if decisions have not been made then how can they be accused of not believing God has future knowledge. Open Theism has more of a focus on the nature of God's genuine real time relationships rather than on God's knowledge of future events. However, in the sense that the future is partly known and partly unknown according to Open Theism, I will continue to use the term *seminiscient* as an objective description not as a derogatory term.
[548] Pinnock, ed. *The Grace of God*, 26.

Pinnock did believe a solution to the problem could be found by changing the root metaphor for God. Pinnock challenged conservative Evangelicals to rethink their basic metaphor for God in the light of the fact that the God of the Scriptures was knowable, relational and not self-enclosed or distanced from human activities.[549]

Pinnock became quite anti-Augustinian. He felt that Augustine was the major theologian responsible for too many Greek presuppositions being introduced into Christian theology. Pinnock reasoned in a non-Augustinian way regarding the immanency of God. To Pinnock, in order for God to grant genuine human freedom, He placed a voluntary limitation upon Himself and His future knowledge. This was important to Pinnock's thinking, because he believed that whenever human action occurred God responded without any divine pre-determined plan.[550] Pinnock was convinced that if God's foreknowledge meant He knew every future human decision beforehand, then such knowledge would negate genuine free will.

Pinnock commented that deep inside of people there was an almost ontological resonance with knowledge of God as loving and relational not impassable. Pinnock argued that this innate spirituality was suppressed when the likes of Augustine imported pagan concepts into the biblical model: "Loving mutuality and response belong to the

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[549] Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover*, 76.
Pinnock was convinced that impassibility was the Achilles heel of conventional thinking, writing that to Reformed thinking God was either perfect or passible; to Open theists He was both perfect and changeable

[550] D. Basinger, and R. Basinger, eds. *Predestination and Free Will, Four Views of Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1986), 151.
Pinnock argues that the Bible presents God as the superior power who does not cling to any right to dominate but steps back to give the creatures room to make their own free will decisions. He lived out the role of a servant and gives human beings the ability to make choices and subsequently God makes decisions in the light of the human action. He was clear that God was able to deal with any contingency and that no matter what decision was made nothing could possibly defeat or destroy God.

essence of God. In recognising this, theology makes explicit what the heart has always known."[551]

So Pinnock called for a rejection of the attributes of divinity that were based on a Greek model of remoteness and transcendence. To Pinnock an image of a remote immutable God was far from the biblical God. Pinnock did not see this mutable changeableness within God as either as a portrayal of God as weak or even capricious but simply as a further expression of God's voluntary self-limitation.

Pinnock regarded the divine attribute of impassibility as another important example axiom of Platonic thinking that had encroached onto the Christian agenda. Pinnock defined impassibility as the inability of God to be unable to experience sadness, pain or even love. However, to Pinnock it was a total contradiction to hold a view of divine impassibility and then argue that God is love or Christ suffered for our sins.[552] He argued that it was a mystery as to how one can say that God *acts* and *feels* in response to different situations, if by His essence He is impassible. He was stating that on the grounds of impassibility it is impossible for God to causes everything, know everything and feel everything.

Pinnock wrote: "One cannot just introduce a dynamic and relational feature into the doctrine of God without reconsidering undynamic and unrelational features of it like

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[551] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 47.
Pinnock wrote that through the Spirit believers are swept into a divine world of mutual love which is the goal of our nature as spiritual and social beings (i.e. theosis). In spiritual language Pinnock calls this design for mutuality as being 'married to Christ and sharing in the triune life'.
[552] This was an overstated charge by Pinnock as will be explored shortly.

meticulous sovereignty and exhaustive foreknowledge."[553]

From a different angle, Pinnock quoted from the philosopher N. P. Wolterstorff who had written about Reformed theology having no room for any part of it to be proved incorrect; otherwise the whole belief package was in danger of collapsing. Wolterstorff commented on impassibility:

> Once you pull on the thread of impassibility, a lot of other threads come along with it. Aseity, for example – that is, unconditionedness. . . . The traditional theologians affirmed aseity believing the world can only be explained if we postulate a being which is the condition of everything but itself, itself being conditioned by nothing – To give up on aseity is to give up an argument for God's existence. . . . One also has to give up on immutability and eternity. If God really responds, God is not metaphysically immutable and if not metaphysically immutable not eternal.[554]

By using a different root metaphor for God, Pinnock offered an open way of thinking that was not dependent on the sum of the parts making up the whole picture. He wanted to offer a grand mosaic of aspects of deity which, though linked, was not essential to the description of the divine-human relationship. Pinnock sought to make a case for God becoming mutable and yet still eternal.

But Pinnock's case was not without its own difficulties. There was a further important aspect within this debate that needed consideration. Is Open Theism itself free of all negative philosophical influences? This thesis has sought to show how Pinnock formulated his theology and Open Theism in an eclectic way, drawing from many sources including insights gained from non-authorities. Pinnock has been very open about

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[553] Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover*, 77.
Pinnock saw that retaining a belief in all-controlling sovereignty was the key doctrine for Reformed theology and their inflexible belief in this doctrine hindered reform in all other areas particularly those areas which saw God as capable of expressing any form of emotion.

[554] N. Wolterstorff, (1999) "Does God Suffer?" in *Modern Reformation Journal*, 8:5, 47, Quoted by Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover*, 78 n 47.

his appreciation of non-Evangelical and non-orthodox insights; therefore, it appeared somewhat disingenuous of Pinnock to attack Augustinian theologians for imbibing Hellenistic nuances, whilst believing Open Theism is completely free from all negative, extraneous features.

Such a blind-spot caused Horton to write that Pinnock reduced Hellenism to the Stoics and Plato, conveniently missing our 'Parmenidean stasis and Heraclitean flux'.[555] By this Horton was pointing out that dialectical, ideological and spiritual debates within Christianity were never simple right or wrong issues. Part of the difficulty within theological debate is the polarization of positions, which certainly reduces the quality of the debate.

Nevertheless, Pinnock was pleased when the theologian, Richard Lovelace, wrote of the philosophical basis of Western culture shifting from a Platonic to an Aristotelian outlook under Aquinas. Lovelace argued that Aquinas sought to fuse Augustinian theology with elements from the Aristotelian system resulting in: "A good many non- and anti- presuppositions from Aristotle slipped through into the system without being

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[555] Piper, Taylor, and Helseth, *Beyond the Bounds,* M. Horton, 203 n 13.
Shuba Gopal and Monroe Richter, on *Plato's Timaeus* in Campbell Corner Archives, Sarah Lawrence College, New York.
By this expression Horton was drawing on Plato's desire to seek reconciliation between the constant change within Heraclitus flux and the fixed stasis of Parmenides. Plato used this expression in his debate with the Sophists to show how apparent distinctions can actually become 'either' 'and' distinctions. The world soul of Plato was neither in flux nor the same.

filtered out by biblical understanding."[556]

This is precisely what Pinnock was presenting as a fundamental basis for Open Theism. Lovelace was agreeing with Pinnock that much Augustinian/Aristotelian thinking had distorted the biblical account and resulted in a tension between the ideals of an immutable perfection beyond the world and a creative sovereignty over with in the world.[557]

Pinnock reasoned that such distortions had resulted in a Western Christianity that had a bias towards a monopolarity and a one-sided view of absolute Reality; a God whose relationship with the world was almost superficial, nominal and external.[558]

However, as Pinnock argued against the pagan, transcendent influences upon Christian doctrine, so he realised that Open Theism could appear to be moving too far towards an immanence that identified God as too dependent upon the world. This was the criticism that conservative Evangelicals levelled against process thinkers. To clarify his position both as non- process thinker and one who did believe God was transcendent,

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[556] R. F. Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life. An Evangelical theology of Renewal* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP, 1979), 175*f.*
Lovelace was exploring the spectrum of attitudes towards the surrounding culture by the early church. He, like Pinnock, argued that it was Augustine who was responsible for adding elements of Neo-Platonic thought which dominated contemporary pagan culture to traditional theological materials. However, Lovelace was not as critical of Augustine as Pinnock was, acknowledging that Augustinianism had grace at the heart of its theology, writing that Augustine *avoided* adopting anti concepts from the pagan culture. Pinnock believed quite the opposite.
[557] Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover,* 78.
Pinnock whilst pleased that Aquinas was portrayed as following Augustine did acknowledge that the Thomists and Calvinists although conventional theists had different agendas. Thomists care about immutability but are not determinists and Calvinists focus on sovereignty and place little emphasis on immutability and unconditionality:
[558] Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover,* 71.
To Pinnock there was a Christianization of Greek, and a Hellenization of Christian thought which Evangelical theologians had to acknowledge. Instead of trying to merge Hellenistic and Semitic conceptions of God into one notion Pinnock believed such a feasible mediation was not possible. To Pinnock it was only Openness theology that offered a more accurate account of the biblical doctrine of God.

Pinnock wrote: My faith too is in the triune God. I maintain that God and the world are ontologically distinct, that God interacts with the world, and that God is omnipotent and wholly good.[559]

Pinnock wanted to appeal to ordinary Evangelicals. He wanted to make it clear that he was a Christian theist who happened to believe that God could only know about decisions that were made, not about any decisions not yet made. This in reality meant that Open theists saw that *some* of the future was settled and *some* was uncertain.[560] Pinnock offered a very simple argument: 'God does not know the future free actions of His creatures because there was nothing definite to know; free actions only exist when free agents create them'. The obvious question that arises from such a position is whether in such an unpredictable environment God loses control. Although Pinnock believed God was never outmanoeuvred and could cope with any future outcome, his answers are far from convincing.

In addition to challenging the influence of Greek thought upon understanding the attributes of God, Pinnock also challenged the influence that the Greek model played

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[559] Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover.*
Pinnock wrote that what he opposed was a basic theism that was distorted by Greek assumptions about the divine.

[560] G. A. Boyd, *God of the Possible: A Biblical Introduction to the Open View of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000).
The developments surrounding the debate on Omniscience are looked at in the next sub-section 4:3 Omniscience was also expanded upon by Pinnock's fellow Open theist Gregory Boyd. At this juncture in the thesis though it should be noted that like Pinnock, Boyd developed his arguments from the premise that the account has many references which show God as altering His plans in the light of changing human responses such as repentance or stubbornness. As with Pinnock Boyd's conclusion was that although there was an ultimate divine master plan, it could only be claimed that the future was only partly determined and partly open. This open view of the future saw the future as not exhaustively settled ahead of time, because God moved within the realm of possibilities and not certainties although He was well able to deal with all contingencies.

within Evangelical rationalism.[561] Pinnock thought that his conservative opponents defined God more on rational grounds than the biblical account allowed for: "Sometimes the attributes of God are derived on the basis of the *dignum deo* (i.e. what it is dignified for God to be according to natural theology) instead of looking at the particular sort of project God is seeking to accomplish in history."[562]

Pinnock endorsed Tertullian's ancient rhetoric 'What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?'[563] Tertullian obviously implied nothing, but Pinnock was determined to show that in the formation of the doctrine of God, the Athenian view of philosophical and ontological categories carried as much weight as the biblical account - Athens had everything to do with Jerusalem.[564]

But was this a fair and objective assessment of the influence of Hellenistic thought upon early Christian theology? This debate has raged for many years over a number of theological disciplines.[565] During the 1960s, the theologian Gustaf Aulen wrote about the incarnation and the influence of neo-Platonism upon Christology he said:

> . . . the Christology of the ancient church cannot be understood as a "Hellenization" of Christianity. . . . The fundamental motifs behind the formulations of the ancient dogmas do not appear as a Hellenization, but rather imply the most determined opposition . . . both against that Hellenization which had its roots in Greek philosophy and tended towards a separation of Christ from God, and against that which had its roots in the

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[561] See Chapter 1 on the debate over the influence of rationalism in the debate of Scottish Common Sense philosophy upon conservative Evangelicalism.

[562] B. A. Ware, *God's Lesser Glory: A Critique of Open Theism* (Leicester: Apollos, 2000), 67.

[563] See footnote 42.

[564] Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover*, 73.
It was the degree that the doctrine of God was accommodated to aspects of ancient philosophical horizons that became the issue of debate.

[565] M. Hengel. *The Hellenization of Judea in the first century after Christ* (London: WCM Press, 1989). For instance there is a major debate regarding what has been termed the Jewish Roots Movement and its opposite view known as Supercessionism or Replacement Theology. There is a vast array of literature on this whole subject by such authors as E. P. Saunders, W. D. Davies, M. R. Wilson and Martin Hengel. Hengel's title sums up the debate.

> mystery cults and resulted in an identification of Christ with God analogous to divine theophanies.[566]

Certainly Aulen's view is confirmed by the recorded early church battles against Gnosticism in its many forms. Michael Horton,[567] a Reformed conservative opponent of Pinnock, directly answered Pinnock's charge. Horton chose to debate with Pinnock's book *The Most Moved Mover* and also with *The God Who Risks*[568] written by Pinnock's Open theist colleague John Sanders. Most contemporary Christian historians trace the current Hellenization of the church argument back well beyond Pinnock to Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930).[569] However, Horton argued that this debate could be traced back even further to the Socinians of the seventeenth century and the corresponding response from the Calvinist scholar, Francis Turretin.[570] The Socinian charge against the Reformers was that they were little more than believers in Stoic predestination or fate. Turretin wrote in response: The necessity of the immutability we ascribe to God does not infer Stoic fate, since it neither imposes an internal necessity upon God nor interferes

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[566] Gustaf Aulen, *The Faith of the Christian Church* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1961), 192.

[567] Horton is the Associate Professor of Apologetics and Historical Theology, Westminster Theological Seminary in Californian and is a strident opponent of Pinnock, writing many articles against Open Theism and PCE (readily available on the web). He is a staunch proponent of conservative Reformed Evangelical theology and was a past president of the alliance of confessing Evangelicals (ACE) and also editor in chief of the Modern Reformation Magazine.

[568] Sanders, *The God who Risks.*
Horton's comments were part of a series of papers which were strongly against Open Theism:
Piper, Taylor, and Helseth, eds. *Beyond the Bounds,* Chapter 6.

[569] Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma,* Vol.1 (Boston: Little, Brown Pub, 1902).
Harnack was a German Lutheran scholar and church historian who was a teacher of the young Barth. He believed that Christian dogma reflected Greek philosophy.

