

**Christological Conceptions within the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhado Church
(EOTC) and the Ethiopian Evangelical Churches (EEC): Possible
Christological-Soteriological Unity between the EOTC-EEC**

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Chapter One

I Introduction/Problem

Christological debates have been all through the history of the church. Different exegetes responded differently towards the issue of Christology. All the responses seem to be responses for the doctrinal/theological uncertainties within their own historical context. For instance, the responses of Nestorius and or Eutyches or Cyril or Chalcedon with the philosophical difficulties of the “two natures in one person” led to a hypostatic controversy of the human and the divine or the vice versa.

Before we step into the detailed discussions of our own quests, let’s re-enforce the gist of this research by reviewing a little bit of Christological quests from the past. In practice, trying to examine all enigmas of the past is an unfeasible task. Therefore we would be selective in our approach of dealing with seeming puzzles of the past.

For this very purpose this research will mainly focus on Nestorius, Eutyches, Cyril and Leo. Then we will try to see how these frameworks have influenced the Christological doctrine in church history, mainly Ethiopian church history. Rationale behind our selection of them is because we see that these are more or less primary and extremes on the continuum. Even though, this thesis will not be silent concerning recent Christological developments in the western world contributed by Scholars such as; debates from Schillebeeckx, DJ Dunn etc.

Nestorius a presbyter at Antioch, and later patriarch of Constantinople (428-435 A. D.) distinguished between the two natures; (Schaff 1910 :714, 717, 729) see also (Rochie :346). He was actually against the description of Mary as the Mother of God (*theotokos*), (Harnack 1961 :181) therefore very careful either not to call Mary *theotokos*, as he said no one can give birth to anyone older than herself (Jurgens :200-202). Nestorius seem to hold on to the idea of Christ who is constituted of two persons, as he emphasized the relation between the two natures in terms of a moral ‘conjunction’ or a merging of wills rather than that of

an essential union. In actuality he did not divide Christ into two 'sons' but he refused to attribute to the divine nature to the human acts (Dowley,1977 :172). Nestorius preferred the *Christotokos* title to Saint Mary as God cannot have a mother (Kelly,1980 :311) and finally resolved the case saying Mary the "mother of Christ" (Jedin,1980 :100). His first letter to Cyril, as was translated into English which says;

it is no small error, but similar to the corruption of Apollinarius and Arius, blending together the Lord's appearance as man into a kind of confused combination...and openly blaspheme God the Word consubstantial with the father, as if he took his beginning from the Christ bearing virgin (Rochie :347).

Nestorius reinforced his argument saying, the two natures (*ousia*) conjugated voluntarily, than hypostatically/natural (Kelly,1980 :315). It is true that Nestorius made a distinction between the human and the divine natures in Christ which he didn't say this of the persons as Nestorius speaks of a *prosopon* of union or a hypostasis of persons not natures (*Ousia*). Nestorius was very clear in distinguishing the two natures yet the union of his *prosopon* was not clear that it amounted to almost separation of the two persons, at least by his followers (Jurgens :203). He said Christ Himself was not born, but only the man Jesus. Hence, Mary was not to be called the mother of God. Only to the man Jesus, could birth, suffering and death be ascribed. As a result certain acts of the Lord were ascribed, to His Divine and certain to His human. All his arguments are more or less to protect the divine immutability from the Human acts in which more will be said later concerning this issue (Grillmeier 1979 :462).

As was hinted in the above discussion, Nestorius continues saying, we should not attribute the acts of the humanity to the deity; the divine LOGOS is not fed with milk or grow. The union in Nestorius is more of a moral union which so separates the two natures, therefore the becoming in John 1:14 seems to be ignored. The "becoming" is not indwelling, as if the Divine was just inside but not part of the flesh.

Nestorius's justification that the beginning of God the Son is not the incarnation is

acceptable with no question. But it seems very obscure for what category Nestorius argued. Is it about the age of God? Or is it about the person of God or the nature of God or what? We don't also see anywhere that Cyril made God to begin during the virgin birth, as the age or eternality of the Son was not so much a question. His frustration with Arius who so denied the divine, his frustration with the ideas from Apollinarius who so denied the human element also his fear of Cyril's esteem who so dignified Mary the Mother of the divine (*theotokos*), seem to make Nestorius to free his thoughts from all the three by making a clear distinction between the divine and the human. If the two natures share a common person, where the person referred here is not from Mary but the eternal person, the divine Son, this person could be enhypostasized into the flesh from Mary, through a dynamic flow of life into both natures. Then right after the incarnation, what belongs to the divine also belongs to the human. The question is, how much of the empowerment is live in the two natures? But if the two natures are so divided as in Nestorius, these may lead that the two natures have their own independent person, independent acts as well.

As far as this conversation is concerned the only point supposing discussion from Nestorius is the immutability issue when it comes to a reconciliation of the incarnation in human terms. Therefore, a challenge to Nestorius Christology may be that, if God has not suffered for the cause of human salvation, all purposes of the incarnation would seem futile and fairy-tale. Why incarnation after all? Who is incarnated after all? These questions are basic which Nestorius doesn't seem to consider in his Christological treatments.

As Nestorianism is the result of a dispute at the Synod of Ephesus in 421, hence the church condemned Nestorianism as heresy at the third general council (Ephesus 431), (Qualben: 122). The Synod decided against Nestorius in favor of the Alexandrian theology that he was declared as heretical, accused of taking the Antiochene School to the extreme of creating two 'Christ's', up until being driven to exile. This is where the Antiochene theology separated itself from the Alexandrian theology. Anyways, in 428, Nestorius became the patriarch of

Constantinople and Cyril continued as the patriarch of Alexandria.

This discussion incurs a bit treatment of mutability/immutability issue. It is true that the divine is impassible, but impassible in what sense? It is true that the divine is impassible when it comes to what is uncreated. Whereas God's essence (including the incarnate one) and God's decree is very natural which is there eternally but has somewhat manifested itself in time and space like creation, incarnation, salvation, etc.... These occurrences appear mutable yet not necessarily implying mutability but actualization of the eternal decrees of God. Having this thought as an option to comprehend passibility/impassibility issues, for the time being, let's see more comparison of Nestorius and Cyril.

While Nestorius favored a moral union as if the divine stands off the human, implying duality, Cyril went for a perfect union, as in the union of the soul and body in human nature, one entity out of duality (Weinandy 2003 :182–92), where the soul and body coexist under one entity but keep their identity. This argument of Cyril actually stands as a strong case for soteriology than Christology. The becoming denotes a shift towards a new functional composition, denoting a perfect union, according to Cyril, or a union with no losing of identity or retaining its former nature, at the same time without separation, according to Chalcedon.

When we study Euthyches in this line of discussion; against Nestorius, he favored a total mix with total assimilation of one by the other to the point of losing former peculiar qualities, as far as total confusion of the identities. Euthyches explanation made the human nature mythical; He therefore asserted that the divine swallowed everything to bring a totality of one nature. This was also done away as Monophysite heresy (Haggland,1968 : 98). Historically Euthyches was taken as presenting the docetic form of Monophysitism (Kelly,1968 :331), simply refusing that Christ was consubstantial with us.

The relation between the divine and human natures of Christ was actually a set up for early Christian theologians like Augustine in a sort of philosophical framework. The Platonists formula-union without confusion-(they actually used

this formula for the union between the soul and body), is made present in the definition of the union of the two natures in one person which was issued by the council of Chalcedon (451), (Diogenes :57). Details of philosophical correlations of the body and soul with the attempts of the parallel understanding of the two natures of Christ will be dealt in chapter five.

Therefore, we may say that Cyril's position, though very far from Nestorius, seems a little bit close but not exactly similar to Euthyches. Schaff said: "*the Monophysite dispute was a partial reaction towards the Eutychian theory*" (Schaff vol III 1919 :705-708) and Cyril was with an enthusiastic zeal for the honor of Mary, where he piled upon her predicates beyond the biblical limits; yet Cyril did not, like Augustine, exempt the Virgin from sin or infirmity (Schaff Philip 1910 : 946-47); Schaff adds; apart from Cyril's partisan excesses, he powerfully and successfully represented the important truth of the unity of the person of Christ against the abstract dyophysitism of Nestorius (Schaff, 1910 :948). Cyril's theological talent was devoted to preserving Christ's person as a living unity against Nestorian 'dualism'. He advocated an acknowledgement of the completeness of Christ's human nature as the two natures were virtually resolved into one (Dowley, 1977 :174).

Therefore, it seems fair to say that meanings must refer to what Cyril meant than what we or others outside of him might have understood as the Christological /soteriological terms of Cyril to be. A clarification of a natural union in Cyril's treatment states that the union is 'natural' (ἐνωσις φυσική) or 'according to nature' (κατὰ φύσιν), not in the sense that the divine and the human natures are compositionally united forming a third nature but in the sense that it brings about the one ontological entity of Christ. Just as the union of soul and body is 'natural' forming the one entity of man, so the union of the divinity and the humanity is natural bringing about the one Christ. (C. Nest. 2, 1 and 13; Ad Nest. 3, 4–5 and Anathema 3; and Expl. XII Cap. 3).

When Cyril said the scriptures refer to only one nature we must not forget that he

believed God the Son became man and has done everything according to man not according to God. This is where we see extreme views between Cyril and Nestorius. While Nestorius thought that part of the activities of God the Son during the incarnation were done through divinity and part of the activities were done with the human nature, against Nestorius, Cyril thought that all were done according to humanity in one perfectly united nature.

According to Cyril, the natural union during the incarnation gave way to one nature (becoming man), just for the soteriological purposes, where the divine person is still there as an identifying mark of 'who' the incarnate Christ is, with no change to the divine identity but a temporary restraint from his power, so as the human may be presented as a ransom for humanity.

If Cyril may be right in identifying all the actions in humanity, this argument still begs for the justification of impassibility of God. It is good to notice that this discussion never implies a change of the divine, as the divine is obviously immutable, but this attempt proposes that God can act as He wills anytime; at the same time God restrains His power as if none, as both acts are possible for Him.

This is why Cyril could write: 'accordingly all the sayings contained in the Gospels must be referred to a single person (ἐνὶ προσώπῳ), to the one incarnate subject of the Word (ὑποστάσει μιᾷ τῇ τοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένῃ).' (Wickham: 25). Here the customary term *physis* has been substituted by the terms *prosopon* and *hypostasis* which acquire the more Chalcedonian sense of person or subject. The reason Cyril can make such a substitution is that, for him, the one entity of Christ (*physis*) is none other than the one divine person/subject (*prosopon/hypostasis*) of the Son existing as incarnate.

Clarifying this concept of Cyril, Thomas G. Weinandy in his Chapter 2 of Cyril and the Mystery of the Incarnation, elaborated this saying;

Bearing on this point, Cyril actually has two readings of the mia physis formula. The more prevalent one is: μία φύσις τοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη. The other, less common rendering, ends in σεσαρκωμένου. Is there a difference of meaning between the two? In the light of the soul/body comparison, which accompanies both, I believe that the two versions of the

mia physis formula denote that Christ is one entity. However, this is most clearly seen within the *σσεαρκωμένου* rendering where it modifies the *τοῦ λόγου*. The translation would be: 'The one nature (entity) of the incarnate Word'. The one entity of Jesus is the Word existing as man. Where the *σσεαρκωμένη* modifies the *μία φύσις* the formula is translated: 'The one incarnate nature of the Word'. This too specifies that Christ is one entity—one incarnate entity—but now the one incarnate *physis* is that of the Word, and so hidden within the use of the term *physis* is the notion of one subject or person as well. Cyril used 'natural' to emphasize that the union establishes Christ as one entity, and he used *καθ' ὑπόστασιν* ('according to person' or 'personally') to designate the distinctive and singular type of substantial union it is. The incarnational act does not bring about a union of natures, but rather it is the act by which the humanity is united substantially to the person (*ὑπόστασις*) of the Word. Moreover, when Cyril spoke, as quoted above, of 'the one incarnate subject (*ὑποστάσει μιᾷ σσεαρκωμένη*) of the Word, Wickham interprets *ὑποστάσει μιᾷ* as equivalent to *μία φύσις*. While the *ὑποστάσει μιᾷ* is contained within the *μία φύσις*, the nuance is quite significant. The *μία φύσις* is emphasizing the one entity of Christ. The *ὑποστάσει μιᾷ* is highlighting who the one subject is within the one entity of Christ—the one Word/Son. (Wickham in Weinandy 2003 :6 and 25).

Mutability issues may again appear as we discuss either Cyril's or Nestorius's terminologies. This seems the concern of Chalcedon. To clarify probable confusion here, it may be better to argue from a different angle.

The shift of Divinity to humanity appears mutability but the mutability during the incarnation is an actualization of a divine decree rather than a change as we might term it "mutability". As God is an eternal God every deed and decree of God is eternal with nothing sudden. Therefore we may say that as the Son-ship of the second person of the Trinity is eternal the historical union of the Son with humanity is also essentially part of the eternal decree, which was later actualized in time, and appears passibility/mutability, but in reality is a process of realization of the eternal decree.

For Cyril this is the marvelous truth of the Incarnation. God from all eternity may have known, within his divine knowledge, what it is like for human beings to suffer and die, and he may have known this perfectly and comprehensively. But until the Son of God actually became man and existed as a man, the Son of God, who is impassible in himself as God, never experienced and knew suffering and death as man in a human manner. In an unqualified manner one can say that, as man, the Son of God had experiences he never had before because he never existed as man before—not the least of which are suffering and death. This is what, for Cyril, a proper understanding of the Incarnation requires and affirms, and this is what the communication of idioms so remarkably, clearly, and even scandalously safeguards, advocates, and confesses (Russell in Weinandy 2003 :105).

Additional caution is that, this argument is not implying that the 'Son' brought down flesh with him like what was said by Apollinarius. The flesh is a flesh from Mary but made one with the divine through ontological union (Russell :106),

(borrowing hints from Cyril) eternally, and functional union in time, which we theologically call the incarnation. However, since Cyril understands the incarnation as radically different—being a personal/existential understanding—we may boldly say he was not illogical at all. The person of the Son, within his existence as God, is impassible. Within his existence ‘as man’, the ‘Son’ is passible. While not fully comprehensible, this is the rational, intelligible, and coherent logic, that the mystery of the Incarnation demands (McGuckin 1995 : 117). As Cyril explicitly stated,

He (the Son) suffered without suffering.... If we should say that through conversion or mutation of his own nature into flesh, it would be in all ways necessary for us even against our will to confess that the hidden and divine nature was passible [Hallman's wish]. But if he has remained unchanged albeit he has been made man as we, and it be a property of the heavenly nature that it cannot suffer, and the passible body has become his own through the union: He suffers when the body suffers, in that it is said to be his own body, he remains impassible in that it is truly his property to be unable to suffer (McGuckin :117).

As a conclusion to the above flow of argument let's move to the Johannine terming. The Johannine “God became flesh”(Jn 1:14), is a human terming to the divine decree, in the historical occurrence. Still, God having this eternal decree has also experienced the limitation, loss, emptiness, wound and death, in humanity, historically, which was predetermined in the divine foreknowledge. God didn't cease to be God in the Human Jesus, as the historical occurrence was part of the eternal decree in some way, but God needed to actualize His decree in humanity, in time, in limitation, in death, yet still remaining divine in His person.

If we see this analysis in such terms we may find Cyril very relevant and also free Chalcedon from the confusion of logic while it tried to keep the two natures together, in unity and in their own identity (Russell in Weinandy 2003 :106-108). The fully divine Son of God did indeed suffer and die. This is precisely what Nestorius wanted to deny and Cyril wanted to vindicate. Nestorius only focused on the impassibility of God but never treated the possibility of passibility in God the Son, in the nature of man. This is exactly why Cyril asserts that he who is impassible as God actually is passible as man therefore the impassible suffered.

To say, in accordance with Cyril, that ‘the Impassible suffers’ is not, then, to be incoherent, but to state the very heart of the incarnational mystery. Firstly, the term ‘the Impassible’ guarantees that it is actually God, in all his wholly transcendent otherness as God, who suffers, and not ‘God’ in some mitigated or semi-divine state. The fact that God does not lose his wholly transcendent impassible otherness in suffering enhances the identification processes Cyril well knew, the import of the suffering, for it means that the Son who is incapable of suffering as the wholly other God is precisely the same one who is actually suffering as man.

In his *Ad versus Anthropomorphitas*, Cyril asserts that Christ not knowing some things (eg MK 13:31) was not the ignorance of Christ’s humanity but the pretending of His deity. This research on this point differs from Cyril and more will be added in chapter five. The reason of picking Cyril as Christological reference basis of the EOTC doesn’t necessarily imply that everything of Cyril is right Christology and should be defended. But this research has a strong assumption that there are lots of inputs from Cyril towards the Chalcedonies Christology, also Miaphysite Christology.

Harnack defines Cyril’s Christology to include the LOGOS taking the humanity “into His substance”. First of all, what could we say about the human Jesus? Can we say he is not God while human? No, He was, but we should say that His divine power was not freely let in Humanity, so as God may be able to save humanity exposing Himself to limitations of his divine power. This doesn’t imply change but a non-action for a limited period of time. If Cyril is properly read “Man becomes God” doesn’t imply man can do everything as God or man’s nature is changed to be God. We have seen that, primarily, Cyril’s concern is soteriology, making human beings as partakers of salvation and therefore be granted eternal life. What humans became is that they are partakers of the divine eternity, not Godness, but made positioned in the abundance of eternity. Yet it is God who became man, then acted as man in everything. Cyril’s terminology of “God becoming man and man becoming God” was customary even in the theology of

Irenaeus and Athanasius (Robertson Archibald on Athanasius: De Incar 1885 :54).

What makes Cyril different from Monophysites? In contrast to Cyril, Euthyches doesn't make a difference between the natures after the union but the Christology of Cyril clearly referred the union of the two natures making a comparison of the natural body and soul, not to be confused and not to be separated under one person. Therefore Cyril's analysis is totally different from the concept of Monophysis and should rather be termed as Miaphysis.

What Harnack thought in his History of Dogma, IV, against Cyril, may be a misreading of what Cyril really believed? Kyle rather seems right saying that Cyril believed in one nature after the union but Cyril was totally different from what Euthyches thought and also a bit different from what was said in Chalcedon.

As a result it seems fair to assert that Chalcedon is born with such antecedent Christological thoughts. Nestorius, Euthyches, Cyril and even Arius were referred either negatively or positively. So the genesis of Chalcedon was in any of the forerunner Christological analytic attempts. For example, three times the Council employs the Cyrillian phrase 'one and the same' (ἓνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν) and five times speaks of 'the same' (τὸν αὐτὸν). Who is who? is concerning the 'one and the same' and 'the same' is none other than the person of the Son. It is one and the same Son who is 'perfect in Godhead' and 'perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man ... consubstantial (ὁμοούσιον) with the Father in Godhead, and the same consubstantial (ὁμοούσιον) with us in manhood'. The thought evolution led to Nicene Creed 431 A.D., which both the East and West repeated as standard and actually a theory held to the Chalcedonies theology (Latourette 1953/2003 :573).

Having this background, the attempt here is to find out Cyril's contribution to Chalcedon, to the point that his Christological analysis may have more logic, presentable than even Chalcedon. Logically speaking, it seems easy to take the natural union of the two natures towards a "perfect" unity of ONE out of TWO,

than to try to understand two natures united, still retaining their natures, without separation. So it may be said that Chalcedon (451 A D), is simply a metamorphosis of the Christological dynamism avoiding extremes of Eutyches and Nestorius with a bit rejection of Cyril who actually fed most of the basics to Chalcedon before he died in 444 AD.

Chalcedon tried to balance the above plays by respectfully recognizing the two natures avoiding the extreme of separation in Nestorius (which made Nestorius to be banned at 451 A.D decision (Haggland 1968 :98) and, the notion of perfect union in Cyril, and also the notion of assimilation in the thoughts of Euthyches.

The concern of this research is not to justify or modify what Cyril said measuring it against Chalcedon or so. The aim here is to see roots of EOTC Christology and get options where we may clear some misconceptions about Cyril's Christology(Lilles: Faculties Catholiques, 1951), so as to identify some crucial uniting lines between Cyril and Chalcedon with the Christology and soteriology of the West and East and lastly but not least, the Christological soteriological uniting lines between the EOTC and the Evangelicals in Ethiopia(Crestwood *St Cyril of Alexandria*, :198–207, his Introduction to Cyril's *On the Unity of Christ*. 1995, :38, 40). For a similar understanding of the above passage, we may refer to H. Chadwick, '*Eucharist and Christology in the Nestorian Controversy*', *Journal of Theological Studies* NS 2 1951, 159–62. B.).

Anyways, it seems better to say that Cyril was never trying to be against Chalcedon, as he died before it, yet he was responding to Nestorius, who was banned by Chalcedon. Cyril's conceptual response was more soteriological than Christological for the salvation of humanity will be true, only and only, if God can be human (Heb 2:14; 2 Pet. 1:4 ;). In Cyril's thought, discussion of the nature serves more human concerns of soteriology than philosophical concerns of Christology.

The incarnation for Cyril is the son of God as man, indeed acting as man in his

entire earthly ministry, with full dependence upon the Holy Spirit yet still person wise, the son of God, one and same Son who was *homoousion* with the Father and who was born, suffered, died, and rose as man. This is most evident in his championing the *mia physis* formula, that is, Jesus is ‘the one nature of the Word incarnate’ (μία φύσις τοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη). The Miaphysis formula in Cyril never echoed mixture or confusion like in Euthyches but a one reality or one person/entity (Petersham :46–58); (Weinandy :59-66; Coptic church analysis...). The Soul and body in any human are governed under one entity though the soul is not the body or the body the soul.

When we pick Cyril here, it should be noted that his secret successor Timothy as well, was leading this movement, up until Timothy was alleged for the murder of Proterius who was then the patriarch of Alexandria. (Grillmeier 1996: 10). Timothy’s statements go like saying, Christ was consubstantial in flesh with us and that he was not different nature (Grillmeier :17). The above queries and responses more or less targeted on the nature of Christ.

Cyrrillian Christological framework has a far reaching impact in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhado Church till this time, therefore against the chalcedonies, Cyrrillian followers in Ethiopia call themselves as Miaphysite not Monophysite, lining up with Cyril (at least on the official position) rather than with Eutyches. This will be treated in detail in the fourth chapter where there will be a discussion of possible Christological-Soteriological unity between the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhado Church and the Ethiopian Evangelical Churches.

What basically separates Nestorius, Euthyches, Cyril and Chalcedon, as far as this research is concerned, is on the way the two natures are composed and how should the person of Christ be thought?

Therefore, there really is no need of unnecessary divinization to the flesh. Still no need of unnecessary denial of the preexistent nature of Christ, yet affirming that Christ’s virgin birth and humanity was a natural possibility, against ancient Apollinarian Alexandrian philosophy and the undefined Anthiochene abstract.

Lastly, Leo's Christological treatment with others spoke much about nature in its substantiality. While his contemporaries dwelt much in numerical plays as; 1 or 2 or 1 from 2 natures or so, Leo emphasized much on the nature (*natura*) of the substance. We may borrow Grillmeier's own statement saying; "in the confession of one nature, Leo sees the assertion of a 'mixed nature' in a strict sense.

Therefore, Leo always presupposed that what the word received from Mary (a true body with a human soul) merits the designation *nature*" (Grillmeier :25). This analysis goes a little deep into the compositional nature of the will.

As a result, the Miaphysites labeled the Chalcedonians, saying; Leo's position was adopted at the Chalcedon decision (451 A D). They also say whether Leo's position or the Chalcedon decision is against the Eucharistic effect (salvation):

the two natures in a way that eclipsed the Hypostatic Union, thus making the Christ as if He had two different wills resulting in two different kinds of acts. One suitable for the Divine, and the other for the human. This will have a very detrimental impact on the Salvation of mankind. For His acts that are not related to the Logos Incarnate would not be effectual in the Salvation of mankind. The Churches that refused The Tome of Leo adopted in the council of Chalcedon, were persecuted by the Byzantine Emperors. Those Churches are: Alexandria, Ethiopia, Syria, Armenia, and India. The other Churches that accepted the Tome of Leo are: Rome, Constantinople, and Jerusalem. (Gebru 2010 :34)

The Main Problem

EOTC is represented by more than 40 million people and Evangelicals in Ethiopia are more than 15 million. Each group stands for its own sect to the extent of dying for its claims. This research seeks to answer the main question: Can the Christological- soteriological rift between the EOTC and EEC be minimized through establishing dialogue links? 'Is there a meaning in the EOTC-EEC literatures, worthy to die for, to the extent keeping us disunited?

Key Questions

1. Are there exegetical insights, particularly those concerning issues about the nature of Christ between the incarnation and the resurrection, which can influence the answers to the Main Problem?
2. Where do the Ethiopian Evangelicals stand in their theoretical conceptions of

the nature of Christ in between the incarnation and resurrection? East or West?

3. What was the substantial nature of the incarnate Christ, just in between the incarnation and resurrection? What are the justifications?

4. Who took flesh (*Sega Nesto/Amharic*)? The Holy Spirit or the Pre-incarnate Christ Himself? This helps to clear the '*theotokos-anthropotokos*' confusion.

5. How has this fourth question influenced the EOTC-Evangelical Christological dialogue?

6. What could be the possible dialogue links between the EOTC-EEC so as to bring them together on the same flat?

7. Are the existing Christological-Soteriological differences between the EOTC and the EEC worth dying for?

Hypothesis

The assumption behind this thesis is that we see no indispensable difference worthy to die for, between the so called Diaphysite / Miaphysite camps in the existential religious practice of Ethiopia, as far as dissecting Christians. Therefore, a delivery of a mature proposal for a Christological soteriological dialogue between EOTC and EEC opens the door to reunite the Christian church of Ethiopia.

Delimitations

As is mentioned above, this research never tries to repeat past queries which had saturated responses. Rather it tries to pick one persisting problem, anticipating a possible bridge between the rifts, optimistically bringing Ethiopian Christians back together as one family of Christ.

Repeating what others have done on Christology will not be the main focus of this research except to do a literature review of Christology such as Kelly, Chemnitz, Schaff, Grudem, Calvin, Erickson, Feinberg, Charles Hodge and

Berkhof with the '20th Century Theology' by Stanley J. Grenz & Roger E. Olson, so as to trace lines of recurring thoughts in the Christological family. At the same time details of Kenotic theories will not be part of this document.

Main focus here will be the common Christological-soteriological heritages crept in the EOTC-EEC dialogue on the way envisioning possible unity.

Definition of key terms

Chalcedonians - The Chalcedonians and the non-Chalcedonians put emphasis on different specific issues some times leading to unfortunate mislabeling and misunderstandings. Chalcedonians underlined the distinctness of the divinity and humanity in Christ, therefore they were considered by the non-Chalcedonians as Nestorians and the advocates of dyophysitism.

Diaphysite Theology- Two separate natures of Christ, two natures in one person as of the Chalcedonies decision.

EOTC- Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhado Church.

EEC-Ethiopian Evangelical Churches.

Incarnation-/Mistre Segawe-Amharic/- Solidarity of the divine with human, in human limitations, experiencing the full range of human experiences.

Monophysite Theology- is concerned about the person of the incarnate Christ with only one nature (*Monos*- single, *Phisis* nature)'. This is confounding of two natures into one.

Miaphysite Theology- miaphysite Christology highlights the one-perfectly united (*tewahedo*) nature of the Word of God incarnate.

Non-Chalcedonians- Since the non-Chalcedonies highlight the union of the natures in Christ, though without the mixture of the natures, the Chalcedonies described them as if they agreed with Eutyches who said, in Christ there is only

one nature, indicating that one of them was absorbed by the other.

‘Tewhado’- is a term with the mystery of the perfect union of the divine with the human according to elaboration within EOTC literatures; very much lenient to Cyril’s explanation.

Theotokos- as far as the Ethiopian Orthodox Church’s unpublished literatures explain *theotokos* means; the divine nature (God the Word), was united with the human nature which He took of the Virgin Mary by the action of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit purified and sanctified the Virgin's womb so that the Child to whom she gave birth would inherit nothing of the original sin; the flesh formed of her blood was united with the Only-Begotten Son. This unity took place from the first moment of the Holy Pregnancy in the Virgin's womb. As a result of the unity of both natures-the Divine and the Human, inside the Virgin's womb, one nature was formed out of both: which makes Mary the mother of God "The One Nature of God, the Incarnate Logos" as St. Cyril called it.

Presuppositions

This research proceeding assumes that there are common Christological-Soteriological heritages, which may be used as a foreground for the unity anticipated also elemental supportive inputs, which have crept in within the current stance of the EOTC-EEC.

- ☐ Scholarly knowledge of Christ’s nature doesn’t necessarily serve for soteriological purposes, rather may serve for apologetic purposes; what saves us is knowing and believing Him as the exclusive savior.
- ☐ Knowledge of our particular theology with more dialogues towards prioritization of what should come first, setting aside what is secondary or tertiary for each one denomination helps to get the common ground. Then the common Christological/soteriological ground should be endorsed officially by parishioners of each denomination.
- ☐ This research optimistically envisions bringing Christians together back to

their eschatological commanding position, where the church was practicing over the political spectrum, one way or the other, in the foundational 3-4 Centuries.

- With all this, as far as this research is concerned, Authority, Inerrancy and Infallibility of the scriptures should be the determinant factor wherever, whenever. Additionally we see that just 'Believing Christ', saves. Soteriological dialogues in the practical field mostly present Jesus with no complication or apologetic rationale such as one of his nature.
- Jesus saves, not necessarily the articulate knowledge of His person/nature.
- Dyophysite/ Monophysite/ Miaphysite Christology is not the concern or the head-ache of the actual beneficiaries of the offer of salvation.

Therefore an issue in this study is: is there a meaning in the EOTC-Evangelical literatures, worthy to die for? Is Christ divided one for the EOTC and the other for the EEC, as far as keeping us in our own denominational lines?

II Defining Ethiopians and the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhado Church (EOTC)

Ethiopia is a country situated in the eastern horn region of Africa with a population number of 73, 918,508. The people of this nation are not homogenous but composed of minimum 85 nations and nationalities.

2:1 Composition of the People- As I have tried to explain in the above treatment, it is not easy to trace the composition of the people for the reason that the ethnic nationalities are so diversified. As Ethiopia is a nation composed of more than 80 people group or nations and nationalities, the heterogeneity dominates that it makes the composition difficult to identify. Actually the current way of identifying these people group is through the mother tongue they currently use and through their Geographical boundary.

The majority group-the "Oromo" tribe speaks "Oromifa" language and their major concentration is in the west, west south and west central region of the country. The

Oromo tribe holds the major share- of 27, 158, and 47. This counts 36.7 % out of the total composition according to the Dec 2008 official statistics (www.csa.gov.et). The next major group is the “Amhara” tribe who are 17,214,056. These people group speaks “Amharic” language as their nativity. The geographical boundary where these people group are living is partly in northeastern, north central and part of North West Ethiopia.

The third largest group is the Southern People Nations and Nationalities “SNNRP” which counts 15,042,531 in south Ethiopia, then the Somali, which count 4, 439,147 and have dominated the eastern region. The next major group are the Tigrians which count 4,314,456, who speak Tigrigna, who also claim to be Semitic and descendants of Queen of Sheba (around 950 B.C);(*This tale is retold in The Second Book of Chronicles, 8:18* (Pankhurst :16). Then we find the “Afar” who mainly are scattered over the regions of North east and Northern geographical region. This group is 99% Moslem and basically nomads.

(www.ethioembassy.org.uk/archive)

The “Tigrians” with the “Amhara” were politically alert; therefore have been royals alternatively for the most part in the past and even to the present. These people live in the northern part of the country called “Tigray” and Amhara.

(www.ethiopian.history.com). The southern region is currently called as Southern People Nations and Nationalities. These name is given to them politically, may be for the reason that they are composed of multiple minor nations and nationalities which may be counted as close as 60 minor groups. They don’t share the same language but they only share the southern region with almost similar cultural elements.

This explanation doesn’t necessarily represent compositions in the cities because cities are mostly melting pots, so much heterogeneous in nature. For example the capital city of Ethiopia- Addis Ababa has 2,738,248 which is 3% of the total population but this number holds all people groups not necessarily one or two people groups. Having multi ethnic languages, the country has so far only one

federal working language-Amharic.

2.2 History- Ethiopia is one of the ancient countries with rich ancient history. The name Ethiopia is mentioned 45 times (www.hti.umich.edu/bin/kjv-idx?) in the Bible which is an evidence for the antique status of the nation with the Ancient Egyptians, Libyans, Syrians and the Jew. History tells us that the original people of the land are Cushitic who dominated the area of Nile civilization down from Egypt known as Nubia, land of the sun burnt faces. At the time of Isaiah Nubia ruled over Egypt and sent a military expedition to Palestine (Isa 18:1; 20:3; 37:9). At the time of Christ, the kingdom was ruled by queens, called *kandake*, (*Acts 8:27*), (Baur: 31). It is controversial whether this Nubia refers to the people of the current Ethiopia or people who were somewhere in North Sudan or whether the Biblical Cushitic people refers to the current geographical Ethiopia or the current geographical north Sudan. If we see this from its ancient biblical and Christian heritage it refers more to the current geographical Ethiopia as there is vast historical ancient religious and Christian heritages in the current Ethiopia. Yet Paul Bowers in his article on *East Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* under the title “Nubian Christianity” referred it more to north Sudan(Bowers :1985). Therefore it seems fair to say that as there were continuous boarder shifts from time to time we may not be able to point out the exact geographical site but as the way of people relations in the then was more determined by the power of monarchs, it seems that this refers to a monarch from somewhere in East Africa-North Ethiopia, who had his/her control all over the Nile Corridor. So the name ***Nuba-Aetheiopia-Cush*** refers more to powerful people of the then with strong trade relations up to north Egypt, south Arabia, the Middle East and particularly Israel (Spain Jerry 1985 :77).

Following this history, it also seems that some Semitic group have also descended to the land probably from the middle east and east central, that the original Landers are no more dominant in the north, north east and north west. The current people who dominated this area are the “Amhara” and the “Tigrians” who claim to have Semitic blood. Yet, except for the most part of the Southern People Nations

and Nationalities, most part of the nation shares almost similar facial structure and a variety of shades with a gloomy or burning type color which gave them the name “Habesha” or “Abyssinia” -meaning people with a kind of burning face.

2.3 Religion- Still, the diversified nature of Ethnicity in Ethiopia reflects back in the Religion, culture, and values. We may pick only the dominant ones as a sample for this research. As the nation had more than 3000 years antiquity and ancient diplomatic relations of the Abyssinian Monarchs like, ‘queen of Sheba’(1 Kings 10:1-13), with the people of the Middle East and particularly the nation Israel, a substantial number of people in Abyssinian land-(currently Ethiopia), happened to be observers of the Mosaic Law with the law of circumcision. Currently those who follow Jewish religion are minority, statistically insignificant and most of them live in the north western part of the country. Though this group is minority, they still follow the Jewish religion and they mostly consider themselves as Jews who might have descended to those places, most possibly following the diplomatic relations with queen of Sheba, some 2900 years ago. These people are called by the native Ethiopians as the “Felasha” which literally means ‘the Diaspora’ who dispersed from Israel to North and North western part of Ethiopia (Baur 1994 :35). Now these group are unnoticed and are almost disappearing with most of them called back to the nation Israel under the programs of habitations, Israel does to its race from everywhere in the world.

The next blow to religion came after the 1 C. A.D Pentecost in Jerusalem. Here the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8) may have some contributions seedling Christianity in Ethiopia but history doesn’t know much about the exact contributions of this man to this land, after his conversion. History rather has retained other four historic moments which characterized the religious forms in Ethiopia.

2.3.1- Frumentius (Abuna Selama)-The entrance of Christianity to Ethiopia is documented in many accounts. Actually the accounts may hint variable historicity. Many accounts agree that Frumenties was responsible to bring Christianity into Ethiopia (Baur 1994 :35). This incidence is related with the well known story of

the shipwreck in the Red Sea in which Meropius of Tyre and his two companions, Frementius and Aedesius, also from Tyre were the only survivors, where Meropius escaped, but Fremintius, the older of the two, and Aedesius were taken before the king of Ethiopia, on the way introducing Christianity to the then king of Ethiopia, whose capital was Axum, a city in the northern and more mountainous part of the country (Wondimagegnehu and Motovu 1970 :4). Others say it was Theophilus who is some way connected to Frumentius, as his successor or so, responsible for evangelizing Ethiopia. Early Christian mission into Ethiopia was closely tied with the conversion of Royalties in the then (3rd C A D), (*Twin Kings; Ezana-Shaizana/Abreha- Wo- Atsbeha 357 A.D, where the later nomination might be a Christian name*).

The Abyssinian tradition says these individual kings were twin brothers who inherited kingdom from their father in the northern part of Ethiopia-Axum. But Yemeni traditions say there were two competent kings, one in Axum (Ella-Asheba) (Baur : 36) and the other in South Arabia-Yemen, and both were Christianized that legends just connected them as twin brothers. The second option doesn't seem factual for there is no Christian indication in Yemeni. Yet early and wide influence of Christianity is still evident in the current Ethiopia. Any ways, our purpose here is not to trace into these variety of documentations.

Fortunately enough, Ethiopia is one of the ancient nations to accept Christianity as an empire religion. This has happened starting from almost during the birth of Christianity through a mission by the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-40) and a little later during the reign of twin kings in Ethiopia Ezana/Sizana 4th C.A.D.

2.3.2-The Nine Monophysite Monks (Saints)- The early 5th century Monophysites, having been chased away at the council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D. , faced persecution and found refuge in Ethiopia. It is also reported as the East-West or Catholic-Orthodox Or Anthioch-Alexanderia Or Rome-Byzantine divorce (Sebhat Le ab Meseret 1996 :19). The migrants were from Syria and Egypt.

Nine monks out of these migrants were aggressively involved in multiple

missionary activities that they were accorded the title as '*teseatu qedusan*' meaning 'the nine saints'. Establishing monasteries, applying translations into the then Ethiopic language (Geez), and developing the liturgy was their main duty with the propagation of the monophysitic theology which they were abandoned by their own people (Metzeger 1977 :221).

Following this line, tradition celebrates the ascent to the throne in 1270 of *Yikno Amlak* as the restoration of the Solomonic line and the beginning of the golden age of Ethiopia. It is reported that *Yikuno Amlak* was the only surviving descendant of the last Axumite king. He had been educated and protected by the then Monks and with his movable tent thrones from Axum-Shoa and Gondar (Baur :38). *Yikuno Amlaks* grandson, *Amda Tsiyon*(1314-44) took the challenge of expanding Christianity as far as Islamic Adal into south west Ethiopia. The national Epos- the Glory of kings (*Kibre Negest*), was also written during his reign.

As far as history tells, the seat of the kingdom in Ethiopia was at Axum in Tigre in 4th C A.D and until the middle ages (1270 A.D.). Little by little the seat of the kingdom moved towards the south, first to Lasta Lalibela some 150 miles away from Axum. This was during the greatest of the Zagwe kings in the early 13th C A.D., outdoing Axum, with a replica of Zion at Lalibela. Then the kingdom moved more to the south, 400 miles from Axum to Shoa-Debra Mitmaq, during the reign of Zera ya' iqob in 1449 A.D. who was more or less promoting political theology (Hastings 1999 :4, 34). The Zenith of Ethiopian Christian culture came a century later under king *Zera Ya' iqob* (1434-68) which gave way to a truly Ethiopian kingdom and Ethiopian Christianity (Baur 1994 :38). Zera Ya' iqob was said to set himself to unify and reform both Church and State, applying to Cairo for two bishops, whom he set to work in separate parts of the country (Hastings 1999 :34-35).

Side by side to the religious political reforms by the monarchs, kings and bishops were seen parallel as two sacred centers. With this, there was a monastic rival led by influential monks like *TeklaHimanot* , the greatest Ethiopian saint, 1215-1313

who built *Debre Libanos*, the country's leading Monastery, in Shoa, near Addis Ababa. After him Ewostatewos (Ewostatewos, c. 123-1352) also built another monastery known as Debre Mariam, in Tigre (Baur :38).

2.3.3 The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhado Church (EOTC)

Age wise, the second organized religious group after the Jewish religion of Diaspora (*Felasha*), are the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhado Church (EOTC). The religious view of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhado Church (EOTC) is a long awaited monotheism influenced by ancient Judaism also later Christianity, 3-4 hundred years after the New Testament Pentecost.

The nature of Christianity in Ethiopia is different from the nature of western Christianity in Christological and soteriological details. Their concept of God is monotheistic and salvation view of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhado Church (EOTC) is more of syncretistic emphasizing Christ, Mariology, Saints and Angels.

Having this as a general background of who the Ethiopians are, what religious background they had, and how Christianity came to Ethiopia, we would then try to see little details of the substance of Christianity and Christology in the theology and practice of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhado Church (EOTC) with exact contemporary images of the church.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhado Church (EOTC), is a Christian church with almost similar confession of Monotheism and Trinitarian beliefs compared with the rest of Christians in the west, be it Catholic and Evangelical. It is true that influences of the East-West Schism during and after the time of Constantine with immense influence of the nine saints described above, and historical alienation from the western Christianity for the last 1400 plus years, gave the EOTC a different picture from the kind of Christianity in the West. For example, Trinitarian analysis in the EOTC is defined as not 'twin divisibility' among the three persons but a multiplication into three (Chief reverend Dereje Haile and Dekmezmur Beza, *Mekdes Yegebu Menafiqan/Heretics inside the Temple* 2008:1-2).

Christological stance of the EOTC is strictly against Aryanism (Gorgorios/Abba; *Church History in the Forum of the World*, :114), against Euthychianism, but more of Cyrillian and a bit sympathetic to chalcedonies. Gorgorios referred to church history and said that, as Arius has believed in the saving power of Jesus but denied Christ's eternal deity, it is illogical to believe in His saving power and deny his eternal deity as these notions are extremely contradictory issues. Gorgorios also argued saying "how can a created being be able to save created beings (Gorgorios 1999 :110). As a result it may be fair to say that the EOTC bases its doctrinal stance of Christology on the Nicene 325 A D, against Arius, and the Constantinopolitan, against Macedonian, and the Ephesian (331 A D), councils. The EOTC recognizes Cyril as the formative master mind of the council of Ephesus but rejects the decision of Chalcedon (451).