[570] Horton drew upon the works of the Genevan theologian Francis Turretin (1623-87) to argue his case. Turretin had battled with the Socinians who held to a similar position to both Harnack and Pinnock. The Socinians had reproached the classical theism of the Reformers for following a metaphysical rather than biblical doctrine. Turretin, who was a leading Reformed theologian, replied to the Socinian charge against the Calvinists.

with the liberty and contingency of things.[571]

Reformed theology is adamant that it does not see transcendence and immanence as antithetical categories. Although it believes there is a Creator-creature distinction, and acknowledges the finitude of human language, Calvinism still believes that a strict choices between either God's sovereignty or His love is a simplistic reductionism of the theological debate. Horton had good reason to argue that Pinnock's reductionism dismissed 'in one stroke the entire classical tradition as hopelessly trapped in ancient paganism'.[572]

Ware also picks up on a similar point and argues that Open Theism proof texts verses to justify their position, rather than contextualizing them within the broader biblical picture. For instance, Ware reasons that the times when the biblical account states that God relents regarding (say) impending judgment, it is not just on the basis of the immediate penitential response that God changes His mind but it is on the basis of earlier covenant promises that have never been vitiated.[573] This goes back to the earlier dispute regarding God's relationship to time. The Reformed argument is clear; God is beyond time and knows beforehand what human decisions will be made and therefore He is not surprised by choices made within time and He does not wait hesitatingly for human responses.

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[571] Piper, Taylor, and Helseth, eds. *Beyond the Bound,* 200.
Socinianism was a movement from the sixteenth century that interpreted Christianity rationally. However, their doctrines regarding the trinity, Scripture and the sacraments were far from orthodox and decidedly Unitarian and liberal. It is unfair to label Pinnock or PCE as either Unitarian or liberal.
[572] Piper, Taylor, and Helseth, eds. *Beyond the Bound,* 2020.
Horton argues that the Reformed tradition **was** suspicious of the Stoicism of Justin Martyr, Origen, Clement of Alexandria and the neo-Platonism of Augustine.
[573] Ware, *God's Lesser Glory,* 90-91.
To Ware the diminishing of the doctrine of omniscience alters & diminishes the conception of the conception of God's glory-hence the title of his book.

However, somewhat surprisingly, the Reformed philosopher, Paul Helm concluded that neither side in the debate on both time and the Creator-creature distinction could claim a victory by simply arguing on the basis of Scripture. He reasoned that agreement could only be reached by a mutual acceptance as to which texts should be given hermeneutical priority in formulating a doctrine of God. However, Pinnock was right in that the debate needed first to agree as to which basic metaphor for God was being considered. This in turn opens up another debate: 'Are some metaphors of greater relevance than others in the biblical account?'[574] It is highly unlikely whether an initial agreement on the prioritizing root metaphors between Evangelicals.

The Evangelical Augustinians believed that Augustinianism, although influenced by neo-Platonic thought ultimately rid Christianity of more Hellenistic imperfections than it accrued:

> . . . the early Reformed tradition has usually related the classical theological tradition in a sympathetically critical manner, suspicious of the Stoicism of Justin Martyr and Origen; the neo-Platonism of Augustine; the Aristotelianism (alleged and real) of Aquinas; late medieval nominalism, and the rise and rationalism evident in Socinianism.[575]

When it comes to Reformed or Augustinian thinking, Pinnock has no time for friendly dialogue. His mind is made up, Pinnock and Open theists believe the conservative position has distorted and caused much harm to Evangelical reform even calling Augustinian theology an 'immobility package'.[576] However, even though Open Theism places an overemphasis on the rejection of Hellenistic and Platonic concepts of the divine being and His attributes, it does raise some very important issues for

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[574] Beilby, Eddy, eds. *Divine Foreknowledge,* 62.
Helm sees a weakness in the Open theists argument because they treat all motifs of equal value, when clearly some motifs are made to highlight immediate points not establish the doctrine of God.
[575] Piper, Taylor, and Helseth, eds. *Beyond the Bounds,* 203 n 13.
[576] Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover,* 78.

theological consideration. Pinnock was right to show how Calvinism placed too much emphasis on the remote transcendent God, but Pinnock certainly blurred the 'Creator – creature' distinctives and is far from convincing with the God and time debate.

Whilst the Reformed theologians argued that transcendence and immanence were not antithetical categories,[577] the reality was that Calvinism emphasized transcendence and Open Theism emphasized immanence: "Transcendence and immanence become inextricably bound up with the divine drama of redemption."[578]

To Pinnock, the divine drama of redemption focused on a dynamic and interactive divine response, which although initiated by God, was subject to the open and free-will synergistic response by individuals. Such a position could never be considered an Augustinian world view, but it was very much a feature of Openness theism.

4:3 Later Developments with Pinnock's Openness Theology and Divine Omniscience

Section 4:2 considered the Hellenistic influences upon the Christian understanding of the divine attributes. Although the free-will debate *per se* was highly contentious, probably the most controversial part of Open Theism was Pinnock's interpretation of the doctrine of omniscience. In his interpretation, and the implications from his understanding of divine foreknowledge, Pinnock lost support from both Evangelical Arminians and a number of fellow PCE. For instance Tom Noble, a Wesleyan scholar

[577] They correctly reasoned that God's love and His justice cannot be separated.
[578] Piper, Taylor, and Helseth, eds. *Beyond the Bounds*, 210.

wrote: "Open Theism is not the position of Wesleyan Arminianism; the main difference is his rejection of God's omniscience."[579]

By omniscience Noble meant the orthodox understanding of the term. According to Wesley himself, Evangelical Arminianism was but 'a hairs breadth difference' between them and Calvinism regarding this issue.[580] Arminianism followed the belief system which became known as *middle knowledge.* Middle knowledge essentially believes that whilst God is able to create a world in which he foreknows all events, such foreknowledge does not usurp the free- will choices.[581]

Pinnock, on the other hand, argued that if there was a genuine free-will choice then the very concept of freedom must include being free of any divine influence or foreknowledge. To Pinnock, free-will had to mean that God had no knowledge of the immediate future choices that people would make. In other words, Pinnock claimed that God, regarding individual choice, only had past and present knowledge. Further, he believed that God imposed a voluntary self-limitation. In reality, this meant that Pinnock saw God as knowing all possible outcomes but could only make an 'expert estimation' regarding what was going to happen in the future. Although Pinnock maintained that God

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[579] T. Noble, (2004) "Open Theism – an Occasional Paper," given at the *Nazarene Theological College, Manchester.*

[580] *The letters of John Wesley* (London: 1931), edited by J. Telford, Vol. 4, 298. This was a well-known comment by John Wesley when challenged as to the differences between his and Calvin's views on justification by faith in 1765 and there was a similar view regarding omniscience. Wesley was clear the God possessed knowledge of future events and through this knowledge God predestines. His dispute with Calvin was whether predestination was absolute or conditional:

[581] Luis de Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge - Concordia:* Part 4 (NY: Cornell University Press, 1988). Middle knowledge is the system of thought on freedom of the will, predestination, providence and foreknowledge developed by Luis de Molina, a sixteenth-century Jesuit theologian: Freddoso Alfred (trans.)

would not be overcome by our choices, he did acknowledge that God may well be surprised by our choices.[582]

Such thinking is in contrast to orthodox belief, which saw God's foreknowledge as not restricted by temporality, and was exhaustive because of His unchangeable eternal purpose. The traditional Protestant Confession of faith was very clear on this issue: Exhaustive knowledge is predicated of God, and this knowledge is independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to Him contingent or uncertain.[583]

Nevertheless, Pinnock was claiming quite the opposite, arguing that God's knowledge was contingent upon the human partner. Process theology had certainly caused Pinnock to reassess whether or not it was possible for God to know with absolute certainty the future free acts and choices of human beings,[584] and Pinnock liked the process view of reality that considered the future open and not closed in any way. Pinnock's conclusion was clear; he believed that God only related to events as they happened. He did not believe that God operated in some time-free zone but subjected Himself to the limitations of time.[585]

Another Wesleyan academic, David Rainey picked up on this point.[586] To Rainey the issue centred on the question as to whether God's existence was essentially atemporal or temporal. The traditional Evangelical Arminian position is that God is atemporal - God does live in time but He also lives in the eternal now. Thus Arminian belief is that God

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[582] Gray, and Sinkinson, eds. *Reconstructing Theology*, 136*f*.
[583] *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, 1643 (Inverness, Scotland: Ecclesithe, 1970), Chapter 2.
[584] G. Robinson, (1991) "A Brief Examination of C. H. Pinnock's Understanding of Divine Omniscience," in *Evangelical Theological Society, USA*.
[585] Pinnock, ed. *The Grace of God*, Introduction X.
[586] D. Rainey, lecturer at the Nazarene Theological College, Didsbury, Manchester – in correspondence following Pinnock's Didsbury Lectures in 2000.

does operate according to foreknowledge, but in order to preserve human freedom He has not pre-determined any final outcome. This position is called compatibilist free-will.

Pinnock whilst not agreeing with the Evangelical Arminian position of compatibilist free-will defines it as 'God exercising governance by means of His exhaustive foreknowledge'. Pinnock saw compatibilist free-will as claiming God had the ability to be able to anticipate everything precisely in detail, thus allowing God's plan to include every potentiality and make every appropriate provision.[587] Pinnock rejected this neat Arminian package and was convinced that such a total omniscience took away from truly free and significant human choice.

Pinnock's reasoning was straightforward, if God knows the future before it happens then that that is a form of divine pre-determinism. Any pre-determinism to Pinnock was the antithesis of genuine human freedom. In fact, Pinnock was so fixated on removing any vestiges of a divine pre-ordained plan that he weakened his case and lost support from previous allies.

Pinnock was adamant that the whole Openness debate centred on the incompatibility of divine foreknowledge and human freedom. Pinnock believed that God was voluntary self-limiting and therefore only aware of events as they happened. This assumption was important to Pinnock because he believed that such a lack of divine insight helped give understanding to God's seeming lack of action in preventing

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[587] Pinnock, ed. *The Grace of God*, Introduction XII.
Pinnock argued that he knew the Calvinist belief regarding exhaustive foreknowledge was tantamount to predestination because it implies the fixity of things from eternity past. He disagreed with this position and therefore rejected Arminian compatibilist free-will belief on those same grounds.

horrendous evils. He felt that divine self-limitation was a good starting point in the theodicy debate.[588]

However, whilst this position might help in the theodicy debate, it actually opened up much wider moral issues. Did Pinnock really believe that the moral freedom of the individual was much more important than the lack of moral action or intervention by God? The Reformed view appears to actually offer a better case than Pinnock's position; they believed that some things were locked in the mysteries and sovereignty of God. Pinnock found that response too limiting, although his position left God self-limited, impotent, and unable to intervene in human tragedy. If that is the case, how could Pinnock claim that God was sovereign and omnipotent?

David Hunt in supporting the exhaustive foreknowledge position quite rightly commented 'that even if the future is settled *epistemically* in the divine mind, it does not follow that the future is *causally settled* in any way that conflicts with human freedom'.[589]

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[588] Porter, and Cross, eds. *Semper Reformandum,* David Basinger, 148*ff.*
Pinnock did not develop a doctrine of theodicy. He believed that a voluntary self-limitation by God helped explain seeming divine inaction at times but as this section shows, this was a rather flawed argument. Basinger argues that theodicy developed within a given theism is determined by the perceived relationship between God and the world. Pinnock does teach that (unlike the process thinkers) God can and does unilaterally intervene in earthly affairs. What it can't guarantee is that God's will and what He wants to happen will come to pass. So much is subject to the individual human choice. Evil occurs, to this way of thinking, because God cannot give meaningful freedom and control its use. Therefore to the extent that God grants this sort of freedom so the increasing possibility of evil cannot be avoided. Exercising human freedom appears a more acceptable moral goal than God preventing the evil that is the outcome of such free-will thinking.

[589] Beilby, and Eddy, *Divine Foreknowledge,* David Hunt, 53.
Hunt uses a good example. He quotes how the Lord predicted that Peter would deny Him three times but there was no evidence for any divine manipulation to bring about the denial. In fact the Lord was sad at the free-will choice Peter made.

But Pinnock could not reconcile that epistemological, divine, future knowledge could do anything other than restrict choice and activity made by any person or nation. William Craig, who holds to the Arminian compatibilist position, asks the relevant question, and wonders why Open theists can't accept that divine foreknowledge and future contingents do not have to be antithetical. He uses a good example in the story of Joseph being sold into slavery by his own brothers.[590] Towards the end of the story Joseph proclaims 'You meant it for evil but God meant it for good *to bring about this present result.*' (emphasis added). This is a clear biblical statement that God foreknew the evil plan of the brothers yet still used His foreknowledge to reach a predetermined ultimate goal.

It appeared that Pinnock moved beyond a moderate divine-human synergism and his critics make a good point when they argue that his Openness view places the individual human ,not just in partnership with God, but in the driving seat. It was as though God was subject to, and waiting for, the human decision. It was hardly surprising that because of this stance, Pinnock was accused of Pelagianism. Such a projection of the power of human choice caused Tony Gray to conclude that Pinnock 'would have been more at home with the Pelagians than the Arminians'.[591] Maybe this was no insignificant point since Pelagius opponent was Augustine.

Norman Geisler went further in his criticisms and claimed that Pinnock created God in the image of man.[592] He argued that in Open Theism God was reduced to no more than an exalted human being. Orthodox Christian teaching believed that there is an

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[590] Genesis Chapter 50:20, New American Standard Bible.
[591] Gray, and Sinkinson, eds. *Reconstructing Theology*, 130.
[592] N. H. Geisler, *Creating God in the Image of Man?* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1997).

infinite qualitative difference separating divinity from humanity, and to speak of God utilizing human concepts is to affirm an almost finite God.[593]

However, Pinnock believed that humans were created in the *imago dei*. To be in the image of God meant that there was a correspondence between God and humanity and also a correspondence between human language and truth about God. Therefore, Pinnock believed it was perfectly legitimate to speak of God by using finite categories, even anthropomorphisms. He argued that the greatest example of this was in the Incarnation. He further justified his use of human language to describe the divine-human encounter by writing that 'The written word explains the living Word'. Some Open theists, took this further, and argued that Open Theism hadn't reduced God to anthropomorphisms, but God revealed Himself through theomorphisms.[594]

Pinnock admitted that (extremely naively) in 1994, when he participated in an editorial process for his major book on the Openness of God, he was surprised that it created so much interest and provoked so much controversy within the Evangelical community.[595] Ultimately the book *Most Moved Mover* was first delivered by Pinnock at the Didsbury Lecture in Manchester United Kingdom in 2001.[596] *Most Moved Mover*

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[593] Porter, and Cross, eds. *Semper Reformandum*, 115.
Geisler rejected Open Theism language because he saw it as 'relativizing the absolute'; 'the finite cannot contain the infinite and nor can it be described by finite terms'. Above all he argued that 'God is completely unlike anything in creation'.
[594] Ibid, 126.
By this Sanders meant (as an example) love and justice are not an anthropomorphisms since any human concern for love and justice is a theomorphism.
[595] Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover*, Preface.
[596] It was a poignant time for Pinnock when he gave this series of lectures. He publicly acknowledged that thirty seven years earlier, he had begun his theological odyssey at Manchester University in earnest under the esteemed Evangelical scholar F. F. Bruce. Pinnock's journey had taken him a long way over nearly forty years.

proved to be Pinnock's final and definitive articulation of Open Theism. Open Theism was now clearly dividing the Evangelical constituency.

4:4 Pinnock's Openness Theology: A Summary of the Free Will Debate

From 1989 with Pinnock's published articles on his doctrine of God, his initial Openness view became known as 'free-will theism'. With the passage of time this evolved into the better known title 'Open Theism'. However, free-will theism is a more accurate description of what Pinnock was seeking to express through his Openness thinking. He wrote that during the early 1980's he realized there were still more implications to be drawn from the study of the divine attributes such as omniscience and freedom of the will.[597]

Pinnock spoke of Evangelicals needing to be free from hyper-transcendence, and becoming conscious of a free-will theism in which human responses with God are bilateral and genuinely free from divine activity. His positive appraisal of such a definition of human freedom was inextricably linked to Pinnock's rejection of the orthodox view on omniscience. Whether it was a subconscious desire to seek Evangelical acceptance, but as with his redefining of *inerrancy* whilst retaining the term,[598] so Pinnock redefined and continued to use the term *omniscience*. This was strange when to all intents and purposes he denied God's foreknowledge. However, to the end of his academic career Pinnock felt both *inerrancy* and *omniscience*, although limited

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[597] Callen, *JTR*, 239.
Pinnock said that all his previous theological enterprises were drawing him onto the territory of Christian theism. He said that it was understandable that this would be the last subject for him to study because the doctrine of God was the greatest and most demanding of the theological topics.
[598] This topic was covered in Chapter 2:3.

expressions were still the best definitions to describe the issues at hand, and therefore he continued to use them.

Pinnock did concede that *divine foreknowledge* and *human freedom* are both affirmed in Scripture without mutual exclusivity or contradiction. He wrote about this tension:

> teaching about the divine foreknowledge appears to contradict biblical teaching about human freedom and it is nigh impossible to see how the puzzle can be resolved rationally. This drives us back to a more precise definition of freedom; to speculations about time and timelessness; to problems of theodicy. . . . The whole issue has been debated practically nonstop and resists a final word.[599]

But Pinnock could never resist the final word, and he certainly did not leave the paradoxes of the biblical text within the mysteries of God. He pursued a rational and logical approach to unravelling these complexities. Pinnock was still quite a rational apologist when he needed to be. J. I. Packer[600] on this issue of divine sovereignty and human freedom wrote that theologians must 'suppress the imperious demands of reason and submit to antinomy'.[601] But even though Pinnock acknowledged there was no final word of resolution to be found on the matter, still disagreed with Packer.[602]

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[599] A. Caneday, (1996) "God in the Image and likeness of Adam – Clark Pinnock's Use of Scripture in His Argument: 'God Limits His Knowledge'," in *Evangelical Theological Society*, Taylor University, Fort Wayne Campus. March 16-17, 7, 11.
Bold comments mine to emphasise how Pinnock knew a Scripture principle alone could not confirm the position of Open Theism.
Caneday is Professor of Biblical Studies at North-western College, USA.

[600] Packer was a Reformed scholar who located unanswerable questions within divine, impenetrable mystery that transcended human logic – *finitum non capax infiniti.*

[601] J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1961).

[602] Basinger, and Basinger, eds. *Predestination and Free Will*, 143.
This chapter in the book is where Pinnock debates with Packer's arguments. He reasons that to leave the debate within the mysteries of God plays right into the hands of the sceptics or even believers who find contradictions confusing and even destructive to faith.

Pinnock therefore made many rational appeals to justify his understanding of genuine human freedom. However, in doing so he violated his own methodology and became too reductionist, forcing complex issues into simplistic models. With justification Pinnock's arch critic, Don Carson, argued that Pinnock committed the 'fallacy of the excluded middle, only appealing to selective evidences, and ignoring a massive category of biblical data'.[603]

Pinnock was not seeking to diminish the 'glory of God,' and he acknowledged the ontological otherness of God. He emphasized that he was not a believer in the panentheism of process theological thinking, and was adamant that it was the world that was totally dependent upon God, and not the other way round. Pinnock was trying to get across that Open Theism regarded all autonomy as a gift from God and Pinnock classed human freedom within this autonomy.[604]

However, there are vagaries within Pinnock's definition of autonomy and freedom. John Feinberg noted that an underlying problem with Pinnock's free will theism is his understanding of *freedom*.[605] Feinberg particularly picks up the point that Pinnock's notion that causal determinism automatically contradicts the notion of genuine freedom. He argues that Pinnock confuses significant freedom with causal determinism arguing that there is a way for determinists to talk of freedom, without meaning a closed robotic,

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[603] D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 98*f*.

[604] Basinger, and Basinger, eds. *Predestination and Free Will,* 145.
Pinnock wrote that both Plato and Whitehead agreed that God had to face a universe He did not create. Pinnock is adamant that he rejects such dualism and believes the account that all reality is dependent on God. All existence is therefore a gift from God and any autonomy given to humanity is also a gift from God. The author and giver is God not man.

[605] Ibid, 163.
Feinberg argues that Pinnock's use of emotive language such as 'true freedom', 'significant freedom' and 'genuine freedom' causes him to reject any other notion of freedom that is not contra-causal.

mechanistic universe. He was emphasizing that Pinnock appeared to confuse determinism with fatalism.[606]

Pinnock's view on divine indeterminism does not really explain as to how an agent is totally free to make choices. Surely though, the very act of choosing is itself a proof that actions *are not* determined but significantly free from divine control. Both Pinnock and Feinberg agree that Gods *perceptive will* (that is a rule regarding moral conduct) is not always done. However, God's *decretive will* (that is an expressed command) will be fulfilled sooner or later.[607]

Pinnock has an interesting perspective regarding those verses which indicate predestination and God's decretive will. Pinnock focuses on the collective context of the verse being exegeted. His view is that the predestinarian verses are usually in the context and in reference to a group or class of people (i.e. Israel or the Church)[608] rather than a reference to individual plans and choices. In other words, Pinnock claimed that God's

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[606] Basinger, and Basinger, eds. *Predestination and Free Will,* 19*ff*, Feinberg.
Feinberg notes that most people who hold to an indeterminism regarding human freedom still acknowledge that there were causes & influences prior to the choice being made. He argues that such a position acknowledges causal influences.
Pinnock had argued that the sovereignty of God was not a blueprint of everything that will ever happen; a pretemporal decree that freezes everything into position before history even began. To Pinnock sovereignty was the activity of God who is working out His **saving** plan in the sphere of history. He believed the goals of the plan were unchangeable but the outworking of the plan was flexible and responsive to changing decisions. Pinnock's response, 152.

[607] Ibid, 165.

[608] Pinnock, ed. *The Grace of God,* 20.
Pinnock commented that he was attracted to election as a corporate category when he considered the election of Israel as one of God's servants in a special way according to the Old Testament. In the New Testament Pinnock believed the predestinarian calling was to a chosen people for His Son, joined and belonging to the elect Body by faith in Christ. His conclusion was that this election post-Christ was neither arbitrary nor exclusive. Election was a corporate symbol of universal significance and a joyous cause of thanksgiving.

corporate plans could never be thwarted although His specific personal or local plans could well be.[609]

However, whilst the determinists would agree that God's ultimate plans will come to pass; the question must be asked of Pinnock: 'If local plans are thwarted would God be able to guarantee that His ultimate plans would still come to pass?' Individual and personal actions do affect the bigger picture, an uncertain local future, unknown to God, must be contingent and subsequently affect God's future general plan and purpose for humanity. Open Theism does not address this question satisfactorily.

This question leads to the whole question of evil and theodicy. Many of Pinnock's detractors have taken a similar track and asked the question: 'If God cannot accurately predict any future events involving free moral agents, then how Pinnock can be sure God will eventually triumph over evil?'

Certainly Pinnock's colleague John Sanders author of *The God Who Risks*,[610] acknowledges the difficulties, but offers little in the way of solutions other than a casual 'it will all turn out alright' approach. Open Theism is a long way from the conservative Evangelicalism which believes in both divine pre-ordination and in an individual spiritual perseverance that requires a tenacity of faith to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil.[611]

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[609] Basinger, and Basinger, eds. *Predestination and Freewill*, 29. Pinnock's response 58-59, Feinberg. For instance, Feinberg makes much of Ephesians 1:11 as the clearest example of divine sovereignty in the context of preselection. In response Pinnock dismisses that interpretation because of its general reference to God's corporate plan and not to personal decisions which can reject God's known will.
[610] Sanders, *The God who Risks*, 198.
[611] Ephesians 6:10-18.

Pinnock concluded that God was no Unmoved Mover but through His grace and voluntary self-limitation the biblical God was in reality a *Most Moved Mover.*[612] Pinnock believed that Open Theism offered a viable third way in the free-will debate between the classical theists and the process thinkers.[613] Pinnock sought to balance belief in omniscience and God's timelessness alongside a libertarian notion of human free-will. However, the solution that Open Theism offered is far from convincing or watertight.

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[612] Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover.*
[613] Pinnock (et al), *The Openness of God,* 9.

PART 2

4:5 Pinnock's Pneumatological Inclusivism – An Introduction

Part One of this chapter, I explored how Pinnock's Open Theism was in reality a radical, revised version of the Evangelical doctrine of God. Such a major revision led to further far-reaching developments. Two particular controversial outcomes relating to his doctrine of God were his teaching on Inclusivism, and his teaching on Conditional Immortality. Both of these subjects are now explored within the context of his theology and the effects they had within the Evangelical community.

Following a working definition of Inclusivism, the debate focuses on whether there is any uniqueness of Christ within Pinnock's Inclusivist thinking. In the final section, I will explore Pinnock's teaching on Conditional Immortality and consider whether it fits into an Evangelical paradigm or not. Finally, all of these developments within Open Theism are compared to the traditional conservative Evangelical position and conclusions are drawn.

Pinnock gave a clear definition of what he meant by a theology of other religions: The two components of this dialectical truth claim are *universality* (God's love for all humanity) and *particularly* (the reconciliation of sinners through Jesus Mediation).[614]

Pinnock's belief in the universality of the gospel meant much more than a belief that there were true believers, or the elect of God, in every nation. From his Arminian days, Pinnock was much taken with confidence that the prevenient Spirit was drawing all

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[614] Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy*, 17.

peoples towards salvific love through God's saving grace, which was freely and universally available.[615] This meant of course that he had to decide what the particularity role of Christ was in the missiological task. Was Jesus the focus of the task, or was He a peripheral figure, particularly when it came to dealing with people and religions who had never heard that such a person ever existed?[616]

In 1992, Pinnock first addressed the issue of religious pluralism in his book: *A Wideness in God's Mercy.*[617] In this book, Pinnock wrote of 'optimism in salvation' that he found in *The Scripture Principle.* He called this a 'hermeneutic of hopefulness' and it held him to a belief in *Heilsoptimismus* (i.e. that the majority of people will eventually be saved).[618] Pinnock believed his hermeneutic of hopefulness was based upon a Christological Scripture principle, and Pinnock made it clear that he does not believe in a *certainty* of universal salvation, but does believe in the *possibility* of salvation for all.

He devoted two chapters in *Flame of Love* to the work of the Spirit and Universality.[619] In these chapters, he debated just what the universality of the gospel meant. He wrote: 'The cosmic breadth of the Spirit's activities can help us conceptualize the universality of God's grace reaching out and touching people'.[620]

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[615] This is a popular Evangelical Arminian expression inviting a response to follow Christ without any pre-conditions. It is given by Reformed theologians as an example of a 'cheap grace' that is based solely on an emotional appeal. In a general way Arminianism was supportive of mass appeal to the 'whosoever,' in contrast to the Reformed praxis which avoided anything other than rational appeal.

[616] Although it is customary to describe the Christian attitude towards other faiths as Inclusivist, Pluralist or Exclusivist, such labels are too simplistic and far from satisfactory. However, they do offer a general overview and will therefore be used throughout this study.

[617] Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy,* 17.

[618] The opposite view that few will be saved is known as *Heilspessimismus.* This thesis has looked at how Pinnock was influenced by different forms of the doctrine of recapitulation.

[619] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* Chapters. 6-7.

[620] Ibid, 187.

Pinnock argued that with a belief in an inherent salvific aspect to general revelation, and a pneumatological starting point, a greater understanding of universal grace emerges. To him, the Spirit has always been working in creation and history. God sent Jesus as a fulfilment of a process in which the Spirit had been a central player. Pinnock saw in the ministry of the Spirit an offer of grace from as far back as history itself. Creation and redemption were seen by Pinnock as continuous, not discontinuous. He believed that Creation was never lacking in universal grace, and that salvific grace is still reaching out to all people.[621]

Pinnock built upon this principle and argued that the unevangelized people of today are in the same position as those pre-messianic believers recorded in the Old Testament. Pinnock was referring to people such as Enoch, Melchizedek and Job.[622] Pinnock termed these people 'holy pagans'. To Pinnock, these 'holy pagans' were prepared by the Spirit, through prevenient grace, for a fuller understanding of the divine plan and purpose.

Pinnock used the term *pneumatological Inclusivism* to describe his emphasis of universally accessible grace.[623] Pinnock defined *Inclusivism* as upholding Christ as the ultimate Saviour of humanity whilst affirming God's saving presence in both the world

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[621] Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, 198.
Pinnock argued that it was not Jesus that represented the first offering of grace but the Spirit who had been preparing the world for redemption since Creation. Pinnock does qualify this view by pointing out that Jesus was the culmination of the offer of grace through His participatory atonement, although he adds that the atonement made the way for a fuller manifestation of the Spirit in Pentecostal power.
[622] Ibid, 199.
Pinnock considered he was only following in the footsteps of Wesley in this matter. Wesley taught that the Spirit preceded evangelization by being present everywhere. Their eternal fate of people was then judged by their response to the measure of light that had been shown to them.
[623] Gray, and Sinkinson, eds. *Reconstructing Theology*, 223.
In this work Strange acknowledges that Pinnock's unique emphasis upon Spirit Christology is in part due to his stress upon divine immanence.

and other religions.[624] Pinnock saw in the rise of the global village and the disappearance of the small world, a new challenge emerging for Christians. He argued that although religious pluralism was not a new phenomenon, a new ideology of pluralism emerged through the relativistic mindset of late modernity. This ideology was proving a major challenge to Christianity and for Evangelicals in particular, because it celebrated choice, claiming that choice in itself is good, no matter what is chosen. Further, he saw that religious truths were becoming recognised of value only in an existential sense.[625] In other words, Pinnock rightly assessed that relativism denied the right for cognitive claims to be made regarding the uniqueness of both Christianity and Jesus Christ.