Sadly enough, little by little, syncretistic tendency has crowded the EOTC, to the point that the church practically remained with no standard doctrinal frame. EOTC has been sympathetic to at least two fictitious but contradictory traditions as truth; (*Fictions of the Arch Angel Michael, the Hidar No 74, 75 :44*).

The faithful conservative confessional fathers may teach, preach and live according to the biblical doctrinal standards and may be considered as saints; the same time those who somewhat write fictitious stories of saints against the biblical doctrinal standards will also be considered as saints.

For example, there was once a true reformation movement in the EOTC, which actually happened just before the Lutheran reformation in the 15th C. History knows it as the martyrdom of the "Stefanites" as detailed in the book describing the hagiographical history of the Stefaniete Martyrs (Deqiqe Estifanos-*Behig Amlaq*, originally written in Ge'ez then translated into Amharic, by Professor Getachew Haile, 2010). The Stefanites preached, thought and lived the same way the apostles lived and were strongly against the harlotry practices of the then monarch (King Zera Ya' iqobs ,1434-68), where the church was very surprisingly tolerant. The stefanites were against the mixing of state and the church, which was getting

done under King Zera Ya'iqobs unitary policies. On the good side his reading enforcement of a spiritual book-*Meshafa Birhan*, and an order for Christians to be branded, with an attempt of reforming the declining of spirituality, superstition, ignorance, pagan practices, pastoral laziness of the clergy, should be commended. As his theology was politically motivated his reform made the church large but was unsuccessful in true spiritual reformation (T. Tamirat 1972 :103-108).

Idol worship during Zara Ya-iqob, like the cults of the cross and Mary, application of Sabbath, were very distasteful to the Estifanites, as such practices were highly important for the political theology of Zara Ya'iqob and the monks every where in the then (Hastings 1999 :37-38). Estefanites chose to confine their theology with the worship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, rejecting anything beyond this which annoyed the royalties and monks in the then. The Monarch was not happy by the resistance of the Stefanites, that he fabricated syncretistic teachings such as, the mediatory roles of Angels and saints, Mediatory role of Mary against the direct access to God, permission for himself to have two wives, one on his right hand and the other on his left hand and so on. The church accepted his religious /philosophical options. Being encouraged by this, he then has brutally persecuted, murdered the Stefanite reformers. The startling response of the then Church was to nominate him as one of the saints. On the other hand the northern wing of the same church accepted the Stefanite Martyrs as saints. This is how the church became the owner of two fictitious yet contradictory stories and so syncretistic (*Gedle Abune Estefanos Ze Gundagundi: Legacy of Abune Staffen Ze-Gundagundi*, 2004 :11).

Baur added saying, the development of the church in Ethiopia was characterized by deep political and doctrinal divisions, eventually healed by emperors Theodore and John IV. In the decisive period from 1840-1860, the influence of protestant and Catholic missions on political and ecclesiastical events was quite considerable, but their roles have to be reviewed separately.

After the middle of the 18th Century the Solomonic Dynasty declined. The region

south of the *Abbai* (Blue Nile) was lost to warrior Oromo, and the governor of Shoa separated his province from the rest of the kingdom by inviting the *Wallo* group of the Oromo to establish themselves on his northern frontier. The princes of the other provinces were in a continuous state of rebellion, each one claiming the throne either for himself or for his puppet. 1770-1855, there were said to be no fewer than six emperors (princes/*mesafint*) living, no one enjoying any authority beyond his province. In the years 1830-1850, when renewed contacts with Europe took place, the rivalry of leadership had been reduced to three chief provinces, Begemeder-the central Amhara region around the capital Gonder, which had a control over the titular emperor and the Province of Gojjam; Then Tigre-the northern province with the ancient capital Axum, its prince residing in Adwa; and the recently established south-eastern province of Shoa(Showa), the power of the future for its prince Menelik II would create the modern Ethiopia and build Addis Ababa near his provincial headquarters at *Ankober*, toward the end of the century (Baur :154).

Orthodox Christianity was a unifying factor in as much as majority of Ethiopians found in it their national identity. Core problems of the EOTC as outlined in the book “heretics inside the temple” p 12 are firstly Bible Phobia; which says, if one reads the Bible, he or she may lose his/her religious practices. Secondly, if one reads the Bible at all, it must be a simple and shallow reference with no deep examination. Third, too much dependence on extra canonical literatures than the Bible with the 66 books. Fourth, the theology of mediators and mediatorship; the case here is intercessory roles of one for the other (Grammar and Dictionary; By Chef Kidanewold Kifle).

On mediatory roles, the book outlines that a mediator must be one who is free of any criminal activities (Rom 3:11), and he/she must be one who is free of debts of any kind, of his own or from his/her parents so that he/she may be considered as competent guarantor (Derje and Deqemezmur 2008 :23-33).

Referring to the above criteria’s the EOTC gives the answer for who can be a

mediator. Following this line, Saint Mary could be competent, “Holy Angels” could be competent; Saints who have been heroes in the History of Christ’s church anywhere, anytime, could be competent; and of course Christ could be competent.

The book “*Heretics inside the temple*”, argues against such logic saying most of the above except Christ could not be competent for mediatory roles. The right reason for this according to the book is that; firstly all except Christ are created beings. Secondly, all cannot be everywhere at the same time, except the risen Christ. Third, Angels act only and only if they are sent by God not by men. Fourth, mediatory roles of Saints are developed in the traditions of the EOTC, following a wrong interpretation of Matthew 10:40-42 and Luke 16:18-31. Fifth attribution of mediatory role to Virgin Mary has developed out of a wrong interpretation of John 2:3.

In EOTC’s incarnational analysis, the flesh and the divine word- the Logos, are perfectly united without confusion, retaining their identity, like the unity between the Soul and Body, in humanity under one person. This process is mandatory in the incarnational analysis of the EOTC, in order for the salvation need might be met as God surely becomes man. “Unity” according to the EOTC never implies the two former entities lost their former natures, yet it tells us that the two have been united not to separate, not to remain two, but to be one, retaining their former individual qualities (Heretics inside... :127). EOTC’s Christological analysis also underlies that, in order for the needed perfect unity to be effectual, there needs for some elements to be eliminated. For example, sinful nature is surely a scandal for the unity, therefore should be eliminated. The logic here is that the son of God cannot be a savior at the same time hold sinful nature from the human part. This must be done away for soteriological purposes, so as the innocent lamb may be sacrificed as a ransom to remove the sin of humanity (Heretics...127). Therefore incarnational analysis of “Unity/*Tewhado*” is the central key to understand EOTC Christology.

The Chalcedonies Creed (451 A D) sees a united duality without separation,

retaining their individual natures, getting united through a process of the conquering role of the person of Word/Logos, with no confusion or mix and with no losing of the former qualities.

But just before Chalcedon, Cyril has articulated the “union”, a little bit differently from Chalcedon, Saying; “two natures”, coordinated to leave back duality and/or twinity and became “Unity” towards one, but not to remain two. Against Euthyches, the unity is without confusion or mixture but just like the unity of the Soul and Body under one person in a Human being united not to be two, not to separate anymore, not to be seen divided.

Therefore we may say the EOTC Christological formula follows Cyril than Chalcedon. “Unity/Tewhado” in the EOTC teaching, means that the divine took the nature of humanity making it its own and the human also took the divine nature (only in the case of Christ), leaving back its former duality, towards oneness (not necessarily implying one nature, as the natures are united but not assimilated). This incarnational explanation of the EOTC is called Mia-Physis, not Monophysis (Heretics inside....:128).

This analysis, according to the EOTC, has Biblical bases. It is true that God is eternally God not to be man and also man is created man not to be God. Yet, the EOTC elaboration says, against the natural law, Isa 9:6 affirms that, a child is born unto us and this child is with a mighty name. This prophesy is against the natural law of “man be man: God be God”, and also seemingly contradictory as a “sovereign God” and “a child” are seen in the text woven together.

The EOTC says this seeming contradiction or paradox gets resolved only and only in the EOTC “Unity/Tewhado”, explanation , where the Christology of Unity gives chance for God to become man (John1 :14), and for man to become God (only in the person of Christ)(Isa 7:14). This is the ancient and confessional Orthodox incarnational analysis, underlying that the Son of God, while getting united with man during the incarnation, twinness has disappeared and the son became “one Son”, not “two Sons”, “one person” not “two persons”. This will be true only and

only through the mystery of “Unity/ *Tewhado*”.

This logic seems to have a lot with monophysitism everywhere but the EOTC never identifies itself with Monophysitism; rather calls herself as Miaphysite which the council of Chalcedon had condemned as heretical anyways. Following Cyril’s articulation, the EOTC confesses that the divine took only the flesh, not soul and spirit, which has directly come down with the Word/Logos. This analysis helps to avoid the “sin inheritance” disjunction, as the divine soul and spirit is free from any taint of sin (Heretics inside the Temple :136).

Sadly, this Christological analysis in the EOTC has remained only confessional among few intellectual clergies and is facing worse degeneration in the process of History through the unguided practices of the mass under the influence of state men like the Zera Ya’ikob (1434-68) , Monk Teklehaimanot (1706-1721) etc (Atiya Aziz S.,1968 :148)

We may say there were three antithetic forces in the formation of EOTC Christology. One is the confession of the faithful fathers, under Cyril’s formula as we discussed above and the other two traditional interpretations from lay group who are simultaneously backed up by state officials.

For example, a group called “*Qibat /Annointing*” believed and thought that the “Word/Logos” was changed to be man to the point of losing everything from the divine, but got fully united by the unction or the anointing of the Holy Spirit, to keep intact with divinity while he was on earth. Against this teaching the faithful fathers reacted saying, if we say “the Word was changed”, this is against the basic impassibility of the divine Word/God and opposes the continuous distinction between the divine and the human natures in Christ, therefore, charged the “*Qibat*” group as heretics. But since the group was backed up by the followers of the Monks like Ewostatewos, their teaching flourished dominating the Orthodox Christological understanding, particularly in Gojjam area, northwest Ethiopia.

After this, another group of monks developed the “*Sost Lidet*”/Three Births, theory.

This group was from Debra Libanos Monastery, the monastery of Tekla Haimanot. The three births are his eternal birth from the Father; His temporal birth from the Virgin Mary and his third birth through the unction of the Spirit. According to this group, it was during the third birth Christ earned the redeeming grace, either given to him in the womb of Mary or during his baptism, therefore called as “*Yetsega Lij*”/ Son of Grace.

Through time, any resistance of new teachings was getting backed by armed forces that, the “anointing” and the *Tsega* (Grace) group were somewhat replaced by another group call “*Kara*”, implying that they were slaying their contenders. Therefore, the conservative Cyrilian Christology got somewhat swallowed by heretic groups under the political covers from the then state men like emperor Theodore II 1855-68, Emperor Yohannis IV 1872-89, Menelik II 1889-1913, Menelik’s grandson Lij Eyasu who embraced Islam, Menelik II’s daughter Zawditu- a crowned empress with the then 25 years old grandnephew Ras Teferi Mekonnen as her regent at the beginning but later ruled the country as the last emperor Haile Sillassie I from 1930-1974 (Baur :157).

The current position of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhado Church (EOTC) and scholarly articulations evolving from within will be examined against others who see the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhado Church (EOTC) differently. More analysis will be done in the fourth chapter which focuses on the official literatures of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhado Church (EOTC) and the Ethiopian Evangelical Churches (EEC).

2.3.4 The Ethiopian Evangelical Churches (EEC)

The history of the Evangelical churches in Ethiopia is comprehensively treated by Tibebe Eshete in his recent book “The Evangelical Movement in Ethiopia: Resistance and Resilience” which directly deals with the evangelical movement in Ethiopia, referring to the first three centuries of reformed missions; The war years and the Restoration(1936-1959) and post war mission impulses.

When we see the first three centuries (16th-19th C) of reformed missions we get the Germans as the earliest protestant missionaries with Peter Heyling, who arrived in Gondar 1634-1635 during the reign of Emperor Facil (1634-1669). Peter's strategy was to revitalize the Ethiopian Orthodox church through literatures and attempts of translations of some parts of the Gospels (John), but unfortunate as he was killed by the Turkish Pasha in 1652.

In 1825 the Church Missionary Society(CMS) sent five missionaries to Egypt where two of them, Samuel Gobat and Christian Kugler came to Ethiopia, to the Tigrai region in 1829 (Tibebe 2009 :66). According to Atiya, protestant missions in those days were a mixed affair; German, Polish, Swedish, French, British, and Swiss names keep flickering on the scene of events from the middle of the century without concrete results (Atiya 1968: 156).

Baur highlighted more saying; it was the internal division in the EOTC which facilitated to the 19th Century missionary enterprises from Europe. The German Protestants sent by the British Church Missionary Society (CMS) were the first ones with the missionary attempt. Right after this there was a Bible translation task from Ge'ez to Amharic done in 1824 and 1840 by *Samuel Gobat and Christian kugler* . The missionary attempts were done in Tigray-North Ethiopia then in Shoa (Johann Krapf, 1837) and then in south west Ethiopia. In 1866 a new missionary group from Sweden arrived through an invitation by Gobat and Krapf-former missionaries, which had an attempt into the Hamasen near Asmara, one of the cities of Eritrea which is no more part of Ethiopia at this particular time.

Johann Krapf was appointed as a missionary to Ethiopia by the CMS in 1837. As he arrived in Ethiopia he found mighty and expanding people whose true identity is 'Oromo' who were scattered people from east to west part of the land, militantly expanding to the other parts of the nation as well. This group were essentially pagans with a little bit of Muslims and a menace to the Christian empire in northern part of the country. Sadly enough, Krapf had left only vision of reaching this group to other follower missionaries but unable to access himself due to health reasons

(Anderson :3-5).

Missionaries continued to come to Ethiopia sometimes welcomed sometimes resisted by the successive monarchs/princes. Emperor Tewodros 1855-1868, for example, welcomed protestant missionaries, provided that they train his people in handicrafts and technical assistances. Martin Flad could be mentioned as one whose mission targets were the *Felasha*- Ethiopian Jews. However Flad's extended attempt was blocked by Emperor Yohannis IV in 1874, as the emperor was resistant towards any alternative forms of Christianity.

Advised by Krapf the Swedish Evangelical Mission (SEM) begun mission work in Eritrea-the Red sea coast and along the Sudan corridor with the hope of reaching the Oromo inhabiting the area south of the Abbai River (Tibebe 2009 :70).

During the attempt of missions from the red sea coast into the west south, the first convert of the Swedes was a redeemed Oromo slave, Onesimus Nesib (1904), during the reign of Emperor Menelik II who was partially willing, partially resistant to mission endeavors. Onesimus was able to translate the whole Bible into his mother tongue after he got education in Sweden.

There was also a high government official by the name Aleqa Taye, who was advisor to Emperor Haileselassie. This man was evangelical by conviction and has done much in the facilitation process for evangelicalism. He with the missionaries like Eriksson was able to form the first evangelical Congregation in Addis Ababa (Aren Gustav :192). Aren says 23 March 1922 constituted a milestone in the history of Evangelical Christianity in Ethiopia. Qes Gebre-Sillasse TesfaGabir, who travelled primarily to Najo and Neqamte in a four months trip from Eritrea together with his family, was then installed as the first indigenous pastor of the newly formed Evangelical congregation in Addis Ababa (Aren Gustav 1978 :197-199).

Such missionary expeditions finally got admirable success particularly in Oromo lands, which then has been the base for the Lutheran mission and the native Evangelical Church in Ethiopia, under its first leader *Qes Bademe Yalew* in 1941

and has officially established under the name Ethiopian Evangelical Church of Mekane Yesus (EECMY) in 1959.

Missionary expansion got massive success during the reign of Haile Silassie (1916-1975) who wisely led the mission posts to the south and western part of the country as the northern part of the country was spared for the EOTC. Dr Lambe could be mentioned as one who got favor of the Emperor in 1919-1926 (Aren Gustav :178). Sadly enough, colonization attempts by the Italians 1936-1941 led to a complete reversal as the Italians were forcing the nation to be under the Roman faith. Even though, postwar mission attempts revitalized the reunification, strength and expansion of native Christian churches in which the SIM churches set up a consortium called *Yewongel Amagnoch Andenet Maheber* (Consortium of Evangelical Believers) from which *the Qale Hiwot* church, which is now one of the leading largest evangelical church, evolved.

Then initiatives of interdenominational cooperation begun in 1977 up until forming the current Ethiopian Evangelical Churches which are officially called as Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia (ECFE)(Tibebe :76-100).

Currently the Ethiopian Evangelical Churches are around 35 denominations united under a consortium known as Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia (ECFE).

ECFE is the umbrella in which most evangelicals are represented formally through it, in a simply stated 'credo' as those who share the same faith in one God who revealed Himself in trinity; who believe that Christ is the only way to salvation and affirms that believers have never contributed to their salvation whereas are all expected to persevere in faith.

Evangelicals in Ethiopia confessionally believe in one Holy Catholic Apostolic Church and therefore are organized to foster unity in diversity. The ECFE has also Para church associates, some of them Christian ministries and some of them Para church Christian organizations. Since there are also denominations which are not

formally linked to the ECFE but are by default members, for the faith they confess, for the purpose of this thesis we prefer the abbreviation EEC than the ECFE.

The EEC Christological conception is confessionally Chalcedonian. This is because many can easily articulate the nature of Christ as with two natures and one person all through the incarnation and the resurrection and after. Yet, deep examinations imply another fact.

When we try to uncover the wrapping, Christological conceptions among EEC seem standing neither chalcedony nor non chalcedonic but somewhere within the spectrum. This we say, as a result of a survey made in a written interview questions made to some 120 representatives of the EEC.

Therefore setting aside the confessional Christology of the EEC for the time being, the practical Christological conception of Christology among representative Evangelicals so to say, is neither clearly east nor west, nor in between but a third view of some type which should be left for further study.

As we can see from the above analysis, when it comes to Christology issue, Evangelicals are as diversified as their nature. Majority of them confess chalcedonic but our research has proved that deep inside, they are somewhere in between the chalcedonies and the non-chalcedonies. Therefore, we cannot say for sure the Ethiopian evangelicals are clearly lining in the Chalcedonies (451 A. D) formula.

This discussion leads us to say that, over a long period of time this whole process resulted in dividing the universal church of Christ as Coptic; Greek; Orientals; Catholics; Protestants; Eastern; Western; etc. This course of action finally led to the great rift between the Chalcedonies and non-chalcedonies which almost lasted the past 17 hundred years. There were trials of reconciliation time and again but doesn't seem to succeed, for the reconciliation trial was unable to convince one of the camps to revert their identity. The impact of this rift was and is striking in the course of history where the church obviously lost its eschatological position over

the world's socio-politics, therefore has been a hunt and prey to Islamic and liberal invasions. Here, one thing is very clear. Majority of current Ethiopian evangelicals do not believe that these Christological theories are worthy to die for, as far as dissecting Christians as EOTC and EEC, so tangible hope for unity.

2.4 Quests of now and here

Fundamental question here is that what if Christological meanings in either Monophysite or Miaphysite or Chalcedon are influenced by the sociopolitical contexts of their time? A survey of Christological theories in reference to what we have seen so far tells us that modern Christology seeks to be more aware of the inter subjectivity and self-awareness of Jesus' personhood (Diogenes Alen 1985 :57). With this, Monophysite or Miaphysite interpretation of either the Coptic's or the Ethiopian Orthodox views were and are very much intertwined to the Monophysist and/or Myaphysite's own historical milieu and were responses to the queries of their own settings. However, searches for clarity are still persistent.

Recent studies of New Testament history and New Testament Christology hints that the pre Christian Gnostic redeemer myth or the previous literatures such as the Pseudopigrapha, or the Qumran texts or the Targums (Forestell, 1981) or studies of 1st Enoch (Milik, 1976; Knibb, 1979), might have set the frame work for the later Hellenic New Testament theology and so for Christology (Bousset 1970, Bultmann 1955, Cullman 1963, and Fuller 1965).

Having this as introductory discussion, we might temporarily say that pursuits for Christological truth, either in the then or now were not trying to respond to questions before or possible questions which may be raised somewhere, sometime in the future, but tried to respond to their own contemporaneous doubts. In addition to this, as the Bible was a central tool, most responses, one way or another, were also getting a reference from the Bible. Still, it must be underlined that theological and socio-political tendency has obviously influenced understanding and interpretations of each age (Schaff Vol III :47), as there were severe clashes to the extent of assassinations here and there, and therefore

political interventions, to ease the case on one side and settle the doctrinal conflicts on another side.

Therefore, we may say, at times former responses were made for the quests of their own historical context. If so, responses made so far, may not fully satisfy existential inquiries everywhere and are difficult to use them so easily, fully, universally and timelessly. A simple prove to this is that Christological controversy continued all through the time of the renaissance, the reformation and to the modern enlightenment ages, even though the chalcedonies framework seems to settle the case and dominate the scene. That is why the Eastern Orthodox churches still remained isolated in their camp even though the chalcedonies decision was there at the outset of the western Christological framework.

Nonetheless, an attempt here is not trying to throw away everything from the past; we affirm the tribute to the orthodoxy protected for us in the past. At the same time, we should not be ignorant of the distinctions between ages because of their religious and socio-political derivatives. With all this, this research holds the assumption that Authority, Inerrancy and trustworthiness of the Scriptures is the determinant factor wherever, whenever.

This therefore leads to Christological questions which actually are slanting in Ethiopian historical and sociological milieu. These questions are not even necessarily global and timeless but predominantly very local and time bound.

Searches as we have seen them so far, are first of all largely time bound and very local in nature. Generations during the successive years have had their own Christological debates and have also responded accordingly to their time inquiries. Christological studies seem still left open as our generation has its own Christological interests. Methodological questions in the Christology of Hans Küng, Walter Kasper, and Edward Schillebeeckx (School 1973; Hebblewhite 1980; School 1974) could be taken as few examples. In fact, it seems better to follow the theme, “Christology is moving in the direction of a ‘field approach;” (Crossan :202–3) or “multiplex methodology” (Hasel, 1978). With this, some approaches by recent

scholars like D J Dunn who underlined that “Christology is in the Making” (CIM) will be considered. *CIM* underscored the following account;

fresh approaches to Christology must be developed which succeed, on the one hand, in recognizing the fluidity of both geographical and chronological boundaries, and still allow for penetrating beneath “titles” to investigating other kinds of claims made about Jesus which may not have taken the form of attributing titles to him, claims, for example, which may be implicit in the narrative itself. (Dunn 1980:8)

This flow of thought leads to the conclusion that this generation should mind its own enquiries. The rift between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the catholic west, for example is yet an unresolved problem in the Continuum. The rift is also more than east-west, because it has dissected countless local African ethnic villages. Ethiopia is one of these localities affected by such a rift, and this rift presents the opportunity to re-examine the Christological stance of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhado Church (EOTC) Versus the Ethiopian Evangelical Churches (EEC), including identifying the possible Christological-Soteriological dialogue links. These links may help bridge the long awaited gap that eclipsed the saving gift-Christ, to those in need.

2.5 Preview of the Structure

Chapter one: Introduction/Problem: Chapter one will be a preliminary introduction to the Christological differences and their resulting rift between the EOTC and the EEC briefly comparing and contrasting these differences with selected church fathers.

Chapter Two: deals with exegetical study of NT Christological texts, divided into two parts; part one will focus on the Johannine writings, the Christology in the synoptic Gospels and then part two will focus on Pauline Christology. For this process variant readings of the texts concerned will be analyzed. We will also employ some lexical, syntax and discourse analysis, conducting word, grammar, and discourse features. In this chapter the writer will interact with the rationale for or against the view that the nature of ‘God the Son’ was not changed after the resurrection since God is immutable.

Chapter Three: Primarily deals with ancient, very ancient, documents as the *Didache*- written in the second half of the 1st C.(50-100 AD); Origen, Justin Martyr, Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus, Polycarp, Athanasius, Apollinarius, Gregory of Nazianzus, and of Nyssa from-the book, *Creeds, Councils and Controversies*, by J Stevenson :85-74; additionally; Apostolic and Post Apostolic, Ante-Nicene Fathers(Vols 1-5) etc, will be referred as much as possible; early creeds will also be referred. Rational following this logic is that, this documents yield the foundational mind frames behind the later ecumenical confessions. In addition to this, this chapter will also look forward to the historical developments with emerging Christological outlooks. There will be a comparison of different views analyzing their similarities and differences with their effect on current mind frames.

Chapter Four: EOTC and EEC Christological literatures and traditions with scholarly works will be measured analytically against objective outlooks from outside and meanings from the New Testament and the thoughts of Orthodoxy.

Chapter Five: Reflective epistemological critique, polemically arguing for or against and contextual response to the readings and crucial contextual questions.

Chapter Six: Principles and proposals where we may suggest some directives.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion.

Chapter Two

Part I

I Introduction

1.1 Christological sense of the New Testament Texts

How much has scholarship used the life, teachings and preaching's of Jesus Himself during His earthly years for the sake of analyzing the substance of Christ's nature or person? It is obvious that we always read Gospel history for some reason, may be devotional and the like issues.

As far as surveys so far are concerned Christological studies most of the time give due emphasis to creedal theological developments like the Nicene 325, the Constantinople I 381, Ephesus 431 and Chalcedon 451 and also post creedal historical-theological developments, rather than a primary focus on Biblical facts. Paul Barnett who somewhat returned back to the first twenty years of Christianity through his historical literary piece, approached this issue a bit differently (Barnett 2005 :22). In his search into the early Christian literatures he said "we might expect a gradual divinization of Jesus over many decades". Barnett as well implied that close mates of Jesus came to understand who he was little by little (Barnett 2005 :22).

The apostle John in (Jn 1:1-14), introduced Jesus from the Logos point of view. Successive chapters follow such a flow insisting that the faith on the divine nature of Jesus has come gradually. Even His own family was in doubt of His divine origin though not to the extent of denying it, as it clearly says, "...for even his own brothers did not believe in Him" (Jn 7:5).

1.2 Delimitations

The challenge to us here is the ambiguity of where to begin. It may not be proper to follow the current structure of the New Testament flow which is more or less a simple structure, set from the point of view of the ones who composed it. Current

scholarship agrees that Pauline letters are the earliest to be written and circulated before the gospels but the arrangement we now have seems to follow the nature of the material rather than the age of the documents. Simple example here is referring to the date of the earliest Gospel (Mark), which scholars agree that it was the first of the Gospels most possibly written A. D. 65-70. This tells us that the rest Gospels were written after Pauline letters were written as Paul is believed to have died before late 60's. But this doesn't imply that Paul's writings predated Jesus tradition or the early church karygma, as Paul had to base his teaching, preaching and writing in them (Arthur 2005 : 49).

Another task is that it would have been easy if we could find a complete Christological pattern in one text or book. But, Christological concepts are widely scattered everywhere in the New Testament, in disorganized manner, in actuality not necessarily entertaining 21th C. Christological questions.

As we have seen it in chapter one our Christological challenge to the most part comes from our existential situation. This was not the search of the New Testament existential scenario in which we are demanding a complete Christological pattern. The New Testament beholders had Jesus himself with them with limited material about his nature. This obviously would make this task difficult. Having this justification, we would just pick books from the New Testament which we believe have high Christological emphasis and apply exegesis which will be used for the consumption of this study.

It is therefore better to treat this issue in two parts where part one will focus on the Johannine writings, the Christology in the synoptic Gospels and then part two will focus on Pauline Christology.

With this, we would like to pick the Gospel of John and other Johannine letters as our first focus for this research, following the assumption that these letters were written down and circulated almost last, compared to other New Testament literatures (Keener 2003 :140).

II Christology in Johannine writings

This research on John's Christology attempts to show the Christ whom John portrayed in his Gospel, in the 1st Letter of John, and the 2nd letter of John. The 3rd letter of John has nothing on Christology but it is somehow included here for it has the same tone of pastoral care hinted within the rest Johannine letters.

Though it is the assumption of this research that the book of revelation was written by the same John, this research will not use this book for Christological study for one or two reasons. First of all, it would be too much to make it manageable for the purpose of this research. Second, its apocalyptic nature may not allow one find out Christological doctrines very easily.

2.1 Understanding John as Authority

Contemporary interpretation primarily demands any exegesis to settle the issue of Author and date, in order to prove its trustworthiness. This we will do first, because we have to have satisfactory answer which crosses over the doubts. In addition to this, our findings must be able to pass the test of criticism, questions from liberal thoughts, and be presentable in a factual and reasonable manner.

In the interpretation of the Gospel of John, especially studying it for Christological dialogues, what naturally comes first is its Authorship. Extreme ends compared and contrasted hereafter, are not necessarily the position this theses holds on, but for the sake of analytical review we will try to make a survey of some of these ideas.

19th century critical scholarship presented extremely divergent view about the authorship of this Gospel rather than what was conservatively believed before. This perception is reflected in some literatures saying; all early church fathers from Clement to Papias never quoted John as an author although they frequently quoted from the literatures as we now call them Johannine. The argument is trying to proof if taking John the apostle as an author is right or if another John or somebody else has written the Gospel of John. That is what is meant by

difference between quoting John as an author and quoting the literature probably under any one's authorship. Critical scholars say quotations are from John as literature but not John as the author. The seemingly missing of the name from the quotations (as of these critical scholars) of early church fathers made critical scholars to doubt John-son of Zebedee, as the author and also rejected Johannine Authorship altogether (K Aland 1967 : Unpublished Document). Is this really true?

On the other end there are also scholars like (*'De Ogdoad'*; *'the Epistle of Irenaeus to Victor Bishop of Rome'*; *'Sermo de Fide'*; etcetera... but all fragments quoted from the lost writings of Irenaeus) (R Alexander & J Donaldson 1995: 568-570), who firmly believe copies of Irenaeus writings with a quotation of John were already in existence at the beginning of the second century; therefore believed that the Apostle John wrote the Fourth Gospel in his old age. Additionally, Alexander Roberts, D.D., & James Donaldson in the book "Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol I" provided more than 86 evidences for a direct quotations and also any extra quotations of John by Irenaeus in his defense against heresies, starting from his introductory note all through his (Irenaeus) five books (Alexander & Donaldson :309-567).

Yet, this doesn't seem to satisfy the doubt of the critical scholars that they still ask; if so why the apostolic Fathers are so persistently silent about it? Why is a literal phrasing of "the son of Zebedee" not seen as its author? The question is not on the literature but on the author of the literature. Critical scholars ask why there are no verbatim quotations of the Fourth Gospel.

Are there traces of John to be found in early Christian literature, as some scholars claim? Yes indeed. There are good evidences in Irenaeus especially that John lived to the age of Trajan: Haer II.22, 5; John lived at Ephesus: III.1, 1; John and Cerintus: III.3, 4. with Tertullian, Eusebius, and Jerome etc... (Schaff Vol I : 408). Also in the Letters of Ignatius to the Smyrneans, III; Trallians X, Magnesians, VII, and others (Schaff Vol II: 656). James M. Robinson, one of the

Authorities regarding the Gospel of John reinforced this. His exact words are;

John the son of Zebedee and beloved disciple of Jesus had written it. It was accordingly taken into the circle of canonical gospels. Clement of Alexandria formulated the matter thus: The three synoptic gospels wrote τὰ σωματικά (literally, "bodily," but often translated "the outward facts"); the fourth Evangelist, however, composed the εὐαγγέλιον πνευματικόν ("spiritual gospel"). One could then interpret the Gospel of John as a supplement to the Synoptics (Bernard J. H. 1928: 3).

The case seems fluctuate to sides, some supporting John's Authorship, others rejecting John's Authorship. Scholars are still divided differently; some saying the author is another John, who is an eye witness to the deeds of Jesus but not part of the inner circle of the apostles. This John is the one entitled as John the presbyter. Others say the author is another evangelist; with some actually making the same presbyter as the evangelist. To list some, E. Evans in his book *The Dissonance Of The Four Generally Received Evangelists*, Gloucester, 1972; K.G. Bretschneider in his book *Probabilia de Ev.et Ep. Joh. Ap. Indole et Origine*, Leips. 1820, refuted by Schott, Eichhorn, Lucke, and others; retracted by the author himself in 1828; D.F. Strauss in his book *Leben Jesu*, 1835; withdrawn in the 3rd Ed. 1838 but renewed in the 4th, 1840; F CHR.

Baur in *the Theol. Jahrbucher* of Tübingen, 1844, 1847, 1848, 1853, 1855, 1859; should also be in this list as he represents the fourth Gospel as a ripe result of a literary development, or evolution...according to the Hegelian method from thesis, to antithesis and synthesis, or from Judaizing Petrinism to anti-Jewish Paulinism and (pseudo) Johannian reconciliation. Baur was followed by the whole Tübingen School with dating from 110-170 A.D. . . .

On the other end Jos Priestley (1793), Schleiermacher and his school, De Wette; Weisse (1836), Schweitzer (1841), Weizsacker (1857, 1859, 1862, 1886), Hase (1875) and others too defended the genuineness of the Gospel of John, though differing among themselves about its extent (Schaff Vol I 1910 : 694).

All proposals above have their own strong arguments and the argument has still more to go. J H Bernard who studied the case of the author has done an extensive search on the extant remains of the Gospel manuscripts, and said they

were written in Egypt on papyrus. Out of these he said, the fourth Gospel was in a form of codex, made up of some twenty five sheets and not in the form of rolls of papyrus. This is one of the indications for the late writing of the material. Another discovery of Collection in the Washington MSS. of the Four Gospels, by (H. A. Sanders 1912: *Purpureus Petropolitanus* ε 19: 557) shows that even the orders were like Matthew, John, Luke and Mark which is different from the orders we have today. These studies are done on the ancient Unicals, Cursives and Minuscules then the study goes on to check for the ancient versions.

Another related challenge is the one proposed by J. P. Norris, (Bernard J. H. 1928: 18) and was later accepted by scholars. He said dislocations are very evident in the book of John, particularly in Chs 5, 6, 7 where the actual geographical sites do not match to what we have today in the Gospel, either eastern side of the lake or western side, and it seems ch 7:1 is naturally connected within succession to the narrative in Ch 5. Ch 7:1-24 fits with Ch 5 very naturally than the order we have it today in the traditional one.

Next we will proceed to consider the difficulties presented by the traditional order of cc. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17; and reasons given as a better optional order for the 4th gospel, viz. 13:1–30, 15, 16, 13:31–38, 14, 17, which is believed, more nearly represents the intention of the original writer. This leads to a change of the structure of the whole Gospel for John, in a different set than the order we have today; The Gospel falls into three parts, preceded by a Prologue and followed by an Appendix.

Thus according to Norris, John 1:1–18, is said to be primarily a Hymn on the Logos, interspersed with explanatory comments by the evangelist (Bernard J. H. 1928: 22) . Part I. (cc. 1:19–4:54 with ch. 6) begins at Bethany beyond Jordan, goes on to Galilee, hence to Jerusalem, and back to Samaria and Galilee. It deals with the ministry of a little more than one year. Part II. (cc. 5, 7, 8–12) has to do with the Jerusalem ministry of Jesus, and extends over a second year. Part III. (cc. 13–20) is wholly concerned with the Passion and Resurrection.

Against rearrangement and displacement, Raymond Brown , proposed five stages of the development of the Gospel of John towards its last form; 1-Prior existence of traditional material about the works and words of Jesus, which is independent of the synoptic Gospels. 2-the development of this material into Johannine patterns over decades, sifted and molded probably through preaching and teaching or “the oral tradition”. This preaching teaching is obviously the work of more than one man. 3- Distinct first edition as the work of ‘him” or the evangelist, most probably the Greek edition, but basic cohesiveness evidences rather than mere collection. The evangelist was paraphrasing the words of Jesus while he was preaching over the years to different contexts or audiences in circulation. 4-Second edition by him, introduction of new material to tackle new problems, example relating the excommunication of the blind man from the synagogue into a new situation in the 80’s and 90’s (ch 9:22-23). 5-a final edition by a redactor other than the evangelist who may have been either a close friend, disciple, in the same school of thought (Brown :34).

Generally speaking there are strong evidences for the authorship by John the apostle, or the beloved disciple, son of Zebedee. To list some of the evidences; first of all Irenæus, Polycartes, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Hippolytus, Tertullian, and others are clear as to this (Shaff Vol I: 406), as we shall see; and most of them ascribed, the authorship to John the apostle, the Apocalypse and of the Johannine Epistles as well (Haer II.22, 5); John lived at Ephesus: (III.1, 1); John and Cerinthus: (III.3, 4). with Tertullian in his *De praescr*, Eusebius in his *Hist Eccl.*, III, chs 18,23,31; IV.14; V.24, Jerome: *Ad Gal.* 6:10 etc...(Schaff Vol I 1910 :406).

Papias frequently mentions his hearing and learning from the early elders who were first and second generation elders (*Presbuteroi*). As Papias was said to have lived starting before the end of the first century; he is taken as the first witness of the church fathers. It is also said that he had chance to see the apostle John himself in his old age, as it is believed that the apostle John has not died until the close of the 1st C A. D. Irenaeus takes Papias as the one who heard

of John the apostle referring Papias's very words "the words the Elders" (Schaff 1910 :694).

2.2 Evaluation

While we try to evaluate the above proposals, we must first set the witnesses, and then weight the evidences. Whose witness is more valued; those who were close to the event or those who are far apart from the event? Naturally and rationally those who were very close to the event should be taken as true witnesses. Here, the early church fathers during the 2nd and 3rd C A.D. are to be compared with other late witnesses of any age, coming up with researches and findings. This line tells us that even the researches of those who reject the apostle John as the author, leads to a conclusion that the early church fathers, agree that the apostle John was the author. Therefore to value their witness than any other one is logically acceptable.

Second, when we see the weight of the witnesses; Irenæus, Polycartes, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Hippolytus, Tertullian, Papias clearly supported the apostle's authorship and this is very clear even in the researches of those who reject. From the evidences of rejection themselves it seems that the ratio is 6 to 1; 6 in support of John the apostle as the author but 1 with somewhat vague position. Therefore the weight tells us John the apostle as the author of the fourth Gospel.

Third is internal evidence: Internal evidence is much dominated by the absence of the mention of the name of John as the son of Zebedee, but we should say that, first of all absence entails many other reasons than a blatant denial of him as the author. It may be shyness which may be done not to cover the glory of the main actor, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the habitual nature in the experience and tradition of the early church which is in contrast to our edge, with a quest for evidences such as the date, author etc... and also a gut feeling to spell ones name in history as a scholar or so.

Internal evidences do not deny the authorship of John the apostle because the narratives of fourth Gospel give a weighty evidence of a Palestinian eyewitness, with a closest relationship than even the rest of the disciples in the inner circle of the apostles, who clearly, mentioned him as the beloved disciple.

Another reason to reject the rejection is the notion of presenting a presbyter John itself. John the presbyter is a hypothetical figure. Therefore it is rational to pick the historically true than the hypothetical assumption.

However, there is a good common point where the traditional may share a common line with the critical views. When we try to understand the real quest of the critics, authorship is initially needed to weight the evidence rather than to find out the one who penned it. If that is so, we may agree on this point that having taken John the apostle as the authority and seal behind the fourth Gospel, a helper may be there writing and editing. This is a possibility for many reasons, yet will never let us question that John the apostle is the authority, who was the eye witness to all the events as recorded in the fourth Gospel. Therefore the question 'who penned it'? is irrelevant, because even today, some histories are penned by a secretary, yet this doesn't make the secretary the owner of the substance.

After all the cause of rejection of the authors has its root in the enlightenment unbelief, which is said to be the age of reason. The rejection is more or less a rejection of most of the contents which seem difficult for a modern man to swallow. Therefore all doubts have come as a result of unbelief of reason against faith. So, there is no middle way here to seek for a different author than John the apostle- son of Zebedee but accept the content as truth. If we accept the content we equally accept the authority behind. If we reject the authority we equally reject the content. Therefore rejecting the proposal of rejection, we affirm that the fourth Gospel is written by the apostle John, son of Zebedee, the beloved disciple, at the end of his age, during the close of the first Century.

Establishment of the trustworthiness of the author would then give us the

freedom of using the whole material of the 4th Gospel for our Christological analysis. All in all the traditional belief however is; John the apostle himself was responsible for the writing of the most part of the Gospel but he may also have had a helper, for some of the parts, yet all in all under his own seal and approval.

2.3 Christological analysis

Brown has outlined a good deal of references to use for Johannine studies (Brown 1972 : 22). A preliminary concept one should have before putting an exegesis of John is that, since many scholars agree that this literature is lately composed, almost after six decades of Christianity, much better matured views and Christian traditions were at hand. The same principle works for the Christological outlook John might propose. First of all and most likely, whatever Christology John might have suggested is naturally geared by his post resurrection scenario. Secondly our cause was not necessarily the problem of the New Testament community in the first two hundred years that we might find very little concerning the nature of Christ in between the incarnation and the resurrection.

Most possibly, John was more concerned with deeper Christology, because of an interest to affirm Jesus' Deity, presenting Jesus evangelistically to the gentile community, be it anti or receptive, so that they might believe in him and have life (Jn 20:30). Yet still, John was also mindful of the incarnate Christ as he was an eyewitness. Many scholars even say that John's high Christology was very much influenced by Hellenistic thoughts. Brown actually rejected such idea outright saying John was not!

a popular form of Greek philosophy, Philo and the Hermetica. The Logos concept is right Greek philosophy but it is difficult to argue just from terminological parallels, thus there is no reason to suppose the Gospel was influenced by Greek philosophy. In addition, there seem some parallels between John and Philo because both draw from OT wisdom literatures, but the similarity or dependence is far apart, for there is no extant philosophy and allegory in John as we see them in Philo. The higher form of Philosophy in Hermetica is also somewhat reflected in John but Dodd says the similarities should not be over emphasized (Brown :58).

A tension between divinizing and humanizing seems evident in the whole

analysis of the book. The background for divinization might have something to do with the Greeks custom of divinizing heroes or philosophers (Keener :299). The humanizing force might have come from the conservative Jewish resistance of refuting Jesus' positional glory (Deut 6:4). Therefore John had to deal with these two antithetic forces, doing away both and introducing the right nature of Jesus. This presupposition of John never affects inspiration issue as his response to the tension will ultimately and automatically be the output of inspiration; it is also true for all the New Testament writings, which were primarily occasional responses but ultimately inspired literatures for every generation.