Inclusivism was not on the Evangelical agenda, because it was considered a diminishing of the uniqueness of Christ and therefore a threat to the missiological enterprise. As an example, Pinnock noted how a leading charismatic theologian, J. Rodman Williams played scant regard for Inclusivist thinking: "The term 'religion' is not even indexed by J. Rodman Williams in his systematic theology. . . . The subject of religion does not appear even in his less than four page discussion on general revelation and natural theology."[626]

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[624] Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy*, 15.
In contrast Pinnock defines Pluralism as the position that denies the finality of Christ & maintains that other religions are of equal salvific status.

[625] Ibid, 10.
Pinnock quoted an example of politicians in Canada legislating to usher in a form of unity in conformity which refused to recognize the diversity of religions and in one example replaced the singing of Christmas carols with 'Frosty the Snowman'. He argued that such legislation does not engender either truth or harmony. Pinnock remained strongly anti-secular in his Inclusivist views but he increased in his embracing of the benefits of other religions.

[626] J. Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology: From a Charismatic Perspective*, 3Vols (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988-1992).
Pinnock made this comment in: *Flame of Love*, 249 n 6.

The context of this quote shows that even Pentecostals and charismatics were just as conservative as other Evangelicals regarding Inclusivism. Most Evangelicals considered a theology of religions as superfluous in an *a priori* sense. They believed that Scripture was almost silent on the subject because other religious systems were considered irrelevant to biblical revelation and personal faith. In fact, it would be accurate to state that Evangelicals regarded all other religions as wrong, the worship of false gods.[627]

Nevertheless, there were a few Evangelicals who were willing to tackle this problem in a more objective way. The Pentecostal scholar Walter Hollenweger[628] followed a similar trajectory to Pinnock and interpreted Inclusivism as a logical progression of pneumatological approaches to theology. But such views were rare within the whole spectrum of Evangelicalism.

Nonetheless, Pinnock's particularity axiom was based on a belief that God, through the mediation of Jesus, has acted redemptively for the entire human race. His universality axiom was based on a belief that God loves sinners and wants to save them. In explaining it in this way Pinnock saw no great dichotomy between his views and traditional

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[627] Martin Luther, *Collected Works* (Weimar): 40-2-11.
For instance (as a typical Evangelical position) Martin Luther said, "All worship & religions outside Christ are the worship of idols."

[628] S. M. Burgess, and G. B. McGee, ed. *Dictionary of Pentecostal & Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub, 1996).
Walter Hollenweger was a leading European Pentecostal academic, a former Professor of Mission at the University of Birmingham in the U.K. Unlike most of his contemporary Pentecostals, he was actively involved with the World Council of Churches arguing that Western theologians needed to develop an awareness of the intercultural dimensions of the Christian traditions. He challenged Evangelicals to build bridges and communication within an intercultural setting. Pinnock adopted a similar path.

Evangelical belief.[629]

Daniel Strange acknowledged Pinnock as the most developed and systematic theologian of contemporary Evangelical Inclusivism.[630] He traced the growth and development of Pinnock's Inclusivist theology comparing Pinnock's earlier and later writings: Pinnock's thinking on the subject of pluralism and the unevangelized has significantly developed from his book *Why is Jesus the Only Way*? to his *Flame of Love*.[631]

Strange acknowledged that Pinnock's soteriology did emphasize that all redemption (even post mortem) is through the person and work of Christ, but he argued that Pinnock separated the functional and the ontological status of Jesus Christ.[632] Strange was challenging Pinnock with his own words. Pinnock had written:

> In thinking about Jesus' Christology, it is important to distinguish between functional and ontological categories. Did the early followers think of Jesus as God in action or God in the flesh? I think not, for even if what Jesus claimed was only in a functional rather than an ontological Christology, the claim would still be too high for Pluralism to absorb.[633]

However, with the passage of time Pinnock modified his position. He realized that other faiths could possibly accept a functional and confessional role for Jesus the man,

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[629] Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy*, 17.
Pinnock disagrees with his critics and he does acknowledge that there are limits within his optimism of salvation. He writes here of the parameters for Christian thinking regarding a theology of other religions. However, he had regarded the issue of universality as a major challenge for contemporary Evangelicalism and commented that this had long been a concern of his and was a major theme in his earlier books *Grace Unlimited* and *The Grace of God & the Will of Man*, 187 n 3.
[630] Strange, *The Possibility of Salvation*, 42.
This book is based upon Strange's doctoral thesis awarded in 1999. Although it is an analysis of Inclusivism within contemporary Evangelicalism, essentially it is a critique of Pinnock's Inclusivist theology.
[631] Ibid, 45.
[632] Ibid, 202.
Strange notes how cultic thinking has a version of this derivative uniqueness of Jesus & he is quite correct to note that Pinnock needs to emphasize the unique ontological, kenotic features of the Incarnation.
[633] Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy*, 59.

even if they rejected an ontological, metaphysical Christ.[634] Pinnock's Inclusivism did appear contradictory at times, and appeared to be advocating redemption through a functional knowledge of Jesus.

Pinnock was aware of this problem, and his resolution was to emphasize two Christological points. First of all, he maintained that Jesus brought salvation for the whole world, and secondly, that He was a manifestation of God in the flesh.[635] Not very convincingly, Pinnock argued that he was not seeking a revision of the Christological truth, but he was seeking a revision of an exclusivist posture that needed to re-think the Christology-Inclusivist dilemma.

Pinnock believed he had found an answer to the dilemma by making an appeal, not to uniqueness of Jesus, but to united belief in one unique God.[636] He wrote: "Uniqueness and finality belongs first of all to the God of the Bible; and, Jesus is only unique in that special relationship to God. Uniqueness and finality only belong to Jesus derivatively. He is unique not as an independent being but as the Father's beloved Son."[637]

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[634] D. Okholm, and T. Phillips, eds. *Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. 1996), 107.
Pinnock argues that often people do not believe in the Christian God because of misconceptions. He concurs with C. S. Lewis who wrote of 'those who belong to Christ without knowing it'. Pinnock acknowledged that it was C. S. Lewis who, in the 1950's first helped him to understand the relationship between Christianity and other religions. In the last volume of the Narnia cycle *The Last Battle* the pagan soldier Emeth is told that the worship of Tash is recognised as worship of Aslan.
[635] Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy,* 50.
Pinnock recognized that an awareness that understanding Jesus as the cosmic Christ was a way to balance the inclusive and exclusive biblical Christological texts.
[636] Pinnock debated that the high Christology which is part of orthodox thinking was more a product of church tradition than good exegesis of the biblical account.
[637] Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy,* 53-54.
This is a concerning aspect of Pinnock's Spirit Christology. He appears to cast doubt as to whether Jesus should be sharing in the same glory as the Father, although he goes on to say that if the Incarnation meant that Yahweh had come into human history the Christ's uniqueness and normativity would be assured. Pinnock did believe the Incarnation meant just that.

But was this a Trinitarian starting point? Pinnock sounds more like an adoptionist than a Trinitarian[638] and he went on to argue that Jesus never went around saying He was God. However, he does recognize that Jesus became the object of worship within the Christian church, although he saw the worship of Jesus as a later development by the believing community. He argued that Jesus Himself did not express equality with God as his primary relationship, but expressed the relationship between Himself and the God by the usage of the term *abba*; an exclusive and distinct relationship as the Son of God.[639]

But Pinnock was definitely Trinitarian, and yet in desire to start interreligious dialogue, he definitely diminished the status of Christ. He felt that a functional understanding of Jesus could help those of other faiths such as Jews and Muslims make an initial acceptance of Jesus as a unique man. He then hoped from that position, a deeper understanding of Christ as a universal Saviour would come about. But such a debate was moving away from a salvific Inclusivism into a missiological project, and Pinnock's main goal was how to deal with the Inclusivist question.

Pinnock believed that Vatican II was a contemporary step in the right direction. He commended the bishops for holding to the finality of Jesus and at the same time giving qualified recognition to the positive religious worth of other faiths. His conclusion on the

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[638] J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrine* (London: A. & C. Black, 1968), 115*ff.*
Adoptionism or dynamic Monarchianism was a Christological heresy that believed that Christ was a mere man upon whom God's Spirit had descended. It became prominent around190 AD under Theodotus who was excommunicated by Pope Victor (186-198).

[639] Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy,* 58-59.
Pinnock quotes from James Dunn who reasons that Jesus prayer address to God as *abba* in John's gospel shows Jesus knowledge of His divine Sonship which he encourage His disciples to believe in and this led to the early church worshipping Him as divine Lord.
James D. G. Dunn, *The Evidence for Jesus,* 49.

matter was: A high Christology can mandate both an openness to other religious traditions and a responsible ministry of evangelism on a worldwide scale.[640]

Undoubtedly Pinnock did want to see the Inclusivist project develop beyond the stage of Vatican II, but there is no evidence that either he or other Open theists made much progress except to further the debate. What can be said though, is that in Pinnock's desire to find a mediating position, he ends up more with a subtle universality rather than a distinct universal, salvific Christology.

Of course Pinnock's approach led to much criticism from within the Evangelical community, and he tried to address the issue by qualifying his meaning of Inclusivism by adding the adjective 'cautious'. He wrote that he used this title because he was impressed with its use within Vatican II.[641] His added that his 'cautious Inclusivism,' sometimes he calls it 'modal Inclusivism,' as a methodology stops short of stating that the religious themselves are vehicles of salvation (which is how he defined pluralism). He also acknowledges that there is a dark side to many religions.[642]

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[640] Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy,* 75.

[641] Okholm, and Phillips, eds. *Four Views on Salvation,* 98.
Pinnock wrote that he made no apology as an Evangelical in admitting an enormous debt of gratitude to the Vatican Council for their lead in contemporary Inclusivist thinking. He quotes from them in a number of his books i.e.:
W. M. Abott, ed. *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Guild Press, 1966).
However, Pinnock disliked Rahner's phrase 'anonymous Christians' as a model phrase of Inclusivism. He felt the phrase and Rahner's view that non-Christian faiths are 'lawful religions' eroded the emphasis on the need for conversion through Christ. Nevertheless Pinnock acknowledged there was a closeness to his thinking on universalism and Rahner's position.

[642] Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy,* 15.
He defined 'pluralism' as a position that denies the finality of Christ and maintains other religions as salvific paths.

One other important and interesting feature of Pinnock's Inclusivism or *pneumatology of universality*[643] is that he does not see religion alone as the bearer of meaning. Because of his belief in the universality of the Spirit, he is anxious not to confine the operations of the Spirit solely within religious environments. He saw God the Spirit operating through many channels, such as culture and social institutions (like the family or even governments). Wherever people were, Pinnock believed prevenient grace flowed.

4:6 Pinnock's Cautious Inclusivism and an Eschatological Commonwealth

But there were other aspects of pneumatology that Pinnock developed for his theology of religions. He kept two constants in focus. First of all that the 'triune God is a missionary God'[644] and secondly that Christ was the 'cosmic Christ'.[645]

The premise of Inclusivism is that God is present in the whole world, and His grace and His Spirit is somehow working amongst all religions. This meant that, to Pinnock, there was no disjunction between nature and grace,[646] but Pinnock believed his 'cautious Inclusivism' stopped short of stating that other religions are vehicles of salvation. What

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[643] Okholm, and Phillips, eds. *Four Views on Salvation,* 143.
Pinnock made this statement in response to Alister McGrath's claim that Pinnock was actually promoting a Logos Christology.
[644] Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, 142.
[645] Strange, *The Possibility of Salvation, 87.*
[646] Gundry, ed. *Four Views on Salvation,* 9, 100, 127.
J. Hick, *God and the Universe of Faiths* (London: Macmillan, 1988), 131.
Pinnock disagreed with the leading Inclusivist John Hick. In this article Hick gives an account of his rejection of his earlier Evangelicalism but unlike Pinnock he rejects any salvation that is based in a unique transaction through Jesus Christ. He proposes that salvation consists of human change from self-centredness to Reality (God) centredness that continues beyond this life. He further rejects salvific claims that are dependent upon a moral criterion. Pinnock rejected such an extreme Inclusivism as judged by Evangelical criteria. However, Pinnock does agree with Hick that the bible is more God centred than Christ centred. Hick wanted to move belief from a Christocentric presentation towards a theocentric presentation but Pinnock did not move in that direction, offering both a Logos Christology and a Spirit Christology.

he did believe was that God *may use* other religions as a means of communicating grace and evoking faith, although not necessarily so.[647]

Pinnock did not comment much on prophetic eschatology, and was dismissive of dispensational eschatology in particular. However, he saw merit in the dispensational view that 'the object of faith in every age is God, but the content of faith changes in the various dispensations'.[648] Pinnock praised dispensational thinking for recognising flexibility in God that adapted to changing circumstances.[649] Pinnock could well see God adapting the salvation message to cover those people who had never heard anything of the Christian story.

4:7 Holy pagans and a hermeneutic of hopefulness

Don Carson has a rather pithy and succinct definition of Pinnock's Inclusivism: "Christ is ontologically necessary for salvation but knowledge of Christ is not epistemologically necessary."[650]

Although Pinnock's cautious Inclusivism maintains it holds to a Christocentric understanding of the Kingdom of God, it was hard for him to justify this position,

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[647] Russell D. Moore (Asst. Professor of Christian Theology, the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) presented a paper on PCE at the Evangelical Theological Society Atlanta, Georgia 21st Nov. 2003. R. Moore, (2003) "Post Conservative Evangelical Proposals as Reversal of Evangelical Doctrinal Development," in *Evangelical Theological Society*, November 21.

[648] Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism To-day* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), 123. Ryrie is a leading contemporary exponent of Dispensationalism & his annotated bible commentary is a popular version. Pinnock also quoted from Irenaeus who wrote that 'There is but one and the same God who, from the beginning to the end by various dispensations, comes to the rescue of humankind.' Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3.12.13.

[649] Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover*, 44 n 52.

[650] D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God – Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Leicester: Apollos, 1996), 279. This quotation was first used by Carson, although Daniel Strange quotes it on a number of occasions.

particularly when he also held to a belief in a universal salvation that did not necessitate even knowledge of the historic Jesus.