2.4 Structure

As far as our line is on the same plane with those who believe that authority and authorship of the whole Gospel goes to John the apostle, son of Zebedee, the whole content is to be treated as his own treatise rather than an addition of somebody else.

For example, there is an argument which says the prologue is a hymn in the early ages of Christianity which was then added in the final edition of John's Gospel by an editor. Reasons for this are that the prologue seems to have nothing to do with the rest part of the Gospel, and also the Logos mentioned in the prologue is never mentioned outside of the prologue and so on (Brown 1972 :24). However, if we are able to turn our mind the other way round 'the Jesus' we see in the pages of the 4th Gospel's series of successive chapters gets its origin and ground only and only in the prologue. It is the prologue which lays the ground about 'which Jesus', John wants to tell us. Was he some ordinary human being whom his origin was just humanity from Joseph and Mary yet who accidentally became a hero for reasons even unknown to him? Has he changed dynamically from the human person to the divine? Is it possible to get a savior Christ in whom anyone should believe, by omitting the prologue?

Let's also raise another question. What was the source of the hymn? What was the hymn all about? The only way we can think of the source of the hymn is a

belief about who Jesus is and was. This even makes the hymn a strong theology which existed even before a written document about the words and works of Jesus was produced. There may be a question that the “Logos” concept is peculiar to John but not the synoptic Gospels and Paul. Why? The main reason for the rare mention of the logos in the other synoptic Gospels and even in Paul is most possibly as he was lately (during the close of the 1st C A.D) documenting his case for Christ, as it is argued above.

The hymn behind John1:1-14 if at all it is hymn, is obviously a result of the preaching and teachings of Jesus himself while he was on earth and the successive preaching and teachings of the apostles about ‘the Christ’ whom they have seen, heard, touched and known. Therefore, this research assumes that, a belief or theology and tradition about Jesus was there, as a source for the hymn. This source is most possibly an independent source for John to compose his Gospel, which was part of their belief, part and parcel of the theology of the New Testament Christian community, part and parcel even to John himself; therefore he began his content by the hymn.

An argument for an omission of the prologue is very hazy as the Greek or any Greek MSS or ancient versions do not omit the prologue. Additional argument is that, say someone believes the prologue should not be part of the rest of the Gospel; what Kind of Jesus will one see in the next series of chapters? In what kind of Christ are we expected to believe at the end of the narration (Jn 20:31) or may be we don’t have to believe in anything but just leave the material as simple trash of the 1st or 2nd Century myth.

The fact that it is never repeated in any of the rest of the narration shouldn’t lead one to avoid it all in all, at the same time no mention of it by itself may be a different wisdom, telling stories to hearers by leading them from the climax to the bottom and then the climax. If we are really interested to know more about the nature of Jesus, the prologue, be it in a hymn form or a detailing of the things in the beginning, leads us to another line of thought which we are ready to explore

hereafter.

What if John's main content in the whole book deals with the nature of Christ in-between the incarnation and resurrection? We will deal more on such matters in our fifth chapter. But as a foretaste, it may be said that John told us things of the origin in 1: 1-14, but was not replicating this theme in the next narrative, at least directly; as there may be an indirect reference (Jn 14:9-10;15:1), therefore, his intention might be to show us the other face of his nature, while still affirming his pre-existent nature. The fact that the logos of the prologue is not mentioned in any of the rest of the narrative doesn't change the basic nature of Jesus, borrowing words from Ridderbos, (Ridderbos, 1975 : 68-9), yet his Son ship, his deity, leads the reader through a different focus concerning the nature of Christ.

A response to doubts about the prologue will be a logical 'no', because omitting the prologue will automatically make the rest narration of Jesus empty and leave us in our doubts than leading us to believe in him. Therefore, the prologue should be part and parcel of the rest of the narration, for it gives firm ground and basic frame to the belief expected from the addressees in the then and now (Jn 1:1-14 and Jn 20:31). Having this frame as a view through which we should see the Gospel of John, we would then move to details of arguments for this position.

2.5 Content

The apostle John in Chapter 1:1-14 introduced Jesus from the *Logos* point of view, so as to make Jesus an aspect of God Himself, still insisting that faith on the divine nature of Jesus has come gradually. This we may see right in the next successive chapters where John contrasted the understanding of the people about the real nature of Jesus.

In contrast to '*kurios*' interpretation, which is understood to imply either just human-God relations or to refer to Jehovah in the OT context, John's Logos refers to *Elohim* who was and is responsible for creation issues. This is evidenced in the ESV English Hebrew Interlinear Old Testament as " the verse"

makes it clear that it was Yahweh-Elohim (the Lord God), rather than Yahweh. This is not necessarily to make Elohim bigger and Yahweh lesser but to magnify the functional tone in *Elohim* while the Logos came out to create (Gen 2:4) and again to save (Jn 1:1).

As Bullinger also reinforces this saying; *Elohim* in the OT or the *Logos* of John Ch 1 is more of a functional title connected with the work of creation rather than a title of Deity; which is a visible manifestation of the invisible Deity either in creation acts or in the human flesh to redeem humanity (Bullinger :896).

The function here depicts the God who took creation as a task and also taking redemption as a specific task. Therefore the *Logos-Elohim* of Jn 1:1 is about the 'Word-God' coming out of God to create first and to redeem next, in contrast to the understanding of the '*Lord-Jehovah*' which speaks more about the nature of the Deity rather than the function. Yet we would also like to affirm that, the second person of the Trinity, coming out of the trinity, in a functional aspect not ontologically, is still deity: though Ch 1:1-4; 14, talks about the God in Action. A little more exegesis of the beginning verses of John Ch. 1 tells this fact.

John 1:1 The phrase "in the beginning" echoes the opening phrase of the Hebrew Bible (Gen. 1:1) and establishes a canonical link between the first words of the Old Testament Scriptures and the present Gospel. "Beginning" points to a time prior to creation (Brown 1966 : 4; Beasley-Murray 1999 :10; Schnackenburg 1990 : 1. 232). Yet while John's first readers would have expected the phrase "In the beginning God," the evangelist instead speaks of "the Word" (Beasley-Murray 1999 :10). The focus of this verse is to show the Word's preexistence (Ridderbos 1997 : 25 ; Schnackenburg 1990 :232), preparing for the later reference to a new "beginning," the incarnation of the Word (cf. 1:14) (Morris 1995 :64; Carson 1991 :114).

Besides "beginning," the Greek term ἀρχή can also mean "first cause." It is possible that John here seeks to convey both meanings, "in the beginning of history" and "at the root of the universe" (Morris 1995 :65).

The designation "Word"—used in a Christological sense only in the prologue

(1:1, 14; 1 John 1:1) conveys the notion of divine self-expression or speech (cf. Ps. 19:1–4).

Calvin (1959 :7) remarks, “I think he calls the Son of God ‘the Word’ ... simply because, first, He is the eternal wisdom and will of God, and secondly, because He is the express image of His purpose. For just as in men speech is called the expression of the thoughts, so it is not inappropriate to apply this to God and say that He expresses Himself to us by His Speech or Word.”

The Genesis creation account establishes the effectiveness of God’s word: he speaks, and things come to pass (Gen. 1:3, 9; cf. 1:11, 15, 24, 30). Psalmists and prophets alike portray God’s word in close-to-personal terms (Ps. 33:6; 107:20; 147:15, 18; Isa. 55:10–11). Yet only John claims that this Word has appeared as an actual person, Jesus Christ (cf. 1 John 1:1; Rev. 19:13). As a comprehensive Christological designation, the expression “the Word” encompasses Jesus’ entire ministry, placing all of Jesus’ works and words within the framework of both his eternal being and existence (Michaels 1989 :21) and God’s self-revelation in salvation history.

the allusion to the tabernacle in 1:14 and the reference to God are giving the law through Moses in 1:17 (see also 5:46). As Behr (2000: 94 [cf. M. Edwards 1995]) notes, for the second-century church fathers, including Justin Martyr, “The revelation of God in the incarnate Logos is the last, even if the most important, in a series of discrete revelations.” According to Irenaeus, “[t]he pre-existence of Christ, the Word of God, is inextricably connected with his seminal presence in Scripture, the word of God” (inseminatus est ubique in Scripturis ejus Filius Dei; Behr 2000 :98).

The term “Word” appears to have been used by the evangelist at least partly in order to contextualize the gospel message among his Hellenistic audience. Keener (2003 :339–41) provides thorough discussions of the Gnostic Logos; the Logos of Hellenistic philosophy (pp. 341–43); Philo (pp. 343–47); wisdom, word, and Torah (pp. 350–60); and John’s Logos and Torah (pp. 360–63). Three primary backgrounds have been proposed: (1) Greek philosophy (Stoicism, Philo); (2) the personification of wisdom; and (3) the Old Testament.

E. Miller (1993: 448–49), lists as many as nine different theories: (1) the Old Testament dbr; (2) Wisdom (R. Harris 1917); (3) Greek philosophy (Stoicism); (4) Philo (Evans 1993: 100–145; Tobin 1990); (5) the Aramaic mmr. (Hayward 1978); (6) rabbinic speculation on the Torah; (7) gnostic sources, such as the

Hermetic literature, especially Poimandres (Pagels 1999); (8) the Hellenistic-Gnostic redeemer myth, Mandeans, and the Odes of Solomon (Bultmann 1923; 1973; 1971); and (9) the breaking of divine silence (Jeremias). Some, such as Epp (1975), combine two or more of the above (in Epp's case, Wisdom and Torah).

Miller himself (1993: 452), building on his earlier work (1989), advances the thesis that the uses of λόγος in the Gospel proper, while not a Christological title, are invested "with a certain Christological transparency" (B. Reicke's term). Thus, startlingly, Miller, who believes that the prologue was written not only after the Gospel proper, but even after John's first epistle, finds the origin of the prologue's λόγος in the Fourth Gospel itself: "The one of whom it was said in John 7:46, 'Never has a man spoken like this!' eventually came to be called, appropriately, 'the Word.'" He said "I find this thesis entirely unconvincing (Miller :1999) attempts to make the same case for ἀρχή". It is quite a tour de force to brush aside the massive Old Testament substructure pervading the entire prologue. Not surprisingly, Miller's thesis has found only few followers.

In Stoic thought, *logos* was Reason, the impersonal principle governing the universe. A spark of universal Reason was thought to reside within people (at least the best and wisest of them), who must live in keeping with it to attain dignity and meaning. Yet while John may well have been aware of the Stoic concept of the *logos*, it is doubtful that it constituted his primary conceptual framework (see the three reasons given in Köstenberger 1999a :52).

Another candidate is the personification of wisdom in wisdom literature (see, e.g., Talbert 1992 :68–71). In Prov. 8 (esp. vv. 22–31), wisdom is called "the first of his [God's] works," "appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began." Wisdom was "the craftsman at his side" when he marked out the earth's foundations, "rejoicing always in his presence." A whole corpus of apocryphal wisdom literature built on these notions (Sir. 1:1–10; Wisdom of Solomon). At first sight, the parallels between the characterization of wisdom in Prov. 8 and John's

logos seem impressive. Wisdom, like John's *logos*, claims preexistence and participation in God's creative activity. Like the *logos*, wisdom is depicted as a vehicle of God's self-revelation, in creation as well as the law. Yet despite these surface similarities, John's *logos* differs from personified wisdom in several significant respects, and the term σοφία (*sophia*, wisdom) is absent from this Gospel (Schlatter 1948 :43; see the three differences noted in Köstenberger 1999a :53).

Finally, the third proposed background is the depiction of the Word of God in the O.T. There are several reasons why this option has the most to commend it: (1) the evangelist's deliberate effort to echo the opening words of the Hebrew Scriptures by the phrase "in the beginning"; (2) the reappearance of several significant terms from Gen. 1 in John 1 ("light," "darkness," "life"); (3) the prologue's OT allusions, be it to Israel's wilderness wanderings (1:14: "pitched his tent") or to the giving of the law (1:17–18); and (4) the evangelist's adaptation of Isa. 55:9–11 for his basic Christological framework (Köstenberger 1999a :54),(Viviano 1998 :182).

As far back as man can think, **in the beginning . . . the Word** was existing. The term "Word" is the common Greek word *logos*, which meant "speaking, a message, or words." "Logos" was widely used in Greek philosophical teaching as well as in Jewish wisdom literature and philosophy. John chose this term because it was familiar to his readers, but he invested it with his own meaning, which becomes evident in the prologue.

A/The Word was with God means in a special relationship of eternal fellowship in the Trinity. The word "with" translates the Greek *pros*, which here suggests "in company with" (cf. the same use of *pros* in 1:2; 1 Thes. 3:4; 1 John 1:2). John then added that **the Word was God**.

B/ The Word has always been in a relationship **with God** the Father. Christ did not at some point in time come into existence or begun a relationship with the Father. In eternity past the Father (God) and the Son (the Word) have always

been in a loving communion with each other. Both Father and Son are God, yet there are not two Gods.

2.5.1 The Deity of Jesus Christ

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The New World translation against other translations, used “god” rather than “God” as the translation mainly stands for the “Jehovah Witness” doctrine. This translation is basically motivated by theological persuasion rather than by true grammatical construction and therefore such translation is wrong as it denies the deity of the Son. Some syntactical rules are suggested below to settle confusions alike partly from the book (A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, Second Edition) and partly from other references.

Jn 1:1–14. THE WORD MADE FLESH.

1. **In the beginning**—of all time and created existence, for this Word gave it being (Jn 1:3, 10); therefore, “before the world was” (Jn 17:5, 24); or, from all eternity **was the Word**—*He who is to God what man’s word is to himself, the manifestation or expression of himself to those without him.* (See on Jn 1:18). On the *origin* of this most lofty and now for ever consecrated title of Christ, this is not the place to speak. It occurs only in the writings of this seraphic apostle. **was with God**—having a conscious personal existence *distinct from God* (as one is from the person he is “with”), but *inseparable from Him* and *associated with Him* (Jn 1:18; Jn 17:5; 1Jn 1:2), where “**THE FATHER**” is used in the same sense as “**GOD**” here. **was God**—in substance and essence **GOD**; or was possessed of essential or proper divinity (Jamieson, Robert; Fauset A.R; Brown David: 1997_).
2. Was the Word *eternal*? It was *not* the eternity of “*the Father*,” but of a conscious personal existence *distinct from Him and associated with Him*. Was the Word thus “with God?” It was not the distinctness and the

fellowship of *another being*, as if there were *more gods than one*, but of One who was *Himself God*—in such sense that the *absolute unity* of the God head, the great principle of all religion, is only transferred from the region of shadowy abstraction to the region of essential life and love. But why all this definition? Not to give us any *abstract information* about certain mysterious distinctions in the Godhead, but solely to let the reader know *who it was that* in the fullness of time “*was made flesh*.” After each verse, then, the reader must say, “It was He who is thus, and thus, and thus described, who was made flesh.” (Fauset A.R; and David: 1997).

Reinforcing this, other scholars also add in 1:1 “Beginning” points to a time prior to creation (R. Brown 1966: 4; Beasley-Murray 1999: 10; Schnackenburg 1990: 1.232). Yet while John’s first readers would have expected the phrase “In the beginning *God*,” the evangelist instead speaks of “the Word” (Beasley-Murray 1999: 10). The focus of this verse is to show the Word’s preexistence (Ridderbos 1997: 25; Schnackenburg 1990: 1.232), preparing for the later reference to a new “beginning,” the incarnation of the Word (cf. 1:14) (Morris 1995: 64; Carson 1991: 114).

The designation “Word”—used in a Christological sense only in the prologue (1:1, 14)—conveys the notion of divine self-expression or speech (cf. Ps. 19:1–4). (Calvin 1959 :7). The Genesis creation account establishes the effectiveness of God’s word: he speaks, and things come to pass (Gen. 1:3, 9; cf. 1:11, 15, 24, and 30). Psalmists and prophets alike portray God’s word in close-to-personal terms (Ps. 33:6; 107:20; 147:15, 18; Isa. 55:10–11). Yet only John claims that this Word has appeared as an actual person, Jesus Christ (cf. 1 John 1:1; Rev. 19:13).

...“**was God**”. Not “a god,” for the lack of the Greek article here does not make “God” indefinite but determines which term (“Word” or “God”) is to be the subject of the linking verb “was”. The literal order of the Greek words here is “and God

was the Word" (*kai theos een 'o logos*), the subject "Word" follows the verb and the predicate nominative "God" precedes the verb, the reverse of English word order. Since this clause uses a linking verb, both the subject and the predicate nominative are in the nominative case, so case endings do not serve to identify the subject in this construction; rather, the article "the" points out the subject of the clause. Greek uses the article "the" to accomplish what English does by word order. Thus, if John had placed the article "the" before "God," the meaning would be "and God was the Word;" if he had placed the article "the" before both "Word" and "God," the meaning would be convertible or reversible: it would mean equally "God was the Word," and "The Word was God," but this John did not do. By placing the article "the" before Word, "Word" must be the subject of the linking verb was and the statement can only be rendered "the Word was God." Just as mistaken is the rendering "the Word was divine," for "God," lacking the article, is not thereby an adjective, or rendered qualitative when it precedes a linking verb followed by a noun which does have the article.

Translators and translations which choose to render this phrase "a god" or "divine" are motivated by theological, not grammatical, considerations. The phrase "a god" is particularly objectionable, because it makes Christ a lesser god, which is polytheism, and contrary to the express declaration of Scripture elsewhere (Dt 32:39). For clearly if Christ is "a god," then he must be either a "true god" or a "false god." If "true," we assert polytheism; if "false," he is unworthy of our credence. John's high view of Christ expressed throughout his gospel, climaxing in the testimony of Thomas, who addressed Christ as "my Lord and my God," is asserted from this opening statement, "the Word was God." There is no legitimate basis for understanding his declaration in any lesser sense than affirming the full deity of the Word. Jn m5:18. 8:+*35, 58, 59. +*10:30, 33,

p+34. 14:7. +m20:28. Dt +*32:39. Jb +*19:26. Is *43:10. m44:6. Je m23:5, 6. Mi +*5:2. Ac p12:22. m20:28. Ro 9:5. 2 Co p*4:4. Ep 5:5g. Ph 2:6n. 2 Th 1:12g. Ti m2:13g. He +*1:8. 2 P m1:1g. Re 21:7.

Just to add a little bit of *articular* use in Greek grammar, let's see Colwell's article published in 1933. In 1933, Colwell published an article entitled, "A Definite Rule for the Use of the Article in the Greek New Testament," in *JBL* 52 (1933) 12-21. Ever since, his rule has been known simply as "Colwell's rule." This rule treats syntax either articular or anarthrous making the predicate nominative definite or indefinite. He said articles indicate the definiteness or there may be a shift of order in the sentence construction. To put it rightly Colwell's rule is as follows:

*"Definite predicate nouns which precede the verb usually lack the article ... a predicate nominative which precedes the verb cannot be translated as an indefinite or a 'qualitative' noun solely because of the absence of the article; if the context suggests that the predicate is definite, it should be translated as a definite noun..."*¹ (Colwell 1995 :20).

Almost immediately many scholars (especially of a more conservative stripe) misunderstood Colwell's rule. They saw the benefit of the rule for affirming the deity of Christ in John 1:1. But what they thought Colwell was articulating was actually the *converse* of the rule, not the rule itself. That is, they thought that the rule was: An anarthrous predicate nominative that precedes the verb is usually definite. This is not the rule, nor can it be implied from the rule.

For the most part, they either quote Colwell without much interaction or they read *into* the rule what is not there. For example, Nigel Turner argued: "[In John 1:1] there need be no doctrinal significance in the dropping of the article, for it is

simply a matter of word-order” (Turner : 17). This means that θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος meant the same thing as ὁ λόγος ἦν ὁ θεός.

Colwell’s research casts the most serious doubts on the correctness of such translations as ‘and the Logos was divine’ (Moffat, Strachan), ‘and the Word was divine’ (Good speed), and (worst of all) ‘and the Word was a god’ (... *New World Translation*)” (Metzger 1951-52 :125-26). Actually, Colwell’s rule does not address this issue at all. Walter Martin goes so far as to say: “Colwell’s rule clearly states that a definite predicate nominative ... *never* takes an article when it precedes the verb ... as in John 1:1.” Although Martin states the rule rather than the converse (though too dogmatically, for Colwell did not say “never”), he assumes the converse of the rule in the very next breath! (Martin 1968 :75).

The point here is that Colwell’s rule has been misunderstood and abused by scholars. By applying Colwell’s rule to John 1:1 they have jumped out of the frying pan of Arianism and into the fire of Sabellianism. So what?

In his article Colwell overstates his case: “Loosely speaking, this study may be said to have increased the definiteness of a predicate noun before the verb without the article. ...” (Colwell: 21). Further, he was inconsistent elsewhere when he said: “[The data presented here] show that a predicate nominative which precedes the verb cannot be translated as an indefinite or a ‘qualitative’ noun solely because of the absence of the article; *if the context suggests* that the predicate is definite, it should be translated as a definite noun in spite of the absence of the article.”(Colwell: 20).

This is an accurate statement in that he recognizes that contextual factors need to be brought in, to argue for a definite Predicate Noun. But this is followed on the next page with: “The absence of the article does *not* make the predicate [nominative] indefinite or qualitative when it precedes the verb; (Wallace : 257).

Therefore in John 1:1 the back up for affirming the “Deity of the Word” and which makes some translations wrong is more from the context. So the contextual meaning comes as we go down to the next successive verses.

2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 4 In Him was life and the life was the Light of men. 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. 9 There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. (All Bible quotations from New American Standard Version, 1995)

2.5.2 The Word Made Flesh

A grammatical analysis of the Greek New Testament reflects the following on John 1:14. **ἐ-σκήνωσεν** aor. -νόω *pitch tent; dwell in a tent* (σκηνή); more generally, *dwell*; either inceptive aor. *took up his abode* (incarnation), or constative (global) aor. §253 *dwelt* among us (earthly life). The latter favored by the following **ἐ-θεασάμεθα** aor. θεάομαι *behold, observe; see*. **ὥς** as (in the capacity of), or causal, *in as much as, because*. **μονο-γενής** neut. -γενής (< μόνος + γένος) *only (child)*. **παρά** w. Gen. of pers. *From*, indicating the origin of

the Word and of his glory. **Πλήρης** often indecl. In HGk: nom. (Ref. ὁ λόγος) or acc. (Ref. δόξαν), or even gen. (Ref. μονογενοῦς) §11. **χάρις καὶ ἀλήθεια** rendering a very freq. O.T. Expression ref. God's merciful love and fidelity to his promises. **ἀλήθεια** *truth*, here that revelation of divine reality communicated by Christ's words, deeds, and life (Zerwick, Max; Grosvenor, Mary 1974 :286).

"Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament" puts it saying 'and the Word became flesh, Cf. ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο (Jo. 1:14). **σὰρξ, σαρκός, ἡ** *sarx* flesh. 1. This noun occurs 147 times in the NT (only 8 times pl., the balance sg.) and is among words with the largest NT frequency (among the anthropological terms σὰρξ stands in third position behind ἄνθρωπος and καρδιά). It is one of Paul's favorite words (72 occurrences, 26 of those in Romans, 18 in Galatians) and is also common in the post-Pauline tradition (25 occurrences, including the Pastorals and Hebrews). It occurs only once each in 1 Timothy, Philemon, James, and 2 John. 1 / 2 Thessalonians, 2 Timothy, Titus, and 3 John do not use the word.

The range of meaning extends from the substance *flesh* (both human and animal), to the human body, to the entire person, and to all humankind. This variety is already seen in the LXX, where σὰρξ translates Heb. *Bśr* (ca. 265 times), though where the reference is to flesh as food, the LXX usually uses κρέας, which occurs in the NT twice with the same meaning (Rom 14:21; 1 Cor 8:13). The New Testament reflects and maintains the Old Testament view of the human being as an undivided whole almost without exception (far from any notions of dichotomous, trichotomous, or dualistic perspectives such as that in

Greek philosophy, Hellenism, and Gnosticism). This is shown *inter alia* by the infrequent occurrence of the Pl. (Jas 5:3; Rev 17:16; 19:18 [5 occurrences], 21, where the reference within the context of judgments is to the eating of human *flesh*).

2. An examination of the use of σάρξ must be based not on its use with other terms (*flesh* and blood, in the *flesh*, according to the *flesh*) but on objective criteria, since some word combinations can have widely diverging meanings in different contexts. (1) Σάρξ refers, first, to the bodily substance, the *flesh* of circumcision, then the human body itself (frequently with a closer qualification, e.g., ἀσθένεια), and finally the whole person or humanity (in the universal sense: all of humanity; in the partial sense: the people Israel, σάρξ referring to physical lineage and expressing genealogical membership in Israel). (2) In a further group σάρξ refers to earthly and natural existence and then to the *merely* worldly existence of human beings (κατὰ σάρκα in combination with a vb.). (3) Finally, and ESP. In Paul, σάρξ implies a theological understanding of mankind subject to the power of sin. The theological implications emerge above all from use with ἁμαρτία, νόμος, and θάνατος and from the contrast σάρξ — πνεῦμα. Here statements about *flesh* come into direct contact with those about anti-divine powers of perdition. We see that the becoming into the flesh is for the Word, neither excluding the divine nor swallowing the human, indivisibly also unmixingly.

3-*Flesh* is also a term — again under OT influence — for the human body (1 Cor 6:16; cf. 2 Cor 7:5; Eph 5:31) as well as for the whole person. Other substantives specify more closely that the person in view is threatened and endangered: Reference is made to weakness (Gal 4:13; Rom 6:19), troubles (1 Cor 7:28), destruction (1 Cor 5:5), and defilement (2 Cor 7:1) of the *flesh*. Qualified by an adj. the human being is portrayed as mortal *flesh* (2 Cor 4:11), though flesh to which even now the life of Jesus is revealed. “All *flesh*” refers, as in the Old Testament, to all human beings, all humanity (Gal 2:16; Rom 3:20; both

influenced by Ps 142:2 LXX: πᾶς ζῶν). Paul twice uses the phrase “*flesh* and blood” (1 Cor 15:50; Gal 1:16; cf. Sir 14:18; 17:31; 1 *Enoch* 15:4–6), referring thus to those who are excluded from the kingdom of God or whose authority is insufficient.

Life “in the *flesh*” (Gal 2:20; 2 Cor 10:3; Phil 1:22, 24; Phlm 16) expresses the normal manner of earthly existence (without any special qualification). Although the phrase sounds slightly Hellenistic, in substance it nonetheless agrees with the Old Testament view of human beings, since according to Greek understanding the soul can indeed be in the body, but not the human being “in the *flesh*.”

c) Paul’s statements using σάρξ of human beings subject to the all-encompassing power of sin are ESP. Important (Rom 7:5 [14], 18, 25; 8:5, 6, 7, 8). Mankind so considered is bound to a sinful existence hostile to God and is incapable of attaining redemption on its own. But Jesus’ death and resurrection robs sin of its power. God sent his Son “in the likeness of sinful *flesh*” for the sake of sin and in order to condemn sin “in the *flesh*,” i.e., in precisely the “place” where it set up its power: in the worldly-physical sphere to which all human beings belong without exception (8:3).

4. The post-Pauline tradition to a large extent follows Paul’s understanding of mankind while setting its own new emphases. Col 2:1 uses σάρξ in the sense of “visible corporeality” (Schweitzer 1968 :136); the use of κατὰ σάρκα in 3:22 also corresponds to Pauline usage: The (worldly) master exercises his lordship in the earthly-worldly realm (so also in Eph 6:5). According to Col 1:24 Paul suffers in his own earthly-physical existence what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions (cf. 2 Cor 4:11; Gal 6:17). The “indulgence of the flesh” in Col 2:23 (a difficult phrase; cf. BAGD s.v. πλησμονή) probably refers to the over satiation of a person not

oriented toward the order of God (on the attempts at syntactical correction see J. Ernst, *Col*/[RNT] 213f.).

5. The OT formula *πᾶσα σὰρξ* also occurs (apart from O.T. quotations in Mark 10:8a par. Matt 19:5b: Gen 2:24; Luke 3:6: Isa 40:5) in Mark 13:20 par. Matt 24:22: No human being could be saved in judgment if the Lord did not shorten the days. “*Flesh* and blood” (Matt 16:17) follows OT terminology and refers to those incapable of proclaiming what alone is of value. *Σὰρξ* and *πνεῦμα* stand over against one another in Mark 14:38 par. Matt 26:41; one cannot, however, speak of “anthropological dualism” (*contra* Schweizer 124; H. Braun, *Spätjüdisch- häretischer und frühchristlicher Radikalismus* [1957] II, 115 n.4 views the passage as a secondary parented insertion); the weakness of the *σὰρξ* and the willing spirit correspond rather to the OT understanding of the conflict between good and evil in human beings (cf. Ps 50:14 LXX). “*Flesh* and bones” (Luke 24:39) refer to the actual corporeality (appearance in person) of the resurrected Jesus in contrast to an incorporeal and unreal spirit. Acts cites the OT twice with the phrase *πᾶσα σὰρξ*, “all human beings” (2:17: Joel 3:1 LXX; 2:26: Ps 15:9 LXX). Acts 2:31 concludes from the incorruptibility of Jesus’ *σὰρξ* that of the human *σὰρξ* (cf. 2:26f.); this refers to the resurrection body of Jesus (*ψυχὴ* in v. 27 is not repeated in v. 31), (Robert and Gerhard, 1990-1993c:230-232).

6. a) The Gospel of John, in which *σὰρξ* appears with relative infrequency (13 times), uses this term in a unique fashion. The phrase “all *flesh*” (John 17:2) is traditional: The Father gives the Son sovereignty over all mankind. In 8:15 the formula *κατὰ σάρκα* is used with the art.; Judgment “according to the *flesh*” is another expression for human incomprehension (cf. v.14) and refers to judgment

according to (superficial) appearances (cf. also 7:24), which cannot recognize who Jesus truly is. Similarly 3:6: Whoever is born “of the *flesh*” is (only) *flesh*, i.e., belongs (only) to the worldly sphere having no part in the kingdom of God. Only through birth within the πνεῦμα does one come into the kingdom of God. *Flesh*, however, does not characterize human beings as subject to the power of sin; a person becomes sinful only by rejecting πίστις. The meaning is similar in 6:63; the contrast between σὰρξ and πνεῦμα is not that found in Paul, but expresses rather that the understanding of Jesus’ speech (v. 60) is possible only in the Spirit.

In the Johannine prologue *flesh* (1:13) refers to physical lineage (cf. the interpretative αἷμα and θέλημα ἀνδρός) — contrasted with birth from God. Σὰρξ is thus thought of as having a will — as does a human being: The birth willed by the physical human being corresponds to the conception desired by the person. John 1:14 asserts that, like every person, the Logos, too, took on physical form; it chose the same earthly existence that every human being has, it set up its tent, and it dwelled among us. So the becoming is neither mysteriously spiritual nor just symbolic but the becoming of the ‘Word’ into ‘human’, neither excluding the divine nor swallowing the human, indivisibly also unmixingly.

b) According to 1 John 4:2 (some mss. Repeat ἐν σαρκί in v. 3) and 2 John 7 the confession that Jesus came “in the *flesh*,” i.e., as a human being, separates the true believers from the prophets of lies. Faith (or its absence) is now revealed not only in relation to God, but also in relation to the one sent by God.

7. a) In Heb 5:7 σὰρξ is used of Jesus’ earthly existence; the “days of his *flesh*” are his days on earth. During this time he took on “blood and *flesh*” (2:14b; → 4), as does every person (v. 14a). This comparison prohibits the assertion that “the ‘substantial’ character ... is now much more prominent” (*contra* Schweitzer 141). The “fathers of our *flesh*” (12:9) are our earthly fathers to whom we were obedient. “Regulations (δικαίωμα) of the *flesh*” (9:10) are cultic requirements of

the law (food, drink, and purity regulations) that only effect a preliminary “purification of the *flesh*” (9:13), i.e., of the external person. In contrast, Christ’s blood purifies the human conscience (v. 14). This dichotomous-sounding statement corresponds to early Christian tradition (Mark 7:15 par. Matt 15:11; cf. Heb 10:22).

According to Heb 10:20 entry into the sanctuary is gained “through the *flesh*” of Jesus; this text does, however, present some difficulties. Is σάρξ here a metaphorical designation for Jesus’ *death*? Vv. 5 and 10 show that σῶμα would have to be used. Is διὰ locative (with the “curtain”) or instrumental (with σάρξ)? Or does διὰ even have a consistent meaning here? Σάρξ could refer to human nature; then the question arises whether this nature must be destroyed (as the curtain was torn) to open access to the sanctuary; “nature,” however, is not really an adequate rendering of σάρξ. The excellent attestation of the text here makes it impossible to assume the presence of a later gloss that might be eliminated. The context suggests the direction our solution must take: Jesus’ blood was spilled at the cross (v. 19); thus the death on the cross made access to the sanctuary possible. This led through the curtain, and this symbolic event is then interpreted concretely through the term *flesh*: Jesus opened the way once and for all through (instrumental) the sacrifice of the “body of flesh” in death.

b) 1 Pet 1:24 (quoting Isa 40:6 LXX) uses πᾶσα σάρξ in accord with O.T. usage to mean “every *person*,” “*everyone*.” 3:18 speaks of Christ, who suffered (the v.l. ἀπέθανεν, while well attested, is not the preferred reading; cf. *NTG*^{and} *UBSGNT* with *NTG*) and was killed in the *flesh* (cf. 1:18f. 2:24). Σάρξ refers to “the mortal human condition” (L. Goppelt, *1 Pet* [KEK] 245 with n.27) or *earthly existence* in general (but not to the body as a soteriological category, *contra* N. Brox, *1 Pet* [EKKNT] 168; K. H. Schelkle, *1 Pet* [HTKNT] 103f. is ambiguous) contrasted with pneumatic existence (cf. Rom 1:3f.). This contrast is also a factor

in the difficult text 1 Pet 4:6, though in reference to the dead: They receive the good news that though in their *earthly existence* they will be judged as humans, they will then live in the spirit like God (cf. Rom 8:27; 2 Cor 7:9, 10, 11).

In 1 Pet 4:1a, too, σαρκί (dat. Of respect, as in 3:18) refers to earthly existence characterized by πάσχειν as the sphere in which Jesus' Passion was manifested historically (cf. 3:18a; there as always in 1 Peter ἁμαρτία is Pl.). The statement in 4:1b can best be described (with Goppelt, *1 Pet* 268) as a general parenthetical justification; it refers in a general sense to the human σάρξ as the "place" where sin rules, but where a person through suffering (probably threats, persecution, and mortal suffering, not bodily harm [*contra* Brox, *1 Pet* 181]) has ceased from sin (cf. Rom 7:6; BAGD s.v. 2) so as for the rest of the *earthly* time no longer to live by human passions (4:2).

The "dirt of the *flesh*" (3:21) is contrasted with the good conscience (cf. Heb 9:10f.; the contrast is not, however, strictly carried through): baptism does not effect an *external and physical* cleansing, but rather "a promise to God for a good conscience" (ἐπερώτημα, literally "question, appeal," is to be rendered here "promise, vow"; → ἐπερώτημα). The background here is the determination of a person according to (unimportant) external and (decisive) internal criteria.

The statements concerning σάρξ in 1 Peter stand fully within early Christian tradition and also take up in part Paul's anthropological-theological conception, though no longer with his linguistic exactitude and conceptual consistency; this becomes esp. clear in the new understanding of sin.

c) According to Jude 7 Sodom and Gomorrah (and the surrounding cities) indulged in “unnatural *flesh*.” This probably refers to sexual lust; the pejorative sense is expressed ESP. Through ἔτερος and suggests perverted desires. The historical perspective recalls particularly Gen 19:4–25: Like the cities mentioned there, the false teachers in Jude engage in fornication with unnatural *flesh* (v. 8). V. 23 is probably to be interpreted in this way as well. 2 Pet 2:10 picks up Jude 7, though without the adj. ἔτερος; instead, it adds “the lust of defiling passions,” thereby rejecting the σάρξ, the human *body*, as an object of sexual gratification (cf. Also 2:18). ¹ (Balz, Horst Robert; Schneider Gerhard 1990-c1993:232-234). And 1cdwelt among us, and ^dwe saw His glory, glory as of ²the only begotten.

All the analysis so far leads us to conclude that he flesh Jesus had is the same as any human being has, which confirms the full humanity of Our Lord Jesus while he was on earth.

John 1:18. There is a question as to whether the original reading here is μονογενὴς υἱός (*monogenēs huios*, one-of-a-kind Son) or μονογενὴς θεός (*monogenēs Theos*, one-of-a-kind [Son, himself] God). With the acquisition of P⁶⁶ and P⁷⁵, both of which read μονογενὴς θεός, the preponderance of the evidence now leans in the direction of the latter reading. M. Harris (1992: 78–80) expresses a “strong preference” for μονογενὴς θεός, for at least four reasons: (1) it has superior MSsupport; (2) it represents the more difficult reading; (3) it serves as a more proper climax to the entire prologue, attributing deity to the Son by way of *inclusio* with 1:1 and 1:14; (4) it seems to account best for the other variants. Most likely, then, μονογενὴς υἱός represents a scribal assimilation to 3:16 and 3:18.

No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God... **1:18**. At the conclusion of his prologue to the Gospel, the evangelist states emphatically, “God [first in the Greek word order] no one has ever seen.” The present verse constitutes an *inclusio* with 1:1 (Keener 2003 : 335 [with reference to Boismard 1957 :76–77], 338). There it was said that the Word was *with* God and the Word *was* God. Here in 1:18 it is similarly said that the “one-of-a-kind Son” was God and that he was with God in the closest way possible (Louw 1968 :38). This relationship, in turn, is presented as the all-important reason why Jesus, the enfleshed Word, was able to overcome the vast gulf that had existed between God and humankind up to that point—despite the law. For God no one had ever seen—not even Moses (1:17; cf. Num. 12:8) (Hofius 1989 :170). If there is a polemic here, it is not against the law itself (true also of Paul [e.g., Rom. 3:31]), but against the revelation contained in the law. As Jesus asserts later in the Gospel, anyone who has seen him has seen the Father (14:9; cf. 12:45), and no one can come to the Father except through him (14:6). Although the law is God’s gracious revelation, it is not adequate as a vehicle of the “true, ultimate grace” (1:17) that came only through Jesus Christ.

The lack of a coordinating conjunction (asyndeton) indicates the causal relationship between 1:18 and 1:17 (Hofius 1989: 163 n. 4). Importantly, this theme is reiterated in the body of the Gospel during the course of Jesus’ ministry in relation to the Jews (5:37; 6:46; cf. the close verbal parallel 1 John 4:12). In the O.T. , God had stated clearly that no one could see his face and live (Exod. 33:20) (Mowvley 1984 :137). Moses received a glimpse of God’s “back” (Exod. 33:23), as did Hagar (metaphorically; Gen. 16:13). The saints of the OT usually were terrified of seeing God (Exod. 3:6b; Judg. 13:21–22; Job 13:11; Isa. 6:5). The reason for humankind’s inability to see God is twofold: first, God is spirit (John 4:24); second, humankind fell into sin and was expelled from God’s presence (Gen. 3; Isa. 59:2). Jesus surmounted both obstacles: he, himself God,

became a human being, so that others could see God in him (John 1:14; 14:9–10; cf. 20:28); and, being sinless, he died for people, so that their sinfulness no longer keeps them from entering into fellowship with God (John 1:29; cf. Rom. 5:1–2, 6–11). By way of *inclusio*, the phrase “the one-of-a-kind Son, God [in his own right]” provides a commentary on what is meant in 1:1c, where it is said that “the Word was God.” The Word was God, and so Jesus is “unique and divine, though flesh” (Mowvley 1984: 137). Rather than functioning attributively (“the one-of-a-kind God”), μονογενής probably is to be understood as a substantive in its own right as in 1:14 (“the one-of-a-kind Son”), with θεός in apposition (“God [in his own right]”; Hofius 1989: 164). The phrase “one-of-a-kind Son, God [in his own right],” which John here uses with reference to Jesus, is both striking and unusual (though note the equally clear ascriptions of deity to Jesus in 1:1 and 20:28). If this is what John actually wrote, it would identify Jesus even more closely as God than the phrase “one-of-a-kind Son.” Judaism believed that there was only one God (Deut. 6:4). As John shows later in his Gospel, Jesus’ claims of deity brought him into increasing conflict with the Jewish authorities. In the end, the primary charge leading to his crucifixion was blasphemy (19:7; cf. 10:33), (Keener 2003 :426).

The phrase “in closest relationship” (εἰς τὸν κόλπον, *eis ton kolpon*) refers to the unmatched intimacy of Jesus’ relationship with the Father (Wallace :360), which enabled him to reveal the Father in an unprecedented way (cf. the contrast with Moses in 1:17; R. Brown 1966: 36). Literally, John here says that Jesus is “in the Father’s lap,” an idiom for greatest possible closeness (cf. Prov. 8:30) (Hofius 1989: 164–65, following Gese 1981). This is the way the term is used in the OT, where it portrays the devoted care of a parent or caregiver (Num. 11:12; Ruth 4:16; 2 Sam. 12:3; 1 Kings 3:20; 17:19; Lam. 2:12; cf. *b. Yebam. 77a*) (Hofius

1989: 166 nn. 19–21). The most pertinent NT parallel is the reference to “Abraham’s side” (TNIV) in Luke 16:22.

These parallels show how deeply intimate John considered Jesus’ relationship with the Father to be. The evangelist later uses a closely similar expression (ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ; lit., “in Jesus’ bosom” [13:23]) with regard to himself, “the disciple Jesus loved,” indicating that his closeness to Jesus during his earthly ministry made him the perfect person to write this Gospel. Access to divine revelation was also prized in the pagan mystery religions and Jewish apocalypticism and mysticism. Yet here John claims that Jesus’ access to God far exceeds not only that claimed by other religions, but even that of Judaism. This is why Moses’ system was inferior: under it, no one could see God (Morris 1995: 100).

John here does not use the more common term for “to make known,” γνωρίζω (*gnōrizō* [15:15; 17:26]), but the rare expression ἐξηγέομαι (*exēgeomai*; found only here in this Gospel). In its Lukan occurrences (Luke 24:35; Acts 10:8; 15:12, 14; 21:19), the term regularly means “to give a full account” in the sense of “telling the whole story,” the probable meaning here also (Louw 1968; Morris 1995: 101; contra Beasley-Murray [1999: 16], who likes the thought of the Logos “exegeting” the Father). (Harris 1994 :109,115) . As he concludes his introduction, John therefore makes the important point that the entire Gospel to follow should be read as an account of Jesus “telling the whole story” of God the Father.