Pinnock expounded his universal, and inclusive, soteriology in *A Wideness in God's Mercy*: 'My reading of the gospel of Jesus Christ causes me to celebrate a wideness in God's mercy and a boundlessness in his generosity towards humanity as a whole'.[651]

Pinnock interpreted the Bible with what he called a *hermeneutic of hopefulness*.[652] This hermeneutic looked at the great global covenants of the Old Testament such as the Abramic and Noahic Covenants. He concluded that God had established a global or cosmic covenant with all nations, and not just Israel.[653] Pinnock placed an emphasis upon this collective call to all peoples: Abraham was chosen by God for the sake of the world, not for his own sake. His election was not a sign of God changing His mind about other nations. God has chosen to bring about the salvation of the many through the faith of the one.[654]

Pinnock took this argument further and by using the examples of Job, Enoch and Melchizedek, maintained that his hermeneutic of hopefulness portrayed the God of the Jews, as also the God of pagan people. Pinnock cited from New Testament passages to confirm his position. For example, he quoted from Acts: 'I now realise that God does not show favouritism *but accepts men from every nation who fear Him and do what is*

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[651] Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy*, 18.
[652] Ibid, 20.
[653] Ibid, 21.
Pinnock devoted a whole chapter (6) in his book *Flame of Love* to the issue of *Spirit & Universality* writing of the cosmic breadth of Spirit activities & the universality of God's grace.
[654] Ibid, 23.

right'.[655] Furthermore, he quoted from 2 Cor. 5:18-21 which speaks of "God in Christ as the Saviour and reconciler *of the whole world.*" (emphasis added).

However, Pinnock's exegesis is poor. These passages do not focus on approval of other religions, they simply record that people from other religions were present when God spoke. Even a cursory reading of the Old Testament reveal a focus on the exaltation of the God of Israel,[656] and in the case of the New Testament, the focus is on the uniqueness of salvation through Christ.

Although to Pinnock, Jesus represented the ultimate manifestation of God's offer of grace, he saw in the history of the Spirit, a ministry of the Spirit from creation.[657] Grace more than faith became a key to Pinnock's theology of religions: Instead of saying there is no salvation outside of the Church, let us simply say there is no salvation outside of grace or finally outside Christ.[658]

4:8 Pinnock and theories of the atonement

Inevitably Pinnock's Inclusivist and universal thinking meant he had to reconsider the biblical models of the Atonement. The correct context for the doctrine of the Atonement is within the context of the doctrine of God and its allied doctrines of sin (harmartiology) and the doctrine of the person of Christ.[659] Evangelical belief was that Christ's atonement was the only sufficient sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. Christ was unique, and it was understood that no meritorious work, or person could offer salvation to

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[655] Acts 10:34-35 (emphasis added).
[656] Strange, *The Possibility of Salvation*, 153.
[657] Ibid, 73.
[658] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 194.
[659] Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An historical study of the three main types of the idea of the Atonement* (London: SPCK.1970), Foreword.

eternal life There was absolutely no doubt that both Evangelicalism, and orthodox Christian belief saw faith in Christ as the only means of world redemption.[660]

Pinnock maintained that he did hold to belief in the models of the atonement, but the issue for him was to find to find a universal redemption model. Pinnock was quite clear as to where he was coming from:

> I found I had to re-think about the atoning work of Christ. The easy part was accepting the obvious fact that contrary to Calvinian logic Jesus died for the sins of the whole world according to the New Testament . . . they fitted so obviously into the doctrine of God's universal salvific will, which I had come to accept.[661]

Pinnock looked for a more relational model of atonement; one which sought to emphasize the healing of broken divine/human relationships rather than one which focused on an appeasement of divine anger and honour. To do this Pinnock looked to recapitulation and the restoring of people back into God's image.[662] Such a trajectory made Pinnock re-visit the Aulen's Christus Victor model,[663] a point that Strange rightly picks up on:

> Pinnock wishes to focus on the whole of the incarnation as being a salvific event . . . triumph in life, death and resurrection. This resembles the Christus Victor model and Pinnock draws on Irenaeus and the early Greek theologians to support his argument that Jesus' life was one of conflict with the powers of

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[660] Muller, *Dictionary of Latin & Greek Terms drawn principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology*. *Sola fide*: by faith alone; *sola gratia*: by grace alone; *sola Scriptura*: Scripture alone; *soli Deo gloria*: glory to God alone and *sola fides in Christum membra ecclesiae constituit*: only faith in Christ can establish the members of the church.

[661] Pinnock, *The Grace of God*, 22.
Pinnock said that he reduced the precision of the general understanding of the atonement when he realised that Christ's death did not actually secure reconciled relationship with God, but it 'made it possible by faith'.

[662] See Chapter 3.
A paradox within Pinnock's glowing appreciation of Orthodox theology is the reality that Orthodoxy struggles with Christian ecumenical debates and does not see salvific content in other religions.

[663] Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor*.

> evil. On the cross God absorbs all that sinners can do without striking back . . [664]

Pinnock saw his Openness model of atonement as a participatory model which recognized the possibility for *all of creation* to be transformed into the likeness of God.[665]

> The Spirit had to take Jesus on a representative journey for the sake of wholeness. The meaning of atonement is not in a rationalistic theory but in the mighty act of God in which sin and death are annihilated and the world begins to be re-created. This is the theme of Irenaeus . . . a recapitulation of human history . . . give the human race a new start . . . making Jesus head of a new humanity . . .[666]

To enable Pinnock to focus on the new humanity he chose as his root metaphor Christ as the second Adam. The first Adam had been a universal man and therefore Pinnock concentrated on the universality of the second Adam. Pinnock clearly stated that *all humanity* had the potential to be children of God:

> We are saved by His representative journey. The redemption of Jesus Christ as the last Adam is ours by virtue of solidarity with Him, into which we are drawn by the Spirit . . . Christ's representation is inclusive, not exclusive.[667] Adam's sin was reversed. Through this act of representation creation is restored. Key is Christ's representation of humanity. . . . This act of atonement includes and does not replace us; it is a representation that includes rather than excludes.[668]

Pinnock's model of Christ as the second Adam on a universal journey to renewal and restoration undergirded his understanding of the atonement. Pinnock's conclusion

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[664] Strange, *The Possibility of Salvation*, 79.
Strange makes a good observation on how Pinnock saw the overemphasis upon law and propitiation to God the Judge, in the penal substitutionary model, as diminishing the soteriological significance of the Incarnation death and resurrection of the divine Son in the ministry of Christ as the representative corporate man.
[665] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 93.
Pinnock saw Thomas Torrance and E. P. Sanders as fellow travellers down this road adding that this is what atonement looks like when Christology is placed within the mission of the Spirit.
[666] Ibid, 95.
[667] Ibid, 96.
Pinnock develops the theme of recapitulation from Irenaeus and teaches that the last Adam, a universal person Jesus Christ saves mankind through a participatory journey, a journey of theosis. Starting with reconciliation Pinnock believes the atonement releases understanding of God's purpose for creation.
[668] Ibid, 95.

was that salvation was provided for *all humanity*: God's universal salvific will implies the equally universal accessibility of salvation for all people.[669]

However, there was an important nuance to Pinnock's conclusion and that was that before the benefits of the atonement could be received there had to be a genuine response towards God.

4:9 Pinnock and a cosmic covenant

As his Open Theism developed, Pinnock began to go beyond his principle of universal salvific *provision,* and expounded the view that the *majority* of people would enjoy salvation (Heilsoptimismus). This position has been called a *cosmic covenant.* Pinnock's cosmic covenant emphasised the dialectic between the triune God and the human partner: "It involves two movements, the first by the Trinitarian God who makes Himself universally present through the Spirit, and the second by human beings who accept a relationship to God through faith."[670]

Pinnock maintained belief that salvation was based on a faith principle, but reasoned that people could only respond within the measure of the light of faith that they have. Pinnock wrote that a person was saved by faith, even if the content of that faith is deficient. God cares about the direction of the heart, not the content of theology. [671]

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[669] Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy,* 157.
[670] Strange, *The Possibility of Salvation*, 86.
[671] Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy,* 157.
There is a subtle shift here in Pinnock's thinking. Evangelical faith was faith in Christ but Pinnock was now saying that it was the faith that Christ grants to any one individual. Pinnock says that Old Testament believers couldn't have known Jesus as Saviour, nor could babies who die in infancy. But this is not a convincing argument, how can you compare someone incapable of knowing with someone who has chosen to reject any knowledge of Christ?

Pinnock wrote: "From the Spirit flows that universal gracing that seeks to lead all people into fuller light and love."[672]

However, this was a non-Evangelical position. To Evangelicals it was not any faith but a unique Christ centred belief. For conservative Evangelicals, Pinnock's cosmic covenant diminished the role of the Son and also the missionary enterprise. Evangelicals have always been at the cutting edge of world mission, seeing it as part of the preparation for reception of Christian salvation. Evangelical missiology saw prevenient grace and general revelation as pointing the way to the way of salvation but never claimed general revelation was an integral part of special revelation. Evangelical mission has always been measured by the number of conversions to Christ and the Christian influence upon the local communities. It now appeared to many Evangelicals that Pinnock was advocating a belief in a redemptive path that needed little missionary activity.

In an attempt to answer such criticisms, Pinnock turned the argument on its head. Firstly, he reasoned that knowing that the Spirit preveniently, meant a belief that God has gone before making the missiological task so much easier.[673]

Pinnock also argued that the motivation for most Evangelical mission was negative, and the missionaries went to tell the unevangelized about hell and judgment.[674] He argued that missionaries should approach mission from the perspective of the good news of

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[672] Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy,* 161.

[673] Richardson, *Eternity in their hearts.*
This assumption (like many of Pinnock's ideals) is theoretical rather than realistic. Apart from one of two exceptions (which Pinnock quotes), the missionary task is often difficult and extremely dangerous. There appears little evidence of general preparation for the Christian gospel by unevangelized people.

[674] Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy,* 176.
Pinnock did say that there was a tension between access to salvation and world missions and was challenging the motivation for mission not the need of mission.

Kingdom of God not a proclamation of terror and judgement but good news of God's boundless generosity, which has already begun. He rather harshly wrote:

> It is a travesty to maintain that the primary motive of missions is to rescue souls from hell. . . . The purpose of Christian missions involved proclamation and church planting . . . part of God's strategy for transforming the world and changing history. One goal of missions is quantitative, to baptize and form congregations. The other goal is qualitative, to change life's atmosphere to infect people with hope and love . . .[675]

However, whilst a sense of mankind's spiritual lostness and a thankfulness for their own personal redemption is a feature of the Evangelical message, it would be inaccurate and unfair to conclude that this is the primary motivation of most Evangelical missionaries. The biographies of missionaries give another picture of their motivations; such as a deep love to those less fortunate and living in dire situations. Pinnock has taken a nuance and made it into a caricature, in order to confirm his belief in salvific grace amongst the unevangelized.

Pinnock reasons that what is required of the missiological enterprise is an access to the 'fuller expression of God's grace and power, which is found in Jesus'.[676] However, what he glaringly neglects is comment on those 'unholy pagans' who offer no evidence of desire for Christian knowledge, or Christian morals.

Pinnock appears naïvely optimistic regarding the state of pre and non-Christian religion. Early Christian history records the hostile environment in which the faith grew, and there is no evidence today that there is a benign acceptance of Christianity by non-

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[675] Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy*, 178.
An interesting point that Pinnock does make is that mission should always come from the perspective of the kingdom and God wants everyone to be a part of the Kingdom.
[676] Ibid, 179.

Christian religions. Nevertheless, Pinnock's optimism of salvation led him to believe that many non-Christians would be given an encounter with God's grace in Christ.[677]

Pinnock contended that for those who have lived as 'holy pagans' and never had the opportunity to hear of Christ, they will have an opportunity even as a post-mortem encounter. However, Pinnock's premise for such optimism does not begin with a Scripture principle. His appeal is (initially) to an emotional inductive *a posteriori* reasoning. For instance he writes:

> Christians have felt threatened by the existence of other religions and found it difficult to relate lovingly to theirs. Reasons include geographical isolation, awkwardness in the presence of conflicting truth claims and competition between our mission and theirs . . . a lack of confidence in God's generosity towards them. Dark thoughts have clouded our minds thanks largely to the Augustinian tradition that has so influenced Evangelicals.[678]

Pinnock uses his considerable apologetic skills to present his case for Inclusivism, but there is a masking of important biblical complexities, which make Pinnock's conclusions defective.[679]

4:10 Pinnock and harmartiology

Certainly from an Evangelical perspective, the biggest weakness in Pinnock's case for Inclusivism is his lack of any emphasis on the enormity and consequences of sin. In presenting a hermeneutic of hopefulness, it appears as almost a reaction against the

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[677] Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy*, 172.

[678] Ibid, 19.

[679] D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God*, 289.
Probably D. A. Carton, British, a conservative Evangelical, professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, is the most gifted and prolific author against Open Theism. His *Gagging of God* is a comprehensive tone written from a classical Evangelical perspective.

pessimism of Reformed Calvinism.[680] A biblical harmartiology is distinctly lacking from Pinnock's Open Theism.

There is an overemphasis by Pinnock upon the love and mercy of God at the expense of God's wrath and judgement. Indeed, Partridge (who deals sympathetically with Pinnock) writes that 'repentance could be more explicitly unpacked in Pinnock's theology.'[681] There is no doubt about that, and Partridge adds a further important point that a sound doctrine of sin leads to the conclusion that there are inadequate and false interpretations of ultimate reality. Other religions are often radically different from, and radically discontinuous with Christianity.[682] With his religious optimism, Pinnock skirts around religions as false interpreters of reality and looks at other religions as almost different expressions of truth.

In a similar way Pinnock is not clear as to what faith means in a non-Christian setting; is it partially or fully salvific? Although Pinnock rejects fideism which he defines as 'a belief that anything can be believed, but no one can say which view is right or of little value,' he nevertheless appears to put great value (even salvific) upon the sincerity of the intrinsic faith found within the 'holy pagans'. So Pinnock could write in a startling non-Evangelical and orthodox way: 'The Bible does not teach that one must confess the name of Jesus to be saved. Job did not know it. David did not know it. . . . The issue God cares about is the direction of the heart, not the content of theology. Paul says that faith makes the difference . . . the faith principle'.[683]

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[680] Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy*, 20.
[681] Gray, and Sinkinson, eds. *Reconstructing Theology*, 208.
[682] Ibid, 209.
[683] Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy*, 158.

Pinnock speaking of the preference of the direction of the heart, as opposed to the content if theology has some merit in it. However, the direction of a searching heart will surely want to find greater expressions of truth and an expression of that is surely to be found in right theology.[684]

Is Pinnock trying to indicate that there is an intrinsic value in faith as proclaimed in non-Christian religions? Carson picks up on this point and reasons that Pinnock is simply using the form of preferred antitheses. What he meant was that Pinnock used certain minimum information for example *faith in God saves* – which at one level is true. However, merely possessing information is not salvific and what Pinnock omits is the fact that faith has content or an object.[685] Therefore, faith in the Ouija board is not the same as faith in Christ. Every form of faith is not salvific, and yet Pinnock struggles to differentiate between the meanings of faith outside of Christ.