If so the sameness of the Word with the father is asserted but the Word’s becoming into flesh also not denied. The flesh nature of the Word at this Juncture

is not of the same kind with the father as the father has no flesh. Then the phrase of-the-same-kind refers to only the nature of the Logos in his former divinity and his unequalled/unique relationship with the father. The Textus receptus use of the word “Son” has nothing wrong in this case as the “Son” is truly the “unique Son” of the “unique God” but this doesn’t imply a denial of the “Son” stepping out from God to man which we theologically call as the incarnation. It is a process of limitation or the infinite willing to be finite, the Logos willing to be on the level of man. Yet it is the unique Son of God, the Son/Logos who became man not any body else.

2.5.3 The Testimony of John

Since the Word existed in the beginning, one might think that either the Word *was* God or the Word was *with* God. John affirms both. What is expressed is “not simple co-existence, but rather the idea of active relationship or intercourse ‘with’ ” (Pollard 1977: 364).

Seeking to combine the notions of “with” indicating accompaniment and “toward” signifying relationship, R. Brown (1966: 4–6) translates, “The Word was in God’s presence”; A. T. Robertson (1934: 623 [cited in MacLeod 2003: 57]) glosses, “face to face with God.” 65).

In terms of relationship, not only does πρὸς establish a relationship between God and the Word, but also it distinguishes the two from each other (R. Brown 1966: 5).(Köstenberger, Andreas J 2004 :25).

In the beginning chapters, John made a descriptive narrative of the reactions from those who were meeting with Jesus in an eye breaking contact with Him. Those who were positive towards Jesus, most possibly only knew the prophetic utterances about Jesus as far as labeling Him as the messiah (Jn 1:45). Nathanael’s confession “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel” (Vs 49), seems a sudden utterance which might have come out of just a surprise in what Jesus said about him, rather than a clear understanding of the divine nature. The same was the case when Peter uttered similar statement about Jesus, during Jesus’ interrogation to the disciples ‘who do you say I am?’.

Peters answer was not premeditated, let alone to the extent of understanding the real nature of Jesus. That seems the reason for Jesus to discourage Peter's confession, not to publicize this incident before the time (Mark 8:29-30).

A Commentary Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, S. gives the following analysis of Jn 5:26.

Does this refer to the essential life of the Son before all time (Jn 1:4) (as most of the Fathers, and OLSHAUSEN, STIER, ALFORD, &c., among the moderns), or to the purpose of God that this essential life should reside in the Person of the Incarnate Son, and be manifested thus to the world? [CALVIN, LUCKE, LUTHARDT, &c.] The question is as difficult as the subject is high. But as all that Christ says of His essential relation to the Father is intended to explain and exalt His mediatorial functions, so the one seems in our Lord's own mind and language mainly the starting-point of the other (Jamieson, Robert ; Fausset, A. R. ; Brown, David ; 1997)

The Believers Bible Commentary puts it a little bit deliberately saying;

*This verse explains how a person can receive life from the Lord Jesus. Just **as the Father** is the Source and Giver of **life**, **so He has** decreed that **the Son**, too, should **have life in Himself** and should be able to give it to others. This again is a distinct statement as to the deity of Christ and as to His equality with the Father. It cannot be said of any man that he has life in himself. Life was given to each one of us, but it was never given to the Father or to the Lord Jesus. From all eternity, they have had life dwelling in them. That life never had a beginning. It never had a source apart from them. (MacDonald, William ; Farstad, Arthur , 1995,1997)*

Yes, it looks that God does something on God. It is not a problem for the Jews to see God as one following the "Shema" Deut 6:4. But when the Trinitarian nature begun to get disclosed through the incarnation of the Son, such experience was difficult and a mystery for the Jews and similarly for us. Life is a provision of the One God. Obvious and almost a saturated theology for the Jews during the time of Jesus. Jesus initially came to give life for us also for those who are already dead (Vs 28-29). The question is who is this Jesus who has authority to give life and where did he get that authority. It seems Jesus' addressed it in a twofold manner. The first one Trinitarian and the second one missional. When we say Trinitarian, the life that Jesus is to give is a life always originated in God. When we say in God it encompasses the Triune God. So, it may have been a shock for Jesus hearers as Jesus announced about giving life (as they know that the

source of life is the one God only) that he had to refer to God, as giving the power and authority to the Son so that He might give life on Himself. Any human being can have life sourced out from God but no human being is able to pass “this life” to others because the life passing prerogative is a Trinitarian task.

The second thing is the missional nature of Jesus’ statement. What is the Son’s incarnation all about? Is it not to die and have victory on death therefore we and those who are already dead may have life? As the Son is already God, God doesn’t give life to God and then make God another God or giver of life. This has nothing to do with eternal generation or a God giving life to God.

Still Jesus went on doing miracles, in Chapters, 2, 3, 4,5,6,9 and 11. What were the reactions from the people’s side? The texts clearly testify that there was a split situation among the crowd, making some to stand for Him and some against Him, with none of them grasping quite clearly who Jesus was. This is evidenced in Philip’s ignorance while he was still insisting to see God Himself (Jan 14:8). Jesus’ response to Him was very strange and complicated.

What does “I am in the father and that the father is in me“, mean? None of the disciples seem getting a clear view about this utterance of Jesus. Was it that the divine was there hidden in the material Jesus, as some might infer or that Jesus was sometimes in the divine dimension and another time in the physical dimension? Or Jesus Himself is materially divine and materially human at the same time?

If we say that the divine was there materially in Him it must have been very visible as far as the disciples and others who see him could identify, and this would also be in contradiction to the functional fact that Jesus had in his earthly life, which was clear in his own utterance of Himself about His physical condition elsewhere in this book.

In John Chapter 17. the word glory is mentioned more than five times within only this chapter. Glory or ‘*doxa*’ here refers to a bright radiance or splendor which

attracts attention (Brown 1966 :23) to the knowledge of the real matter/substance behind something. From this meaning it was clear that there is no visible divine radiance over the flesh of Jesus as cause of attraction. Jesus clearly narrated his former glory “Glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you, before the world begun” Vs 5., stating that He has now missed/limited himself from the glory or the divine quality, therefore he came out of that glory Vs 8., to this imperfect world to be in the limitedness.

If it is that Jesus was shifting up and down sometimes in the divine and sometimes in the human, this is just incongruous with no proof anywhere in the New Testament. This is not to deny that the incarnate Lord is God. However, we don’t have to forget that we are discussing about incarnation, in which it is the action of the infinite willfully becoming finite for the sake of the salvation of humanity. If we are talking about the incarnational context, the very purpose and essence is in limitation.

Well, how far is the limitation? also the where about of the divine in the former infinity may be a question. Some texts of the New Testament like Col 1:17 which speak of the Son holding the universe is very clearly a post resurrection act than an act during the incarnation. Paul was discussing the pre-present and post resurrection scenarios in one context. So let’s not confuse such texts with acts limited within the incarnation context. Luke 2:40,52 exactly talks the change in the nature of the incarnate Christ. This affirms the human nature and there is no talk of the divine enabelent here, therefore no argument about God changing or growing etc.

Why are church fathers as Tertullian and John of Damascus, reformed theologians as Calvin, Shedd, and Hodge , Arminian theologians as Wesley, and Lutheran theologians as Chemnitz wrong to say that each nature in distinction from the other acts, wills, and experiences? This is not the place to answer the question above as we are trying to see backgrounds in the New Testament yet the analysis given above is the stand at the table here which will surely be

discussed in detail within the next chapters. We will try to see more arguments in chapter three, on the analysis of the development of Christological theology in church history, where we may also see a little bit of the opinions of: Grudem, Clark, Baille, Dorner, Hodge, AB Bruce, Shedd, Wiley, Warfield, Chemnitz, John of Damascus, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, Calvin, either arguing for or against their evidences.

The only incident of a different substance now seem to be visible, which is very literal in the text is when Jesus was about to be with God in the divine dimension late after His resurrection discourse with Mary Magdalene. His statement to her was; “do not hold on to me for I have not yet returned to the Father ... tell them I am returning to my father and your father, to my God and Your God” (Jn 20:17). We may still be dragged into the same question of the nature of Christ again and again as John 20 :17, comes into the picture here.

It is true that in our simple reading of the pages of the Gospels we never see the incarnate Christ being able into all places at the same time during the incarnation as the resurrected one does. We never see the incarnate Christ entering into a house behind the closed doors except in few cases after the resurrection. Doesn't this imply that the resurrection put on something to the nature of the incarnate Christ? That's why we say He was in the not yet, until this moment that we cannot say He sometimes was in the divine and sometimes in the human unless otherwise one denied this scriptural evidences. It does not even signify that Jesus was materially divine and materially human for there is no material divinity. The material world with humanity and flesh is a created substance rather than a divine substance unless otherwise we are again trapped in Apollinaire cults of divinizing the flesh. Still, details of this will follow in our successive chapters.

When we come to Jesus' answer to Philip's question in the next successive verses of ch 14:10 “the words I say to you are not just my own, rather.... the Father in me”; this means the words of the Father in me which is the divine

message from the Father through Christ to us, as this is true of the context. He came out of the father and He was sent by the father. Yes, His mission and message was from the father. Yet that message was accomplished in the physical world in the midst of humanity to humanity; that's all we get in the text.

These are gospel records of the Apostle John about the Historical Jesus, where the human limitation was gloriously true in his ministry in between the incarnation and the resurrection.

But these are not the only texts we should rely on for the study of Christology in the Gospel of John. Texts like John 5:18; 19; 26 clearly speak of Jesus equality with God the Father. This is not an evidence of divine power as far as nature is concerned though that may be implied but it is all about authority. Jesus said I can do nothing without the father...(paraphrase mine). Does this conflict with the analysis coming down so far, where we have emphasized the human limitation of Jesus during the incarnation? In order to understand the texts above better, we must first try to see what caused Jesus to utter His equality with God the father at this very juncture.

While we read the context, we see that two things which may be unusual have happened. The first is the healing of a man who had been ill for 38 years, secondly the fact that the healing was done during the Sabbath. What caused the rioted argument mainly was not the healing, as Jesus had repeatedly done so, also healing might happen even by the water in Bethsaida as many sick, lame etc were there to get a healing, as the water was rushed by an angel or so outside the presence of Jesus. The unique thing is its occurrence on the Sabbath. Verse 10 says "So the Jews were saying to the man who was cured, it is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet." The immediate response of the man who was refused of carrying his pallet, was redirecting the case to the one (Jesus) who said "carry your pallet".

A question of authority is very evident here. Who has more authority on Sabbath? On whose authority is such activity to be done or undone? So the question is not about the substantial component of Jesus but on the authority Jesus had; so is the response from Jesus. Authority wise Jesus is equal with God, yesterday, today and forever. Function wise, pre-incarnate Jesus has surely changed during the incarnation and has changed more during the post resurrection. This is the basic meaning implied in verses 18, 19, and 26 as the next boundary (Vs 27 says “and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man).

In the functional reality of Jesus, humanity and incarnation is limitation which was the functional reality of the Son only (not of the father and of the Holy Spirit) during the incarnation. Details will come later in chapter five. Verse 28 adds something interesting here. Jesus seems to shock the surprise of his opponents by hinting what the future would look like. He said in Vs 28 “Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, Vs 29 and will come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment”. What does this tell us? Firstly ‘a time in the not yet’ and ‘an event in the not yet’. So the resurrection has surely changed the substantial nature of Jesus, from a temporary limitedness during the incarnation to infiniteness after the resurrection.

Vs 30 says “I can do nothing on my own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will, but the will of Him who sent me”. Still here, we see Jesus’ will in coherence with the will of the Father, and also the need of his dependency on the Father during his incarnate stage.

Another text is John 14:28. It says; “You heard that I said to you, ‘I go away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. (All verses used above are from the *New*

American Standard Bible: 1995 Update. LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995, S. Jn 14:28).

According to John 14:28 we may ask, is God greater than God? No but in line with the above flow, Jesus is referring to his temporary humiliation as man. It is good to assert that God is greater than man. This may be against what Grudem has said as the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. Human nature is never the nature of the Father or the Holy Spirit but has been in the nature of Jesus during his incarnation as he willingly limited Himself for the sake of saving us.

III The Christology in the Johannine Epistles

As we are aware of the disputes concerning the authorship of these epistles either by the same author or a redactor/copyist, it would be good to give a little introductory note, of the disputes reinforcing our former position. Canon A. E. Brook, in his exegetical commentary on 1, 2, and 3rd John (Brook 1912 :2), made a careful and detailed comparison between the epistles of John and the Gospel of John. His goal was to stress the identity of Authorship, which we think needs bit overview. Brook first listed scholars who are against the traditional authorship thinking. His list includes men of widely divergent views, among whom Eichhorn, Credner, De Wette, Lücke, Ewald, Keim, and Huther may be mentioned. Brook said similarity of phrasing in Baur's view, is that the explanation of the obvious connection between the two writings is to be found in imitation rather than in identity of authorship (Brook :3).

Therefore we may say that, scholars who are supporters of imitation by an editor or copyist at least admit obvious and close similarity between the epistles and the Gospel. The notion is either to say it is an imitation or repetition of usage by the same author. A scholar who is almost with a foundational document for a copyist rather than the same author according to Brook is (H. Holtzmann in his article in the *Jahrbuch für Protestantische Theologie*, 1882,:128). To quote what Brook

presented;

The attempt has been made to show how each phrase is used in the Gospel and the Epistle. The connection is obvious. In explaining it the choice has to be made between an imitator and a writer repeating, not without significant variations, his common phrases and methods of expression. The usage of these phrases seems on the whole to support the latter hypothesis. But the question can only be determined after considering the other evidence (Brook :5).

In Brook's analysis more than 144 verses are selected from both the Gospel and the epistles in the original Greek, just for comparison and contrast. It would be easy to make the list a long one. But these examples serve as illustrations. Brook then concluded that, the usage suggests a writer who varies his own phrases, rather than a mere copyist. If it is a question of copying, there has at least been intelligent use and not slavish imitation. To site few examples: The following points of similarity of style have often been noticed (Brook :7);

- (1) The infrequent use of the relative. The thought is carried on by means of
 - (a) Οὐ... ἀλλά. This use is very frequent. Cf. Jn. 1:8, 13; 1 Jn. 2:2, 16, 21.
 - (b) Disconnected sentences. Cf. 1 Jn. 1:8 (ἐὰν εἴπωμεν), 9 (ἐὰν ὁμολογῶμεν), 10 (ἐὰν εἴπωμεν); Jn. 3:18, ὁ πιστεύων... ὁ μὴ πιστεύων Frequent in Gospel and Epistle.
 - (c) Positive and negative expression of a thought. Cf. 1 Jn. 1:5, ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἐστὶν καὶ σκοτία οὐκ ἔστιν ζέν αὐτῷ οὐδεμία: Jn. 1:3, πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν.

3.1 Christology in 1st John

If we affirm the authorship of John- the son of Zebedee, as basic frame for our thought, for all Johannine writings, the flow of Christological outline we attempt to expose will surely follow this basic frame.

The purpose of this letter has two faces; first, to encourage his readers reinforce their fellowship with God and his Son; second making them alert of the false representation of the nature of Christ blowing from the either Gnosticism or

dualism (Brown :54). We are not sure whether the false teaching highlighted is from Gnosticism or from ancient dualistic remnant thoughts. If we say it is Gnosticism it would make this epistle a late document in the 2nd C A.D. On the other hand if we say it is about dualism it will still make this literature very ancient, may be back to some 500 years before Christ rather than a 1st C A D, document.

It may be fair to say that the heresies in view are from remnants of ancient dualism which might have been recurrently appearing either in Gnosticism or just a simple dualistic interpretation of nature. All in all the intention seems a pastoral care underscoring the right type of fellowship with God through the true knowledge of the nature of Jesus Christ.

Having this as a foreground, we can say that the purpose of first John partially treats the cause of Christology by featuring the human nature of Jesus Christ while he was on earth. This response from John was needed to protect the wrong conception of those who try to make Jesus void of the physical world. As we obviously know, dualistic outlook so divides between spirit and matter openly, making the matter issue evil and the spirit holy or good. Such a notion is a trial to present a pure uncontaminated sort of Christ for believers. Yet, such a motive cannot make the error right. Therefore John responds strongly against it.

The very beginning verses of this book introduce Jesus Christ in a tangible measurable form as any scientific evidence might demand information substantiating it through the five senses. 1st John Chapter 1:1-4 follows a parallel prelude we have seen in the beginning of the Gospel of John above. The first verse tells about the word of life which has existed from the very beginning (Vs 1), affirming its preexistence or eternality. Then the “Word” in approachability to the ‘eye’, the ‘ear’ the ‘hand’ and so on.

Reinforcement to this idea is in Vs 22 of the same chapter which talks about the enemy and his followers who were formerly professing believers but now revealed as side trackers. Their character is elaborated as they are enemies of

not only Christ but also the Father. In rejecting Christ, they also have rejected the Father. Here is an implication that any misrepresentation of Christ ends in total animosity to God (Vs 22) and a love to the Enemy of Christ (Vs 18).

All in all a true understanding of the nature of Christ lies in the acknowledgement that Christ came as a human being. Anyone who denies this Jesus does not have the spirit from God (1Jn 4:2-3). In general, both the Gospel account and 1st John, having been written by the same author, we may assuredly say that both focused on the nature of Christ in between the walls of incarnation and resurrection. We may borrow Brooks analytical comparison as reinforcing evidence to our argument (Brook 1912 :9). (1) The general ideas which form the basis of the Johannine teaching are common to both.

The incarnation of the Son of God:

1 John. 4:2. Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα.

John. 1:14. ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο.

The life which has its source in Him:

1 John. 5:11. αὕτη ἡ ζωὴ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ ἐστίν.

John. 1:4. (ὃ γέγονεν) ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν.

6:35. ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς (cf. ver. 48).

6:33. ζωὴν διδοὺς τῷ κόσμῳ.

3.2 2nd John

When we come to 2nd John, though this letter is addressed to an individual and most possibly through her to many who deserve the message (2nd Jn 1:1), the same tone of pastoral care is reflected still asserting that, deceivers have gone out over the world, people who do not acknowledge that Jesus Christ came as a human being (Vs 7). The third letter is more personal yet with almost the same

tone of pastoral care.

Therefore these are Johannine records of the Apostle John about the Historical Jesus, where the human limitation was gloriously true in his ministry in between the walls of the incarnation and the resurrection.

IV Conclusion

We have tried to see the Gospel of John and additional Johannine writings as sources of Christological discussion. Preliminary step in our argument was fixing the authorship. Though there are still who doubt attribution of the authorship of the Johannine writings to John the Apostle-son of Zebedee; our line of argument goes for accepting the traditional belief affirming the authorship of John the apostle, son of Zebedee. If not, our argument will lose foundation making us tempted to rely on just hypothetical author, who may not even be an eye witness, and therefore leading us to compromise or reject the content all in all.

Having this as groundwork, we have seen how we should frame the Gospel of John and the other Johannine writings, without violation of the intention of the author. Then we tried to trace Christological line of developments all through the books.

All in all a true understanding of the nature of Christ lies in the acknowledgement that Christ came as a human being. Anyone who denies this Jesus does not have the spirit from God (1Jn 4:2-3).

V. Christology in the synoptic Gospels

Trying to get Christological formula laid by the synoptic Gospels is not an easy task. First of all these literary types (genres) were not set to answer the 21st C. Christological questions. Secondly, as McKnight suggested in his book *interpreting the Synoptic Gospels* (McKnight 1988 :13), each genre is distinct; consequently, applying the same method to different genres will often lead to serious misunderstandings.

The synoptic Gospels are written based on events in the life of Jesus and his sayings and were written long after his death, while they were in a process of transmission which the oral tradition takes the major part. For example a comparative reading of the synoptic Gospels may lead one to question their authenticity, while he/she can see the same narration but a varying and contradicting setting and chronology. Therefore McKnight warns (McKnight :14) that the transmission process and the phases of development should be considered in any exegesis.

Therefore, due consideration to the relationship between the individual parts of the three (Matthew, Mark and Luke) will be the preface for the details of Christological study.

As this research is for the major part about the Christology in the synoptic Gospels, we would not attempt to make the author, date, and provenance and occasion issues main part of our discussion.

Scholarship has made us aware that, the names of authors for each part of the synoptic Gospels are a later addition by a copyist or redactor rather than the original writers themselves. This entails something about the date of composition which might tell different phases through which they were getting matured. Yet getting the occasion and the relationship between the three is a fundamental task in the process of exegesis towards finding Christological thought out of all.

A face value reading tells that Mark has a very condensed treatment in contrast to Matthew and Luke. Some narrations have additional details in Matthew and Luke in contrast to Mark. What was the common source for all the three is still hypothetically presented in current scholarship. Trying to make Matthew as source for both Luke and Mark seems an outdated mode; rather there is now an insistence for Mark and another "Q" as basic source for both Matthew and Luke. Luke in his beginning chapter, very clearly mentioned his use of sources plus eyewitness evidences for his documentation. This would lead to the possibility that Mark antedates both Luke and Matthew. Anyways, a minimum of 90%

dependence is very evident; therefore a synoptic study is justifiable.

5.1 Christological Content

The exegetical challenge here is trying to grasp the real substance of the nature of our Lord Jesus during His earthly ministry. It is good to trace to more other New Testament records and apply some word study in order to get clear explanation of the issue at hand. For example the word *Lord* is very often used to designate divinity when it was used specifically for God. Does this apply to the nature of the incarnate Jesus?

The word *Kurios* ‘*Kurios*’ an adjective from of ‘*kuros*’ meaning ‘mighty’ refers to the one who exercises power, one who has power (Bullinger 1971 :466). But while *Kurios* is used as a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament Jehovah in the New Testament texts such as Matt 22:43-45 and Mk 12:36-37, the name Jehovah was never applied to the incarnate Christ. Let’s see how the term was applied in the New Testament texts.

As Keener has clearly treated this search from its application within the rabbinic literatures and the LXX, he said *Lord* was quite usually used as a title of God sometimes distinguished from “Elohim” in most of the rabbinic literatures, but as an equivalent to “Adonai” in which both were translated as “Kurios” in the LXX. The distinction between ‘Kurios/Lord’ and ‘Jahovah/ Elohom’ is at least clear in Keener’s treatment. Keener even goes to mention the vocative case ‘Kurie’, where it may also mean ‘Sir’ (Keener 2003 :297). How does this serve our cause, meaning the nature of our Lord in between the walls of the incarnation and the resurrection? How was this terminology applied to Jesus by the disciples while he was on earth?

The disciples were addressing him as ‘Kurie’ meaning ‘Sir’ meant to respect him whatever his very nature is, rather than ‘kurios’ which is more or less applied as a divine title. But this limitation of the nature of Jesus doesn’t seem likely, right after the resurrection (1Cor 8:5-6; 16: 22). The disciples seem to have a hazy picture

of 'him' till their post resurrection scenario, therefore, they were addressing him with just a respect than with the full understanding of who he is.

5.1.1 Matt 22:42-45.

Jesus asked the Pharisees "what do you think about Christ?"(vs. 41). The Pharisees answered in relation to David, saying 'son of David' (vs. 42). Jesus was still persistently digging into the issue and therefore the Old Testament context (Ps 110:1) is differently understood by Jesus than the traditional understanding of the Pharisees. Both the Pharisees and Jesus seem to be on the same line, while they referred to the relational concept as both sides referred to the Lord in relation to David.

Yet the 'Christ' the Pharisees referred to, seems accountable to David but the 'Lord' referred by Jesus is the Christ in which David is accountable to. That lordship surely belongs to Him in a positional manner but it is not there with him in a practical manner. Let's try to see this verse by verse;

41 ^aNow while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question: 42 "What do you think about ¹the Christ, whose son is He?" They ^{}said to Him, "^aThe son of David." 43 He said to them, "Then how does David ^{1a}in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying, 44 ^aThe Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, until I put Your enemies beneath Your feet" '45 "If David then calls Him 'Lord,'*

^a Matt 22:41–46; Mark 12:35–37; Luke 20:41–44

¹ I.e. the Messiah

^a Matt 9:27

¹ Or *by inspiration*

^a 2 Sam 23:2; Rev 1:10; 4:2

^a Ps 110:1; Matt 26:64; Mark 16:19; Acts 2:34f; 1 Cor 15:25; Heb 1:13; 10:13

how is He his son?" **46** ^aNo one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him ¹another question.

A little grammatical analysis deem necessary here. **δυσὶν** dat. Of δύο. **κρέμαται** pass. κρεμάννυμι hang, pass. intr. met. depend. **συν-ηγμένων** pf ptc pass. -άγω v.34, gen. abs. for concordant (w. αὐτούς) ptc §49. **ἐπ-ηρώτησεν** v.23.

τί ὑμῖν δοκεῖ; v.17. **τίνος**; v.20. **τοῦ** perh. inserted to show gen. case of Δαυίδ (indecl.), cf v.43. **ἐν πνεύματι**: ἐν of concomitant circumstances (associative) §116, connoting the influence of the Spirit. **κάθου** impv κάθημαι. **ἐκ δεξιῶν** 20:21

^a Mark 12:34; Luke 14:6; 20:40

¹ Lit *any longer*

dat. dative

pass. passive (voice)

intr. intransitive

met. metaphorical(ly)

pf perfect (tense)

ptc participle, participial

v. verse

gen. genitive

abs. absolute, standing (syntactically) on its own

w. with

perh perhaps

indecl. indeclinable

cf Lat. *confer*, compare

impv imperative (mood)

at the right hand. ἕως ἄν w. subj. *until.* θῶ aor, subj. τίθημι. ἐχθρός *enemy.* ὑποκάτω w. gen. *under* §83. εἰ οὖν introducing a “real” condition §305. ἐ-δύνατο impf δύναμαι. ἀπο-κριθῆναι aor. inf. dep. -κρίνομαι v.1. ἐ-τόλμησεν aor. -μάω *dare.* ἐπ-ερωτῆσαι aor. inf. v.23. οὐκ-ἐτι after a neg. *any longer, any more.* (Zerwick, Max ; Grosvenor, Mary 1974 :73).

From the above grammatical analysis we see that, Jesus was asking a question to the Pharisees and the question was about “who” the Lord is and in what sense? To whom was David referring while he said “the Lord... my Lord...? And the second question will be in what sense is this Lord be the Lord of David? There we see a clue which says ἐν πνεύματι “in the spirit”, which is most possibly in the influence of the spirit, or under a prophetic influence, David was able to hear the divine talk between the two Lords. This affirms the Lordship of Christ or the deity of Christ which makes him the Lord of David, of course the Lord of all humanity. But the timing goes backward than forward while David was uttering this prophecy through the spirits influence. He was able to see the pre-existent Christ not necessarily the incarnate one. If one takes this as if talking about the incarnate Christ, this confuses the date that David lived with the time the incarnate Christ revealed himself in time. So it is all about Him as Lord but in his pre-incarnate state. Mainly the ἐν πνεύματι- in the spirit, could also be taken to mean that what David said was said in the spirit not in day to day market talk, therefore should not be taken literally.

subj. subjunctive (mood)

aor aorist (tense)

impf imperfect (tense)

inf. infinitive

dep. deponent

neg. negative, negation

Does this make our Lord lesser than a full Lord/ deity. No way! but while the Pharisees and other people do not in any way understand his preexistent nature in his humanity, Jesus was hinting concerning his preexistent nature which he is having it now, only positionally than practically, which we usually say he is functionally man but ontologically God. The function is a measurement of time and space, physical limitedness, but the ontology is trying to understand Jesus beyond time and space from eternity, which is now condensed in time and space in flesh, just to the level of only positional potential than practical potential.

This leads us to say, the Lord is truly son of David when it comes to his humanity but Son of God when it comes to his Deity. Son doesn't necessarily refer to divine enablement but a protocol or position.

5.2 Mk 12:36, 37

According to McKnight the book of Mark is structurally divided as: 1:1-13 Introduction, then ch 1:14- ch 9:50 his ministry in Galilee and the neighborhood, then ch 10 his journey to Jerusalem, ch 11:1- 15:41 last work in Jerusalem and 15:42-16:8 conclusion. This is a little hint towards the occasion where Mark is spinning.

The same thought recurred in Mark that it is David himself Calling him 'Lord' still indicating the relational arrangement between David and his Lord. Christ's Lordship in His pre incarnate nature is depicted in Ps 110:1, because he is not yet born as human in time and space, still letting Him stand by himself apart from the person of Jehovah; yet this retrospective reference of Jesus in Mk 12:37 or Lk 20:41-45, never denies Christ's humanity magnifying only his pre incarnate superiority.

αὐτὸς γὰρ Δαυὶδ for D. himself. βίβλος ἡ (= βύβλος papyrus) book. ψαλμός psalm, hymn.

κάθου impv -θῆμαι be seated. δεξιός right (opp. left), ἐκ δεξιῶν at the right hand. ἕως ἄν w. subj. until, ref. future. θῶ aor² subj. τίθημι. ἐχθρός enemy. ὑπο-πόδιον pred. Footstool, construct state of Hebr. original accounting for absence of art. §183. κύριον pred. καὶ τῶς...; so how...? §459. (Zerwick, Max; Grosvenor, Mary 1974:265)

The -θῆμαι *be seated*. **δεξιός** *right* in the above text gives a good clue to what we are trying to assert. Who is said “to sit by the right side of the other Lord until...”? When was Jesus being seated by the right side of the Lord? The other clue is the **ἕως ἄν** *until*. It is true that it was Jesus who was said to sit by God’s right hand. Christ is still truly the son of David, but How? **Mark 12:35** And Jesus began to say, as He taught in the temple, “How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? **36** “David himself said in the Holy Spirit, The Lord said to my Lord, “**Sit at My right hand, Until** I put Your enemies beneath Your feet.” **37** “David himself calls Him ‘Lord’; so in what sense is He his son?” And the large crowd enjoyed listening to Him.

12:32-34a. These verses are unique to Mark but neither Mark nor Matthew gives us any answer to the question of ‘whom’ or the ‘timing’.

The answer was left for time to rejoin it. For this question to be answered Jesus must be crucified, and die and buried and be resurrected. It may be easy for us who may see it relating all incarnation, death, resurrection and post resurrection together as we may infer all these in the recorded history of the Gospels and the

rest of the New Testament. Yet it was not easy for those who were attending Jesus during his earthly years. That may be the reason for Jesus to live the issue like open ended, for them to synthesize it through time.

Had they have a good answer they would have been fast to articulate their theology and say something to Jesus. They were not even understanding the question let alone prescribing an answer. Was Jesus expecting them to say something about his preexistent nature? This doesn't seem so. If so why need such a question. We are not sure and we cannot be assertive here but we may suggest that he was opening their mind to a new theological understanding, which should revolutionarily grow in time.

What the scribes said about Christ's son-ship to David has truth in it because it is true that Christ is the son of David in his humanity. But this statement is partial unless otherwise the preexistent nature of Jesus, which David was able to visualize in Spirit, is added.

Yet, the incarnate Jesus was limited in space in his condensed state and has never been to the place of his father, while he was on earth, except through the Spirit and prayer. Here is where the **ἕως ἄν** comes in. The time element changes our exegesis, may be upside down. Context tells us that Jesus has never been at the right side of God during his incarnation up until his resurrection (Jn 20:17). The "Until" element also speaks the interim time between his first resurrection and his second coming. This leads us to say that Jesus in between the imaginary walls of incarnation and resurrection has never been at the right side of God, but is being at the right side of God, right after his resurrection up "until" his second coming.

Therefore the Lord of David was 'the Lord' in his preexistence, meaning in a practical manner, but was only a Lord in a positional manner during his incarnate state, and of course not Lord during the incarnation- meaning in a practical manner, and happened to be Lord again after his resurrection up until his second coming, which this all will be summed up by his enemies made under his feet

and his submission to the Lord who will lay his enemies under his feet(Mk 12:37).

The scribe (cf. 12:28) recognized the accuracy of Jesus' answer and voiced his approval, viewing Him as an excellent **teacher** (cf. vv. 14, 19). He restated Jesus' answer, carefully avoiding mention of **God** (not in the Gr. text but supplied in the NIV) in keeping with the typical Jewish practice of avoiding unnecessary use of the divine name out of great respect for it. The words, ***There is no other but Him***, come from Deuteronomy 4:35. He also substituted the word ***understanding*** for "soul" and "mind" (cf. Mark 12:30).

The response of the scribe in the above text implies that there was no tangible evidence of who Jesus was in his nature, except to see and testify that Jesus is an excellent teacher but just a man.

Thinking of Jesus here as God, is a theological truth which is true and clear for Jesus and Jesus only but not for the scribes, not for the Pharisees, or any scholar of that age, not even the closest disciples and not also for his own blood family.

He had responded wisely, and Jesus probably stimulated further thought by declaring, *you are not far ("not far" is emphatic in Gr.) from the kingdom of God* (cf. Mark 1:15; 4:11; 10:15, 23). This man had the kind of spiritual understanding (cf. 10:15) and openness to Jesus that brought him near to embracing God's kingdom, His spiritual rule over those related to Him by faith. Whether he entered into this relationship or not is not known (12:34b). Jesus had effectively thwarted all attempts to discredit Him and had exposed the hostile motives and errors of His opponents so skillfully that nobody else dared ask Him any more questions.

12:35. Later while teaching in the temple courts (tō hierō; cf. 11:11), Jesus asked what the Law teachers meant when they said that the Christ, the expected Messiah, is ("simply" is implied) the Son (Descendant) of David, who would be the triumphant Deliverer (cf. 10:47). The Davidic son-ship of the Messiah was a

standard Jewish belief (cf. John 7:41-42) firmly based on the Old Testament Scriptures (cf. 2 Sam. 7:8-16; Ps. 89:3-4; Isa. 9:2-7; 11:1-9; Jer. 23:5-6; 30:9; 33:15-17, 22; Ezek. 34:23-24; 37:24; Hosea 3:5; Amos 9:11). Jesus added that it is equally true that the Messiah is David's Lord. The Law teachers' view was correct but incomplete (cf. similarly, Mark 9:11-13). The scriptural view held far more than just their narrow nationalistic hopes.

12:36-37a. To prove that the Messiah is David's Lord, Jesus quoted what David himself spoke long ago by (under the controlling influence of) the Holy Spirit declared in Psalm 110:1. This clearly argues for both the Davidic authorship and the divine inspiration of this psalm. He said: The Lord (Heb., *Yahweh*, God the Father; cf. Mark 12:29) said to my (David's) Lord (Heb., *'Ādōnāy*, the Messiah): Sit at My (the Father's) right hand, the place of highest honor and authority, until (or "while"; cf. 9:1; 14:32) I (the Father) put Your (the Messiah's) enemies under Your (the Messiah's) feet, bringing about their subjugation (cf. Josh. 10:24; Heb. 10:12-14).

The unassailable fact was that David called the Messiah Lord. This raised a problem: How then, or in what sense, can (*estin*, "is") He (the Messiah, David's Lord) be his (David's) Son? Jesus' rhetorical question pointed His listeners to the only valid answer: the Messiah is David's Son *and* David's Lord at the same time. This strongly implies that the Messiah is both God (David's Lord) and man (David's Son; cf. Rom. 1:3-4; 2 Tim. 2:8). He will restore the future Davidic kingdom on earth (2 Sam. 7:16; Amos 9:11-12; Matt. 19:28; Luke 1:31-33).

No doubt Jesus deliberately raised this issue so that His listeners might relate it to Him. It carried a bold yet veiled reference to His true identity which the Jewish leaders probably caught but did not accept (cf. comments on Mark 12:12; 14:61-62). (Interestingly the NT has more references and allusions to Ps. 110 than to any other single OT passage [cf., e.g., Acts 2:29-35; Heb. 1:5-13; 5:6; 7:17, 21].)

12:37b. In contrast with the Jewish leaders who had been trying to trap Jesus with subtle questions (cf. v. 13), the large Passover crowd was listening all along

to His teaching with delight, though not necessarily with comprehension (Walvoord, John F.; Zuck, Roy B. 1983-c1985:164-165).

The scribes had always taught that the Messiah would be a lineal descendant of David. Though true, this was not the whole truth. So the Lord Jesus now posed a problem to those gathered around Him in the temple court. In Psalm 110:1, David spoke of the coming Messiah as his Lord. How could this be? How could the Messiah be David's *Son* and his *Lord* at the same time? To us the answer is clear. The Messiah would be both Man and God. As David's Son, He would be human. As David's Lord, He would be divine.

The common people heard Him gladly. Apparently they were willing to accept the fact, even if they might not have understood it fully. But nothing is said of the Pharisees and scribes. Their silence is gloomy (MacDonald, William; Farstad, Arthur 1997-c1995).

He is the son of David in His humanity because he is a descendent of David, but the son of Jehovah in his divinity for he is eternally born not created from the father.

The 'Son of God' terminology also needs a little treatment here. In the ancient Greco-Roman world any hero was thought to have a sort of divine element in him or her. Such heroes or some philosophers of the ancient world were considered as having a divine seed sprung up from the divine world or some way nurtured by the gods. Emperors were also considered as 'Sons of God' with the same consideration to their siblings, be them Kings or just in the royal family (Keener :293). Therefore the Hellenistic way of using the term 'Son of God/gods, is just soft with no deep theological or philosophical explanation. This kind of explanation comes out as a result of ignorant idolatry with cultic assumptions.

The Jewish way of applying 'it' in the Old Testament was a little different in that it was used for those who belong to the true God, the righteous, to the nation Israel and also the Angels(Keener 2003 :295).

In the Gospel traditions Jesus was depicted as “the unique Son of the unique God” which is in complete contradistinction from the Hellenistic way of understanding it. Yet the ‘Son of God’ in the Gospel traditions was never understood to be as ‘God the Son’. No divinity is hinted, no biological relation hinted (Keener 2003 :297). If this was so it will be the same with the Hellenistic way of thought which said a sort of divine seed sprung up in the material or similar to the way some current religious fantasists superstition.

This is clearly set in Keeners exegesis;

But granted that Deity is neither a necessary nor the usual sense of the term in the synoptics (where it usually bears the sense ‘Messiah’), the fourth Gospel reflects a background not only in Judaism, but in six decades of early Christian teaching... The expression in the fourth Gospel means far more than “Messiah” although the expression itself is never made to bear the weight of Christ’s Deity provided by other components of the narrative (Keener : 297).

VI Synthesis

In all the above New Testament Texts it seems that Christ was rectifying the misconception of the Pharisees who were letting down Jesus on the level of humanity only. The Pharisees were right saying Christ is the son of David for Christ is a descendent of David, in his humanity. This nature of Christ is never shared by the Father or the Spirit.

The name ‘Jehovah’ was quite often applied in the New Testament narratives but it was used in reference to God the Father than the ‘person of Christ, in between the imaginary walls of the incarnation and resurrection’. Applications of the word ‘Lord’ in the Old Testament were more or less of two types. One when it was referring an autonomous master (Jehovah) who assumes and exercises unlimited power (Keener : 466). Secondly when individuals claim the master in His relation to them as their shield saying *ha-adhon or adoni*, who is there to protect and provide. The first explains his autonomy the second explains his relational quality. The Lord to Lord conversation in Ps 110:1 is a good example here which should be read as a dialogue between Jehovah and the Lord.

This process leads us to one or two assumptions. Firstly this obviously indicates

the separate persons in their respective autonomy eternally; secondly Jehovah refers still to the Father be it in the Old or New Testament and still to the father during the time of the human Christ making the human Christ dependent on Jehovah for any of the powers he exercised, rather than to the issue of divinity of Christ.

Therefore the word 'Lord' applied to Christ in the New Testament shows the relational nomination 'my lord' who is there to protect and provide me' rather than to divinity issues or Jehovah himself. Who is then crucified? The son of God or the Son of David?

6.1 Mark 15:35-38; Matthew 27:37; Luke 23:36

The crucifixion details are recorded for us in all the four Gospel narrations (Matt 27:37, 40; Mk 15:30, 31, 32; Lk 23:36, 38; Jn 19:19). The challenge here is 'What?' was crucified? The reason here to ask 'What' rather than 'Who?' is that, this is a question of nature or substance rather than a question of person. Person wise it is very clear that it was the person in both the lord and the servant. However the crucified substance must be examined. Which nature? the divine or the human?

All the texts above except for John 19 reported similar facts concerning the crucifixion event. Mark's record with other synoptic narrators presented the Lordship with servant hood intermingled. This may raise strong exegetical challenges. For example the crucified Jesus was labeled as the 'king of the Jews' in Mark 15:26; Matthew 27:37; Luke 23:38. Kingship is totally a different scenario than servant hood. But this is first of all referring to the person than his nature; secondly a simple court case accusation or labeling than affirming Christ's divine nature.

Yet all the above texts similarly pick a phrase saying;

"...destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!" Luke stressed on the fact saying "let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the chosen one"(Lk: 23:35).

What do these phrases in Matthew, Mark and Luke tell us concerning the crucified substance? The where or what about of the divine matter?

All the temptation from the crowd and the soldiers; "...destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!", were all to test Jesus' divine element in the human substance yielded to the cross. Would he escape pain, suffering and death through his positional divine Son-ship?

A wider contextual analysis tells us that Jesus has squeezed himself to the level of humanity and servant hood so as to bear all possible limitations (Matt 20:25-28). In order for all abuses and public mockery to happen and the mission of saving humanity so to come, no divine power should be vested as a protection.

Therefore it seems fair to say that Jesus was with full submission on the level of any ordinary human, on the level of a servant and on a shameful death upon the cross (Mk 15:39). All other New Testament texts coherently affirm this nature of Jesus while on the cross and actually all through his human stage in between the walls of incarnation and resurrection (Phil 2:11). Keener said, "*Jesus possibly refused a narcotic meant to dull the pain: he came to embrace the worlds pain: he would accept nothing less than the full impact of his bloody death (27:34)*" (Keener 1999 :674).

No divine empowering element was tangibly exhibited in the flesh of Jesus on the cross. The historical fact is that Jesus never retreated to refuse suffering through divine power, from his very incarnation (Matt 4:3-10) up until his crucifixion (Lk 23:35) or has never used any anti pain or narcotic (Matt 27:48) to get relief from the pain . His humanity was real and complete, his suffering and pain were real and deep with no mythical cover or hidden empowerment to avoid all these.

Part II

Paul -Christological notes

We may not need spend our energy proving matters of authorship and the likes, but just follow the assumption that the letters outlined as Romans; Corinthian letters (Two), Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians letters (Two), Letters to Timothy (Two) and Titus belong to Paul. Out of this list we would like to pick the Thessalonians letters (Two), The Corinthian letters (Two), the Book of Galatians, and Philippians for this research.

Thessalonian Letters

Authorship and dates of the Epistles are not treated in this discussion; as such a discourse is dealt enough in other literatures. There may be a place where “occasion” issues are treated as it somewhat helps clarifying the Christological meanings.

Our main reason to choose Paul’s writings is that it is Paul who is most possibly chronologically the first Christian theological writer. Borrowing the words of Paul Barnett, (Barnett 2003 :22) ‘his (Paul’s), Christology is as advanced and developed as any within the pages of the NT’. Therefore we would put our preliminary focus in the letter to the Thessalonians, which was written from Corinth most possibly in 50-51 A.D. . . . Donald Guthrie makes this letter the first epistle (Guthrie 1964 :180).

Therefore, it would be sensible to trace the routes from the second missionary journeys of the Apostle with a plausible date between A.D., 49 and 53 (Metzger :180). As Paul was accompanied by Silas and Timothy (Acts 15:4-20:2), following the Macedonian call (Acts 16), then a reference of the city in the first part of Acts 17. Then he visited the place in company with Silas and Timothy, after they had just left Philippi, where Paul and Silas had been imprisoned; next to Thessalonica, then to Athens and Corinth because of persecution to Berea.

During his stay in Corinth Paul received his first news from Thessalonica through Timothy (1 Thess 3:1). This may be a good report of the health of the young church but also some questions (1Thess 4:9,13;5:1,12), about the date of

parousia and the second coming, which needs Paul's answer (Metzger :219) , therefore, it seems that the letter emerged out of a report coming from Timothy about the Thessalonians.

Gordon Fee adds saying, all the ways that Paul will speak of Christ in the subsequent letters are already in place in this letter (Fee, 2007 :34). Coming back to our main concern of Christology in Pauline letters, Barnett raised profound question saying 'does the letter portray Jesus as a prophet or holy man or "Lord"? We borrowed his statement as an introduction to analyze the Christological elements in the letter to the Thessalonians.

Paul here repeatedly referred to Jesus as Lord in the portrayal of the post resurrection events (1st Thess 1:10). The reason to say 'post resurrection is that this research has assumed that these letters are first of all products of post resurrection reflection. The second assumption is that the post resurrected Lord is physically unlimited, also true that if His body is unlimited, then His body is God, in contrast to the pre-resurrected one who willfully made himself weak, so as to bear our infirmities. But this never implies that Christ ceased to be God. Christ only limited himself in the management of his power. Fee connected Christological ideas in this letter (1:9) to the Old Testament text (Ps 110:1), referring to Jesus as the exalted Lord. Here Jesus is referred a 'Son from Heaven...raised from the dead'. The phrase 'from heaven' may imply a unique nature of Jesus. Designation of Him as either 'Lord' or 'Christ'-the messianic name, or 'Jesus' his human name or 'Lord-Jesus' combined are carefully counted comparatively in their application within these Thessalonians letters. Fee's (Fee :34-35), comparison tells that the full name 'Lord' and 'Christ' are used less than the combined name 'Lord-Jesus' .

The '*kurios*' reference is seen dominating much like 13x in 1st Thessalonians and 22x in 2nd Thessalonians, while other ways of naming are less than 5x. What does this imply when it comes to the nature of Christ as portrayed in Thessalonians letters? In anticipating the development of a Christology which

does not separate Christ into two loosely connected parts, we should ask, “Does this tell only the divinity ignoring the humanity side”? If we consider the contextual background of the Thessalonians themselves, it may have a different implication than the extreme of magnifying the divine properties only. Even Fee partially agrees that the Thessalonians affirmation of Christ as *Kurios* has something to do with their persecution, as there couldn’t be two Lords (Fee :34-35). As the word ‘Lord’ was simply an allusion to anyone thought to be ‘lord’, be it kings or so, how and in what sense did Paul use such allusions? Paul’s insistence to a rival king as ‘Lord and savior’ who is the risen Lord Jesus Christ in this case, may pull danger to him and to his audience at Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-10).

Then the definite article ‘*ho*’ attached to the word usages of *kurios* in Thessalonians, may tell us that Paul had in his mind the Septuagintal way of using them (1st Thess 3:13 Vs Zech 14:5; 1Thess 4:16 Vs Ps 46:6),(Fee 2007 :34-44).

To answer the question we raised earlier about the Christological picture in Thessalonians, it may be right to say, it looks that Jewish background is fresh in Paul’s mind in synthesizing the letter. His message is sandwiched between his Jewish cultural expectations of the future issue and the Thessalonians hurry to know the nature of the future, which is either eschatological wrath or eschatological peace.

Therefore, key in Paul’s answer was the Christ who was dead to save from the eschatological wrath and who has been raised, still to save from the eschatological wrath. The letter is more of encouragement to the Thessalonians who were under severe persecution. The apostle has reminded them that they are sharing the suffering for the reason of their faith in the Lord Jesus.

The Jews who persecuted and killed Jesus, the prophets and then also the Apostles, were doing the same to the Thessalonians (1:15). The Thessalonians will therefore naturally fellowship with Jesus and other Christians through their

suffering. The suffering will cause the natural fellowship and will be consummated in the phrase 'Lord Jesus when he comes' (2:19; 3:13). If we may take this phrase as the key to Paul's analysis of the second coming event, we may then easily pick the very early Christological developments.

Jesus is here portrayed from the position of post resurrection scenario. Jesus Died (past because he is no more dead) and rose (present as he is still alive) again and God will bring with Jesus... (future, from the point view of human dimension) ;(4:14).

The one who was dead (5:10) was Jesus. He must die in order to save and he must become human in order to die. Of course His body is God, therefore God died, but a when one says his body is God, this should affirm that God willfully became weak, and limited in order to be able to bear human misery. The death of God tells the death of God, not anybody else's death, but the God who limited Himself in the flesh.

The nature of the divine has nothing to do with the nature of the physical world except in that one is the creator and the other is the created. Jesus is the link line between the divine dimension and the created dimension for He is the *Elohim*- God in His preexistent situation and the incarnated God-man in his historical death and the resurrection; also God-man in His post resurrection existence.

One might ask a question like, was Jesus God during the incarnation? For this question a response shall be proposed in the fifth Chapter of this research. Actually the answer is yes; in a positional manner, for He was not robbed of His divine position yet the divine qualities were saved or in non action for the purpose of saving through dying. This view that our Lord could not use some divine qualities as omnipresence and omniscience during His time on earth- is denied by many including Calvin, Hodge, and Grudem whose positions we will evaluate below. But the tenet that the earthly Christ had limited usage of some divine qualities is held as well by some Evangelicals as Millard Erickson (Erickson, God in Three Persons, 223,224); and also in his Christian Theology, Grand Rapids:

Baker, 1985). Erickson also affirms the position that Jesus never exercises only His humanity or deity; it is always the “human-divine” that acts (Ericson, 1983, 735).

This is never denying the co-equality of our Lord with God. God the Son became less, as he became human because of his humanity and because of his willingness “not to use” his divine enablement, temporarily, for the sake of tasting weakness and death and the saving mission.

Now, the future holds the assurance of the second coming of the risen Lord. No one is able to say Jesus was man before incarnation and no one could also say Jesus was raised before he died. No one could also deny the second coming event is a post resurrection scenario which is neither past nor present (when it comes to its material accomplishment) but future from our point of view dimension. This tradition was there among the apostles in the very early year of Christianity (1st Cor.15:1-3; 15:5-7, 11).

What will be then the answer to the question; does the letter portray Jesus as a prophet or holy man or “Lord”? Clearly Paul proclaimed Him as the Lord, but truly from a post resurrection scenario where the Lord Jesus Christ is now manipulating His full power of God-man. This understanding- that Christ reactivated some powers after His resurrection- is not in line with Chalcedonies tradition and may also be in sharp contrast to what major proponents of Chalcedonies Christology as Calvin, Charles Hodge, and Grudem have taught. So, a critique of the argumentation and evidence advanced by these three notable theologians will follow letter.

Corinthian Letters

As we continue our search for Pauline Christology, the same tone of ‘*Kurios*’ echoes in his letters to the Corinthians. Fee’s statistics show that ‘*kurios*’ occurs 64x here, but ‘*Christos*’ has also occurred almost equally like 63x. Other compound references are ‘Christ Jesus/Jesus Christ’ over against ‘the lord

Jesus'. (Fee 2007 :87).

The Christological arguments have actually risen out of the ethical and moral odds the Corinthian believers had, not necessarily out of epistemological demands on Christology like the one we might have it today. The same time main concern in 1st Corinthians is Soteriology than Christology as the crucified God is portrayed in 1Cor 1: 23-24 within the context of 1:10-4:21 where true meaning of wisdom is in weakness of the crucifixion than the Greek folly. Calvin or Grudem may not agree but more will be said about the approaches of Calvin and Grudem which may make this research stand different.

Additionally true salvation, according to this text, comes as Christ is willing to become weak, as far as getting crucified (Vs 23). Which Christ is signaled 63x in the books of Corinthians? It should be the Christ who was crucified and was buried and was raised on the third day. We cannot speak of the Lordship without laying the foundation first. The foundation is 'the Christ crucified' within the frames of incarnation and resurrection. Christ crucified means that he willfully abandoned/restrained from his empowered lordship and became a servant for the sake of saving humanity. Servant hood implies stepping down from the power of Lordship, the power of divinity to the level of humanity, which is a new soteriological philosophy against the wisdom of the Greeks, which attributes divine elements to heroes of whatever. Which Christ has saved us? It is the Christ crucified (Vs 23), the Christ revealed in weakness than in power.

1Cor 15:1-49

A dramatic contrast of the weakness scenario we have seen in chapter 1:23 of 1st Corinthians generally, may be the writings of the same Paul to same addressees in 1st Corinthians chapter 15: 44-49.

The Gospel I preached ...15:1-2: First of all, the details under, presuppose the Gospel as the boundary. Unless the death of Christ is preached with the resurrection of the same Christ yesterday, today and until Christ comes, the

Gospel would not be complete. Unless the resurrected Christ presupposes the man Christ, the Gospel preaching would be meaningless. This is the frame for all the details coming hereafter.

According to the scriptures Christ has died for us and was buried 1

Corinthians 15:3:

Death: What are we asserting while we say Christ is died? What was the level of emptiness in Christ as He experienced death? The Bible is clear that the death experience of Jesus was a complete abandonment by God (Mark 15:34) which tells us that the death of Jesus was true human death with complete agony.

Therefore there was no way of escape through divine enablement. His death was not a kind of fainting and was approved by Pilate Himself, so no disguise or trick in the process (Mk 15:44). Next “Death” is defined in detail to show the magnitude of limitedness of God during the incarnation.

Stanford Encyclopedia of philosophy (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/death/#1>) (First published Wed May 22, 2002; substantive revision Tue May 26, 2009), puts the criteria of death; asking questions like what constitutes death? It is clear enough that people die when their lives end, but less clear what constitutes the ending of a person's life. *Second*, in what sense might death or posthumous events harm us? To answer this question, we need to know what it is for something to be in our interests. *Third*, what is the case for and the case against the *harm thesis*, the claim that death can harm the individual who dies, and the *posthumous harm thesis*, according to which events that occur after an individual dies can still harm that individual? *Fourth*, how might we solve the timing puzzle? This puzzle is the problem of locating the time during which we incur harm for which death and posthumous events are responsible. A *fifth* controversy concerns whether all deaths are misfortunes or only some.

Of particular interest here is a dispute between Thomas Nagel, who says that death is always an evil, since continued life always makes good things accessible, and Bernard Williams, who argues that, while premature death is a

misfortune, it is a good thing that we are not immortal, since we cannot continue to be who we are now and remain meaningfully attached to life forever. A *final* controversy concerns whether or not the harmfulness of death can be reduced. It may be that, by adjusting our conception of our well-being, and by altering our attitudes, we can reduce or eliminate the threat death poses us. But there is a case to be made that such efforts backfire if taken to extremes. Raising these controversial issues the dictionary goes to explain the substance of death which is our concern here.

Death: Death is life's ending. Let us say that *vital processes* are those by which organisms develop or maintain themselves. These processes include chemosynthesis, photosynthesis, cellular respiration, cell generation, and maintenance of homeostasis. Then death is the ending of the vital processes by which an organism sustains itself. However, life's ending is one thing, and the condition of having life over is another. 'Death' can refer to either.

Let us add that 'the ending of life' is itself potentially ambiguous. On one hand it might be a process wherein our lives are progressively extinguished, until finally they are gone. On the other hand it might be a momentary event. This event might be understood in three ways. First, it might be the ending of the dying process—the loss of the very last trace of life. Call this 'denouement death'. Second, it might be the point in the dying process when extinction is assured, no matter what is done to stop it. Call this moment 'threshold death'. A third possibility is that life ends when the physiological systems of the body irreversibly cease to function as an integrated whole (defended, for example, by Belshaw :2009). Call this 'integration death'.

Thus death can be a *state* (being dead), the *process of extinction* (dying), or one of three *events* that occur during the dying process. Death in all of these senses can be further distinguished from events—such as being shot with an arrow—that cause death.

Death for you and me is constituted by the irreversible discontinuation of the vital

processes by which we are sustained. This characterization of death could be sharpened if we had a clearer idea of what we *are*, and the conditions under which we persist. However, the latter is a matter of controversy.

Criteria for Death; Defining death is one thing; providing criteria by which it can be readily detected or verified is another. A definition is an account of what death *is*; when, and only when its definition is met, death has necessarily occurred. The definition offered above was that a creature is dead just when the vital processes by which it is sustained have irreversibly ceased. A criterion for death, by contrast, lays out conditions by which all and only *actual* deaths may be readily identified. Such a criterion falls short of a definition, but plays a practical role. For example, it would help physicians and jurists determine when death has occurred.

In the United States, the states have adopted criteria for death modeled on the Uniform Determination of Death Act (developed by the President's Commission, 1981), which says that "an individual who has sustained either (1) irreversible cessation of circulatory and respiratory functions, or (2) irreversible cessation of all functions of the entire brain, including the brain stem, is dead. A determination of death must be made in accordance with accepted medical standards." In the United Kingdom, the accepted criterion is brain stem death, or the "permanent functional death of the brain stem" (Pallis 1963 :1982).

These current criteria are subject to criticism. Animalists might resist the criteria, since the vital processes of human beings whose entire brains have ceased irreversibly to function can be sustained artificially using cardiopulmonary assistance. Mindists and personists might also resist the criteria, on the grounds that minds and all psychological features can be irretrievably destroyed in human beings whose brain stems are intact. For example, cerebral death can leave its victim with an intact brain stem, yet mindless and devoid of self-awareness.

With any of the criteria's either Biblical or scientific Christ has died. This tells the level of his descending into humanity must come as a starting point of the Gospel

message.

And he was raised on the third day (15:4): Yet for the message to be complete His resurrection must be the embodiment to all the details. So talks here from Paul are 'Death', the highest level of disempowerment or weakness; 'Burial' that the death of Christ was proved practically and 'raised' that he is Lord now over all enemies after he passed through all levels of humiliation during the incarnation and death.

For death comes through a man and the resurrection of the dead also comes through a man 15:22: Still in order for the complete soteriology to come into reality, Christ should be man, so as to die, so as to be buried, so as to be raised from the dead as the first fruit for those who will also share in his resurrection.

Our assessment in Thessalonians letters surely applies here; firstly the position of such tone is post resurrection, where the Lord Jesus Christ is unlimitedly empowered God-man at this stage, and secondly, as far as he will see all his enemies under his footstool (1Cor 15:27 Vs Ps 8:7 and Ps 109:1). See 1 Corinthians 8: 6) as Lord, right after he passed through complete humiliation.

Galatians

It would be good to borrow the phrase "a Gospel other than one we preached to you..." (Gal 1:8), in order to link the flow of our argument with the above analysis in the Corinthian letters. The book of Galatians is all about justification by faith in Jesus Christ. Paul here is against any supplement to the Gospel preached before. What Gospel was he talking about? The book gives short and down to earth answer. It is Jesus Christ who was clearly portrayed as crucified before the eyes of the "Galatians" (Gal 3:1), who are now described as foolish. What is foolish of them is that they switched to a different Gospel, than the Christ who is crucified. F.F. Bruce said Paul genuinely accepted the manhood of the one whom he called Lord. As Paul had made it clear in Galatians 4:4 Jesus was truly born of a woman, and has also descended from Abraham (Gal 3:16),(Bruce ,

1974 :81).

Still the humiliation of Christ, His death and crucifixion makes up the nature of Him and also the nature of the Gospel, which reinforces the argument so far.

Philippians

Scholars suggest many things as the purpose for which the book of Philippians is written. Many argue that it is a thanks response letter for the gift the Philippians sent to Paul upon his detention (4:10-19); others say it is an encouragement for them to stand firm in the face of persecution and cultic, legalistic temptations (1:27-30; 3; 4:4); or, to commend ministers to the Philippians Church; it is to exhort them to unity and humility (2:1-11; 4:2-5). The last frame will be picked for our Christological discussion.

For the purpose of Christological research we will concentrate on the exhortation towards unity and humility which in turn gets its foundation in the humility of Christ (2:5-11). Here is also awareness of the agreed conclusions, that this text reflects the liturgical life of Christians in Paul's time which in turn was a resource for Paul's theology reflected here. The analysis of the poetic insistence and so the possible first draft in which, some scholars like Lohmeyer (Lohmeyer :141-142) and C Brown, demonstrated that Paul has developed on that poem (Martin :2), may some what help to the lexicography seeing how the words might have been used to mean. Before trying to revisit commentaries let's put our attempt of stating the possible meaning of the text with a particular emphasis to Verse 7-8. Then after we will compare what commentators have on this text.

⁷ἐ-κένωσεν transl. *He stripped* himself, aor. -νόω *empty*. λαβών *by taking*, aor² ptc λαμβάνω *take*. ὁμοίωμα⁷ *likeness* (Rom 8:3) indicates simply that in every

² A superior figure ² denotes strong or 2nd aorist (or future or perfect).

ptc participle, participial

respect he was like a man. **γενόμενος** aor² ptc γίνομαι *be born*; (v.8) *Become*. **σχῆμα**⁷ refers to his ‘at hand’ *appearance*, dat. Of respect §53. **εὑρεθείς** aor. ptc pass. εὕρισκω, pass. *be found to be*. With μορφή, ὁμοίωμα, σχῆμα note the different vbs: ὑπάρχων (divine nature), λαβών (human nature), γενόμενος (likeness of man), εὑρεθείς (appearance).

The translators here gave the literal meanings of the words “*e kenusen-stripped off* and *genumai- became or be born*”. But I doubt they tried to soften the meaning of *genumai* which literally means “became” rather than just an outward appearance or of some kind of addition of nature to. The translation seems to mean that the Son was ‘stripped off’ his divine prerogatives if we take the word *he kenusen* and the same Son became a full man, if we take the meaning of *Genumai* literally to mean “become”.

In the first place there is no one assertion in this research saying that Christ is not God. This research affirms that Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. But His immutability doesn’t mean that His power would not be restricted for the actuality of suffering and death. God is immutable at the same time able to limit His power. What is at this venture is the whereabouts of the divine enablement or as to practicality of the divine enablement. It may be implied that the verbs tell ‘not using’ the divine enablement for his own advantage, which actually means the enablement were not in practice. That is very consistent with the gist of our research here. Whether literal or idiomatic the verbs tell that divine enablement was in non use, during the incarnation as Christ was made man up

⁷ neut. nouns ending in -μα

v. verse

dat. dative

pass. passive (voice)

until the crucifixion. Gordon Fee seems also in this line as he suggested the following.

We begin our investigation, then, with the two major Christological passages in the letter, 2:6-11 and 3:20-21, in which Paul's (typical Krios Christology finds ultimate expression; but in the former case we also have the clearest and strongest expression of Paul's belief in Christ as preexistent— fully divine and equal with the Father—who in his incarnation became fully human for the salvation of humankind (Fee. 2007 :372).

A simple reading of the Philippians Text in Chapter 2 verse 5-11, looks to have a structure like; 1-Vs 6; Christ's being in the very nature of God: 2-Vs 7-8: Christ's becoming new form (incarnation): 3-Vs 9-11; His exalted form. Fee adds saying "it was the preexistent One who "emptied himself" at one point in our human history "by taking the 'form' of a slave, being made in the likeness of human beings." (Fee 2007 :375). Actually, Fee believes this argument cannot have definitive answer, except that he believes the context is all about "mind set" Christ exemplified, rather than losing something out of the former pre existent form; also the mind set the Philippians should follow against any dissension (Fee 2007 :383-385).

As the interest here is to find out the nature of Christ during the incarnation before the resurrection, our exegesis will focus on Vs 7-8. What do the words "emptied"; "humbled" imply? As we may see in various versions above, variants from the base text are very visible. But the variants look like only on emphasis rather than on meaning, except in the King James Version which added a wholly other word to the 'emptied' saying 'taking no reputation'. This doesn't bring any difference as far as meaning is concerned. When we see the next statements, the degree of variance is more as the phrase "being found in human form" is also said "in human likeness" and an extension of a word "in appearance" in the New American Bible version. What confuses may be the meaning of "appearance". Does this imply that Jesus was not really in a human likeness, in the form of a servant, as this is measured in reality?

If we follow the Greek ὁμοίωμα⁷ likeness (Rom 8:3), it denies nothing of the content of μορφή but of itself indicates simply that in every respect he was like a man. When the outward appearance of Jesus is measured in content and likeness (μορφή, ὁμοίωμα), Jesus never missed any of the organs which any human being could have. F. F. Bruce adds that such expressions as “born in the likeness of man” and “found in human form” in Vs 7 should not mislead us; apart from the from the consideration that they may belong to a pre-Pauline confession, there is a high probability that they represent alternative Greek renderings the Aramaic phrase kebar-‘enash (“like a son of man”) in Dan 7:13(Bruce :81-82).

But other scholars seem not to agree to such interpretation and have also extensively invested on this very text. Ralph P. Martin has summarized the literatures from 1900 through 1963 in his exhaustive study entitled *Carmen Christi*. But Martin has admitted that the text is still the occasion of much debate with lack of agreement to a precise nuance in modern commentaries from Dibelius to Fee (Martin :1-2). In this list D. G. Dunn has begun from the poetic nature of the pretext so as to show the theocentric points coming out of the worship than Christology matters; Ernst Käsemann regarded it as mythological hymn, therefore difficult to argue on and he chose to focus on the kerygmatic dimension of the text (Martin :43)

As we try to get the meaning of the word “humbled” in Vs 8, all versions measure the ‘humbling’ process to the point of death and a death on the cross with no variance. As the death of Christ was backed up with data’s from history; Bible and Science in our research of the Corinthian letters, this would again go into the line of argument we have done so far, that Christ willfully has stripped off his divine enablement, “functionally”, within the imaginary walls of incarnation and resurrection. Fee said, in two of the "preexistence" passages (2 Cor 8:9; Phil

⁷ neut. nouns ending in -μα

2:6-8) Paul speaks of the incarnation with extraordinarily strong metaphorical language, where the emphasis of the metaphor is on the "impoverishment" that Christ experienced in becoming human. Impoverishment is in line with the above flow of argument except that Fee understands the wordings of the texts more of metaphorical than functional (Fee 2007 :506). This research strongly underlines the wordings to be more of literal as Christ cannot be said died metaphorically.

Does this humbling clearly talk about the 'God' part or the 'Man' part? If we are talking about one person, then it is God who was humbled. But if we are talking about two persons, then may be the God part has never experienced humbling, which doesn't seem to mean that way in Phil 2:8; but one person, who was eternally in the image of God but displaced into an image of man and a slave.

Such a stand naturally differs from a classical view or the tradition so far which generally underlines that God can never experience change, therefore no change of God during the process of incarnation. In addition to this, the classical view affirms that the Son added human nature, which this research is with a complete separation to such assertion, saying God the Son has not added but "become" as it is very clear in the *genumenos* of pages of John 1:14 and Phil 2:6-7.

So we would like to respond to possible questions arising against such assertions in this research. The first question is; who died on the cross? God the Son or Jesus the human? If we say God the Son died; we may be trapped in the snare of passibility-impassibility cases. If we say only the human nature faced death we still have to resolve the two person-one person controversy of Nestorius and Chalcedon. How can this be reasoned out without erasing the immutability of God and a preservation of one person Chalcedonies concept?

As we try to make a survey study of Christological developments, particularly within the last 100 years, the discussion on Philippians 2, has a diverse interpretation with still open ended conclusions. Let us see how it goes and then this research may suggest a middle road.

The discussion more or less starts quoting few verses before Phil 2:6 "Have this attitude among yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God . . ." Traditionally at Westminster, as elsewhere, Philippians 2:6ff. has been considered in systematic class at the point where a kenotic understanding of the Incarnation is being refuted. On the other hand Macquarrie admitted that there is some evidence of renewed interest in kenotic Christology (Macquarrie 1996 :77). But he also said that more typical of contemporary theologians is J. A. T. Robinson's dismissal of kenotic theories as "fruitless expenditures of theological ingenuity" because they assumed the pre-existence and the deity of Christ (Robinson :208). The non kenotic theologians also add that, whether a theologian is favorably disposed toward kenotic speculation or not, there is little inclination today to seek support for such a theory in the exegesis of Philippians 2. Accordingly, the approach to the interpretation of this passage which is the gravest threat to orthodox Christology at the present time is that which refuses to recognize the presence here of any reference to such supernatural categories as pre-existence and the incarnation of deity.

Again, this might seem a most surprising development. In his study R. P. Martin made brief reference to what he termed the nineteenth century Lutheran "dogmatic" view which saw the subject of verse 6 as the historical Christ. Here the time of the verbs are located not in some pre-temporal existence but in the course of his earthly life, when he was faced with the decision whether to seek his own exaltation or to obey the Father's will (Martin 1998 :63).

In 1964 Martin could dismiss such an interpretation as virtually defunct, but today it is very much alive. John Harvey calls the "traditional exegesis" an "embarrassment" to contemporary theologians who "are discarding the two-nature theory of the Incarnation;" (Harvey :337-338) and therefore he proposes that we understand verse 6 to be stating that, like Adam, Christ was a man, made in the image of God, and thus the divine nature was his, from the first even as it is ours from the first. But unlike Adam, and indeed all of us except Jesus, He did not seek equality with God, but rather gave up all concern for himself and so

knew that end which "simply carries on to its logical conclusion what should happen to a life which is lived entirely for God and other people — death on a cross." (Harvey :338). Such an interpretation may seem singularly unconvincing, but N. K. Bakken, writing asks that Harvey's position be taken seriously.

Philippians 2:6 teaches that Christ "emptied himself of the aspiration to 'be God'," thus becoming "the man whom God intended, and to him and through him man is again given dominion. . . ." (Bakken :76). C. H. Talbert's argument is on this line as he said that 'because of the parallelism of stanzas 1 and 2, stanza 1 like stanza 2 refers to the decision of the human Jesus "to be God's servant rather than to repeat the tragedy of Adam and his sons."' (Talbert :153).

Jerome Murphy-O'Connor's lengthy article in *Revue Biblique* argues that, nothing in the language of verse 6 demands the notions of pre- existence or divinity, and that appeal to the wider context of the Pauline epistles is invalid because Paul did not write the Philippian hymn. Murphy, however, insists that the reference to likeness to God refers to something unique to Jesus. But since he also insists that "methodologically" a "minimal hypothesis" which will explain that uniqueness (one which will not posit more than humanness of Jesus) must be preferred to." That the hymn sets forth the Incarnation of Christ in His humiliation and subsequent enthronement is universally agreed." (Harvey : viii). A "maximal hypothesis," the hypothesis which he favors is that it was Jesus' *sinlessness* which gave him the right to be treated as if he were God, that is, the right "to enjoy the incorruptibility in which Adam was created," an incorruptibility he was willing to forego in order to obey God's will even unto death; even though he admits that the heart of that hypothesis, the sinlessness of Jesus, is never referred to in the hymn itself.

Murphy underlines that despite the *tour de force* displayed in some of these suggestions, one must agree with Reginald Fuller that "the attempts which have been made to eliminate pre-existence entirely from this passage . . . must be

pronounced a failure." (Murphy-O'Connor :49). As Howard Marshall also notes: "It is impossible to make sense of numerous phrases in verses 6–8, if they are understood solely against the background of the earthly life of Jesus." (Marshall 1992 :116). Most importantly, what would be the force of the aorist participle in 7c, *genomenoj*, "being made in the likeness of men," and what would be the meaning of verse 8a, "being found in appearance as a man"? Jack Sanders convincingly argues that "the presence of *genomenoj*, in verse 7 . . . would seem to indicate that this would have to be the first appearance of . . . Anthropos in the hymn, or, in other words, that the redeemer here first becomes Man " (Sanders 1993 :66).

The interpretation which begins with Christ in verse 6 as merely a man like other men simply cannot do justice to the following description of his humiliation and subsequent exaltation. As Hamerton-Kelly puts it: "The hymn demonstrates a Christological interest in affirming the protological preexistence of Christ. This affirmation secures the divine nature of Christ and provides a foil against which the significance of the humiliation of the Cross becomes fully evident." D. F. Hudson notes that: "There is a clear pairing of 'the divine nature,' and 'the nature of a slave,' and any fair exegesis of the passage which tries to avoid the full force of the first cannot lay any weight on the second. . . . Jesus was not merely the man who became the Man for Others, but he was the God who became the Man for Others." (Hudson :29).

The question is if we must do justice to the full force of *en morfy* , what is the full force of that expression? For years said Hudson "I tried, like Warfield and Murray, to maintain the view of Lightfoot that Paul here uses *morfy* with the sense it had acquired in Greek philosophy, particularly Aristotelian, and which Murray speaks of as "existence form . . . the sum of those characterizing qualities that make a thing the precise thing that it is." Light-foot wrote: "though *morfy* is not the same as or *ousia*, yet the possession of the *morfy* involves

participation in the *ousia* also for *morfy* implies not the external accidents but the essential attributes."(Light foot 1989 :110).

But Hudson says, I have had to conclude that there is really very little evidence to support the conclusion that Paul uses *morfy* in such a philosophical sense here and that my determination to hold on to that interpretation was really rooted in its attractiveness theologically. Hudson added saying, "I believe Calvin was quite correct in pointing us to John 17:5 for the meaning of *en morfy* — "and now, glorify thou Me together with thyself, Father, with the glory which I ever had with thee before the world was." Such a description of the eternal Son as in the form of God, sharing God's glory, reminds us of Hebrews 1:3 ("the radiance of His (God's) glory and the exact representation of His nature") and of his title, Logos. As Johannes Weiss wrote: "in the Pauline sense, Christ was from the beginning no other than the *Kabod*, the *Doxa*, of God himself, the glory and radiation of his being, which appears almost as an independent hypostasis of God and yet is connected intimately with God." (Weiss :478)

Herman Ridderbos writing his outline of Paul's theology at the same time that Martin was producing *Carmen Christi*, (Martin, :119), greatly expands an idea that Martin presents as follows: "Adam reflected the glory of the eternal Son of God who, from eternity, is Himself the 'image' of the invisible and ineffable God. . . . What Paul had learned at the feet of Gamaliel about the 'glory' of the first Adam . . . he transferred to the last Adam as He had revealed Himself, to him in a blaze of glory."

Let us try to make a synopsis of the discussions above. The concern of all hermeniuists above seems to respond to the quest of the form of the pre-existent Christ in view of the Humbled one as narrated within Vs 6-8 of the book of Phillipians. Having agreed that Christ is the radiant of God's being from eternity the quest of this thesis rather responds to the who of Christ in between the imaginary walls of the incarnation and the resurrection. So, it should be noted

that the thesis of the exegetes like Martin, Hudson, Harvey, D.G Dunn, Kassemann, Fee etc etc... is different from the thesis here. Theirs is a response to the liberal tendency of minimalists who try to see Christ as only man; but the thesis of this research is a full focus on the nature of Christ, who is God from eternity, but who so humbled himself in humanity within the frames of the incarnation and resurrection.

The text of contest here is Phil 2:5-11. Some scholars read beyond this boundary to get meaning but the boundary within 5-11 is quite mostly taken together very often. Questions for the debate are: was this text truly Pauline or borrowed from an original Hymn, which just shows the liturgy of that community than any Christology? What do the terms *he kenusen*; *genomay-genumenos* and *morfy* within the text, actually signify?

Lohmyer and Martin agree that the text trusts a pretext showing the liturgical life of Christians that time, therefore, Paul has developed on that (Lohmeyer 1928 :141-142; Martin 1998 :2). This doesn't bring any difference as long as both agree on the authorship of Paul from any source pre-existing.

The other argument is concerning the meanings of the terms *he kenusen*; *genomay-genumenos* and *morfy* . Some may favor idiomatic sense than literal sense of such words. But even though we may go for idiomatic sense, it still cannot escape the literal meaning in the language game.

Literally speaking, *he kenusen* is stripped off himself; Vow is made empty; *Laboon* is taking, *Omiooma* is meant in every respect was like man; and *genomenos* means 'become' not 'added'. Being in the very nature of God means that Christ is God (Phil 2:1-6). He then become man is affirming his full humanity in every respect (7-8). Then God exalted him from humility, in a guise of a slave and human to His former glory, back up over the ladder towards immeasurable height (9-11).

As we have seen above, Martin and D. G. Dunn don't agree to such argument as they believe that the text depends on pretext and has nothing on Christology but just Theo-centric liturgy. Ernst Kasemann even goes further setting the text as mythological. The Westminster reinforces such argument by counting Philippians 2:6 as only interested with attitudinal focus than any Christology. J A T Robinson dismissed any kenotic notions as fruitless, for the text is all about history and present state and begs no supernatural or pre-forms of deity. As the verb in verse 6 tells only the present, Past or future view is totally avoided in Lutheran Dogmatic view (Martin :63).

Some late scholars of this debate like John Harvey , N.K. Bakken, C.H Talbert, J Murphy O'Connor went far against Lutheran exegesis and against Martin also dismissing the two nature Christology, but counting Christ on the level of "the Adam" before the fall. Murphy even tells that Jesus achieved divinity because of his obedient and sinless nature, in which the text says nothing on sinless nature.

Against all the above line of arguments, Reginald Fuller and Howard Marshal said that eliminating the pre-existent Lord, for just the 'present tense' in the text, is a great failure. They argued that the *genomai* simply tells the pre-form becoming to human likeness.

One last thing of this discussion is the language game of '*Morfy*'. Lightfoot Warfield and Murrey prefer the Aristotelian meaning telling the sum of qualities making a thing to be a thing. D F Hudson declined from such interpretation saying this approach has only theological attraction than real exegesis. Hudson quoting Calvin (John 17), minimized the pre-form to just a glory or radiance, then a full substance.

All arguments so far in the exegesis of the Gospel of John, the Synoptics, and Letters of Paul cohere in one thing. Christ who is God and the radiant of God's being (Jn 1:1) has become man (John 1:14), descended to the level slave, to the

point of death as crucifixion details are recorded for us in all the four Gospel narrations (Matt 27:37, 40; Mk 15:30, 31, 32; Lk 23:36, 38; Jn 19:19), 1 Corinthians 15; Gal 3; and Phillipians 2:7-8. Therefore, the degree of the divine enabelment in the human Christ was limited to zero level in between the walls of incarnation and resurrection so as the soteriological mission may be meaningful. The hypostatic union of the divine with the human in all the process was a perfect unity, like the soul and body as in the analysis of Cyril where Ciril is not basically far from Chalcedon as he asserted that the two natures have preserved their identity with no mixing or confusion but in perfect unity which is not in Nestorius or Eutichus.

As we are about to close the Biblical analysis concerning Christology, let us add reflections on crucial approaches done referring the New Testament by scholars like Calvin, Hodge and Grudem.

Calvin

The following reflection is on the Christological summary of Calvin from his book “ Institutes of Christian Religion, Book II, Chapter xiii, paragraph 4 through Book II, chapter xiv, paragraphs 1-3.

What is the reflection of Calvin concerning the nature of Christ, particularly in solving the two nature –one nature controversy and communication of the properties of these two natures in one person Christ? Calvin, in his book, Institutes of Christian Religion, Volume II, Chapters 13 and 14, extensively discussed this matter, in a way responding to former and rival heresies. In Chapter 13, Calvin referred to Romans Chapter 9:5 and Galatians 3:16 as a proof for Christ’s true descent from David, meaning his human nature. So Christ’s humanity is not something mythical or mysterious, but real as the flesh of any human being. Calvin, asserting the genealogy as concrete, by a reference from (Mt. 1:5, 16) adds to this fact saying Christ was fully nourished by his mother until maturity. So Christ’s human nature was not mythical or symbolic but

true, according to the analysis of Calvin. Then Calvin moved on to the exploration of the way the two natures were handled together and communication to each other.

Having said this, it seems inescapable for Calvin to deal with how Christ could be exempted from the effect of sin which looks the fate of all humanity? To solve such a dilemma, Calvin said, Christ though true human, as a second Adam, he was not from earth but from above, Christ is pure not because he was from the seed of the woman but he was man, at the same time lord, and he descended from heaven to earth without abandoning heaven. Calvin referred to Romans 5:12; 18, and 1 Corinthians 15: 47 as a proof for his arguments.

Well there is complete agreement as to the sinless nature of Christ. This is very clear in John 17 and no objection to this as far as this research is concerned. But proofs referring to either Romans 5:12; 18 or 1 Corinthians 15:47 seem to hint something else other than purity or sinless nature of Christ as a human.

Concerning Christ's sinless discussion, to say, Christ was born of the woman not from the man or to say the Holy Spirit sanctified everything to make the generation free of any taint is not an argument which bases itself on a established text. However, this never detracts this research for the main issue is yet to come in Calvin's next discussion about the ways the two natures might communicate.

Calvin in chapter 14, the very first three paragraphs, discussed the communication of these two natures referring to scriptural proofs. He said some texts are assigned to his divinity, some to his humanity and some to both natures. His argument goes like; "that the entire properties of each nature remain entire, and yet the two natures constitute only one Christ". Referring to John 3:13, Calvin argues that, the son of man is the one who ascended and Calvin took this as comprehending the two natures at once. It is very true that what is "attributed to the 'One' properly belonged to the 'Other' ". Well, comprehending of the two natures in one person is not a problem but the text citation referred

above still has another concern rather than telling the communication of the two natures.

May be Calvin is more following his assumptions than the clear meaning of the text. Reservation here is not on the position of Calvin but on the scriptural proofs given for his assertions.

Christ's authority to forgive sins, still part of Calvin's argument as a proof for the divine act under one person, raises more fire again. Did Christ really forgive the one who was said 'his sins are forgiven'? What was the case there in the context? Wasn't it that the man needed healing and he got his physical healing but Christ used that opportunity to reorient his audience that the son of God has authority to forgive sins than an immediate offer of forgiveness? How does this be a proof for the communication of two natures at once?

Arguing against Christ's two natures under one person is not an issue here, but the scriptural proofs given are completely away from what Calvin meant. What Calvin has said in his beginning pages of chapter 14, is completely coherent with the assumption of this research which says, Christ's divine power was temporarily limited during the incarnation. Calvin's words are like;

but because he was hid under a humble clothing of flesh, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and humbled himself (Phil. 2:8), and, laying aside the insignia of majesty, became obedient to the Father; and after undergoing this subjection was at length crowned with glory and honor (Heb. 2:7), and exalted to supreme authority, that at his name every knee should bow (Phil. 2:10); so at the end he will subject to the Father both the name and the crown of glory, and whatever he received of the Father, that God may be all in all (1 Cor. 15:28).

What does humble clothing mean? Simply, God's humiliation in flesh, or God's limitation of Himself; what does laying aside the insignia of majesty mean?

Laying aside is laying aside, no other meaning implied even in Calvin's argument. How did Calvin use Hebrews 2:7 "*at 'length' crowned with glory and honor*" ...and 1 Corinthians 15:28 after his exegesis of Philippians 2:5-11? Most of these are in agreement with the presupposition this research is attempting to present.

While Jesus died on the cross, if the same person represents both natures, it is very true that suffering and death worked on both natures, but not as far as annihilation of these natures. The change applied on God through the incarnation is not mutability, rather a movement of God within the dimensional boundary of Himself.

Hodge

Next comes reflection on Hodge. From his book of “Systematic Theology, vol II, part II. ch III, pages 387-418 ; 433-440.

Hodge’s discussion of the substance of the nature’s of Christ as to their communication encompasses a wide range of references from Chalcedon up until our time. Under his topic of the Hypostatical union he first put the principle “that which is divisible cannot be indivisible; that which is finite cannot be infinite”. He also reinforced this principle saying, “the attributes of one substance cannot be transferred to another”. Following the frame of this principle Hodge said that “the two natures , human and divine in Christ are two distinct natures, also affirmed that such has been the belief of the church universal. The Creeds, key church fathers and theologians, the reformation Creeds coherently assert this thought to be true and Orthodox, according to Hodge.

Christ is not one person and another but one nature and another. As to the communication of these two natures, Hodge said, firstly they operate under one person; secondly they are united but not mingled or confounded. Mingling or confinement, Hodge said, is impossibility, because the properties in question are incompatible. We cannot mingle mind and matter so as to make a substance which is neither mind nor matter, but spiritual matter, for that would be a contradiction. It would amount to unextended extension, tangible intangibility, or visible invisibility. In all Christian creeds therefore, it is declared that the two natures in Christ retain each its own properties and attributes.

Hodge also underlined that the union happened as a personal union not through

a transfer of attributes of one nature to the other. He said, if divine attributes be conferred on man, he ceases to be man; and if human attributes be transferred to God, he ceases to be God. The Scriptures teach that the human nature of Christ remained in its integrity after the incarnation; and that the divine nature remained divine. It was a divine person, not merely a divine nature that assumed humanity, or became incarnate.

If so, what really occurred upon to the nature of Christ after the hypostatic union? Hodge said the natures communicate through one person, meaning what ever may be affirmed of either nature may be affirmed of the person. What ever deed or whatever says is a deed or a say to the 'theanthropos' (God-man).