The debate centres as to whether the commonalities of the word *faith* are greater than the differences. Is there a common faith that is in accord with the biblical account? Pinnock does not make a good case for such a faith, and can such differences be responsibly ignored whilst retaining the Christian ethos?[686]

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[684] Carson, *The Gagging of God,* 297.
Carson believes that Pinnock's view that redeeming love will eventually win is not balanced by the biblical emphasis upon God's holiness, wrath and purposes.
[685] Ibid, 296.
[686] Ibid, 295.

4:11 A brief summary of Pinnock's Pneumatological Inclusivism

It is hard to be convinced that Pinnock's hermeneutic of hopefulness has an answer that can claim to hold to a Scripture principle for the salvific path of non-Christian religions.

Pinnock is far too general and reactionary towards traditional Evangelical belief exaggerating its pessimism and extolling the claims of Inclusivism. Even within Christendom Pinnock's strident approach has been noted. For instance, even the American Catholic theologian Chester Gillis wrote:

> While Pinnock heralds Vatican II and cites several recent Catholic theologians approvingly . . . at time sounding more Roman Catholic than Evangelical Protestant, still he refutes certain theories arising from Catholic thinkers. *It is a particular brand of Inclusivism* they espouse, accepting some elements, rejecting others. Sometimes they seem as if they are attempting to carve out an 'Evangelical Inclusivism' that will both distinguish them from main-line Catholics and Protestants and *continue to endear them to Evangelicals.*[687]

Gillis was absolutely right; Pinnock's Inclusivism was a carved out version to appeal to 'new Evangelicals'. It was a multi-faith project and ecumenical endeavour within an Evangelical context. Of course all contemporary religions have to deal with inter-faith relationships and dialogue. Isolationism is difficult and wrong in a shrinking world of globalization but Pinnock's theological pluralism undercuts the normative of Jesus Christ.

To make his case for cautious Inclusivism, Pinnock appears to give salvific status to aspects of the good and truth found in other religions and cultures. He redefines the meaning of Evangelical faith: There is salvation for those who, without knowing God as

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[687] C. Gillis, (1996) "Evangelical Inclusivism: Progress or Betrayal," in *Evangelical Quarterly*, 148. (Emphasis added).

revealed in the gospel who have showed justice to the oppressed, and acted in accordance with God's purposes.[688]

Such a statement is the antithesis of Evangelicalism which repudiates any works based righteousness. In spite of his assertions, he does appear to offer relativism as an alternative to Christocentrism.[689] He calls for an objective debate about the value which other religions have. He makes a good point when he asks: Why is Plato worth talking to and not Lao-Tzu?[690]

Contemporary Evangelical thinking is that God *may* use religion as one of God's options for evoking general faith and communicating non-salvific grace.[691] For an Evangelical, Pinnock's Inclusivism is an extreme trajectory. He uses terms such as *God* and *salvation* outside of biblical or Evangelical content. Although his stated aim is to remain within Evangelical parameters, Pinnock redefines Christological normative truth claims in such a way that they can encompass any religion.[692] His overall thesis too tenuous and his arguments needed a lot more honing, but he has initiated thoughtful and relevant, contemporary questions regarding Inclusivism that do need resolution.

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[688] Gray, and Sinkinson, eds. *Reconstructing Theology*, 265.
[689] Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy*, 129.
[690] Ibid, 141.
Pinnock called for theology and apologetics to be done within a global context and outside of Western intellectual currents.
[691] Okholm, and Phillips, eds. *Four Views on Salvation*, 100.
Pinnock was clear that grace operates beyond the constraints of any religious setting.
[692] Gray and Sinkinson, eds. *Reconstructing Theology*, 182.
C. Sinkinson, 'Clark Pinnock and the World Religions'.

4:12 Pinnock's Conditional Immortality

Clearly linked to Pinnock's Inclusivism and his views on those who have never heard of Christ was his theology on Conditional Immortality or Annihilationism.[693] Annihilationism is the belief that the final state of those who are not redeemed is a literal, and final, death and destruction.[694] Annihilationism is the belief that eternal punishment means permanent elimination. Such a view has been a minority Evangelical position, although this chapter argues that Pinnock was clearly heading down this route with his cautious Inclusivism.[695]

Pinnock first published his acceptance of belief in Annihilationism, in the form of Conditional Immortality, in the magazine *Christianity Today*,[696] Pinnock began his defence of Conditional Immortality by arguing (once again)[697] that it was Greek concepts

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[693] Conditional immortality is different to annihilationism. The Platonic concept of the immortality of the soul is not an orthodox Christian doctrine. Conditional immortality has an emphasis upon a belief that either mortality prevails or else there is total destruction. Conditional immortality does not hold to a belief in the continued existence of the soul, which is Pinnock's position. However, annihilationists hold a different anthropology, a more Platonic view of the soul's immortality, and therefore, paradoxically, find difficulty with the term annihilation, even though it is the nearest description to their belief in a cessation of existence.
So Pinnock was not technically an annihilationist, but for the purpose of this thesis and in keeping with general opinion (even some Evangelical scholars whose views will be expressed) conditional immortality and annihilationism will be considered synonymous, since they both represent belief in a cessation of existence and a denial of hell as a place of eternal, conscious punishment.
A useful taxonomy on the subject is found in:
N. M. de Cameron, ed. *Universalism and the Doctrine of Hell* (Grand Rapids Baker Pub. 1992), 196-199.

[694] Annihilationism has to be understood in contrast to the traditional view, which teaches that unrepentant wicked beings will remain conscious in hell forever.

[695] Pinnock acknowledged that it was certain Evangelical authors who had persuaded him to adopt the position of conditional immortality. The particular authors he cites are:
John Stott, Essentials: *A Liberal Evangelical Dialogue* (London: H & S, 1988).
Edward Fudge, *The Fire that Consumes* (Fallbrook, Calif: Verdict Pub. 1982).
P. E. Hughes, *The True Image: The Origin and Destiny of Man in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989).
M. Green, *Evangelism Through the Local Church* (London: H & S, 1990).

[696] "Fire then nothing" in *Christianity To-day*, (20th March 1987) : 40-41.
This was then expanded by Pinnock in a later book entitled: Pinnock, *Theological Crossfire*.
He also developed the topic further in a paper called:
C. Pinnock, (1990) "The Destruction of the Finally Impenitent," in *Crisewell Theological Review*, 4, 243-60.

[697] See 4:2.

of immortality that clouded early Christian interpretation and understanding of Hell. He wrote that apart from Tertullian, who was an advocate of hell as a place of everlasting torment, the earlier Christian sources (and he included the Didache) displayed annihilation as the final state of the unrepentant sinner.[698] He argued that Origen had a belief in a form of universalism that ultimately secured salvation for all. To Origen Hell existed for the purpose of purification.[699] In particular, two aspects of Origen's theology appealed to Pinnock, the first was its optimism regarding universal salvation and secondly it was his emphasis upon the love of God as a never failing pull towards reconciliation.[700] As mentioned throughout this thesis, Pinnock was impressed with Irenaeus and his motif of recapitulation. Recapitulation held to an optimism of salvation regarding the majority of people.[701]

In contrast to such optimistic soteriology, Pinnock argued that Augustinianism (including Calvinism) denied the largeness of salvation, and virtually denied the freedom of the will.[702] Pinnock argued that once Augustine's influence and vision of Hell was

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[698] The Evangelical ACUTE report on hell writes that Tertullian opposed those who interpreted 'destruction' as annihilation. The report went on to argue that conditional immortality made the final resurrection redundant. The Nature of Hell: A Report by the Evangelical Alliance Commission on Unity and Truth Among Evangelicals (ACUTE) working Group: David Holborn, Faith Forster, Tony Gray, Philip Johnston and Tony Lane. The Importance of the ACUTE report is not just in its findings but the fact that its existence is to seek unity and truth among Evangelicals. With that criteria in mind it clearly reflects a 'new Evangelical' Evangelical debate.

[699] Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy,* 55.
Pinnock was quoting from Against Celsus IV:13; VI:25.

[700] Ibid,

[701] See 4:8 on Irenaeus doctrine of recapitulation.

[702] Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy,* 182.
It is not insignificant that Luther (an ex-Augustinian Monk) wrote his famous rebuffal of Erasmus in a book entitled "*The Bondage of the Will*" in reply to Erasmus book on the freedom of the will.
See: Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will,* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2000).
Translator J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston.

established, it was only then that this became the dominant view within Christianity for over a millennium.[703]

However, this was a rather prejudiced opinion. Pinnock, in seeking to justify his view, ignores the fact that the majority of the early Church Fathers including Lactantius, Jerome, Cyril of Jerusalem and Chrysostom all agreed with Augustine. Furthermore, they openly rejected both the annihilationism and the universalism of Origen, as recorded in his doctrine of *apokatastasis* which taught the universal reconciliation of all creation including Satan.[704] Origen was never canonized and his work was posthumously condemned in 553 AD. The reality was that the majority of Church Fathers endorsed the biblical account of hell fire and damnation. Pinnock's references to the early church endorsing immortality are highly selective and rather disingenuous.

However, to Pinnock the pessimistic Augustinian view of the eternal state of the unrepentant, was compounded by Aquinas and Calvin, who established such a belief within both the Catholic and Protestant communities. Further, Pinnock's rather tenuous exegetical biblical reworking of the doctrine of Hell, with its overemphasis on divine love, finds him close to holding a Universalist position. Pinnock was adamant that he was not a Universalist because he believed in the uniqueness of Christ.[705]

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[703] W. Crockett, ed. *Four Views on Hell* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub.1992), 138.
William Crocket also disagrees with Pinnock's view that annihilationism was never the norm before Augustine. Crocket further disputes that the Didache teaches annihilationism and he offers a lot of evidence to support the view that the norm of belief was for eternal suffering as the lot of unrepentant sinners.
[704] W. Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, 4th Edition (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992), 156-157.
[705] O. Cullmann, *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead* (Eugene: WIPF and STOCK, 1964), See also n 1 of 4:12.
As noted in footnote 693, natural immortality of the soul is not a Christian doctrine. Oscar Cullmann rightly points out that belief in the immortality of the soul is in antithesis to belief in the resurrection of the dead.

Pinnock was clear in his thinking that the Bible did not teach the immortality of the soul, but it did teach conditional immortality. To Pinnock, if the soul is not immortal then it can be destroyed (annihilated), or it can be resurrected with the body. In seeking biblical confirmation for his position Pinnock tried to build an argument from such passages as Psalm 37:10: *The wicked will be no more.* However, again his exegesis is lacking, and appears to be more proof texting. The majority of texts in the Scriptures do reflect Hell as the archetypal ultimate place of evil.[706] Pinnock seeks to portray the biblical account of Hell as almost benign. His doctrine of Conditional Immortality cannot be substantiated from the biblical account.

Pinnock did agree that Annihilationism was not a majority Evangelical view, but he reasoned that for quite a while Evangelical Protestant luminaries such as William Shedd, Anthony Hickman and Millard Erickson taught that teaching on hell should be treated metaphorically and not literally. As an irony, he cited his arch critic Don Carson as one who rejected belief on a literal hell fire, along with other Evangelical luminaries such as F. F. Bruce, Donald Guthrie and Carl Henry.[707] The issue though was about more than a literalness of the flames of Hell, it was about the post-mortem state.

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[706] For instance Hell is described as a place 'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched' (Mark 9:48), a place of outer darkness and gnashing of teeth (Matt 8:12), a place of dungeons and everlasting chains (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). The biblical language for Hell is graphic and neither neutral or ambiguous. The most cursory reading of the account could never claim to reflect eternal judgement as annihilationism.

[707] Crockett, ed. *Four Views on Hell,* 44 n 6.
In making little headway in the biblical account debate, the conditional immortality thinkers turned to etymological, arcane arguments to justify their position. For instance Stott (who Pinnock quotes from) argued that the verb 'to destroy' ἀπόλλυμι and its cognates were best understood as a cessation of existence (i.e to kill). He reinforced this reasoning by arguing that the middle intransitive use of the same verb was often translated 'to perish'. However, the απωλεια word group has a range of meanings. For instance the 'lost' coin or 'prodigal' son or 'ruined' wineskins of the gospel accounts never equate lostness with cessation of existence. Therefore, Stott's definition seeking to make 'destruction' synonymous with 'annihilation' is not warranted.

But Pinnock was right in one respect; Annihilationism was certainly on the agenda of 'new Evangelicalism.' Pinnock acknowledged this, and recognized that his own understanding of the contemporary debate was indebted to the British scholar John Wenham.[708] Wenham became so well-known regarding this debate that his autobiography was entitled *Facing Hell.*[709]

The whole debate became so prominent within Evangelical circles in the United Kingdom that in AD 2000 the leading Evangelical organization known as the Evangelical Alliance published a report called *The Nature of Hell.*[710] In this report, Pinnock is quoted many times, and his theology is debated on more times than any other theologian, including Wenham and Stott. The conclusion and recommendations of this report recognized that Conditional Immortality had now become *a significant minority Evangelical view.*[711]

Pinnock looked for support for his position from other theologians outside of Evangelical circles. In particular, he argued that Rahner and Hans Kung saw no correlation between eternal torment and the love of God. Pinnock quoted from Küng:[712] "Even apart from the image of a truly merciless God that contradicts everything we can

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[708] J. W. Wenham, *The Goodness of God* (London: IVP, 1974).
Wenham was a Greek scholar of influence, both Stott and Pinnock expanded on Wenham's thesis.
[709] J. Wenham, *Facing Hell: The Story of a Nobody – An Autobiography 1913-1996* (U.K.: Paternoster Press, 1998).
This was set out in his book The Goodness of God (1974). Wenham was a Greek scholar of influence, both Stott and Pinnock expanded on Wenham's thesis.
[710] The Evangelical Alliance Commission on Unity and Truth ACUTE (2000), *The Nature of Hell* (Carlisle: Paternoster Pub).
[711] *The Nature of Hell,* Article 19, 134.
During 1998 ACUTE surveyed member churches and their leaders. The survey showed 79.6% believed in eternal punishment and 14.2% believed in conditional immortality.
[712] Crockett, *Four Views on Hell,* 153.
H. Kung, *Eternal Life, Life After Death as a Medical, Philosophical and Theological Problem* (NY: Doubleday 1984), 136-137.

assume from what Jesus says . . . the idea not only of a lifelong, but even eternal punishment of body and soul, seems to many people absolutely monstrous."[713]

The conservative Evangelical response was that it was an emotional reply driven by secular sentimentalism, not by a biblical understanding of sin and divine justice.[714] Nevertheless, Pinnock's understanding of divine love allowed him to emphasize that's God's will for universal salvation was so strong, that it must included post-mortem encounters.[715] Conditional immortality to Pinnock indicted a post mortem judgement resulting in either eternal life or eternal annihilation.[716] However, Pinnock conceded that God would not provide eternal life to those who did not want either salvation or God's friendship.