Right after this Hodge went on to discuss the scriptural passages. In his discussion he has seen that all passages speak about one common person but sometimes in a divine predicate like when its says "before Abraham was I am...", or sometimes in a human predicate when it says "god died" or "God poured his blood, ate, slept etc" or a *theontropic* predicate when the acts are the acts of God-man.

Acts of Christ, be it divine or human is performed under one person. There is no confusion of nature while Christ acts as it is the same one person who is acting in any circumstance. The two natures still retain their identities but operate under one person. For example, when Christ suffered, the divine person suffered but not the divine nature. This principle equally applies to worship. When he receives worship the "he" refers to his person not to one of his natures.

With this stance Hodge's analysis affirms the creeds and the reformed theology against the errors in the early Church such as; the Arian, the Ebionitic, the Gnostic, the Apollinarian, the Nestorian, the Eutychian, and the Monothelite, as well as the peculiar Lutheran doctrine introduced at the time of the Reformation.

Generally, after doing holistic evaluation of the development of the doctrine of Christ, Hodge re-asserted the orthodox doctrine, saying; the whole Christian

world has believed, and still does believe, that Christ was a true man; that He had a real body and a human soul. The Council of Chalcedon in formulating this article of the common faith, declared that Christ was, and is, God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever; that according to the one nature He is consubstantial (ὁμοούσιος) with us, and according to the other He is consubstantial with the Father.

Christ's one person in two distinct and never confused natures, acting under one person, never inter-affected nature wise, but inter-affected through the union of a person is something which should be nailed in this research also. But this research hints a step further than this foundation without denying the facts given above.

During the incarnation some acts of the divine should necessarily be terminated in a non- action manner, without being changed or without being affected attribute wise. A simple case here is when Christ was on this earth, he has never been to heaven and earth at the same time as his limited movement within the boundary of Galilee, Judea and Samaria is very true in the Gospels but no evidence for his travel to heaven. His ability to be everywhere is not changed but temporarily non-activated, so as to accomplish the goal of soteriology through suffering and death. The same principle applies to his knowledge where he clearly said 'the Son doesn't know the end of the ages'. Some passages seem to hint that Christ was crossing the borders of the human dimension towards heaven even during his incarnation time (Jn 3:13). But the whole New Testament teaches us that during the incarnation Christ has never been beyond the borders of Jerusalem, Judea, Galilee, leave alone crossing space to heaven or so except through his dependence or prayer to the father, during his incarnation.

Hodges stand is basically for what he calls "the first principle". He said, any theory, therefore, which assumes that God lays aside his omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, and becomes as feeble, ignorant, and circumscribed as an infant, contradicts the first principle of all religion, and, if it be

pardonable to say so, shocks the common sense of men.

This assertion of Hodge is faithful to what is just believed rather than being faithful to the New Testament incarnation story where Christ was practically limited as any human being, obviously with no change to his divine power, except temporarily locked in non-action. If God's unlimited power was actively working during the incarnation, instead of limitedness, then the suffering of Christ and His death was simply fake. That is where this research has extended to. This never implies that Christ ceased to be God. He was, He is and He will be. But Christ willfully made some of his divine powers to be switched off temporarily for the sake of effective soteriology.

Hodge asserted that attributes cannot be transferred, added or lost, without changing nature. Well, very true that attributes may not be lost, added but could be transferred and changed but not as far as mutability as the argument above sees change and mutability separately. Hodge believes God cannot assume human attributes. Why not or why he can't? Is Jesus humanity a fake?

Grudem

Our final evaluation will be Grudem referring his commentary of "Systematic Theology, pages 549-562. Grudem refers to John 10:17-18 on the saying of Jesus about his body as telling the power in him either to give his life or take it back. The saying "in three days I will raise it up is a clue for the power Jesus could release to return himself back to life through the resurrection. Another argument from Grudem is the attestation to the deity of Christ as the fact that he is counted worthy to be worshiped, something that is true of no other creature, including angels (see Rev. 19:10), but God alone" (Phil. 2:9–11; (Rev. 5:13). According to Grudem, Christ is here called "the Lamb who was slain," and he is accorded the universal worship offered to God the Father, thus clearly demonstrating his equality in deity. Then Grudem straightforward asks the question "Did Jesus Give up Some of His Divine Attributes While on Earth?" (The Kenosis Theory), and goes on explaining the kenotic theory (Phil. 2:5–7) or

“kenotic theology.”

The kenosis theory basically holds that Christ gave up some of his divine attributes while he was on earth as a man (agreeing that there are several sorts of Kenoticism). (The word κενόσις is taken from the Greek verb κενόω, G3033, which generally means “to empty,” and is translated “emptied himself” in Phil. 2:7.) According to the theory Christ “emptied himself” of some of his divine attributes, such as omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence, while he was on earth as a man.

This was viewed as a voluntary self-limitation on Christ’s part, which he carried out in order to fulfill his work of redemption. Grudem reacts to this stand saying; “does Philippians 2:7 teach that Christ emptied himself of some of his divine attributes, and does the rest of the New Testament confirm this? The evidence of Scripture points to a negative answer to both questions.

Then Grudem said, we must first realize that no recognized teacher in the first 1,800 years of church history, including those who were native speakers of Greek, thought that “emptied himself” in Philippians 2:7 meant that the Son of God gave up some of his divine attributes. Second, we must recognize that the text does not say that Christ “emptied himself of some powers” or “emptied himself of divine attributes” or anything like that. Third, the text does describe what Jesus did in this “emptying”: he did not do it by giving up any of his attributes but rather by “taking the form of a servant,” that is, by coming to live as a man, and “being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:8).

To put Grudem’s discussions shortly;

1-Jesus himself has implied that he is in full control of his power even during his humanity (Jn 10:17).

2-Jesus is worthy of Worship (Rev 19:10).

3-Jesus as the Lamb was slain (Rev 5:13).

4-Jesus Emptied himself means “not emptied”.

5-Grudem said, Philippians 2:7 meant that Christ did not give up by emptying but putting on a form of a servant.

6-Grudem tried to argue referring to Paul’s purpose in writing Philippians to persuade them to imitate Christ than to emphasize on Christ’s emptying or so.

Grudem position is very clear in that the emptying includes change of role and status, not essential attributes or nature. Having said this: Grudem summarized his stance as follows “Therefore, the best understanding of this passage is that it talks about Jesus giving up the status and privilege that was his in heaven: he “did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped” (or “clung to for his own advantage”), but “emptied himself “or “humbled himself “for our sake, and came to live as a man. Jesus speaks elsewhere of the “glory” he had with the Father “before the world was made” (John 17:5), a glory that he had given up and was going to receive again when he returned to heaven.

As we evaluate Grudem’s analysis in the six points above; first of all; narration of the New Testament tells that Christ as man was not in full control of his own omnipotent power therefore depended on the father or the Spirit for his dealings during the incarnation. Grudem’s single reference from John 10:17 may even tell Christ willful humility and service than Christ’s power management thing or so, against Grudem’s exegesis.

Second, Jesus is worthy of worship, no argument about that, but what does that have to do with Christ’s power management? This case is irrelevant for the argument of the whereabouts of Christ’s ‘Omni’ power during his incarnation and suffering.

Third, what does the lamb slain in Revelation really tell? Christ giving up his power for the sake of saving humanity or something else. Grudem seems to beg

irrelevant issue out of its context.

Fourth Grudem said, emptied means not emptied. Where in the text does it say the way Grudem interpreted? Even the clause 'taking' cannot hold both the 'emptying' and 'not emptying' together. Grudem's facts here are external than internal. He said "no one recognized teacher believed that way for the last 1800 years". Still, this is an argument from history than the text.

Fifth, Grudem contradicted himself saying Christ emptied himself by taking up a form of a servant. First of all, Grudem doesn't seem faithful to the text as the text is very clear saying "emptying." Second Grudem seems to contradict himself saying Christ did limit his power by taking a form of a servant. 'Limiting' is 'limiting' either through 'omission' or through 'putting on' or through a temporary non-action. Whether he gave up or put on is not the case here. The case is that Christ limited Himself.

Grudem assertively said 'Christ Is Fully Divine'. The New Testament, in hundreds of explicit verses that call Jesus "God" and "Lord" and use a number of other titles of deity to refer this fact. Grudem's position on the divine nature of God is very clear. The thesis here equally affirms. The difference may be is on the management of that divine power for the soteriological agenda.

Shortly, the gist of the debate over Philippians 2:5-11 is one of either the two natures Christology or a one nature full human Kenotic view. Classical Christology maintains the two nature Christology with full divine enablement and no change to God but humility to the human part only. In this argument one person in two natures is underscored. However the full divine qualities in the human thing are just left abstract. Resisting this view another extreme is taken, capitalizing on the human and emptying of the divine enablement. Can there be a middle road? Where does this research stand?

No fight here as it is true that the Son exists as God forever and ever. This is Ontological fact. But the functional and relational aspects of him during the

incarnation, shows a clear form of man and slave which is a later becoming which was not there with him while he exists with a full form of God during his pre-incarnate state.

Has the son of God in any way changed by the incarnation and/or the resurrection? The change is not on the Son as God but the change is on the restrictive use of the divine enablement while the Son should be man. So, no change on the Ontological fact.

Here is a middle road not so far as denying impassibility but affirming Chalcedon's one person theory. God cannot change! But God can limit himself. There is no change in his divine attributes and there will be no change at all forever and ever. But God's Omni nature can make him able to act both ways in action and in non-action without changing or annihilating Himself. So, as there is no dissection in the nature of God there will be no change in nature whether within the Father or the Son or the Spirit. But the same nature in all the three may either be manifested in action or in non-action as it moves from the Ontological to relational-functional state through the movement from creation to redemption and consummation.

In this case we see that this nature was functionally manifested in non-action, with the Son, for the sake of the saving mission, when God the Son was willing to become human and die on the cross. Simply, the incarnation is a temporary limitation, non-activation of God the Son's divine enablement, for the sake of a true experience of human suffering and death. This is realized while God was coming out of God and became man for a limited period of time from the incarnation up until the resurrection (John 1:14).

That is how the saying God's nature did not die on the cross becomes feasible. No one has so far argued that the Son had a human nature from eternity. Rather he became man later during the incarnation. No one has so far convincingly argued that the Son had the divine enablement during the incarnation, but was

truly in action right after the resurrection as for example his entrance through fine walls, in a closed room etc.

The question is not whether the Son is God or not during the incarnation. The Son remains God all through eternity, during the incarnation and after the resurrection, but positionally not functionally. The divine enablement was limited to be in non-action for the sake of real experience of human misery and death.

It is not only the human person who faced suffering and death if we agree that one person conquers both the divine and the human natures following chalcedonies stand. The same Son/person from eternity, the same son of man/person in humanity faced limitation (incarnation) therefore suffered and died on the cross.

Can we say that God has stepped down from His divinity? The Son has stepped down, not from his divinity, but from his divine enablement, while He was willingly taking the form of a slave and the form of man. How can he suffer if He still exists in a form of God as his nature was able to resist suffering or death because of divine enablement in him?

Does this position conflict with Feinberg's or Martin's view of exegesis of Phil 2:6-8. Oh yes, this stand is neither denying a two nature Christology nor affirming a one human humiliated kenotic nature (which Martin falls in either of the two) but sees two natures perfectly united in one person, and the divine is temporarily in non action, for the sake of the saving mission.

It is very true that the participle "existing" is in present tense denoting no interruption of God the Son's condition as fully God. The Son exists as fully God but his divine enablement is temporarily switched off.

Being God in the assumption here does not require actively using God's powers. Unlike those theologians as Frame (The Doctrine of God, Phillipsburg: P&R, m

2002), (Frame : 226) who asserts that “nothing can be removed from Him”, this thesis differs that the attributes of God, as omniscience and omnipresence, which the Christ pre-resurrected gave up the use of, are essential to the nature of God! God can “switch off” and “switch on” His powers yet still remain God. For example, God has the attribute of sovereignty, but it is commonly accepted ,particularly by Armenian scholars, that He allows men to have some freedom of will holding men accountable for wrong choices they make (Josh 24:15; 1 Kings 18:21; Mt 23:37).If God limits His sovereignty, then why not His omnipresence? That seems what we get from Philippians 2:5-11.

Chapter Three

Christological Thought Progressions in Church History

Introduction

As the focus so far is to single out the uniqueness of Christ and Christianity from pluralistic tendencies and mixed thoughts of the incarnation in Ethiopia, it seems better to search for a Christian thought developments with countermoves against the orthodox view of the nature of Christ. To make this tangible we would first see the patristic period thought interactions over the issue of Christology. Reason for following this route has its own profound causes. First of all ideologies from this period are taken as measuring road of orthodox thought by most of the mainline churches (McGrath, 1998 :17). Secondly this way we may trace back to the main layers behind and find out the possible reality.

There were different schools of Christian thought, such as the Western Asiatic, and the African Alexandrian (Qualben Lars P. 1953, :105). Differences in doctrine appeared early especially with reference to the holy trinity, and the divinity of Jesus Christ. For example the Monarchians tried to eliminate the mystery of the trinity in one of two ways. One group denied the divinity of Christ, but ascribed to him a certain divine power or “dynamis” as a supernatural endowment. The Supreme Being simply worked upon or influenced the man Jesus Christ which is called dynamistic Monarchianism. Another group made Christ and the Holy Spirit mere manifestations of God or only a difference in mode, in which the one divine person manifests himself hence were named as modalistic Monarchians (Qualben :107). Let’s first put the focus of this portion before any detail.

Delimitations

When we try to find out the Christological thought developments, it is more fruitful to pick historical deviating incidents from 1st C -5th C. with special emphasis to

the 3rd, 4th, and 5th C. A.D. but also a little addition through the next successive years. Analyzing this historical age on Christology is more of theological than exegetical because we more or less rely on the historical thought dialogues than what we might have in the New Testament's Christological scenario. Professor Ben Witherington in his book 'The Jesus Quest' said that much more has been written about Jesus and there is no end in sight (Witherington 3rd 1997 :253). Could a trial in this research bring a difference? Ebionitism, Doceticism, Gnosticism could be discussed within this list but these items are dropped so as to be selective.

As peculiar interest of this thesis is the nature of the substance of the 'Logos/Word', in between the incarnate stage and the resurrection stage, a search of an answer for this inquiry should necessarily apply a careful analysis as to how this inquiry was handled in the mindset of the big figures in church history.

Ethiopian experience is also a victim of this sequence. For this very reason we would like to apply a historical approach, tracing back to ancient Christological controversies, with the Ethiopic ancient Christological experience in a parallel way, as this touches some concerns of Monophysitism/ Miaphysitism. Then we will continue consulting ancient 1st C.-3rd C A.D literatures also few but important personalities from the medieval, reformation and modern ages.

Patristic Christological Views

The apostolic fathers may be worthy of our consideration in order to locate original Christological beginnings. We may pick Ignatius first in this series. Ignatius had no formal Christological creed but indications cited from his writings tell that he emphasized upon the 'two natures' as he said in his letter to the Smyrneans "*I glorify Jesus Christ, the God who made you so wise...totally convinced that with regard to our Lord that he is truly of the family of David with respect to human descent, Son of God with to the divine will and power* (Lightfoot and Harmer 1989 :110). The creedal statements forwarded by Ignatius of

Antioch were more or less set with two faces. 1-Instructions; 2-ordinances and leadership office issues. His letters were more doctrinal than deep theological or philosophical explanations. Therefore we cannot speak of him as responding to quests similar in our sociological framework. Concerning the 'Son' Ignatius said,

He is hung upon the cross, and forgiveness of sins; He is in the grave, and raiseth up the dead; he comes forth from the grave and leaves the clothes therein; he went in to His disciples while the doors were shut, and gave them (the salutation of) peace. So the Father in the Son and the Son in the Father, and the Holy Spirit, this is the Trinity, equal, indivisible, and immutable; Christ was really born, He really grew up, He really ate and drunk, He was really crucified, He really suffered and died and was buried and rose from the dead. Whosoever believeth this that it is so, is blessed; and whosoever dispiseth this is a stranger to the blessed life, (Lightfoot, the Apostolic Fathers :305-306).

Ignatius presented the Son as “one person” not “two persons”, referring to the son as “he” with more emphasis to the reality of his humanity.

We will then look into the *Didache; the Epistle of Barnabas* and *the Shepherd of Hermas*. These treatises were considered most possibly as the first organized documents of the Apostles teachings, actually after the creedal statements forwarded by Ignatius of Antioch. Scholars agree that these documents cover the years between 1Century-150 A.D. (63-168) (Lightfoot J.B., 1989 :145-147), and the *Didache* was very similar to the Gospel of Barnabas. The Gospel of Barnabas as discovered by Bryonies in 1873, is with 21 articles, and elaborates the complete humanity and suffering of Jesus where it says “the limited God suffered at the hands of cruelty”; (it is true that no one is sure whether this document has come out of Barnabas the Apostle or somebody else other than him), (Lightfoot : 170-171). But one thing is true; the content tells that the Son during the incarnation was referred as “the limited God”.

In contrast to the Gospel of Barnabas the ‘Shepherd of Hermas’ speaks of the Son of God in a great power and Lordship rather than in a guise of a slave (Lightfoot :245).

The next patristic period more or less covers 2nd- 4th C.A.D. where this era geographically touches the Mediterranean world with Government seats at Rome and Constantinople. Issues here are whether Jesus was of one substance with

God or one in being/consubstantial with God - "*homousious*". This time the Christological debate was swinging between Alexandria and Antioch, Alexandrians favoring the divine where as those from Antioch tilting more towards the human nature (McGrath 2001 :22).

Polycarp (C.110-155) is a better reference here, for he was said that he met John the apostle and other disciples who have seen Jesus Christ while he lived on earth. In his Christological statements, Polycarp affirmed the enthronement (Pelican and Hotchkiss :43) of Christ at his fathers' right hand and that he will come to judge the living and the dead (Lightfoot :334). Still Polycarp's statements were primarily focused on the post resurrection image and with more doctrinal than theological emphasis.

Justin Martyr (C.100-165) as an apologist, very much relied on pagan mythologies to describe Christian mysteries. He borrowed the *Logos Spermatikos* - seed bearing Word concept to describe Christ. Yet this might help only to understand the nature of the pre-incarnate Christ. For Justin the Son was only a reason in the mind of the creator until He was born as a Son/Logos (Boer :110; See also Pelican and Hotchkiss: 22). There are other fathers of faith in this series but those picked for this consumption are the ones with direct focus of Christology.

Tertullian born 150 A.D. was so terrified by the holistic approach of Clement from North Africa. Therefore he developed theology of Trinity and Christ. Interesting to note is one of his reasons for emphasizing the distinction between Christ's two natures or substances. It is improper for God to suffer. God is impassible-incapable of suffering. Thus in order for Jesus Christ both to suffer and be divine, he has to have two distinct natures and substances. Only one of them-the human- could have suffered and died, as the two natures acted distinctly (Boer 1976 :112-113; See also, Olson :97). So, we see two distinct and simultaneously working natures in one Christ according to Tertullian which may have elements in common with Nestorianism.

Orogen of Alexandria (185-254 A. D), born 185 or 186 in Alexandria, a great genius scholar who produced approximately 800 treatises, castrated himself, have been a principal of a Christian school at the age of 18, never ordained but died as a martyr, but was never canonized as saint, and was suspiciously remembered as heretic. He was accused of teaching that human souls preexisted their descent into bodies, a charge that is almost certainly true which modern New agers seem to borrow from him and *apokatastasis*-a sort of universal reconciliation of all creation(Boer 1976 :92; see also, Olson 1999 :99-103).

Like Clement, Origen recognized and acknowledged truth outside of scripture but rejected the possibility of truth in conflict with the divine revelation (Olson :104). According to Origen all souls enter into this world from a pre-existent state where they have made free choice of obedience or disobedience to God. Only the human soul of Jesus survived this pre-existent probation of innocence; that is why the human Jesus on earth was sinless (Olson :104).The preexistent soul of Jesus was so united with the Logos that it was like iron filled with fire. It was divinized and yet remained creaturely and thus was the perfect instrument for the Word's descent into human existence without change of the divine Logos but only the human soul and body of Jesus suffered (Olson 1999 :111).

Origen's contribution is a mixture of the positive and the negative (Olson :112). A soul like any other preexistent soul which enters into humanity, but a soul still different from other preexistent soul as it is divinized by the Logos. It is this soul which later got into the human Christ during the incarnation, according to Origen. This makes easy for Origen to set the divine and human together in one man- Jesus.

Origen with his controversial approach made the Son an emanation (out flowing of the father) and the Holy Spirit an emanation from both. His explanation made the Son a subordinate to the father therefore Origen has somehow been termed as the father of Arianism (Qualben :107). The preexistent soul symbol is vague

in Origen's analysis especially as it applies to the nature of the pre-existent Christ. He didn't make it clear whether Christ was uncreated, self sufficient person eternally. Plus to that the 'iron-fire' symbolism seems an element passed to Euthechian model as the identities are so mixed as far as a total change.

Aryanism (310 C. A.D) followed lowering the essence of Christ into createdness in a process of declining dynamism or ascending dynamism, with a little supremeness than humanity yet lower than God, and omitting the Divine element from Him. We got enough defenses from Athanasius to Arius theology (296-373), (Archibald R., 1885 :29).

Saint Athanasius (296-373), in his book "Athanasius on the Incarnation", committed series of chapters dealing on the issue of 'reasons for the incarnation'. Exegesis and meaning doesn't seem to be of importance to Athanasius but just applied arbitrary quotes from the Bible to justify his concerns of the reasons for the incarnation. According to him, the first main reason for the incarnation is man's fall, original and continuous previous sins (Archibald :9). Athanasius then goes to say; 'for this very purpose, then, the incorporeal and the incorruptible and the immaterial Word of God comes to our realm But he comes in condensation to show loving kindness upon us and to visit us (Archibald :12)'.

The term 'condensed' here is more elaborated in his own words saying 'condensed to our corruption, and unable to bear that death should have a mastery-lest the creatures should perish ,...,He takes unto Himself a body, and that of no different from ours' (Archibald :12).

Everything Athanasius said might not be relevant to our concern here, yet what he meant by condensation and the body in his clear wordings which said "the 'Word' took upon Himself, which is totally the same with the nature of ours", is of interest here.

The pre-incarnate eternal Word is now being limited in the 'body' susceptible to corruption and suffering of any kind to the extent of losing mastery over death.

This is agreeable for it re-enforces the reason of this critique.

Athanasius then goes to expose ideas of the incarnation comparing and contrasting it to the capacity of humanity. He said, though humans are limited in the physical dimension - - "Now the word of God in His man's nature was not like that, for he was not bound to His body, but rather was wielding, so that he was not only in it, but actually in everything. " Then, he added the analogy of the "Sun", saying though the sun revolves around in heaven it is not defiled by touching the bodies upon the earth, nor it is put out by darkness. This implies that the human Jesus was never defiled and/or restricted by the condensation process.

As far as evaluating Athanasius, the identity of the Pre-incarnate word seems to be confused with the identity of the incarnate Christ all through the analysis of Athanasius (Archibald :27). The question here is who suffered the death on the cross, the word/Logos or the body? If we agree to the logic of Athanasius, saying that the Lord's deeds are divine as well as human when he was performing miracles, taking miracles as evidences of divinity, where will be His limitedness, if he is unlimited, because of the incarnation?

In the analysis of Athanasius there seems a mix of condensation with that of infinity during the incarnation. Affirming the eternal divine unlimitedness of the Logos in the pre-incarnation stage, it is also better to affirm the shift to the condensation issue of the Logos during the incarnation with no compromise, as this action is a necessity to save humanity.

What has then happened to the divine nature of the Logos during the incarnation? Nothing except that it was functionally avoided for sometime in-order to save humanity in humanness.

Athanasius seems to tie the condensed nature with unlimited pre-incarnate nature. Here we see mixes of the pre-incarnate stage with the incarnate stage. Two problems seem to be evident. The first one is mix of two dimensions, the

eternal and the physical or the one which is not time bound and space bound, with the other which is time bound and space bound. The second problem is a hint of two personalities in Athanasius thinking. Who were then the logos during the incarnation? The pre-incarnate is only one person and the incarnate is still one same person. Where Christ was the Word he was the Word only and this is during the pre-incarnate stage. When Christ became flesh, still the same person became flesh. It doesn't say the Word added Flesh but the Word became flesh (John1:14).

How about to the whereabouts of the divinity? Position wise the Logos is still God during the incarnation but functionally the Logos is only human who is very dependent on the father in the time between the pre-incarnate stage and the resurrection stages.

Apollinarius of Laodicea (ca.A.D.310-ca.A.D. 390); Apollinarius basic question goes like "how can man conceive of Christ's (Logos's) human existence? Therefore, his concern was to give a rational elaboration to the union of the eternal Logos with the human Flesh. He was in search of a rational logic in the rational scenario, for the divine dimension is too difficult to be grasped by the created dimension. He still did not deny the divinity of the Logos element except that he said the human flesh was divinized by the divine element. He then went saying "even the flesh was something brought down from heaven while the womb of Mary, simply serving as a passageway" (Bengt; 1968 :90).

He might have said this for his idolized reverence to the flesh material so as to make it very clean. This thought of him might have come from the theology of transmission of sin and sanctification. So, as he was looking for cleansed material he believed that the flesh came down from heaven. We may at least try to understand Apollinarius in that his effort to seek a rational solution should be commended. He has not denied that Christ is the eternal Logos with His own eternal person. Scholarship agrees with this point of him and believes that this eternal person has come down and dwelt within human flesh (Bengt :90-91).

The counter argument rounds the process of the fusion. No rational or scientific or philosophical or theological resolution has thus far satisfactorily treated the union of the divine with the human. Apollinarius said the divine has given life (soul) and reason to the flesh; this might not have perfect rational explanation thus far, either to prove or disprove what really happened during the process of incarnation. Apollinarius was also against Deodore (bishop of Tarsus, 378) who actually was reluctant to the issue of virginity, from the literalistic camp, with strong denouncement to the philosophical allegorical interpretation against the case of the birth of Christ (Chadwick 1967 :193-194).

The agreement seems in the orthodox view that the incarnated one has finally made up one Christ from two natures but only one person. It should be affirmed that Christ was of the same substance and on equal authority with God the father and the Holy Spirit everlastingly. Yet issues of the then world with the issues of the now world demand a rational justification and reinterpretation as far as the understanding of nature of Christ, as he became man (Jn 1:14). Perusing the search for rational satisfaction the next immediate proposed antithesis is the tension b/n Cyril and Nestorius.

Cyril-of Alexandria- might be taken as an extreme Alexandrian with the popular allegorical approaches much emphasizing the *Theotokos* 'mother of god' issue. Having this thought as an option to comprehend passibility/impassibility issues for the time being, let's see more comparison of Nestorius and Cyril. While Nestorius favored a moral union as if the divine stands off the human, implying duality, Cyril went for a perfect union, as in the union of the soul and body in human nature, one entity out of duality (Weinandy, 2000 :182–92), where the soul and body coexist under one entity but keep their identity, which this argument of Cyril actually stands as a strong case for soteriology rather than Christology (Norris :151).

Nestorius-argued that Mary is the mother of the human Jesus, she is not the mother of God. She has never mothered the preexistent divine. But no one could

deny the natural mother- son relationship of Mary and Jesus when it comes to His human years. Still, all this is for the purpose of saving humanity as of the divine decree, rather than any special favor to Mary. Leaving the debates of Cyril and Nestorius there for a while, we would pass to see Gregory Nazianzen as his views were sort of grease to the tension between Cyril and Nestorius, even though not totally salvific.

Gregory of Nazianzus: The argument was not yet settled that Gregory of Nazianzus sometimes called Nazianzen (A.D. 329-389) asserted a serious attack against Apollinarius. Shortly his stern comment against Apollinarius goes like; *“Jesus was with a human mind for it is impossible to separate the humanity from the divinity”*. Nazianzus affirmed the pre-existent nature of Christ as the eternal Son of God who was God Himself and has assumed human nature also for our salvation. In the body, he said, Christ was subject to limitation, yet unlimited in the Spirit; at one and the same time earthly and heavenly, tangible and intangible, comprehensible and incomprehensible; that by one and the same person, a perfect human being and a perfect God (McGrath 2001 :51).

The question is, if Jesus is unlimited in the spirit during the incarnation, how can limitedness and unlimitedness go together? What is the incarnation all about then? Nazianzus's argument sided very clearly with the Antiochene literal camp, yet some of his explanation needs relevant explanation to the modern mind. What was his intent when he said it is impossible to separate the humanity from the divinity? Divinity and humanity are really two separate dimensions. Divinity is usually categorized with the uncreatedness while humanity is within the created dimension. Following this logic they are obviously separate. Nazianzus treatment of the issue was targeted against Apollinarius, yet some issues seem by passed without serious treatment. There needs to be a clear distinction between the physical dimension and the divine dimension.

When it comes to Christ, yes the divine declined to the human dimension still with his positional divinity and with his material humanity in the limitedness of the

physical dimension. So, main concern here is not to confuse the physical with the divine. What is divine is only divine and what is physical is only physical. The case of Christ is a case of declining toward the physical limitedness, for the purpose of saving humanity under the divine decree for a limited period of at most 33 years.

Nazianzus statement of limiting Christ in the body and unlimiting Him in the Spirit at the same time should also be redefined. Was Christ sometimes in the divine dimension and sometimes in the physical world? Or was He in the divine and the physical at the same time? Nazianzus seem to affirm the second one. But there seems a temptation to either hide in the divine cave sometimes and the human cave another time.

To put it in a simple word Christ's pre- existent nature with all the divine potent is beyond doubt yet the decree of saving humanity has made the divine Christ to move or decline to the human dimension. So, during his fleshly humanly years it seems fair to say he willfully limited Himself from the divine dimension for the purpose of saving humanity. Thus, we cannot say divinity was there materially in Human Christ. Yet still his pre-existent divine form was not robed of Him. It was and is in his own possession, positionally, but not materially or functionally, when it comes to His earthly time. So Nazianzus's statements are worthy of some clarification accepting most of it as orthodox. More will be said on this issue in the following chapters of this thesis.

When we evaluate the tension between the Alexandrian camp and the Antiochene camp, Nestorius stands on another extreme within the Antiochene literalistic camp. Shortly the Antiochene counteraction against the Alexandrian camp was that;

Christology made based on the Historical Grammatical approach. This group said Christ had both the human Soul and the human body. According to this group the Logos was not transmuted into man; instead he retained His divine nature, took upon Himself a human form, and united himself to human nature. The Logos employed human nature as an organ, at the same time, however, the two natures remained distinct. Christ possessed the true divine nature, yet He was also real man with a human body and soul (Bengt :91-92).

To be fair however, the original Antiochens also asserted the unity of the person. Nestorianism is the result of a dispute at the Synod of Ephesus in 421.

Unfortunately the Synod decided against Nestorius in favor of the Alexandrian theology that Nestorius was declared as heretical, up until being driven to exile, accused of taking the Antiochene School to the extreme of creating two 'Christ's'. This is where the Antiochene theology separated itself from the Alexandrian theology. In 428 Nestorius became the patriarch of Constantinople and Cyril continued as the patriarch of Alexandria (Haggland :93).

Simple matters in need of due attention are questions like; what if we expand the possibility of life movement in three channels? God permeated life through the union of man and woman in sexual unity. Male chromosomes fused with the ovary will give way to the conceiving and the fetus will go on processing being fed through the umbilical cord of its mother. Christ is neither exception of this process except that He is not born through sexual unity of a human father to a human mother. An extreme of divinizing the flesh of its mother will lead one to deny the true humanity of Christ, where He was there in its mother's womb for nine months and was then brought up as anyone of us, being fed through his mother's system, playing as any child would do and possibly lots of human frailty and mistakes during his youth. Another extreme of emphasizing the human part will lead one to deny the former pre-existent divine nature of Christ. Where is the synthesis then?

Humanity only doubts the reality of incarnation as supra-rational or irrational. Yet humanity never asked how Adams life was permeated. Was it through a sexual union? No. Was it partly human and partly divine work? No. Was it through supra-rational supernatural means? Yes, absolutely. If this is an assumed fact, how could Christ's incarnation nature be in doubt? Betrayal of the fact has been the scenario of humanity that it has been easy to see the vanity rather than reality. If it was possible for God to permit life with or without sexual unity as it was in Adam or any human-being, why is it impossible for Christ to be born without any sexual contact? If Adam's life was natural, why is Christ's life confusing

as far as making it supra-rational? God then has used both means (with and without the union of man and woman) to permit life of the same nature as it was in Adam's creation and Christ's incarnation.

Therefore no need of unnecessary divinization to the flesh or still no need of unnecessary denial of the preexistent nature of Christ, yet affirming that Christ's virgin birth and humanity was a natural possibility against ancient Apollinarian Alexandrian philosophy and the undefined Anthiochene abstract.

Eutyches (ca.A.D. 378-454): Other arguments of the early five centuries of Christianity were reactions from the Alexandrian camp by Eutyches. He claimed that "after Christ became man He had but one nature". According to Eutyches, Christ's humanity was not of the same essence as ours. While Nestorianism seems about the divided Christ or denial of unity, Eutichianism is denial of duality or Monophysite-a united Christ. Two natures mixed to create a third single nature neither divine nor Human, but a mixture of both in one new being (Hannah, 2001 :73). Eutyches View was condemned at the council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D.

Councils

As Constantine the great and the succeeding emperors looked upon the church as the great unifying force, great efforts were made to keep unity and suppress heresy. But where was the true church? The criterion was formulated and defined by the five General or ecumenical councils of this period. The doctrinal definitions of these councils, especially those of Nicene and Athanasius creeds, have always seen been accepted by the main body of the church, the general or ecumenical councils. This we see outlined by Qualben p 121 as; 1 Nicaea I 325, 2-Constantinople I (381), Ephesus I 431, 4-Chalcedon 451, 5-Constantinople II, 553, 6-Constantinople III, 680, 7- Nicaea II, 787(Qualben :121).

A synthesized position seems to vegetate in series of councils where the chalcedonian was the biggest, which is treated independently below.

The Creed affirmed that "Christ in the incarnation was fully God and fully man, in

one person –against Nestorius who so distinguished between God’s son and David’s son, without confusion forever. The creed goes saying; our Lord Jesus Christ, who is perfect in His divinity-(against Arius who denied divine nature of Christ insisting dynamism), with a reasonable soul and body – (against Apollinarius), of one essence with the father according to divinity and of the same essence as we are according to humanity (Norris 1980 :151). The distinction of Natures being by no means taken away by the union, the property of each nature preserved, and concurring in one person not parted or divided into two persons but one and the same Son and the only begotten of God, Logos the Lord Jesus Christ (Huggland 1968 :98-99).

However a dozen of the then churches were not yet in favor of the Chalcedonies creedal decision that another council was held at Constantinople in 553, still solidifying the Chalcedonies decision against Monophysites-single nature Christologists.

This action seems to push the remnants towards east and history tells us that some have traveled as far as Egypt and Ethiopia. Next we will try to look to the root elements of monophysitism/miaphysitism in Ethiopia, so as to connect it to the main issue of our research in this thesis.

Generally Chalcedon 451 A.D. was simply a confession of two natures in one Christ with no details into the how of the composition. The decision was against Nestorius who was said, so divided the two natures, against Appollinarius one who made the Logos swallowed the flesh- or the other way round the flesh itself was divinized by the Logos, and against Euthyches - who argued for only one nature out of two after the union.

Yet despite the council’s decision which somewhat safely ignored Cyril, Cyril was more popular to the extent of gaining violent supports, especially within the eastern camp.

The debate continued through series of examinations over the substance of

Christ's flesh, some saying it was corruptible still having the divine in it- *phithartholatrai*, Severus (460-538), yet others voting for the incorruptible flesh- *phanthasiata* or mere humanity (Fergusson Sinclair B., 1978 :442-443). Such arguments led some to say God suffered on the cross.

Medieval Christological Developments

Western European theological influence was much greater at this time, meaning Christian theological reflection moved from North Africa to Western Europe. The fall of Rome is usually dated 4th C. A.D. 4th-13th C. -almost 1000 yrs, are mostly categorized by scholars as the dark ages.

Here the growing disagreements over the "filioque clause" are indubitably recorded. The tension grew between the Latin speaking Rome and Greek speaking Constantinople and a fight continued as Western theology and Byzantine theology, 1054 being the final break (McGrath :30-31).

Augustine: Where do we get clue to reach to the mind of Augustine? His very confessions are far better help for a research as this, as prime source in addition to other sources about him on the issue of incarnation.

'The confessions of Augustine' as edited by Rev E.B. Pusey., are not primarily written focusing on issues of Christology or incarnation but they are recorded in steps sequentially, from the stages of his infancy and boyhood all through his sinful experiences and attitudes, educational advancements, love of fame, love of wisdom and Manicheanism. His so-journ to Rome and Milan then leaving Manicheans, became again a Catechumen in the church of catholic.

In his 31st year, his confessions tell us that he was gradually coming out of his former errors and heretic tendencies. Here he finds the seeds of the doctrines of Divinity of the 'Word'. His confessions clearly say that the divine 'Words' humiliation, meaning the nature of his incarnation were not yet clear in the mind of St. Augustine at this stage. Therefore he did not know Christ to be a mediator (Pusey :151). Most of his studies of the scriptures at this time especially St. Paul

was of much help to him to straighten his confusions (McGrath 2001 :185). Then his conversion experience followed where his mother Monica's prayer and vision was fulfilled (Pusey 1926 :217). His mother died two years after his conversion at her 56 or in his 33rd year. Then Augustine lastly confessed his understanding of God and Christ as the only mediator in his final chapter (Pusey :253).

His Confessions of Christ's nature could be borrowed here for the consumption of this research. His narration is short not more than three pages yet condensed with deep thoughts and well said statements. To quote him directly his literal statements are like;

"But a mediator between God and man, must have something like God, something like man" "less being in both like man, he should be far from God: or if in both like God, too unlike man; and so not be a mediator" (Pusey: 312).

The 'something like God' means of the same substance with God, and the 'something like men the same way, means of the same substance like men. This statement is drawn from the continuing statements of him where he said "*less being in both like man, he should be far from God: or if in both like God, too unlike man; and so not be a mediator*" (Pusey :312).

Similarly Saint Augustine himself in his book "The City of God", under his sub topic '*of the knowledge of God, which non can attain but through the mediator between God and Man, the man Jesus Christ*' said,

Therefore this must be purged, and instructed by faith, to set it the surer; where in truth itself, God's Son, and God, taking on our manhood without wasting of Godhead, ordained that faith to be a pass for man to God, by his means that was both God and Man; for by his manhood is He mediator, and by man he is our way. For if the way lie between him that goes and the place he goes, there is hope to attain it. But if one has no way, nor knows which way to go, what boots it to know whither to go? And the only sure, plain infallible highway is this mediator, God and man: God, our Journey's end, and man, our way unto it (Saint Augustine, The City of God :313).

This cannot mean anything other than strongly suggesting divinity and humanity in full so as to fulfill the office of a mediator. One question is yet unanswered in Augustine's analysis. Was Jesus considered a mediator before the cross?

Augustine continued his explanations of a mediator through the analogy of a

deceitful mediator, most possibly Satan. What does Satan has in Common with God and in common with man. Augustine said Satan has sin in common with man and immortality in common with God. Since Satan has rebelled against God he should die but he couldn't for his immortal nature. Men will die, for the wages of sin is death. Therefore, according to Augustine, Christ should have the same substance with us, in order to die for us, and pay the penalty of sin (Augustine :312) let's see another direct quote.

The man Christ Jesus, appeared betwixt mortal sinners and the immortal just one; mortal with men just with God: - - -, for as man he was a mediator; but as the 'Word' not in the middle between God and man, because equal to God and God with God and together one God. For as to thee both victor and victim, and therefore victor, because the victim; for us to thee sacrifice; making us to thee of servants, sons by being born of thee, and saving us (Pusey :313).

The statements of Augustine clearly affirm that Christ could be a victor if and only if he is a victim. Christ could be a priest if He is willing to shift towards the nature of a sacrifice as one of humanity so as to be able to die, for the pre-existent word could not die unless he shifted into the dimension where death is a master.

As we have seen it earlier our research question is partially treated in Augustine's analysis. Actually questions are mostly different from context to context. Augustine has not treated the divine and the human nature independently in a detailed way. Was the Logos fully empowered through divinity during the incarnation or set aside for a short period of time?

The two natures are possessions of one and the same person-Christ. But the divine infinity doesn't seem active during the incarnation for the purpose of incarnation (Pusey :314). The incarnation has been a necessity for the cases of humanity, humility, emptiness, disability or incapacitated status, so as to be able 'a victim' borrowing Augustine's words.

The 'victor' issue must be seen while victory was gained later in the resurrection not during the incarnation.

Anselm of Canterbury in the 12th C. and **Thomas Aquinas** in the 13th C. both

called the church back to what Augustine has said (MacCulloch :107). On this line, Aquinas after affirming that the Son of God is God, he reacted against the historical heresies, registered before him from Sabellius and Arius (Joseph Rickaby, S.J., *Summa Contra Gentiles Of Saint Thomas Aquinas., Of God and His Creatures*, Orchard St,17 South broad way, London W, : 337-346). Almost similarly, Erasmus insights are very interesting as far as their influence on the protestant revolution, somewhat reverting the misguided Marian devotion that hung on Luke 2:51, which he believed is less true as a salvation channel (*Opera Erasmi*:1969,:490-92 See also MacCulloch :97). His approach however was not so radical as was with Luther.

Reformation to mid 17th Century- Period of Orthodoxy

When we come to the Christology of the reformation with a little bit to post reformation also, what we discover is that the Christology itself was Augustinian than Scholastic (MacCulloch :112). Major proponents could be said Luther and Calvin.

Collins said, at the heart of the reformation initiated by Martin Luther (1483-1546), was the question of grace (where/how do I find a gracious God), which amounted to the question of the sinners justification. '*To know Christ means to know his benefits and not... to reflect upon his natures and the modes of his incarnation*' (Collins, SJ, 1995 :209). Therefore we may say the reformations Christology was covered more by soteriological emphasis. Dulling also added to this saying; Luther sought to maintain the orthodox doctrine of Jesus Christ "as truly God and truly man". He usually avoided using the church's language and the philosophical language of Aquinas, preferring to employ down to earth expressions and language taken directly from Scripture. When Luther came to the New Testament itself, he concentrated on the humanness of Jesus. It was the weak, lowly and beggarly Christ that attracted him most. Jesus Christ was born in lowliness, lived his life as a human beggar, suffered and died on the cross a weak man, the object of scorn and contempt (Dulling: 105-106).

Referring to Luther's primary works;

He had eyes, ears, mouth, nose, chest, stomach, hands and feet, just as you and I have. He took the breast: his mother nursed him as any other child is nursed...He ate, drank, awoke, and was tired. He was sad and happy. He wept and laughed; He hungered and thirsted, froze and perspired. He chatted and worked and prayed. In short, He required all the necessities and sustenance of this life, and died and suffered like any other man, sharing fortune and misfortune (Luther's Works :199-200).

A bit exploration of Luther's works as edited by Pelican and translated by Martin H. Bertram of Luther's Works , Vol 22 ,Sermons on the Gospel of Saint John Chapters 1-4, 1957 22, S 22) hints a tone that divinity and incarnation of the Son is a mystery which is not graspable by human hearts except by faith. It literally reads as;

The Second Person, the Son, and neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit, assumed human nature. He was born of the Virgin Mary when the day of redemption was to dawn. This Son of God, born of the Father in eternity, John first calls "the Word." He says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word." Later he speaks of His incarnation when he says (1:14): "And the Word became flesh." St. Paul speaks similarly in Galatians (4:4): "But when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman." Any attempt to fathom and comprehend such statements with human reason and understanding will avail nothing, for none of this has its source in the reason: that there was a Word in God before the world's creation, and that this Word was God; that, as John says further on, this same Word, the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, rested in the Father's bosom or heart and became flesh; and that no one else had ever seen or known God, because the Word, who is God's only-begotten Son, rested in the bosom of the Father and revealed Him to us. Nothing but faith can comprehend this. Whoever refuses to accept it in faith, to believe it before he understands it, but insists on exploring it with his reason and his five senses, let him persist in this if he will. But our mind will never master this doctrine; it is far too lofty for our reason. Holy Writ assures us that faith alone can appropriate it. Let anyone who refuses to believe it let it alone (Luther's Works 22, S. 22:5).

This discussion of Luther clearly speaks of or Lord's humanity. Actually, McGrath referring to G.E.Lessing, argued that the leading characteristics of Luther's theology was his proclamation of the individual's total freedom in matters of religious opinion, unfettered by ecclesiastical interference, than complicated issues of Christology (McGrath 1994 :19). McGrath also added that the only major Christological debate of the period of any interest centers upon two groups of Lutheran theologians, who developed rival positions known as 'crypticism' and 'kenoticism' in relation to the nature of Christ's divine attributes (McGrath :13).

Calvin (1509-1564), in his 'Institutes of the Christian Religion', published in 1536,

reasserted the main tenets of Lutheran Protestantism, but without Luther's stress on the soul searching quest for salvation. Calvin stressed the absolute sovereignty of God the creator (Calvin 1989 :215) sees also (Dulling :114). Calvin put it in Orthodox terms: Christ was both divine and human. In his book one, Calvin concentrated on the divinity of Christ, correlating the Old Testament prophecies about him as the eternal Word and wisdom, and its fulfillment in the New Testament where Jesus was seen able to penetrate the silent thoughts and hearts of people (Mt 9:4; Jn 2:23). According to Calvin, Jesus' divinity is proved in his power to forgive sins (Mt 9:6), (Dulling :116). Calvin also used the title 'Son of man' which he argued in Hebrew, meant true man, citing Psalm 8:4 and Heb 2:6; Phil 2 and Rom 5.

Concerning the nature and person of Christ, Calvin's synthesis is well balanced and parallel with what was said by Augustine. His explanation more follows the mediatory task of Christ. His literal words are like;

Christ's work as a mediator was unique: it was to restore us to divine favor and to make us sons of God, instead of sons of men; heirs of the heavenly kingdom instead of heirs of hell. Only the son of God could do this by becoming the son of man...because the Son of God took upon himself a body like our body, flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone, that he might be one with us (Tony Lane :125).

The way Calvin used biblical texts for his argument is most of the time left unquestioned but the contextual meanings implied in the passages seem to imply another teaching than to what Calvin was trying to pick. Obviously he is well trained in Semitic and Greek languages but his application of ancient languages to his systematic does not seem exegetically sound. Simple proof for this is the way he picked the texts above for his analysis of the divinity of Christ, where the verses are only talking about Jesus penetration of human hearts, or that He has authority to forgive sin and so on. Contextually the verses tell something else other than the divine nature of Jesus. The question this research raises is not on the divinity of our Lord but on the method Calvin used to support his case.

Luther and Calvin as biblical theologians affirmed a Christology which was in full accord with Chalcedon; indeed, the Chalcedonies definition became important

element in the creedal literature of most of the reformation churches (Wells 1984 :121-122). Reformations faithfulness to the 'Word/Scriptures' and Calvin's systematization on what Luther laid had a saving and healing effect to the church. But biblical approaches of the reformation are very literal and particularly Calvin's' somewhat mystical systematization still leaves profound questions unanswered.

Bringing the scriptures back as a center and trusting them fully is one thing but neglecting the contextual-exegetical meaning is another danger. This we see in the treatments of Calvin to the interrelations between Man and God in Christ, in his book "Institutes of The Christian Religion" (Calvin 1989 :215), in the discussion about 'the Knowledge of God the Redeemer' in Christ. Here, before he discussed his Christology, Calvin primarily brings the cause of the fall, 'disobedience of the woman' which entails 'pride'; not necessarily eating the fruit or so. Then Calvin goes straight to the book of Romans where Paul said 'by the disobedience of one man.... (Rom 5:18-20).

Well it is fine to say that infidelity, ambition, pride are the initial causes of the fall of man and therefore the curse over the whole nature. But the extension of its consequence to the offspring which all great theologians like Cyprian, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin call it as 'original sin', is not correctly cited from the scriptures as Calvin also more or less arbitrarily quoted from Ps 51:5; Rom 5:19; 1Cor 11:22; John 3:6 and Eph 2:3. These texts have nothing to say on the origin of sin and its transmission, except that the one from Psalm is just a rationalization of King David for his sin with Bathsheba and the Romans 5 text is an argument asserting that salvation is through one man and no other way.

So, ways Calvin quoted the scriptures for his systematic approach seems arbitrary leave alone solving cases of Christology (Calvin 1989 :215). Misuse and misinterpretation of various texts from Paul like (Gal 3:13 and 2Cor 5:21), was the customary habit of the reformers, as for example the view of redemption as penal substitution, as if Christ literally took upon himself the guilt of human sin,

also as if he had personally committed all these sins himself (Collins :211-212). All questions against exegesis of the reformers apply to the way they also understood Christology.

One way or the other the reformers and other orthodox Christian scholars like Grudem (Grudem, Systematic Theology, 549-562), Hodge, (Hodge; Systematic Theology, vol II, part II. ch III, pages 387-418 ; 433-440); Gregory of Nazianzus: Nazianzen(A.D. 329-389), (McGrath :51)., Augustine(Saint Augustine, The City of God :313), Calvin(Calvin 1989 :215), were mostly interested, firstly in reforming the church, secondly staying faithful to the authority of the scriptures and authority of the creeds, than a satisfactory response to current Christological questions. Well this is ideal and all should stick to this. But, literal application of the scriptures has its own deficiency when it comes to right exegesis. Plus to that, the creeds are just general frameworks which still need revitalization as far as solving Christological questions of the post modern context.

Most theologians from early church history all through the medieval age and the reformation repeatedly said that Christ has assumed a human nature or took upon himself a human nature or added a human nature. This assertion of them doesn't seem to fit the becoming/ *egineteo* of John 1:14.

Enlightenment, Modern and Postmodern Christological Approaches Late 17th C-late 19th C

René Descartes (1596-1650) 'cogito ergo sum', symbolized and encouraged 'the anthropological turn' that switched to a concern for the conscious subject which has deeply affected modern Christology and other branches of theology. Like Descartes, John Henry Newman (1801-90) took as his starting point the 'I' and ones consciousness of oneself (Collins :213).

According to Dulling, in philosophy, the enlightenment had moved from Cartesian rationalism to empiricism, through skepticism, and finally to materialism, none of which was based on the Bible and revelation. This led into a new form of religion

where orthodoxy with its creeds, dogmas, institutions, Virgin, and Christ could only obscure the universal morality known to all by human reason (Dulling :137-139). Within this age, supernatural elements, especially the miracles, were seen as common superstitious beliefs of ancient people, and Christianity had simply borrowed such beliefs as the virgin birth and the divinity of Christ. Miracles were contrary to the “New Science,” for, it was thought, and God does not stop the Great Machine of the Universe (Dulling: 144). So Jesus in this age was taken as only human and moral example.

However, many have found out that centrality of reason of the enlightenment as authority towards meaning instead of the scriptural authority was insufficient. The feeling part was getting missed. For Pietists the heart of religion was feeling not reason. Pietism as a distinct movement is usually associated with three figures that emerged within German Lutheranism: Jacon Spener (1665-1705), August Herrmann Francke (1663-1727), and Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-60). In summary, protestant Pietists stressed the inwardness of spiritual experience, the emotional component of religion, without which they believed religion was in danger of becoming cold, dry, and too intellectual.

Pietism and Moravians grew vigorously in the seventeenth-century continental Europe. In England, where the lower classes were depressed economically, spiritually, and morally during the beginnings of industrial revolution, the time was ripe for religious renewal. John Wesley (1703-91), began his study of William Law’s *Christian perfection*, which presented “an imitation of Christ” ideal centering on daily self denial, for example, by moderating fasting, leaving home and family for the sake of Jesus, and abstinence from improper books, dramas, plays, and conversation (Dulling :148-151). More of his thoughts are made clear in Wesley’s own sermons which we may focus on what he said about the condensation of Christ during the incarnation. To quote him rightly;

John 1: 14. Flesh sometimes signifies corrupt nature; sometimes the body; sometimes, as here, the whole man. We beheld his glory-We his apostles, particularly Peter, James, and John, Lu 9:32. Grace and truth-We are all by nature liars and children of wrath, to whom both grace and truth are unknown. But we are made partakers of them, when we

are accepted through the Beloved. The whole verse might be paraphrased thus: And in order to raise us to this dignity and happiness, the eternal Word, by a most amazing condescension, was made flesh, united himself to our miserable nature, with all its innocent infirmities. And he did not make us a transient visit, but tabernacled among us on earth, displaying his glory in a more eminent manner, than even of old in the tabernacle of Moses. And we who are now recording these things beheld his glory with so strict an attention, that we can testify, it was in every respect such a glory as became the only begotten of the Father. For it shone forth not only in his transfiguration, and in his continual miracles, but in all his tempers, ministrations, and conduct through the whole series of his life. In all he appeared full of grace and truth: he was himself most benevolent and upright; made those ample discoveries of pardon to sinners, which the Mosaic dispensation could not do: and really exhibited the most substantial blessings, whereas that was but a shadow of good things to come (Logos Library System; Wesley's Notes , S. Jn 1:14).

According to Dulling, because Wesley wrote no treatise about Jesus Christ, his views on this subject must be gleaned from various places in his writings. The difficulty of systematizing his views is compounded by the fact that such a systematic statement was not as important as to Wesley as the Christian life itself. To Wesley, scripture was to be interpreted in the light of experience and experience in the light of scripture. Wesley's specific method of biblical interpretation stressed the reformation principles that one should look for the plain, literal sense of a passage and that "Scripture interprets Scripture". The result of interpretation for Wesley is that "plain truth for plain people" frees from all nice and philosophical speculations. This overall perspective is crucial to Wesley's view of Jesus Christ. Like Calvin, he came to believe that all persons share in Adam's sin, are totally without merit (Original Sin), and therefore are dependent on God's totally free gift of grace through the sacrifice of his Son, Jesus Christ (Justification by faith),(Dulling :152-153).

Shortly, Wesley's discussion is firstly faithful to Chalcedon, secondly underlined the condensation of the Logos into humanity, third underlined that the glory shone during transfiguration including his miracles are signs of his divine power inside him.

In line with this, **Schleiermacher**, still with an anthropocentric theology, shifted a bit towards a massively subjective switch in the way he systematically set out to base all Christian truth on the experience and self consciousness of the

individual. Eventually he came out to interpret faith in terms of a human 'feeling of absolute dependence'. Hence his Christology revolved around, or was practically reduced to, Jesus' unique God Consciousness (Collins :213).

The flow so far from the reformation to the dawn of enlightenment tells us that, Christological view was more of Orthodox and Chalcedonian and soteriological. The question of the nature of Christ is still kept within the frames of full humanity and full divinity in one person.

A further development of modern world, which at least in the Western world, has complicated Christological (and more generally, theological), work, has been the emergence of a new philosophic pluralism. Philosophy before the 16th Century was following either Platonic or Aristotelian modes. But from the sixteenth century philosophical thought has split up into different and new systems. From Descartes to Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), and Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), philosophers have stood back from their culture, surveyed centuries of intellectual history, and quite consciously tried to take philosophy and human thought in new directions. Influences from analytical philosophy, existentialism, idealism, neo-Thomism, phenomenology, philosophical hermeneutics, pragmatism, process philosophy, and transcendental philosophy, turn up constantly in twentieth-century Christology (Collins :218-219).

Then after, followed a break with tradition since the enlightenment. Here all the past is questioned as to the point that it has no life in the present. Lessing asked truths of the past if it ever affects truth living out here and now. As the enlightenment had no experience of the past, like the miracles of Jesus and even Jesus himself, neither the miracles of Jesus nor Jesus Himself are necessary (Schillebeeckx :583-584). So if Jesus is at all necessary, a new image emerges which has nothing to say about Jesus of Nazareth himself, but only about our new experiences of Him (Schillebeeckx :586). John Thiel similarly affirms that a post modern theory of development which fully acknowledges the discontinuity of the present from the past and yet finds a way in which the past is drawn up into

anew present day framework (Thiel :56-95).

Carson is a good reference as far as postmodern Christological approaches are concerned. Actually other noted scholars will also be touched for the purpose of this sub topic. Carson in his definitive statement discussed pluralistic tendencies of the postmodern age against the Orthodox Christological outlook and shifted his focus onto empirical pluralism, Cherished pluralism and philosophical pluralism. As of his rich experience of research and teaching on hermeneutics he specially focused on hermeneutical philosophical deviations which are leading to pluralistic tendencies about Christian ideas of God, Christ and the Bible. Carson also adds these are mainly the problem of the western society where extreme civilization and post modernistic culture is dominating (Carson :13). As post modernism is an age with no center (Kevin :18-19), the same way the centrality of the Bible, God and Christ is scrutinized by the traits from postmodern thought.

Carson goes on saying; pluralism in one of its uses refers to the sheer, diversity of race, value system, heritage, language, culture and religion (Carson :13). He impressively stated it saying “the pressures of secularization insured that formal religious observance may happily co-exist with the marginalization of religion” (Carson :15). As much as diversity of pluralism, plurality is the natural outcome. Anyways as communism was a threat to confessional Christianity, secularism is currently a threat today. The same is with new age theosophy which publicly confesses the transformational nature of man into the existence of transcendent nature like God with no need of a mediator or a suffering priest and also a radical interpretation of evil (Carson :41). The same is also with rising biblical illiteracy in which most have little or no religious heritage in their bringing up or (Carson :41), the baby booster generation who always want entertainment than lectures (Carson :45).

According to the new age philosophical pluralism there is no need for faithfulness to Biblical world view. This contributed very much towards the decline of Christianity, Catholicism and the vegetation of modern Hinduism (Monism),

Occultism, Mormonism, and decentralization towards pluralism.

Is pluralism a bad fate or opportunity? If Christianity and Christology are swallowed by pluralistic ideologies against its own creedal tenets it is obviously dangerous. But if Christianity and Christology are able to win racial pluralistic society with its Gospel, then it could be taken as excellent opportunity.

Ancient Christological thought developments were in search of an absolute truth about Christ's nature but postmodernism's slogan is 'there is no such thing as absolute truth'. There is a sharp contrast here. The ancient Christology is objective as much as possible but the postmodern is naturally subjective letting everybody have his/her own belief democratically.

To mention some illustrative thoughts from Carson's well summarized paragraphs;

-Enclusivists say; though Jesus Christ is God's self –definitive act of self-disclosure salvation itself is someway available in other religions(Carson :27) .

- Exclusivists say; any claims in any religion against the confessional acceptable tenets of Christianity are necessarily false (Carson :26).

-Confessional Christianity is against radical religious pluralism which more or less is with no claim of superiority over any other religion. Therefore Christology in postmodern age is almost retreating to the defensive camp than on the offensive side for the much blow from pluralism (Carson :26).

Actually it seems convincing that there can never be absolutism in this world.

This is because the imperfect nature of the created world makes it naturally less absolute. Absolutism or perfection is the sole-prerogative nature of God who is solely absolute. Imperfectly created being cannot own absolute knowledge about the mystery of Christ's nature, incarnation or the resurrection phenomena yet can have the undeniable understanding through either the concrete general revelation or special revelation in contrast to rationalistic approach and must assume these incidents as fact.

What are the Bible's Christological claims against the postmodern pluralistic tendency? What does the Bible say about the uniqueness or the finality of

Christ? How about the question “Who do people say I am”?

Carson tried to pose some fresh interpretations of who the historical Jesus really is. Issues treated here are” what kind of Christology would be necessary and what kind of Christology would have to be introduced into traditional Christology? In his digest of ‘pluralism in search of an acceptable Christology’ applied a harsh criticism to Ziesler and Barbara who made Jesus either a political failure or Lunatic magician, by simply saying their interpretation is bad, and Edwards Jesus has a Jesus who is fundamentally removed from the Bible’s storyline (Carson : 317). Carson was also against Keithword, who believed a three stage development of Biblical history, 1-Local, 2-Great scriptural traditions and 3-New emergent truth. Ward believes that the New Testament revelation is still progressively growing towards an unfolding understanding but currently it is with a mysterious signpost (Carson :319).

Then comes the interest with Carson’s point borrowing Hick’s “Incarnation as Metaphor”. Hick said forgiveness is not necessarily through incarnation or sacrifice, but through a true repentant heart. Hick made Jesus on the same level as others without the incarnation or crucifix issue (Lk 15: 20-24, Matt 7). Carson’s response is from a hermeneutical side. He condemned Hick with irresponsible textual selection. According to Carson Hick’s approach is almost treason (Carson :20).

Both Hick and Carson seem to override the fact of Jesus incarnation substance. Well it is clear that Carson is for the confessional Christianity side, against Hick and his contemporaries. Carson’s treatment seems only a hunt to Hick and his friends taking the incarnation as a given, without treating the real issue of the incarnational substance.

Hick completely removed the incarnation and crucifix issue which actually is treason as Carson said or a blind ignorance so to say. To make Christ as ordinary historical figure is a blind wish.

Anyways those who argue for pluralistic notion, it is a profane to try to grasp God's dimension in confessional creeds which we should also agree on the theory avoiding the means they used to justify their theory. What is meant here is that, it is better to base ones confession on the Bible than on the creeds, yet defendants of pluralism neither base their theory on the Bible nor the creeds but on the philosophy of secularism. In response to them the confessional Christians are saying that authentic Christianity which has resulted from the confessional documents of God's revelation of Himself in History as well as in Jesus Himself is a necessity.

In short Carson's approach is totally against pluralistic tendencies which were even evident in the classic liberal dichotomy between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith (Carson 321).

Knitter for example is the one who votes for a Theo-centric Christology, where he said even Jesus put God at the center than Himself (Knitter :181). Jesus never thought of Himself as divine according to Knitter. Well Jesus' material incarnational substance has no scientific elaboration so far; leave alone the creedal saturations and some trials from the scholarly camp.

Another extreme is from White, who said that God Himself has experienced suffering, death and temptation, to sin and overcome them, as a human individual (Carson :327). If it is possible for the divine to be physical at the same time, what White suggested might have some point.

Both White and Carson are with indistinct theology concerning the incarnation. White simply closed Jesus with mere humanity, at the same time he throws the temptation and suffering to God, where surely he stands is not clear. Carson seems to return back to the Orthodox creeds with a simple defense of them than a logical antidote to the gangrenes, in his defense against other rivals as Pannikkar and Fox.

According to Carson these guys were dissecting the historical Jesus from the

Christ of faith (Carson :328). We may not avoid the ideal dissection for Jesus who was one the Logos only and then the incarnated and the again the God man. Yet the dissection Pannikar and Fox draw is between the Jesus of Christians and the Christ of all (Cosmic Christ) (Pannikar :235-263). This is not theology, rather methodology.

Then Carson concluded saying pluralism leads to find the Jesus element in every religion as the Guru in Sikhism, The Yogi in Hinduism, the Adept, Avata and Shamman. He said it is not what may happen to billions of un-confessional generation or it is not whether the peculiarity of Christ could be presented logically, reasonably, but it is all about the authentic confessional Christianity living against pluralism of any form. This will happen as a result of the authority of the scriptures no matter what experience or culture or numerical push might confront the few confessional Christians scattered in various faces of the world (Carson :227).

Evaluation

The question of what is unique about Christ still demands due attention. First of all we have to define uniqueness. Uniqueness in Christ case goes to His exclusive nature which no one has and also not pluralistically shared in any other religious figure. What then makes Him exclusively unique? His incarnation nature and His resurrection nature are two key items which we never get in any body else but in Christ only. Incarnation naturally reminds us the pre-form before the shift towards the incarnated nature. What is incarnated is the one who existed before. Incarnation was not the beginning stage but a proceeding from the former existence, to a different and new form. The pre-existence precedes the incarnation. The incarnation follows the pre-existence.

The pre-existent uncreated second person of the Trinity has then shifted into limitedness to be in the boundary of the physical world yet without change to His eternal person. Incarnation is a willful move to limitation. Incarnation tales in Hinduism, Buddhism and a little part of Confucianism just refer to a cycle of birth

and re-birth of physical matter in another physical matter from the tangible, intelligible physical world into another intelligible matter within the parameter of the physical world. Still this analysis is an assumption or blind faith with no historical and scientific proof.

But the incarnated Christ is the pre-existent divine person, not simple matter who willfully shifted from the divine into the human, from eternity to time, from spiritual dimension to the physical dimension. None of Christ's contemporaries claimed this formula. His incarnation phenomena were not mythical or mystical tale but a historically proven fact.

Some try to explain the uniqueness in relation with the virgin birth. Virginity is all about Mary than Christ therefore it is better to talk about Him than her, for those who believe salvation is from Him. Some also try to see it from the reproduction process point. Yes Jesus was born without a human father. This looks scientifically insensical. Theologically speaking, we may say that reproduction of human beings is not the product of science but the free gift of nature. Therefore, it is the author of nature who can surely define how reproduction occurs than scientific endeavors. We may not also say for sure that scientific discovery has finished its process of understanding how reproduction really occurs.

Elaborating Christ's uniqueness, McGregor returned back to the Nicene Creed which says "*...and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds*", in search of an answer for this question. He first raised the unique nature of any individual with his/her unique fingerprints and argued why it is difficult to internalize the unique nature of God. He then continued saying Jesus Christ is the only Son of the only God because there is only one God, the God whom the Jews claimed to be the only one. Jesus is not only the Messiah or the Rabbi but also the unique Son of God for there is no other who is both wholly divine and wholly human' (McGregor :28).

Witherington 3rd is also in line with this issue in his revision of several articles written about Jesus. He first picked Borg's collections of essays under the title

‘Jesus at 2000’ (Witherington :253). Borg’s writing with few others has specifically focused on the historical Jesus. Who was Jesus and who do His followers say He is? Borg simply denied the divine quality in Jesus body to the extent of denying the resurrection event, as only a dream or vision. But Borg has affirmed that Jesus has continued to be believed as a resurrected reality while he was not (Witherington :254). Borg is also supplemented by John Domenic Crossan concerning the denial of the resurrection issues. Witherington refused and defended Borg’s Ideas that we should not add more to this corpse.

Yet our response goes to the other extreme side of the horizon which is the denial of the Historical claims at the expense of His divinity. The human limitedness of Jesus’ incarnation is emphatically stressed here.

Let’s do more comparison of Christological discussions on extreme positions. Paul D. Molnar in his synthesis of contemporary understandings of incarnation and resurrection, made a comparison of the key theologians of the 20th C. Barth, Karl Rahner and Torrance. Molnar’s treatment is lining Barth and Torrance together and Rahner on the other side (Molnar :125).

According to Molnar, Barth’s incarnation theology is said to be ‘the act of becoming flesh-sinful flesh, on the part of God’s eternal word, where the word did not cease to be God. This occurrence was never forced by any force outside either the fall or Law or the Trinity but a free act of God’s love. No third reality was emerged in the incarnation (union) for this would imply the losing of both former realities, Divine and Human (Molnar :3). Barth also asserted that incarnation concluded by the resurrection gives meaning to the faith of the disciples.

Tomas F Torrance with a similar concept said, incarnation means the entry of God Himself into the sphere of space and time without ceasing to be God. He said Jesus *homoousion* with the father in his divinity and with us in our humanity. (Torrance :52-53).

In contrast to the above stands, Karl Rahner followed a symbolic analysis where he said 'the symbol gets reality in the wholly other nature'; he also believed that Christology gets conclusion in the incarnation rather than the resurrection. He believed that Jesus rose from the dead but rose into the beliefs of the disciples (Molnar :45).

Pressure of Post modernism

Another threat which needs attention is the process of defending Christology against pluralism in a blow coming from post-modernism. Post modernism is defined as a synthesis of situations after the modern is out of date. It could also be translated as "beyond the now". A difficulty here is that the current change is like fast running water in the river line where you couldn't even make a distinction of nature. Wouldn't this be true even in the understanding of the nature of Christian doctrine? Post-modernism is known for its decentralized character ever-changing quickly (Kevin :6).

Post- modernisms exceptional element is the quest for truth. What is truth? How objective is our experience of what we call truth, concerning Christ in this case? Kevin said philosophers have often struggled with the idea of what is true and of how we see the world. Sanders under his title "Unitarianism" treated the nature of heresy saying they are as old as human unbelief and as ancient as man. What seems new, he said, is only new to the age listening to them (Sanders :54). Idealists see or interpret reality as the product of mind. "I think therefore I am" as the finest modern philosopher Descartes said (1665- 1753), any tangible existence gets its reality first in our thinking. See a chair in a room. The chair gets its existence as long as we can see it in the room. If we leave the room it might vanish (Sanders : 33). Empiricists against the idealists sought to trust only what could be discerned through the five senses, only that which could be measured and observed.

Still these philosophies look to stand in sharp contrast with Christian doctrines for 'you will have what you believe to have', than what you can see and sense to

have. Isn't Christ real, though we cannot sense Him through our five senses? Yet still God decreed to put Christ in our likeness in the incarnation process where God made Himself very available to our five senses as the testimony of the Apostle John who was an eye witness (1st John 1:1).

Emmanuel Kant stood in between the idealists and the empiricists in his own coined terms the 'noumena' – the world of reality as it is, the 'phenomena'- the world of appearances, and the 'sense perception'-our angel or reality (Sanders :35). Kant's explanation is the middle-way or the synthesis between both extremes.

Though there could be no clear distinctive concrete wall between *noumena* and *phenomena*, we may put ourselves as the wall in between, in which this wall is neither real nor unreal. This very idea comes from a diluted principle, where our explanation of anything- including our faith upon Christ, could neither be real or unreal as far as measuring it through our five senses or perceptions.

This is because we all are created imperfect originally, for perfection always goes to God and we all partake the fallen nature. This makes our perception neither real nor unreal till the time we may be swallowed by the perfect one or in His perfection. Currently any explanation of a reality including ourselves is disguised and partial. But, when the fullness of time comes, the perfect will totally get control of the imperfect. Then the perfect atmosphere will be a tool to interpret the mysterious reality and we will know that we ourselves are known (1Cor 12:13). Therefore perfect knowledge is the consciousness of 'self' in the perfect and personal reality, which is God Himself.

Unitarianism started through a rationalistic approach to the person of Christ. It was Faustus Socinias , born in Sienna in the 16th c. who adopted a Unitarian thought. Shortly, this man started by denying the eternal existence of Christ. His reasoning is given to us by Sanders as follows: "*As to Christ; the assertion the uni-personality of God necessarily has its corollary, a denial of the deity of Christ, who is reduced to the level of the best of men (Sanders :54).*"

This is where we should sharply dissect Christology and Christian tenets of faith from such philosophy. The creating power of God is turned to make Him somewhat emanating or secreting from something and is still trapped in something as the mind of Humanity. Therefore according to unity thinkers deity is trapped in human mind that prosperous thinking helps humanity to explore the divine. God is impersonal principle for the adherents of 'unity'.

Yet, modern conservative and Biblical Theology puts strong emphasis upon the uniqueness and the personality of God who is transcendent as well as immanent where we could apply this to the risen Christ. A direct quote of the 'Unity' about who Christ is goes like;

Christ "the Bible says that 'God so loved the world that He gave His only son,' but the Bible does not here refer to Jesus of Nazareth, the outer man; it refers to Christ, the spiritual identity of Jesus, whom He acknowledged in all His ways, and brought forth into His outer; until even the flesh of his body was lifted up, purified, spiritualized and redeemed---. And we are to follow Him for in each of us is the Christ, the only begotten Son (Sanders :49).

Dissecting Jesus from Christ is a docetic influence though there is a possibility of talking about the incarnation nature of Christ which was not part of the Logos in its pre- existent condition. Yet the incarnation process has not dealt away with the eternally living Christ. The material nature of Christ employed change during the incarnation for there was a shift from the divine to the human, but the qualifying authoritative personality which is His positional deity was never robbed of Him or changed when He entered Humanity. What then has happened to Christ when He was born as Emmanuel?

-The timeless entered into time.

-The infinite willingly happened to be finite.

-The divine qualities were set off for the purpose of applying suffering and sharing human trauma.

-The Logos became flesh, not the Logos added flesh (John 1:1; 1:14; Mark 15:35-38; Phil 2:4-9; 1st John 5:6; 1st John 4:2; 2nd John 7).

Chapter Four

EOTC and EEC Christological Literatures and Traditions

Introduction

This Chapter mainly focuses on the EOTC and EEC literatures and traditions with scholarly works, measured analytically, against objective outlooks from outside, also meanings from the New Testament and the thoughts of Orthodoxy. The goal here is to find out things held commonly within the doctrines and traditions of both denominations with also the differences, on the way evaluating the commonality with the difference. At the end, the whole analysis hopefully leads us to find out whether unity is possible or not.

Basic questions in view here are; are the EOTC adherents really our brothers and sisters in Christ? Are we really heirs together of the hope of glory? Or should we still be evangelizing them? Is there really a need to seek for a uniting initiative?

EOTC and EEC theological Review

The Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewhado* Church hereafter referred as (EOTC) and the Ethiopian Evangelical Churches, hereafter referred as (EEC) are the two major Christian denominations so to say, which are designated as representatives of Christianity in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Catholic Church is also part of the Christian circle in Ethiopia but since the growth of the Catholics in Ethiopia is limited to one percent only, it is no more influential and therefore not a case for our study.

Actually Evangelicals are not to be taken as one denomination if we are trying to see the issue as to what constitutes a denomination. But as long as they are now having a consortium under the auspices of the Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia (ECFE), we will try to treat them together as one, for the purpose of

this study.

On the other end, we also have to agree that the sects within the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewhado* Church are significant. The sects actually don't consider themselves as sects, but as part of the big umbrella that we treat the EOTC as one denomination with all its sects.

Will there be a possibility of unity confessing one faith? What kind of unity are we aiming at? What do the EOTC-EEC commonly confess still staying in their respective denominational boundary?

To start with, we may say these denominations have a lot confessional elements in common. One example is that they have something to share from all the creeds before Chalcedon (451), which may be capitalized towards the big goal of unity ahead?

Number one step is identifying the common elements which both hold consciously or unconsciously within their respective circles. After identifying what the two entities have in common, we will then pass to the things which might be set apart for dialogue, then after to the things which might be kept at a distance for more examination on each side of the spectrum.

What we may do here is that, we first trace to the givens in both denominations. These are "God; Jesus; the Bible; Church and Salvation", where both believe as givens. Some issues which may be set aside for dialogue are "the extra biblical sources in the EOTC; the role of Angels and Saints including Virgin Mary within the whole soteriological and ecclesiastical process etc... The rest is the traditional and experiential mythology most possibly vegetated after destruction done to the EOTC churches, traditions and textual heritages during Yodit Gudith(a zealous female Jew-of the Ethioian Felasha/diaspora Jews) in 9th C, also under the initiation of king *Zera Ya'ikqob* (1426-1460), which might be temporarily kept at a distance (*Deqiqe Estifanos "Behig Amack"/Sons of the Estefanites "Under God's Jury"* :26), additionally heretic and cultic images imported during King Suzenios

and his son King Facil in 15th Century (Aleqa Kidanewold, 1986 :83).

Doctrines Held in Common

First, there is a sort of spiritual unity which both churches rationally accord. That is; Christ's church is "one holy catholic (universal) apostolic church in its spiritual sense". The term 'Catholic' is not necessarily referring to the denominational Vatican Catholics but referring to the church universal based on Eph 4:1-7.

Second, trials of ecumenism may be reinforced for mutual recognition and fellowship. There are positive initiations from both sides indicating a need for fellowship and mutual recognition. A research document by revered *Nibure Id Elias Abreha*, former secretary for the EOTC patriarch office, presented in the presence of both patriarchs of the EOTC and ECC, key leaders from all the three denominations mentioned above, proposed fellowship of the three Christian denominations in Ethiopia (Orthodox, Catholic, Evangelicals), in a five years plan and complete unity in the long term plan. This seems a little ambitious but the initiation is worth considering. We will come back to the detail analysis of this proposal later in this chapter.

Third, common purposes like development and relief may be embraced in one consular organizational alliance, still remaining in one's identity. This research is not aiming at a total assimilation of one by the other. Practical work out strategies, that is identifying areas where both entities may see the possibility of working together may be one of the proposals of this research and be presented as an initial discussion item in a platform where all leaders are represented. Detail doctrinal elements will not be part of the discussion agenda at this stage. Both denominations will be allowed to retain spiritual quality within their identity in their mother denominations. Fostering unity and cooperation against competition is the goal of this research.

Having said this we applaud the initiation by the EOTC done on April 8th 2008, in a research paper presented by *Nibure ID Elias Abraha*, in the presence of His

Excellency, the late patriarch- *Bitsue Wo-kidus abune Pawlos, Patriarch head of Arch Bishops Ze-Ethiopia, Arch Bishop Ze Axum, Wo echege Axum, Ze menbere Teklehaimanot* , late president of the World Council of Churches(WCC); and his Excellency *Aba Birhaneyesus*, Patriarch of the Catholic Church in Ethiopia; also the presence of the higher executives of the Evangelical Church's Fellowship of Ethiopia (ECFE), where I was also an eye witness as a board secretary for the ECFE and the initiatory role to unity from the EOTC side.

We also show our appreciation to the positive response from the Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia (ECFE), allowing the presentations again in its own general assembly the same year, which I was still an eyewitness. That presentation was summarized in ten position statements which are summarized later in this chapter.

The argument here is the EOTC and EEC has a lot in common which might be picked as a building block for unity than differences. The things which they share in common will be outlined, hereafter.

Common Monotheistic Views

Number one common bond is that the EOTC and EEC share monotheism with the same God whom both denominations believe that this God rules over the whole cosmos. Both denominations name this God as "*Egzi-ab-her*" meaning 'a Father God who governs over all nations' (Gorgorios-Abba 1999:86). There is no variation in the world of meaning and the language games naming this God.

Even though they apply worship staying in their own boundaries, both denominations attribute worship to "*Egzi-ab-her*". Sharing one God commonly, attributing worship to him and only him (*Haimanote Abew/Relegion of the Fathers* 1995 :1).

The book "*Haimanote Abew* is an official EOTC commentary document with a teaching that relegion has to be based on the teaching of the Apostles and the Prophets of the Old and New Testaments. So religion according to this document

is what the Lord has thought in the History of the Gospels, what the apostles have received and transferred to the next religious fathers, decisions of the three councils (Nicaea, Constantinian, Ephesian excluding the Chalcedonian, but all teachings from Cyril of Alexandria and fathers who agree with him). What sets them apart is that the Evangelicals add the Chalcedonian decision. In addition to this practices of meditations and methods of worship sets them apart. However, these are simply technicalities.

For example, EOTC believers might be expected to come to the temple for worship. All must stay within the limits of the outer court all through their devotions either personally or collectively. The temple has two parts as holy and holy of holies, where God is believed present inside with his angels, as you might also see pictures of angels all over the inside walls of the temple building. If one is ready to stay inside the temple during devotionals and reading of the scriptures, he/she is expected to take off his/her shoe, as the place is believed to be inhabited by living angelic spirits with God at the center. This all is done out of reverence to the presence of “*Egzi-ab-her*” with his holy angels.

With this the priest who is responsible for prayer and reading of the scriptures with a little bit of mediation to the repentant sinners, has the right to access all through the center of the holy of holies, which is not permitted for the ordinary worshippers. Believers may stay there in deep devotion, many times with much care and trembling as the angel of God might smite and do harm or kill those who don't observe due reverence for “*Egzi-ab-her*”. That is why it is better for one to stay in the outer court for meditation, hearing of the scripture reading, and personal prayer and devotion. This is all motivated by fear of “*Egzi-ab-her*” and reverence to him.

Is there anything wrong here? We may evaluate it from the theological and practical implications aspect. Theologically speaking, observing fear and reverence to “*Egzi-ab-her*” is absolutely right, therefore ‘all’, be them from EOTC or EEC should strictly follow such attitude and apply it during their worship and all

through their daily living activities.

Another possible theological aspect here is designating places or boundaries within the temple system. It is believed that “*Egzi-ab-her*” is mainly confined within the holy of holies, the rest space like the Holy and the outer court is left for the angels to inhabit and for the worshippers to stay in. This destination may help worshippers making them alert of the glory of “*Egzi-ab-her*” and care their steps while they approach the temple court. On the other hand, this may give false impressions for worshippers as if God is confined only to the center.

A restriction of spaces within the temple court is fine as far as one understands that God is “a spirit” therefore unrestricted in boundaries, but boundaries only help alerting one to watch his/her attitudes and all steps during God-man worship encounter. If this leads the mass to a latent result making them think that “*Egzi-ab-her*” is confined within the limits of the temple center only, therefore makes one lose his/her fear and due reverence to God anywhere outside that center, this should be redirected through teaching.

Practically speaking, whatever the theological meaning behind may be implied, the popular view seems to be influenced by the false impressions of confining “*Egzi-ab-her*” to the limits of the temple. So, millions of EOTC adherents live and practice whatever they feel is good, as far as they are distanced from the temple area. When they feel guilty of their acts they come to the temple area and apply some ritual, mostly aided by the priests, but during fasting and prayer times within the year or even few times only during their lifetime. May be this is an indicator to the need of a disorientation of the wrong orientation towards right worship orientation.

When we come to the evaluation of the practice of worship among the Evangelicals, as the Ethiopian experience in a majority case shows, there surely is a center for worship, where Evangelical believers come together for a corporate worship, apart from some Lutheran congregations, the design of the worship center is firstly undivided as outer, holy, holy of holies etc... . Secondly,

the space is freely accessed by anyone worshipper as the community among evangelicals is believed to be a community of priests or priesthood of believers.

Theological truth here is that all are priests not some. All have free access to God with no mediator necessarily. The temple form is another extreme of the way it is set among the EOTC, as “*Egzi-ab-her*” is believed to be “a spirit” and is everywhere, as he is also among fellow worshippers and in the lives of individuals as well.

Practically speaking, this form seems to lead the mass among the evangelicals to lose their reverence and fear to “*Egzi-ab-her*” while they are in corporate worship at the central place of worship. We don’t see the quality of fear and reverence visible among the EOTC, as far as the worship practice of the Evangelicals is concerned.

Therefore sharing the same God who deserves worship, theological and practical concepts seem to have a little bit difference. But the theological difference is not unbridgeable as the EOTC confessional stance in actuality understands that God is everywhere and God is also a “Spirit”. This is still something which both denominations can affirm together.

On the other hand due reverence to the presence of God which is highly valued and practiced by the EOTC believers should also be taken by the EEC believers as a theological truth to be lived out. This shows there is still a possibility of synthesizing the practice of worship so as the adoring of ‘one God’ will be done similarly within both denominations.

Mediations

Within the discussion of the worship of one God, the mediational communication is differently understood in both denominations. The EOTC believes that Mary has mothered God (Akeqa Kidanewold 1986 :84). The flesh of Christ according to the EOTC is the flesh of Mary. This flesh has been divinated but not the flesh of Mary. Therefore the EOTC theology (Lk 1:27-28), makes Mary unique than

any other creature in that she is chosen to be a mother of God (Sisay Wogayehu July 2005 :23).

Thus far the EEC has no significant difference with the theology of the EOTC as far as Mary is concerned. The EEC in Ethiopia, though with no enough rationality, rejects that Mary has mothered God. As far as this research is concerned, core difference lies in the '*theotokos*' formula and in the 'soteriological' formula of both denominations.

Soteriological differences are related with Saintology and Mariology: the EOTC traditionally believes that a person accesses God through his/her allegiance to saints and his/her deeds, in addition to his faith in Christ. Whereas, the EEC officially rejects any allegiance to saints of whatsoever and also affirms that salvation is by faith alone, like the Lutheran formula of '*Sola fieda*'. This is the attempt of this research where we need to find a bond point.

While saints and angels including Virgin Mary are believed to have roles of channeling worship and prayers to the 'one God', among the EOTC believers, EEC believers all in all avoid the saints and angelic beings channeling. The EOTC concept of including Virgin Mary, saints and angels for mediations is very much rooted in the reverence aspect, as God is thought to be high and remote, access should always be through lesser beings. According to EOTC tradition, in addition on mediatory roles, a mediator must be one who is free of any criminal activities (Rom 3:11), and he/she must be one who is free of debts of any kind, of his own or from his/her parents so that he/she may be considered as competent guarantor (Chief Dereje&Deqemezmur Beza 2008 :23-33).