4:13 Summary of Pinnock's Inclusivism and Conditional Immortality

Pinnock addressed religious pluralism and Conditional Immortality head on. He sought to challenge relativists to consider whether all they had on offer was a dialogue with no soteriological assurance. In turn he challenged Evangelicals to reconsider a wideness in God's mercy that was all embracing. Although not particularly successful at achieving success with either objective, what Pinnock did achieve was to introduce the post-mortem debate within the contemporary Evangelical setting.

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[713] Kung, *Eternal Life.*
See also K. Rahner, *Foundation of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity* (NY: Seaburg, 1978), 443.
[714] J. I. Packer, "Evangelicals and the Way of Salvation: New Challenges to the Gospel-Universalism and Justification by Faith" in *Evangelical Affirmations,* eds. K.S. Kantzer, and C. F. Henry (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. 1998), 126.
[715] Crockett, ed. *Four Views on Hell,* 130.
Pinnock is dismissive of evangelism after death but began to think in purgatorial language and there being an opportunity after death for maturation and growth in God's plan for personal holiness.
[716] Ibid, 156.

Pinnock's hermeneutic of hopefulness overemphasized the love and mercy of God, at the expense of downplaying the sinfulness of humankind. Pinnock believed Calvinism (Augustinianism) placed far too much emphasis on monarchical ideas about God and so he took from Arminianism a pilgrim motif of the regenerate church moving towards God as the loving and restoring Father.[717] He also embraced Irenaeus concept of recapitulation.

Whilst Pinnock did stress that he held a Christocentric understanding of the gospel, his emphasis upon the possibility of salvation appropriated through general and not special revelation was not well received within Evangelical circles. His position resulted in him acknowledging a possible universal salvation that did not necessitate even knowledge of the historic Jesus. Clearly such a person was untenable to Evangelical and orthodox Christian belief.

Further, whilst Pinnock is an advocate of mission, his Inclusivist position is a disincentive towards Evangelical mission and is close to a form of universalism. To balance this Pinnock maintained Evangelical credentials with his Trinitarian theology which elevated the role of the Spirit by emphasizing a Spirit Christology.

Pinnock's *ordo salutis* was termed a 'cosmic covenant'. His cosmic covenant taught that prevenient grace was potentially salvific, and located within the doctrine of

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[717] Erickson, *Christian Theology*, Vol. 1, 21.
Pinnock wanted to redefine the conservative monarchical ideas about God and replace them with an emphasis upon the concept of the pilgrim community of the regenerate church moving towards God as the centre of all things. The American Gregory Boyd argued that Evangelicals should think of the cosmos as operating 'by divine choice and more of a democracy than a monarchy'.

Creation. This meant that in reality, Pinnock saw Creation, not the Incarnation, as the start of the soteriological journey. He saw no disjunction between nature and grace.[718]

Pinnock's soteriological Inclusivism does play down many biblical complexities, particularly with regard to harmartiology. Nowhere was Pinnock's playing down of the sinfulness of humanity more obvious to conservative Evangelicals than in his redefining of Hell, and his belief in Conditional Immortality. Nevertheless, it would not be an understatement to conclude that Pinnock has caused thinking on Annihilationism to move from the fringes of Evangelical orthodoxy. Pinnock rightly concluded that with the passage of time, there was no longer a single authoritative Evangelical position on hell and judgment.

Ultimately, Pinnock's Evangelical critics saw him as both a rationalist and a relativist whose *modus operandi* was more philosophical than exegetical. They argued that he diminished the Christological necessity of faith. One thing is certain though, that in spite of the seismic waves Pinnock's Open Theism has caused within Evangelicalism, his legacy including his Inclusivism and his doctrine of Hell has brought the Evangelical movement into a thorough examination and articulation of its core belief within the contemporary setting.

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[718] Okholm, and Philips, eds. *Four Views on Salvation,* 98.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

An Evaluation and Assessment of Clark Pinnock's Theology with particular reference to the Evangelical movement of the late twentieth century

In the preceding chapters I have endeavoured to present and assess Clark Pinnock's theology and the response that it evoked from within the Evangelical movement of the late Twentieth Century. I have argued that he is to be located within the trajectory of a post-World War Two 'new Evangelical' reformer and that his unique contribution to the theological enterprise was as the innovator of Open Theism. I have shown how Open Theism is a theology which developed from Evangelical Arminianism but which went beyond the remit of orthodox Wesleyan thinking regarding the doctrine of God. This thesis has traced the stages and theological innovations which ultimately led to Pinnock's Open Theism.

I have shown how Pinnock became a catalyst for much change within the Evangelical movement as he offered original interpretations of Evangelical theology which were accepted by those Evangelicals seeking reform, particularly those with charismatic and Pentecostal leanings such as the key leaders of PCE Stanley Grenz and Roger Olson.[719] I have also argued that through the articulation of his theology, Pinnock also became a recognised leader of post-conservative Evangelicalism (PCE). Although

[719] His personal embrace of an Arminian starting point was a masterstroke for a radical Evangelical reformer. He caught the zeitgeist of charismatic reform within the late twentieth century Evangelical movement and soon found like-minded and good theological pioneers such as Stanley Grenz and Roger Olson alongside of him. There was a great deal of interaction between them. Pinnock and Grenz were very much original and innovative thinkers and Olson was a good recorder and analyzer of contemporary theological trends. The results of such interaction saw PCE emerging as a new and distinct approach within Evangelicalism. The Evangelicalism that emerged met with popular approval (cont.) (cont.) particularly amongst younger Evangelicals who were turning from austere Calvinism in large numbers with the advent of the Charismatic movement.

this thesis has focused on the development of Pinnock's theology, it has been acknowledged that the man and PCE are closely linked. I have therefore shown how a symbiotic relationship emerged between them.

Olson defined PCE in a broad sense as anti-traditionalist Evangelicalism and more narrowly as post-modern Evangelicalism.[720] This thesis has argued that this was Pinnock's reformist agenda and following this route he argued that authentic Evangelical faith should place more emphasis upon a pietistic, transforming and distinctive spirituality rather than upon the emphasis of correct doctrine, which was the major thrust of Reformed theology. Reformed or Calvinist Evangelicals became the most significant group who opposed Pinnock's theology.

However, this thesis has also recorded how with the passage of time and the emergence of these developments in the form of Open Theism many previous sympathizers such as Donald Bloesch and Stanley Grenz felt that his reforms went too far, yet they still recognized it as being a valid Evangelical opinion. This is also the conclusion of this thesis particularly regarding the unease over aspects of Pinnock's Open Theism. The greatest concern focused on Pinnock's interpretation of the doctrine of God; in particular his reinterpretation of the doctrine of omniscience which denied God's foreknowledge of events. I have shown how Pinnock held to a belief that the future is partly open and partly closed and this was because Pinnock saw the future as contingent upon the human agent. This view became known as a seminiscient position and is an important nuance of Open Theism.

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[720] I confirmed this in correspondence with Olson on 27.10.08.

I have also shown how Pinnock's seminiscient view rejected the Evangelical Arminian position which is a compatibilist view that does not see conflict between God's foreknowledge and human freedom of choice. Throughout this thesis I have argued that although Pinnock starts his theological enterprise from an Evangelical Arminian position, he constantly pushed back their boundaries. He argued that his reformist goal was that of *semper Reformandum* - always reforming, or rather always *seeking to* reform Evangelical faith.

Pinnock never left the Evangelical movement and genuinely saw himself as a *bona fide* member in spite of many calls for him to be rejected as such.[721] I have shown how he considered himself a charismatic theologian whist not becoming Pentecostal or charismatic by denominational affiliation.[722] This thesis has argued that Pinnock was a genuine Evangelical reformer and although misguided and too dogmatic at times, he nevertheless introduced challenging and exciting concepts into the Evangelical agenda, especially with his original approach to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. This thesis considers his pneumatology to be his greatest legacy, more significance than his revised doctrine of God in the form of Open Theism. Certainly in the aftermath of his demise Open Theism was regarded as Pinnock's ultimate contribution to the theological enterprise but I have sought to highlight that his legacy and context is broader than just as

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[721] See footnote 887.

[722] Callen, *Semper Reformandum*, 11.
In *Christianity Today* 8th October 1971, 14th September 1973 and 12th June 1981 Pinnock wrote a number of articles defending the charismatic renewal. Callen wrote that from this time Pinnock "became one with the charismatics not in tongues speaking or making experience the norm but in recognizing the epistemological priority of the Holy Spirit."

a radical doctrinal innovator.[723] I have argued that he will be remembered primarily as a leading reformer of late twentieth century Evangelicalism.

In each chapter of this thesis I have explored four distinct but linking aspects of Pinnock's theological developments, which contributed uniquely to the reforming of the contemporary Evangelical movement. In the first chapter I began by looking at his theological background and considered the early influences and people that caused him to rethink key elements of his conservative Evangelicalism and thus begin his journey of reform. I then showed how this resulted in Pinnock moving theologically across the Evangelical spectrum, from a 'right wing' position as a Reformed Calvinist or paleo-Reformed theologian to that of a 'left wing' Evangelical Arminian.[724] I concluded the first chapter by looking at how Pinnock embraced the Evangelical Arminian position but soon began to develop other key doctrinal trajectories which, in turn, became the precursors to his Openness thinking.

I also set out in Chapter One how Pinnock's unique mutation of 'new Evangelicalism' found resonance with other like-minded reformist Evangelical theologians.[725] Together they honed and articulated an original form of 'new Evangelicalism', which became known as post-conservative Evangelicalism (PCE), and in which Pinnock was considered a leading pioneer.

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[723] Many of his less controversial teachings such as those relating to his Scripture Principle have gained acceptance within the Evangelical community.

[724] M. J. Erickson, *The Evangelical Left: Encountering Postconservative Evangelical theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997).
This view is epitomized by the title of Millard Erickson's popular book, which is a critique of PCE.

[725] This list includes a number of theologians mentioned in this thesis especially Roger Olson, Stanley Grenz, John Sanders, Gregory Boyd, Richard Rice and Nancey Murphy.

I have shown how Pinnock's interaction with likeminded reformers led to his becoming far more theologically flexible, adopting a much freer and open interpretation of Evangelical and biblical belief. This radical theological shift was epitomized in Pinnock's *New Scripture Principle* which was the subject of the second chapter. I focused on how his open hermeneutic of biblical interpretation, which began with the influences upon him as recorded in Chapter One, ended with a radical revision of the historic *sola scriptura* Evangelical position.

I began with this particular aspect of Pinnock's theology because Scriptural authority *(sola scriptura)* is a foundational belief for Evangelical doctrine and Pinnock was adamant that he was an Evangelical. Undergirding all his theology is a primary appeal to the biblical message. This thesis has concluded that Pinnock does maintain a Scripture principle although his exegesis is rather extravagant at times particularly regarding Inclusivism and his doctrine of Hell.

Pinnock never denied the Bible as the basis for Christian belief and authority, but he did develop a new acceptance of both the humanity and the human limitations within the sacred message. Pinnock brought fresh insight to understanding how God participates in human affairs and responds to the human predicament. The net result was that a very different Evangelical hermeneutic emerged, which included re-interpretations of such established Evangelical shibboleths such as inerrancy and infallibility.

Following an analysis of Pinnock's revised Scripture principle, I explored how this modified Evangelical Arminian hermeneutic emphasized the *sufficiency* of Scripture and no longer the *inerrancy* of Scripture, which had been the Evangelical norm throughout

the twentieth century under the Calvinist influence.[726] I have shown how controversy did not deter Pinnock; he had burned his Calvinist bridges and would never return to that position.

Chapter Two went on to set out the view that Pinnock's approach to the Scripture principle became foundational throughout his developing theological enterprise,[727] hence both his Scripture principle and the background to his theological enterprise are included in the same chapter. Pinnock's theological enterprise pulled together two strands – the text that is to say the Scriptures and the context, the cultural environment. Pinnock was amongst those contemporary Evangelical reformers who cogently challenged Evangelicalism to stop channelling its energies solely into text analysis and lower criticism.

Parallel to this aspect this thesis looked in depth at how Pinnock's broader outlook regarding different theologies helped him to modify his own theology accordingly. I have suggested that narrative and process thinkers in particular influenced his Open Theism. His Openness model embraced contemporary culture desiring to express his Evangelical faith 'not just in the language of heaven, but in the time-bound, culture bound languages of earth'.[728]

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[726] In Pinnock emphasising the Wesleyan Arminian trajectory of the sufficiency of Scripture rather than the Reformed focus on the inerrancy of Scripture Pinnock was embracing a much broader interpretive grid.

[727] Within his theological enterprise I looked at Pinnock's "Manifesto for Evangelical Critical Liberty", which was a challenge to Evangelicals to not be afraid of doing their theology within a much broader context of Christian perspectives. See Chapter 2:6:1.

[728] K. J. Vanhoozer, "The Voice and The Actor: A Dramatic Proposal about the Ministry of Theology," in *Evangelical Futures* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 80.
Olson saw Vanhoozer as the key theologian for the next phase of PCE. He acknowledged him as the obvious successor to both Pinnock and Grenz. Although Vanhoozer would be unlikely to accept such an accolade, in terms of his approach to modernity, his rejection of foundationalism and his emphasis upon the witness of the Spirit as more than rational certainty, it is understandable why Olson so classifies him: Olson, *Reformed and Always Reforming*, 28.

As a result of his theological latitude Pinnock helped to develop an ecumenical outlook that offered *a generous orthodoxy* towards all who considered themselves to be Christian in ethos.[729] However, I have put forward the view that Pinnock's largesse was to his Evangelical critics another sign that Pinnock's theology was full of both theological compromise and cultural accommodation. Indeed I have made it clear that to many conservative scholars such as Strange, Carson and Ware, Pinnock was no longer regarded as holding to either an Evangelical Scripture principle or even to Evangelical faith. This thesis has recorded how Pinnock faced a long, but unsuccessful battle to have him ejected from the prestigious Evangelical academic body *The Evangelical Theological Society (ETS)* of which he was a keen member until his death.[730]

In Chapter Three, I have shown how the theological enterprise built upon a Scripture principle, which Chapter Two explored, gained an unexpected impetus following the emergence of the Charismatic movement during the 1960s.[731] Pinnock somehow caught and reflected the grass roots mood for fundamental change within Evangelicalism. Chapter Three suggested that the Pentecostal emphasis upon a Spirit Christology and the Wesleyan pietistic experience constituted a perfect environment for Pinnock's theology to flourish in. I explored how eclectic pneumatological influences were pulled together by Pinnock and finally expressed as a unique doctrine of the Spirit.

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[729] Porter, and Cross, eds. *Semper Reformandum*, 258.
This was a comment Donald Bloesch made about Pinnock and Gabriel Fackre. It is interesting to note that both Bloesch and Fackre were the theologians to whom Pinnock dedicated his *Scripture Principle* book to.
[730] Pinnock had been a member of ETS for over 35years and saw it a significant forum for him to introduce Evangelical reform. However, in November 2002 a resolution was called to expel Pinnock from the society on the basis that his Open Theism was incompatible with the ETS doctrinal basis. The motion was not rejected until a year later in November 2003 and after much debate. Pinnock was upset to find such strong feelings against recognizing him as an Evangelical.
[731] Olson, *Reformed and Always Reforming*, 49.
Roger Olson in his definitive work on PCE writes that 'PCE are the heirs of Pietism and Revivalism who revel in the transforming experiences of God's Spirit and are sometimes seemingly cavalier in their attitude toward tradition'.

He articulated this doctrine, and the eclectic sources he drew from, in what is deservedly an acclaimed and award winning book *Flame of Love.*

This thesis has shown how Pinnock drew pneumatological insights from many ecumenical sources and, in particular, he drew from Eastern Orthodoxy.[732] I have argued that a number of key concepts within Pinnock's theology emerged directly from Orthodox teaching. I have shown how the Orthodox understanding of the ultimate goal of redemption as the doctrine of theosis fitted easily into Pinnock's Wesleyan understanding of the doctrine of sanctification. Theosis and recapitulation occur throughout Pinnock's theology; even in the last of Pinnock's doctrine that this thesis explored, his doctrine of Hell, theosis is prominent. I have strongly indicated how the Orthodox view of the teaching on the role of the Spirit in Creation can be seen in Pinnock's later Spirit Christology.

Pinnock was most impressed by the Orthodox teaching on the doctrine of the Trinity. This enabled Pinnock to express the bond of divine community as loving mutuality and loving fellowship. Theologically, this relationship was expressed by Orthodoxy as the dance of triune life or perichoresis. I have shown how Pinnock was inspired by perichoresis and his doctrine of God is built on a root metaphor of God as joyful, dynamic and interactive.[733]

I have also shown in Chapter Three how Pinnock developed the scope of prevenient grace understanding it as universal and salvific. The thesis showed how Pinnock drew on

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[732] Pinnock, *Flame of Love,* 92.
In writing on Spirit Christology Pinnock says 'I am indebted to Eastern Orthodox theology'.
[733] Ibid, Introduction.
The first quote in *Flame of Love* is from St John of the Cross-who calls the Spirit a living flame of Love and celebrates 'the nimble, responsive, playful, personal, gift of God.'

the principle of prevenience from the Wesleyan tradition and then expanded it, interpreting it as both missiological and salvific.

This third chapter was deliberately put as a shorter single-issue paper because Pinnock's Spirit doctrine was so pivotal and unique in the consolidation of his theological enterprise built on a Scripture principle, in his understanding of the reform of Evangelicalism and in the preparation of his developing and evolving Open Theism. I have sought to emphasize the Spirit as his pivotal doctrine. I put forward the view that Pinnock's pneumatology was his greatest legacy to the Evangelical movement.

However, I have also shown throughout this thesis that Pinnock was no settler regarding his journey to reform, and soon his theology moved on from pneumatological considerations to formulating his unique contribution to the theological enterprise known as Open Theism. Pinnock's Open Theism was essentially a deconstruction of Evangelical belief in the doctrine of God. Its key features were analysed in Chapter Four and I have shown how Pinnock's Openness thinking was the climax to his own theological journey.

Open Theism would not have been possible without Pinnock's developed doctrine of the Spirit and his open Scripture principle. To those who had followed Pinnock's trajectory, his final theological enterprise offered no surprise in its conclusions. However, to Evangelicals, including many PCE, Pinnock presented a radical and unfinished new paradigm for Evangelical belief that was unacceptable in its conclusions going beyond any previous Evangelical interpretations of omniscience and the freedom of the will.

I have shown in this thesis that during the 1990s, PCE and early Openness theologians were synonymous but with the passage of time and the emergence of

Pinnock's interpretation of Omniscience divisions occurred. Pinnock's views on omniscience and God's lack of knowledge of certain future events were a step too far for many, even amongst those who wanted genuine Evangelical reform. It would, therefore be accurate to state that Pinnock and other Open theists are PCE but not all PCE are Open Theists.[734]

Nevertheless, in spite of some discontinuity, PCE and Pinnock's were agreed upon certain emphases needed for Evangelical reform.[735] One such emphasis was a belief in Scripture as a metanarrative of truth rather than a depository for propositional truths enshrined by doctrine, as was the focus of Reformed thinking. I have supported the view that Pinnock as a 'new Evangelical' functioned as an Evangelical narrative theologian rather than as a Christian apologist.

Pinnock's whole approach to the theological endeavour was for a freer Evangelical hermeneutic and that meant that often he placed too strong an emphasis upon the freedom of the will and genuine human choice at the expense of divine omnipotence. To justify his position, Pinnock looked for different root metaphors in Scripture to describe the divine relationship with humanity. For instance, he placed an emphasis upon God as a loving, guiding parent rather than upon God as a controlling, preordaining monarch. In Chapter Four I examined the new root metaphors that Pinnock adopted- although he rejected any reduction of Evangelicalism to a single model.

I have shown how Pinnock was convinced that Evangelicalism had suffered because of a Calvinistic (Augustinian) influence that distorted the biblical model. I have

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734 This conclusion that I had come to was confirmed in correspondence with Roger Olson 27.10.08.
735 Olson, *Reformed and Always Reforming*, 28.

concluded that Pinnock's zeal in the ensuing debate took a lot of unnecessary energy and focus, which in turn left a lacuna in his theology. For instance, instead of leaving the paradoxes of God within the mysteries of God, Pinnock developed an either/or, right or wrong approach towards much Evangelical theology.

Pinnock spent too much time seeking to make his theology watertight, not in its content but in answer to conservative criticism. The result was predictable, arguments and counter arguments *ad infinitum* with a negative effect upon the Evangelical movement. I have noted how Pinnock perpetuated some of the negative Evangelical characteristics such as intransigence and dogmatism. Pinnock held to many of his views with a dogged determinism, in spite of the fact that many of his views are not complete and still tendentious and in need of further qualification.

Pinnock's answer to such criticism is found in his statement that 'all good theology needs modifications and most theologians change their minds throughout their lives'. I have argued that whilst such a statement has a measure of truth in it, Pinnock's theology has changed much more than most theologians. He has tried to achieve too much change in too short a time. I have pointed out that if he had not been within the contemporary movement of 'new Evangelical' reform, he could well have found himself isolated and classed as a former Evangelical turned liberal (as indeed his conservative critics claimed he was). Such though was neither the reality of the situation nor his destiny. It was not all negative and I have shown how Pinnock helped alter the power base of Evangelicalism

for the better. 'New Evangelicalism' not Reformed Calvinism is now in the driving seat but the final cost to the Evangelical movement *per se* remains to be seen.[736]

Pinnock's own sociological definition of Evangelicalism was that it was a loose coalition based on a number of family resemblances but he certainly felt apart from 'the family' on many occasions: 'I am made to feel stranded theologically: being too much of a free thinker to be accepted by the Evangelical establishment and too much of a conservative to be accepted by liberal mainline. Sometimes I do not know where I belong'.[737]

Whist some sympathy must be given since Pinnock did not want to be excluded from the Evangelical movement; he was far from an innocent abroad. With the single-minded determination of a reformer, he focused on key issues of the critical reform of doctrines and traditions but he appeared to give little thought to not just the ramifications

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[736] Although Warner argued that it was before the PCE movement emerged that Calvinism lost its place of prominence. Warner recorded that as early as 1966 the Calvinistic conservatives dealt a self-inflicted wound with their separation from much milder Evangelical reforms as propounded by the likes of John Stott. Following the Second Assembly of the National Association of Evangelicals in London on 18th October1966, an irrevocable split occurred between mild reformers led by Stott and intransigent conservatives led by Martin Lloyd Jones. However, this has to be further balanced by ultra-radical reformers who felt the PCE of the 1980s did not go far enough. This reform of the reform movement was best represented by a one-time prominent 'new Evangelical' leader, Dave Tomlinson. He became disillusioned with all forms of Evangelicalism and wrote a strident book called *The Post-Evangelical*. Post-Evangelicalism was a call for root and branch ecclesial, sociological and philosophical reform to respond to the complex contemporary society. Although PCE leaders considered Tomlinson's views overdrawn, he did espouse many of their concerns. More important, following PCE the next movement within 'new Evangelicalism' has become known as the Emergent Church Movement (ECM). ECM has followed a more Post Evangelical agenda rather than a PCE one, particularly with their embarkation upon further deconstruction of Evangelical belief and practice. ECM emphasizes the context pole of Evangelical belief, promoting a Christian subculture that positively engages with post-modernity. All in all, the Evangelical world is in a state of flux and the opposite ends of the spectrum appear more divided than ever.
A more full account of the situation is found in the following resources:
R. Warner, *Reinventing English Evangelicalism (1966-2001), A Theological and Sociological Study*, (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007).
D. Tomlinson, *The Post Evangelical* (London: Triangle SPCK, 1995).
E. Gibbs, and R. K. Bolger, *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Post-modern Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005).

[737] Pinnock wrote this in his Foreword to Roennfeldt's book:
Roennfeldt, *C. H. Pinnock on Biblical Authority.*

for Evangelical belief but to the equally objective and persuasive counter arguments which would emerge. Pinnock did not always give a satisfactory answer to his critics.

In a rather exaggerated claim Pinnock rather condescendingly claimed that he had always found it possible to reform his own post-fundamentalist thinking within Evangelical parameters even though his conservative opponents would not do so.[738] Also, with some incredulity Pinnock maintained that he retrieved and kept the best of historical conservative thought which he referred to as 'classical faith'.[739]

Pinnock believed that he was on a heuristic journey and was always reforming *(semper reformandum)* the Evangelical model. However, his opponents believed he wasn't reforming at all but was constantly changing his mind because his arguments were flawed. To Pinnock, he was 'chipping away at a number of barnacles that cling to the good ship of Evangelical theology'.[740] To many conservative Evangelicals, he was putting a hole in the boat.

The upheavals from the fissiparous movements within Evangelicalism have probably marked the end of any future Evangelical homogeneity. Nevertheless, Pinnock found many allies amongst Evangelicals who were unhappy with the influence and rationalism of Reformed Scholastic theology. They were impressed with Pinnock's new Arminian perspective and his Spirit impacted hermeneutic. Many fellow theologians honoured Pinnock as a genuine Evangelical reformer as was seen in the title and content

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[738] Roennfeldt, *C. H. Pinnock on Biblical Authority.*
[739] Ibid,
[740] Pinnock made this comment in his Afterword in Callen's *JTR*, 270.

of his Festschrift *Semper Reformandum*.[741] Was Pinnock a reforming Evangelical or a heresiarch? This was the bottom line for Evangelicals to consider and the view that I have put forward is that it is dependent upon which Evangelical trajectory one is looking at, but in general I believe Pinnock was a much needed Evangelical reformer who needs to be assessed beyond the controversies surrounding Open Theism.

Pinnock's Openness model of revelation was dynamic, not static. Pinnock saw biblical doctrine as a tool to tell the story, not as the climax to it, and he is to be commended for helping to contemporize Evangelicalism in this way. Pinnock was undoubtedly an '*agent provocateur*, a catalyst for much needed Evangelical reform'.[742] To Pinnock his constant revision and eclecticism, which drew from many sources, was part of his theological pilgrimage:

> I do not apologize for admitting to being on a pilgrimage in theology, as if it were in itself some kind of weakness of intelligence or character. Feeling our way toward the truth is the nature of theological work even with the help of Scripture, tradition and community. . . . A pilgrimage, therefore, far from being unusual or slightly dishonourable, is what we would expect theologians who are properly aware of their limitations to experience. . . . I am more like a pilgrim than a settler. I tread the path of discovery and do my theology en route.[743]

Pinnock went on to describe his Evangelical relationships as 'the meanderings of a pilgrim that can be infuriating for defenders of a fortress'.[744] He explored the lands well beyond Evangelical fortresses and strongholds. Pinnock was astute enough to realize that

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[741] Porter, and Cross, eds. *Semper Reformandum*, Introduction.
The editors of the *Festschrift* acknowledged that not all the contributors agreed with Pinnock but they all saw him as a man of sincerity and original theological thought who recognized the provisionality of historical theological systems

[742] Ibid, 15.

[743] C. Pinnock, (1998) "A Pilgrim on the Way," in *Christianity Today*, 43.
Pinnock quoted this in a conference which was an Evangelical-process theological dialogue delivered at the Claremont School of Theology in 1997. Quoted by Callen, *JTR*, 122.

[744] Callen, *JTR*, 122.

his Evangelical critics were more concerned with the direction that Pinnock was taking than with the individual doctrines brought into focus.

He openly stated with sincere belief that his contribution to Evangelical theology was far more constructive than destructive. He argued that all Evangelical theologians should help reform fundamentalism and acknowledged that the contemporary task began with Carl Henry, the first 'new Evangelical' in the 1950s (as this thesis suggested in Chapter One).[745] Sadly with Pinnock's death in August 2010 no further theology will emerge from him but in this evaluation and assessment of his theology, I believe that this thesis has shown that Pinnock's legacy to Christian theology in general has been to offer a creative and contemporary vision of an Evangelical theology.

This thesis has sought to evaluate and assess Pinnock's theology in reference to the Evangelical movement of the late Twentieth Century. Pinnock through his theological enterprise, culminating with his Open Theism, has offered a challenging if unfinished new paradigm for Evangelicalism to consider in the Twenty First century. It is true that Pinnock has been the catalyst for much rethinking within the contemporary Evangelical movement and that his theology has always evoked a thorough and immediate response. It would be both an appropriate, and accurate, conclusion to state that Pinnock's theological journey and unique contribution to the Evangelical theological enterprise, has caused the Evangelical movement to reassess both its beliefs and methodology.

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[745] C. H. Pinnock, Afterward - a concluding chapter in his biography, Callen, *JTR*, 269.

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