Referring to the above criteria's the EOTC tradition gives the answer for who can be a mediator; following this line, Saint Mary could be competent, "Holy Angels" could be competent; Saints who have been heroes in the History of Christ's church anywhere, anytime, could be competent; and of course Christ could be competent.

Surprisingly, these teachings are not necessarily natural to all EOTC adherents. The mass after heretic teachers within the EOTC was little by little swallowed by, syncretistic tendency to the point that the church seems to silence its standard doctrinal frame. Yet the standard doctrines never echo these syncretistic tendencies.

The book “*Heretics inside the temple*”, written by an EOTC priest, argues against mediatory teachings saying, most of the above except Christ could not be competent for mediatory roles. The right reason for this according to the book is that; firstly all are created except Christ. Secondly, all cannot be everywhere at the same time, except the risen Christ. Third, Angels act only and only if they are sent by God not by men. Fourth, mediatory roles of Saints are developed in the traditions of the EOTC, following a wrong interpretation of Matthew 10:40-42 and Luke 16:18-31. Fifth attribution of mediatory role to Virgin Mary has developed out of a wrong interpretation of John 2:3 (Rev Dereje & Deqemezmur Beza 2008 :23-33).

The reverence element on the EOTC side can still be appreciated but this concept doesn't seem to have commonness with the theology and practice about the mediatory process among the EEC. Obviously the EEC shares the reformed theology of free access or priesthood of all believers towards God only through one mediator-Jesus.

The EEC theology of free access to God is rooted in the understanding that Christ has come down to the level of man so as the seemingly high and remote God may be viewed as immanently close as ever before. As this idea is also tasty to the EOTC, there we see chance to bridge through a dialogue on the reason of Jesus' incarnation and the role of Jesus as a mediator. Referring to the criteria's suggested by the EOTC authority above, we may still hope uniting thought in mediatory roles of Christ, excluding Saints and Mary. The next shared ground is Jesus.

A “Jesus” Shared in Common

Christological Conceptions Within The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhado Church(EOTC).

Christological debates have been all through the history of the church. Different exegetes responded differently towards the issue of Christology. Adrian Hastings in his book “A World History of Christianity” said; the theological struggle from Nicaea 325 to the council of Chalcedon in 451 remains decisive for the evolution of both doctrine and the geographical shape of Christianity (Hastings 1999 :47) Debates between Nestorius and/ or Eutyches or Cyril or one from Chalcedonic or Monophysite or Miaphysite were very much intertwined in their own historical milieu and were reactions to the queries of their own settings. The East- West rift (1054 A.D.) for example is yet unresolved problem in the Continuum. The rift is also more than east-west, because it has religiously dissected countless local African ethnic villages. Ethiopia is one of these localities affected by such a rift, and this rift presents the opportunity to re-examine the Christological stance of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhado Church (EOTC).

Background Analysis

Investigations studied so far focused on the unity of the full humanity and the full divinity in Christ. As is usually presented in church history it was Nestorius, a major representative of the Antiochene School of theology, who became patriarch of Constantinople in 428, failed to endorse the term ‘Theotokos’ and this led him being openly charged with heresy, which somewhat looked to be pushed to the idea of two natures and two persons by making a distinction between the ‘Son of God’ and ‘the Son of Mary’. He also denied that Mary is Theotokos (Mother of God) (Lane 1984 :34).

Nestorius' was successfully refuted by St. Cyril of Alexandria (sometime before +444) as heretic, when the latter argued that the Son of God who had been born of God in eternity was born of St. Mary in the fullness of time. Cyril's position was

clearly presented in his famous formula: one incarnate nature of God the Word. Going to the extreme of St. Cyril's Christology, Eutyches thought of the presence of only one nature in Christ; this led to the conclusion that the humanity of Christ was absorbed in His divinity.

With the intention of refuting Nestorianism and Eutychianism, the council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451) proposed a formula, highlighting that there are two natures in the one hypostasis of the Word.

The Chalcedonian Churches accepted the formula but for the oriental Orthodox Churches (Samuel 1977 :247), the definition of Chalcedon appeared to be contradictory to the Cyrillian formula. As the *miaphysis* in the formula indicates, the hypostatic and perfect union of the divinity and humanity in Christ, the Chalcedonian phrase: "in two natures" does not sound harmonious with Cyril's formula. According to Samuel, "the 'in two natures' could mean only that God the Son and the man Jesus were united in the realm of *prosopon*." (Harnack Vol 4-5, 1976 :226 and :228). Thus after A.D. 451 a schism occurred between the Chalcedonians and Oriental Orthodox Churches (non-Chalcedonians).

The Chalcedonies and non-Chalcedonies approach

The Chalcedonies and the non-Chalcedonies put emphasis on different specific issues leading to unfortunate mislabeling and misunderstandings. The former underlined the distinctness of the divinity and humanity in Christ, so that they were considered by the non-Chalcedonies as Nestorians . Since the non-Chalcedonies highlight the union of the natures in Christ, the chalcedonies labeled them as 'monophysites' and described them as if they agreed with Eutyches indicating that one of the two natures was absorbed by the other. The Coptic Church strongly rejected the 'in two natures' formula of Chalcedon, and could be described as 'Monophysite'.

Modern Christological dialogues have realized that the reason that separated the churches in the fifth century were more terminological and political than

theological. It is historically true that after the death of Constantine and with Athanasius, who was a strong back up for the Nicaean theology, and who begun to be conciliatory in his old age, the upholders of Nicaea and the easterners came together, helped particularly by basil to recognize that it had been terminology, not belief, that divided them (Hastings :49).

Justin I (518-527 A.D.), after he came to the throne of the eastern empire in 527 undertook an ambitious plan of military re-conquest beginning in North Africa and moving on to Italy and finally even to Spain. According to Hastings, linked to Justin's military campaigns was his overriding ambition to reunify the church, by either reconciling or abandoning the powerful Monophysite movement which had its base in the eastern territories and by restoring a friendly understanding with Rome, under the theological fight between extreme Monophysite theologians like Sergios the grammarian and Julian of Halicarnassus, who suggested that the body of Christ remained incorruptible even before the resurrection and the moderate Monophysite architects like Severos, who taught that there is one divine nature in Christ, but that he also possessed genuinely human qualities (Hastings :70).

Hastings concludes his evaluation of them saying; the difference between this doctrine and that of the chalcedonies rests primarily on their various understandings of the union of the two natures of Christ in the incarnation (Hastings :70-71). Justinian attempts of reconciliation anyways remained unsuccessful as tensions underlying were in no way completely resolved.

As we bring this to the context of EOTC and EEC, theological explanation of the nature of Christ among the EOTC and EEC is different. The EOTC mostly lines up with the Eastern thought as we have seen it in chapter one, therefore it is mostly non-chalcedonies. I said 'mostly' because EOTC Christology is more Cyrillian than true monophesite. As we have seen it in chapter one, the nature of Christianity in Ethiopia is different from the nature of western Christianity in Christological and soteriological details.

It is true that influences of the East-West Schism during and after the time of Constantine, with the immense influence of the nine saints described in chapter one, and the churches' historical alienation from the western Christianity for the last 1400 plus years, gave the EOTC a different picture from Christianity in the west (Chief reverend Dereje Haile and Dekmezmur Beza, *Mekdes Yegebu Menafiqan/Heretics inside the Temple* 2008 :1-2).

Christological stance of the EOTC is strictly against Arianism (Gorgerins/Abba 1998,:87-88, 92), against Euthychianism, but more of Cyrilian and a bit sympathetic to chalcedonies. Gorgorios referred to church history and said that, as Arius has believed in the saving power of Jesus but denied Christ's eternal deity, it is illogical to believe in his saving power and deny his eternal deity as these notions are extremely contradictory issues. Gorgorios also argued saying "how can a created being be able to save created beings (Gorgorios :110). As a result it may be fair to say that the EOTC bases its doctrinal stance of Christology on the Nicene 325 A D, against Arius, and the Constantinopolitan, against Macedonian, and the Ephesian (331 A D), councils. The EOTC recognizes Cyril as the formative master mind of the council of Ephesus but rejects the decision of Chalcedon (451).

In EOTC's incarnational analysis, the flesh and the divine word- the Logos, are perfectly united without confusion, retaining their identity, like the unity between the Soul and Body, in humanity under one person. This process is mandatory in the incarnational analysis of the EOTC, in order for the salvation need might be met, as God surely became man during the incarnation.

"Unity" according to the EOTC never implies the two former entities lost their former natures (*Te'aqibo* meaning no loss of the former identities in the perfect unity) (Kidanewold 1986 :84) . It rather tells that the two have been united not to separate, not to remain two, but to be one, retaining their former individual qualities (*Heretics inside...*2008 :127). EOTC's Christological analysis also underlines that, in order for the needed perfect unity to be effectual, there needs

for some elements to be eliminated. For example, sinful nature is surely a scandal for the unity, therefore should be eliminated. The logic here is that the 'Son of God' cannot be a savior at the same time hold sinful nature from the human part. This must be done away for soteriological purposes, so as the innocent lamb may be sacrificed as a ransom to remove the sin of humanity (Dereje and Deqemezmur...:127). Therefore incarnational analysis of "perfect Unity/*Tewhado*" is the central key to understand EOTC Christology.

The Chalcedonies Creed (451 A D), sees a united duality without separation, retaining their individual natures, getting united through a process of the conquering role of the person of Word/Logos, with no confusion or mix and with no losing of the former qualities (Dereje and Deqemezmur...:128) .

But just before Chalcedon, Cyril has articulated the "union", a little bit differently from Chalcedon, Saying; "two natures", coordinated to leave back duality and/or twinity and became "Unity" towards one, but not to remain two. Against Euthyches, the unity is without confusion or mixture but just like the unity of the Soul and Body under one person in a Human being united not to be two, not to separate anymore, not to be seen divided (*Haimanote Abew Quaddamt* par Kidanewold Kifle 1986 :63).

Christological Understandings in EOTC in the Then and Now

The early 5th century Monophysites, having been chased away at the counsel of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., faced persecution and found refuge in Ethiopia. It is also reported as the East-West or Catholic-Orthodox Or Anthioch-Alexanderia Or Rome-Bazentine divorce (Sebhat Le' ab Meseret 1996 :19). The migrants were from Egypt and Syria.

Nine monks out of these migrants were aggressively involved in multiple missionary activities that they were accorded the title as '*teseatu qedusan*' meaning 'the nine saints'. Establishing monasteries, applying translations into the then Ethiopic language and developing the liturgy was their main duty with the

propagation of the monophysitic theology which they were abandoned by their own people (Metzger, 1997 :221).

The question here is, is the EOTC Monophysitic now or what? Its current status and nature is accounted a little bit differently than what we see from the above discussion. For example a paper submitted to a consultation 'between the theologians of Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches' held at the university of Aarhus, Denmark in August 1964, the Very Rev 'Like Siltanat Habtemariam Workneh' *Habtemariam :1994), the then Dean of Ethiopian Holy Trinity Cathedral, said something not exactly like but not exactly monophysitic (____, Habtemariam 1994).

Basic deference as far as our survey is concerned here is that the Monophysite emphasizes a nature fully swallowed up (*Meleqot Sewinetin Wattew*) by another nature to bring one out of the two. Whereas, Miaphysite terming distinctly points two natures perfectly united without change of their basic natures, without confusion of whatever elements from each against the thought of a mixture but a perfect unity of the two to bring one. From the above analysis it seems clear that the official Christological position of the EOTC currently should be termed as Miaphysite rather than Monophysite.

A reinterpretation of Likeseltanat Habtemariam Workneh's research is more or less like: after the union numerical use of 'two' for one person is mistaken analogy or irrational. But it is logical to address 'Him' as one rather than two. In the Incarnation process when one speaks of the flesh, he/she duly speaks of the divine, and the vice versa. Co-equality and con-substantiality uncompromised, with the two natures perfectly united, and at the same time preserved their properties. To quote him directly;

Incarnation is a divine mystery. The two natures of Godhead and manhood are perfectly united and Christ is thus one person and one nature from two natures. Christ is one incarnate nature of God the Word. After the union it is impossible to speak of Christ as being in two natures. By the union of the nature in the Incarnation the two natures became one nature, the natures being united without separation, without confusion, and without change. Neither of the two natures was assimilated by the other, the properties of the Devine Word was assimilated by the flesh and those of the flesh to the Divine Word.

*The Logos revealed Himself in our flesh and became man like us. He did all things that man does with the exception of sin (John 8:46). And at the same time was truly God. He is a God-man. He is co-equal and consubstantial with the father in his Godhead. He is perfectly united with us in the union being from two modes of life into one. The union of the Word with the flesh took place in the womb of the Virgin Mary. St John says: "the Word was made flesh..." In the same way we can say that also the flesh was made divine. The attributes of the flesh can be given to the Divine word and vice-versa. However the properties of each nature are preserved without change after the union. Therefore, we believe that Christ is one person and one nature, and thus is both divine and human. We speak of one because of the union. We hold "Miaphysis", composite nature, one united nature. Again, the Lord Jesus Christ is perfect man and perfect God. The word "perfect" closes the door to all quibble and prevarication. We accept both unity and duality in Christ who in acting performed as one. Christ, in whom humanity and divinity were united in one person and one nature, was crucified on the cross. The divine word without being united with the flesh cannot be crucified and subjected to death. If, on the other hand, only the human body was crucified, He could not save the world (*Habtemariam :1994).*

As the EOTC Christology affirms both unity and duality in Christ, but also says "who in acting performed as one", we don't see much difference here as compared to the chalcedonies confession which said "two natures in one person".

The EOTC Christological tradition never loses rationality but when it comes to scriptural facts there remains unresolved questions. For Example, what was the magnitude of the divine property within the flesh after the union done in the womb of Mary? How much was the divine heat in the human Jesus, during his earthy mission? If it is just equality and consubstantiality, how about texts like, Mark 15:39 and Philippians 2:4-7? EOTC confession said, "Perfect union of the two natures yet never lost their original properties in the union". Does this mean the flesh is totally flesh with no change and the divine just divine with no change? If so what is then the incarnation? Abune Meqarios said, the fleshly heat was totally subsumed by perfect unity and the divine glory was totally subsumed to the flesh because of the perfect unity (Meqarios; *Mengede Semay/Heavens way* :46).

On the same line, Abba Hailemariam Melese Ayenew, in his Doctoral Dissertation presented at the University of South Africa (Hailemariam 2009 :21), refined the official Christological doctrine of the EOTC in his way of designation, saying ontological explanation of the EOTC Christology is based on the

theological emphasis of Cyril of Alexandria, who so said Christ is one incarnate nature of God the Word, at the same time against Nestorian interpretation, who so distinguished the two natures, and even more against Eutyches explanation, who made the two natures absorbed in just one during the incarnation union. According to Abba Hailemariam, Monophysitism is a labeling of the Dyophysitists to line up EOTC's position with Eutyches. However, EOTC's Christological position rather bases itself in the historical understanding of Cyril of Alexandria, which should be termed as one united nature, *mia-physis*" in preservation of the properties of the natures rather than Monophysitism.

Another scholar of the EOTC church has also released a book on the same title (Mebratu Kiros Gebru :2010), and has said EOTC's Christology should be termed as *miaphysite* christology, which highlights the one-united (Tewahedo) nature of the Word of God incarnate. Besides, the book proves the orthodoxy of Ethiopian Christology, demonstrating how it is based on the Christology of St. Cyril of Alexandria (+ A.D. 444). In all this discussions the church retains the *Theotokos* issue which may be the point of departure from EEC Christological understanding.

If we try to analyze what we've seen so far, it seems that EOTC's proposal only borrows terminology from Euthichianism-*monophysis*, in that it stressed one nature against what *diaphysites* might believe, as Christ having two natures. However, it is still away from *monophysitism* in that it stressed the preservation of the two natures without change after the union, and this is close to *diaphysis* theology, which underscores one perfectly united nature and one person from two and is both divine and human.

From the above analysis it is clear that the official Christological position of the EOTC should be termed as *Miaphysite* rather than *Monophysite*. Basic deference as far as our survey is concerned here is that the *Monophysite* emphasizes a nature fully swallowed up by another nature to bring one out of the two. Whereas *Miaphysite* terming distinctly points to two natures perfectly united to bring forth

one nature, without change of their basic natures, without confusion of whatever elements from each, against the thought of a mixture but a perfect unity of the two to bring one against the duality in unity of Chalcedon.

The Theotokos as far as the Ethiopian Orthodox Church literatures explain says;

The Divine nature (God the Word) was united with the human nature which He took of the Virgin Mary by the action of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit purified and sanctified the Virgin's womb so that the Child to whom she gave birth would inherit nothing of the original sin; the flesh formed of her blood was united with the Only-Begotten Son. This unity took place from the first moment of the Holy Pregnancy in the Virgin's womb. As a result of the unity of both natures-the Divine and the human-inside the Virgin's womb, one nature was formed out of both: "The One Nature of God the Incarnate Logos" as St. Cyril called it (Bitsue Wo Qidus Abune Meqarios-;1993 :22).

Questions still needed to be addressed are like: Does the Holy Spirit need to purify the blood and flesh, for just purifying purpose? This line obviously leads to the sin inheritance issue. According to the above analysis Christ never inherited original sin. The question is who else has inherited sin? If all inherited sin, can we say Christ is fully human? Is there really a sin to be inherited? If so what would be the fate of new born and under aged children? Some say that if others believe about them and apply Eucharistic duties they will be saved. Others say no but faith is a natural gift that children are spared. Still others say there is no chance for a child dying before an age he/she believes.

All options above lead to irrational and arbitrary conclusions. It might be better to see it differently. None of us have inherited sin but the fallen or the weak nature with its will power. The same is true for Christ. No sin inherited but He has inherited the weak fallen nature which could be exposed to any kind human weakness and temptations. That's how we say he shared our very nature (Phil Ch 2:5-11). However, Christ never yielded to temptations or sin (Heb 5:6).

Therefore a sin which should be counted sin is the one (all humanity including children of any age) done as a result of ones own actions. All children, incapable of any actions, are at the age of innocence like Adam before the fall, therefore are automatic holders of eternal life if they die before consciousness to any sin. These questions are discussed as reinforcement to the Christological-

soteriological unity.

Therefore, we may say the EOTC Christological formula follows Cyril than Chalcedon. “Unity/ *Tewhado*” in the EOTC teaching, means that the divine took the nature of humanity owning it and the human also took the divine nature (only in the case of Christ), leaving back its former duality, towards oneness(not necessarily employing one nature, as the natures are united but not assimilated). This incarnational explanation of the EOTC, is called Mia-Physis, not Monophysis (Heretics inside...:128).

This analysis, according to the EOTC, has Biblical bases. It is true that God is eternally God not to be man and also man is created man not to be God. But, the EOTC elaboration says, against the natural law, Isaiah 9:6 affirms that, a child is born with a mighty name. This prophesy seems against the natural law of “man be man: God be God”, and also seemingly contradictory as a “sovereign God” and “a child” are seen woven together in the text.

The EOTC says this seeming contradiction or paradox gets resolved only and only in the EOTC “Unity/ *Tewhado*”, explanation , where the Christology of Unity gives chance for God to become man(Jn 1 :14), and for man to become God (only in the person of Christ) (Isa 7:14). This is the ancient and confessional Orthodox incarnational analysis, underlying that the Son of God, while getting united with man, during the incarnation, twin-ness has disappeared and the son became “one Son”, not “two Sons”, “one person” not “two persons”. This will be true only and only through the mystery of “Unity/ *Tewhado*” (See Heretics inside the Temple :135).

EOTC never ever identified itself with Monophysitism; EOTC rather calls herself as Miaphysite which the council of Chalcedon had condemned as heretical anyways. Following Cyril’s articulation, the EOTC confesses that the divine took, only the flesh, not soul and spirit, which has directly came down with the Word/Logos, therefore the EOTC accepts both unity and duality in Christ who in acting performed as one (Aymro and Joachim, 1970 :95). This analysis helps to

avoid the “sin inheritance” disjunction, as the divine soul and spirit is free from any taint of sin (Heretics inside the Temple :136).

Sadly, this Christological analysis in the EOTC has remained only confessional, among few intellectual clergies and is facing worse degeneration in the process of History, through the unguided practices of the mass under the influence of state men like the Zera Yai'kob (1434-68) , Monk Teklehaimanot (1706-1721) etc (Atiya Aziz S., 1968 :148). The table under may be used to clarify the distinct theology in each category.

Monophysite Christology	Miaphysite Christology	Chalcedonies Christology	Remark
the two former entities lost their former natures during the incarnation	the two former natures retained their former individual qualities during the incarnation	the two former natures retained their former individual qualities during the incarnation	Miaphysite and Chalcedon are the same at this point
Euthychian	Cyrillian	Chalcedonian	Cyril was the hot bed source for Chalcedon therefore very close with Chalcedon than Euthyces
Incarnation analysis of Mixture as far as losing former identity and quality	Incarnational analysis of “perfect Unity/ <i>Tewhado</i> ” is the central key to understand EOTC Christology.	a united duality without separation, retaining their individual natures is central key to chalcedonian Christology	Duality or twinity is left back in Miaphysite theology, yet still completely different from monophysite theology; but twinity or duality is retained in chalcedonies theology
This is the monophysite theology from ancient underlying the Son of God, while getting united with man , during the incarnation, twinness has disappeared and the ‘Son’ became “one Son” not “two sons” “one person” not “two persons”. This will be true only and only through mixture and loss	This is the ancient and confessional Orthodox incarnational analysis, underlying that the Son of God, while getting united with man, during the incarnation, twinness has disappeared and the son became “one Son”, not “two Sons”, “one person” not “two persons” yet retaining the former natural qualities	The Chalcedonies Creed (451 A D), sees a united duality without separation, retaining their individual natures, getting united through a process of the conquering role of the person of Word/Logos, with no confusion or mix and with no losing of the former qualities	How will oneness be maintained if duality is maintained? Miaphysitism challenges. Chalcedon settled it through the ‘one uniting person’ conquering both natures. How can the former qualities be retained if twinity has disappeared? Chalcedon challenges.

of the former identity	intact. This will be true only and only through the mystery of "Unity/Tewhado"		Miaphysite settled it through the 'perfect unity' model
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What we have seen so far is a Christology of EOTC, on the confessional level only. But we may say there were three antithetic forces in the formation of EOTC general Christology. One is the confession of the faithful fathers, under Cyril's formula, as we discussed above and the other two traditional interpretations are from lay group who are simultaneously backed up by state officials.

For example, a group called "*Qibat /Annointing*" believed and thought that the "Word/Logos" was changed to be man to the point of losing everything from the divine, then got fully united by the unction or the anointing of the Holy Spirit, to keep intact with divinity while he was getting baptized in the Jordan river (Aymro and Joachim 1970 :150).

Against the "*Qibat*" teaching, the faithful fathers re-acted saying; if we say "the Word was changed", this is against the basic impassibility of the divine Word/God and opposes the continuous distinction between the divine and the human natures in Christ, therefore, charged the "*Qibat*" group as heretics. But since the group was backed up by the followers of the Monks like Ewostatewos, their teaching flourished dominating the Orthodox Christological understanding, particularly in Gojjam area, northwest Ethiopia (Aymro and Joachim 1970 :152).

After this another group of monks developed the "*Sost Lidet*"/Three Births, theory called as the Tsegga/Grace group. This group was from *Debra Libanos* Monastery, the monastery of Tekla Haimanot. The three births are his eternal birth from the Father; His temporal birth from the Virgin Mary and his third birth through the unction of the Spirit. According to this group, it was during the third birth Christ earned the redeeming grace, either given to him in the womb of Mary or during his baptism, therefore called as "*Yetsega Lij*"/ Son of Grace (Aymro and

Joachim 1970 :153).

Through time, any resistance of new teachings was getting backed by armed forces that, the “anointing” and the *Tsega* (Grace) group were somewhat replaced by another group call “*Kara*”. They are named as “*kara*” because they were said slaying their contenders using their sharp knives.

Therefore, the conservative Cyrilian Christology got somewhat swallowed by heretic groups under the political covers from the then state men like emperor Theodore II 1855-68, Emperor Yohannis IV 1872-89, Menelik II 1889-1913, Menelik’s grandson Lij Eyasu who embraced Islam, Menelik II’s daughter Zawditu-a crowned empress with the then 25 years old grandnephew Ras Teferi Mekonnen, as her regent at the beginning but later ruled the country as the last emperor Haile Sillassie I from 1930-1974 (Baur :157).

The current position of the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewhado* Church (EOTC), and scholarly articulations evolving from within will be examined against others who see the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewhado* Church (EOTC) differently. More analysis will be done in the sixth chapter which focuses on the official literatures of the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewhado* Church (EOTC) and the Ethiopian Evangelical Churches (EEC).

In the mean time we may assuredly say that the same Christ is shared among the EOTC and EEC, except a little bit of variations in the explanation of the nature of Christ as we have seen it compared and contrasted in the table above.

Taking the *Miaphysis* doctrine as the official Christological teaching of the EOTC, we should then move to the study of the commonality and/ particularity of the persons of the Trinity so as to see the relationship of the divine versus incarnation.

A Triune God shared in Common: Commonality and particularity of the persons of trinity according to the EOTC tradition

Trinitarian concept of the EOTC is very deep as emphasized in the book Sillassie Betewhado. Meseret Sebhat Le ab in his treatment of the prolegomena, treated the EOTC doctrinal issues in seven main sections like: (1-*'Egzi ab her n Maggnet/Accessing God'*, 2- *'Ye eg zi ab her Helwete Melekot-Gebre bahriy/Ontology and Function of God'*, 3-*'Sillassie/Trinity'*, 4-*'Ye Sillassie Wuhedet Mestere/Mystry of Trinitarian Unity'*, 5-*'Menfes Kidus e' na Wold, ke ab Se lemewtatu, ab gen kemanem kemenem alwetam/ Holy Spirit and the Son Coming out from the Father but the Father from no one from nothing'*, 6-*'Ye Sillassie A kalat Alemelewawet/Non interchangeability of the functional names and persons of the Trinitarian bodies'*, 7-*And Fekad/One common will*).

For the purpose of this research we may at least focus on major section five- “Holy Spirit and the Son, coming out from the Father but the father from no one or nothing”, major section six-*“Non interchangeability of the Functional names and persons of the Trinitarian bodies”*, and major section seven- *“One common will”*.

Main reasons to select these portions from the entire book is that one way or the other we will get Christological understandings and reflections of the EOTC within these details.

The nature and glory of the Son is treated in detail in section five of the book. The Son is aphorized as the Sun's ray- coming out from the Sun. Explaining more, paragraph five says; 'the Son' is the begotten one with no predator or successor. It then goes on to say ontologically ,the Son is with the same nature to the Father and these absolute oneness has come because of begetting relations, for the Son is born of the Father not created. If the Son is created no one can say He was begotten. The begetting of the Son is a begetting of nature and therefore ontological identity affirmed.

The analysis above begins interpreting the nature of the Son from the text of Jn 1:18. Is this a retrospective check or a prospective projection about the nature of the Son? As it is natural to ask so far as to what about of the pre-incarnate Son's substance, the argument goes back retrospectively to the actualization of the Son in no time. This occurrence is part of Gods decree that it has nothing to do with creation issues. Most obviously creation is an occurrence in time. But the event of the Son is an occurrence in no time but eternity. In eternity the Father has begotten the Son therefore the Son shares eternality and the same nature with the Father.

The begetting process has also nothing to do with the incarnation process. Therefore John 1:18 in the analysis of the document above affirms the Son- ship of Christ from eternity without details of the incarnation nature of Christ. Having agreed to the absolute oneness of the Father with the Son from eternity, we may say the above argument said nothing concerning the substantial nature of Christ in between the imaginary walls of incarnation and resurrection and therefore is deficient concerning the details of the incarnation. Therefore, EOTC's incarnation Christology is very deep theology so far as the above analysis is concerned but EOTC's ontological Christology is well argued in the above analysis.

Major section six speaks concerning the Non interchangeability of the Functional names and persons of the Trinitarian bodies. The expressed reason here is that the Father is the begetter therefore not the begotten and the Son is the begotten therefore not a begetter and the Holy Spirit comes out or happens from both the Father and the Son therefore not Himself the Father and also not Himself the Son.

With this we may still find only the non-interchangeability of the functional names in the decree function of begetting, being begotten and coming out. At the same time the positional document of the EOTC only affirms the Trinitarian separate persons in eternity than to the nature of the incarnate Christ in between the walls

of incarnation and resurrect on (Bitsue Wo kidus Abune Maqarios 1993 :21).

When we come to major section seven, it talks about the common will in between the Father the Son and the Spirit. Surprisingly this portion discussed the incarnation nature of Christ. It said "the Son became flesh and dwelt with us, born in a manger, born in the image of a slave (*be araya gaber*), born as a baby, escaped to Egypt, suffered in wilderness, famine, drought and needs, all human miseries have happened upon his fragile humanity". It then continues to say "this Son was the Word, and was with God, and was himself God, everything has happened by him and through him, who was the only begotten Son of God. But his pastoral nature made him Human".

The 'common will' is not elaborated in a substance manner in the above analysis. The 'will' here is not something material and measured materially; it rather is all about absolute consent where the will of the Father is the will of the Son and the will of the Holy Spirit. The source of the will is neither the Father nor the Son nor the Holy Spirit but it is there eternally common and naturally unanimous.

The nature and the experience of the incarnate Christ, according to this book, are like anyone of us with no specialty. The mystery of incarnation never goes to explain something beyond the pastoral nature of God to save and protect humanity.

In general Christology is treated independently in the above argument; one in the pre-incarnate stage and two in the incarnate stage. The mystery of the nature of Christ in between the walls of the incarnation and the resurrection, compared or contrasted to the pre-incarnate or post resurrected scenarios seems safely ignored in the above analysis.

A little review of the ancient Christological mind frames is good in order to articulate basic variations between East and West. Lule Mel-aku, one of the key scholars of the EOTC also a specialist teacher of church history at the Holy Trinity Cathedral, says the variations had their root in ancient Gnostic philosophy.

He even said Christological heresies and disparities vegetated out of Gnostic influences where God and every creation is understood dissected into two as evil and good, material-immaterial and so on. This logic, according to him, has led some to believe that divinity should always go to the Father only but not the Son while he was human. Christ Jesus dynamically shifted to the divine, right after he finished his earthly mission. This logic gave birth to Arianism, Arius from North Africa, now Libya, in 318 A D was the founder of such thought.

Obviously Arian controversy was dealt at the council of Nicaea 325 A D, in the presence of 318 scholars with the king Constantine, where the scholars argued from scriptures that the Son was originally God. In addition to this basic questions to be treated are: Where do the Ethiopian Evangelicals stand in their theoretical conceptions of the nature of Christ in between the incarnation and resurrection? East or West? What was the substantial nature of the incarnate Christ, just in between the incarnation and resurrection? What are the justifications? How has the above question influenced the EOTC-EEC Christological dialogue? What could be the possible dialogue links between the EOTC-EEC so as to bring them together on the same flat?

Trinity was not necessarily the divisive factor between the EOTC and EEC from the then up until now. So we may assuredly say that possibility of unity is very visible if such a research is set as an agenda on the table.

The Holy Spirit shared in Common

Understanding of the Holy Spirit is basically the same within the theology of the EOTC and EEC, as far as confessions of both denominations are concerned. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the trinity as clearly confessed in the apostolic creed which both denominations share together. This Holy Spirit, both denominations believe, comes out to renew the face of the earth, and is the person who descended on the apostles on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). This belief commonly shared by both denominations, makes us to assuredly say that possibility of unity is very visible if such a research is set as an agenda on the

table.

A Bible shared in Common (at least major part 81.5 %)

Orthodox Christianity was a unifying factor as much as majority of Ethiopians found in it their national identity. Core problems among the mass and few EOTC clericals, as outlined in the book (heretics inside the temple :12), are firstly Bible Phobia, which says if one reads the Bible he or she may lose his/her religious practices. Secondly, if one reads the Bible at all, it must be a simple and shallow reference with no deep examination. Third; too much dependence on extra canonical literatures than the Bible with the 66 books. Fourth, the theology of mediators and mediator ship; the case here is intercessory roles of one for the other (See the Book of *Grammar and Dictionary; By Chef Kidanewold Kifle*).

Such intellectual observation from within the EOTC is a spring board for a discussion on 'unity' as an agenda item. It is not the evangelicals who identified the problem of Bible phobia, or a shallow reading of the Scriptures, or a problem of high dependence on extra biblical sources than the Bible itself. These items are identified as deviations from the truth by EOTC scholars themselves.

If so, why is it difficult to sit together and settle that the Bible which both denominations believe as inerrant- inspired and with full authority for life and practice, is central to all of us? Yes, when we say "the Bible", what the EOTC has as a content of the Bible (81 books), is different from what the Evangelicals in Ethiopia has as a content of the Bible (66 books). But, we may primarily capitalize on what unites us (81.5 %) than what divides us(only 18.5%), therefore, see with how much of the contents we agree and set aside temporarily those books which are not helpful for commonality and unity.

According to Abba Asrat Getnet-*Wisdom scholar in EOTC*, the EOTC actually recognizes only the 66 books of the Bible as inspired. The rest are just added as additional references. The problem is, this stand of the church is not communicated enough to the mass that the mass generally says the EOTC

official documents are 81 (o.i., July 26, 2013).

Brief Survey of Christological Conceptions among the EEC

The Ethiopian Evangelical Churches are around 31 denominations united under a consortium known as Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia (ECFE). ECFE is the umbrella in which most evangelicals are represented formally through it, in a simply stated 'credo' as those who share the same faith in one God who revealed Himself in trinity; also believe that Christ is the only way to salvation and believers have never contributed to their salvation, whereas are all expected to persevere in faith. ECFE is a member of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), and African Evangelical Association (AEA) (_____Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia 2012 :2)

Evangelicals in Ethiopia confessionally believe in one Holy Catholic Apostolic Church and therefore are organized to foster unity in diversity. The ECFE has also 61 Para church associates, some of them Christian ministries and some of them Para church Christian organizations. Since there are also denominations which are not formally linked to the ECFE but are by default members, for the faith they confess, we prefer the abbreviation EEC than the ECFE just for the consumption of this thesis.

The EEC Christological conception is confessionally Chalcedonian. This is because many can easily articulate the nature of Christ was with two natures and one person all through the incarnation and the resurrection and after. Nonetheless, deep examinations rather imply another fact.

When we try to uncover the wrapping, Christological conceptions among EEC seem standing neither chalcedony nor non- chalcedonic but somewhere in between. This we say as a result of a survey made in a written interview questions made to some 120 seminarians in Addis, whom we think can be representatives of the EEC.

Rational of our selection was first of all, diversity of their traditional background, Lutheran; Baptist; Mennonite; Pentecostal, Presbyterian etc...; Second their seminarian background so that we might gain easy articulation of deep Christological thoughts; third the nature of the interview questions (qualitative) where the interviewee is made not to be conditioned as much as possible, and is also made not to know what is expected of him/her till the end through open ended discussions.

Well some may say this can never replace the status of the mass on Christology issues. But it should be clear that it is hard to identify the Christological understanding of the mass which ever line they align themselves; as far as experience tells us, the theology of the mass is a 'doing type' than a theory type, a dynamic type than a fixed type, experiential type that doctrinal type.

With this presupposition the questions set were totally nine focusing on the role of the trinity in the creation process; the particular role of the trinity in the reciprocal union of Eucharistic duties from humanity to God and from God to humanity; the exclusive role of the Son during creation- if we can talk exclusivity at all; the exclusive role of the father in the incarnation process; how the trinity might have shared ,in the incarnation, the suffering and the Eucharistic sacrifice of Christ; whether Christ has solely carried the suffering and the Eucharistic duties or not? If yes what was the role of the father and the Holy Spirit? The difference between Monophysite, Diaphysite and Miaphysite theology/Christology and which one they personally accept and why? If there is any theological difference worthy to dye for? etc etc

These questions aimed not only for the consumption of this chapter alone but for the consumption of all the research. Yet we will select the responses given for the questions like; if Christ has solely carried the suffering on the cross or not and how; the difference between terminologies like Diaphysite/ Monophysite/ Miaphysite and where the interviewee stands; Why? Out of these, our expectation was to find out the confessional stances, as to where we may line up

naturally as EEC and if there is a need to die for;

In the responses to the question whether Christ has solely suffered on the cross or the Father and the Holy spirit has shared him some way; Out of 120 interviewee 74.28% responded 'Yes' Christ has solely carried the suffering by himself with no participation of the divine. 7.14 responded yes and no as if the divine has somewhat shared the suffering either through knowledge or through decision and encouragement yet the pain was totally upon the human Christ. As to me this group has no difference from the first rank. But the rest 18.57 said God was there energizing the human Jesus on the cross. This notion was made clear as some within this group has have literally said that God sent an angel to support Christ.

When we come to apply these responses so as to trace the Christological whereabouts of the Evangelicals, if Christ (his human nature only) has solely carried the agony on the cross, this therefore implies that two natures were either acting independently or only the human nature was reactive starting the incarnation up until crucifixion. This leads to either Nestorian Christology or kenotic Christology.

If Christ was somehow energized with divine power from inside or supported by external power in His suffering on the cross, this idea more tilts to either monophysitism for the two natures are seen mixed or still kenoticism because the human Jesus was supported externally by another power.

Setting aside the confessional Christology of the EEC for the time being, the practical Christological conception of Christology among representative Evangelicals so to say, is neither clearly East nor clearly West nor in between but a third view of some type which should be left for further study.

Is there something to die for in such a thought? How about the current attitude from both sides? Are the existing Christological differences between the EOTC and the EEC worth dying for?

Next questions to them were like;

- 1- Ethiopian Orthodox Church Christological position is neither Diaphysite nor Monophysite, as far as their claims now but Miaphysite as to current scholarly literatures of the EOTC. What do you think is the difference between these three terminologies? Which one do you personally believe is Biblically sound and theologically viable?
- 2- Do you see a theological difference worthy to die for or it is just a terminology play?
- 3- Two natures in one person, One nature and one person from two, Two natures perfectly united without change of identity, without confusion, with no mixture. Do you see any difference here? If so what and how?

For the first question out of 120 interviewee, (these *were all seminarians supposed to have a better understanding than the ordinary mass*), 61.43% supported the Diaphysite theory. 27.14 % were not clear in their stand, seems confused. 8.57% supported the Miaphysite theory. 1% the supported both the Miaphysite and the Diaphysite. 1% supported the Monophysite theory. 1% rejected all theories as meaningless at all.

A little check deep into the same group to see if they really believe in what they meant, by asking them the 2nd and 3rd question (if this is worthy to die for as far as dissecting us); also the real difference between the three theories' shows that; for these questions; 62.8 % said there is nothing to die for but the difference is clear. The rest 37.2% said it is a theological difference therefore it is not only worthy to die for but necessary to fight it by all means.

Those who replied 'yes and no' with no clear stand were examined if the issue is worthy to die for; 63.15% out of this group said it is not worthy to die for. The rest 36% said it is worthy to die for.

As we can see from the above analysis Evangelicals are as diversified as their

nature when it comes to Christology issue. Majority of them confess chalcedonic but the above data's proved that deep inside they are somewhere in between the chalcedonies and the non-chalcedonies. Therefore we cannot say the Ethiopian evangelicals clearly line with the Chalcedonies (451 A. D) formula.

But one thing is very clear. Majority of the respondents from evangelicals side do not believe that these Christological theories are worthy to die for as far as igniting animosity between the EOTC and EEC.

If the EOTC and EEC have major pillars of doctrines sharing together, why did they remain separated? May be the division is caused with a language game, meaning the missing of the interpretative center. If one makes Mary the center of interpretation the other might have made Christ the center of interpretation. On the confessional level, both EOTC and EEC believe that Mary is the mother of Christ as far as the humanity is concerned. Both believe that Christ is the only begotten Son of God from eternity. Confessional level, both believe that Christ is the center of salvation. Therefore the interpretation should be centered at "Christ" than anyone else. Is unity possible? Chapter six of this research will deal with the possibility of unity between the EOTC and EEC.

Chapter Five

Reflective Epistemological Critique

Introduction

This Chapter attempts to polemically argue for or against contextual response to the readings and crucial contextual questions concerning the status and nature of Christ during his earthly ministry. The epicenter for all arguments so far, from Chapters 1-4 revolves on the issue whether Christ should be the center faith; also around the controversial statement that “two natures in one person” led to a hypostatic controversy of the human and the divine or the vice versa. We have seen these from its Biblical roots; historical perspectives; theological conceptions, also contextual highlights.

Our discussion of the Bible concerning the hypostatic union of the natures of Christ during the incarnation was an exegesis of the Gospels, specifically John, the synoptic Gospels and Pauline writings. In our analysis of the Gospel of John we said that, first of all and most likely, whatever Christology John might have suggested, is naturally geared by the post resurrection scenario. Secondly our cause was not necessarily the problem of the New Testament community in the first two hundred years. Therefore, we might find very little in the New Testament concerning the nature of Christ in between the incarnation and the resurrection.

Having this as a frame, we have to admit that trying to put the hypostatic union into a simple rational box is an infeasible task to our time as it was infeasible during the pioneer years of Christianity, the first five hundred years. Keener’s contextual exegesis seems fair as he said it was cultural for the Greeks divinizing heroes as it was cultural for conservative Jews under the dogmatic *Shema* (Deut 6:4) (Keener 2003 :299). This tension was evident in the incarnation treatments of John 1:1-14, 18.

Analysis

The beginning verses of John Chapter 1:1-4 narrated the God-Logos who was 'coming out of God' with a functional duty (creation and salvation). Its parallel is the creation tone (Gen 1:1), which is more functional than ontological. The 'Word', who is God (ontologically), was coming (functionally) to this world. The Word 'coming out' was also 'becoming' man (Jn 1:14). What is natural is natural therefore no change; what is ontological will remain ontological. However, what is functional or relational is adjustable to any context therefore the becoming of the Word into flesh (Incarnation) was made possible. As we find it in the discussions of Fauset and David, after each verse, then, the reader must say, "It was He who is thus, and thus, and thus described who was made flesh." (Fauset A.R; and David: 1997). It was him 'the God, the eternal, the unchangeable' as we find in Turner also (Turner :17) that θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος meant the same thing as ὁ λόγος ἦν ὁ θεός; who became flesh.

"Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament" puts it saying 'and the Word became flesh, Cf. ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο (Jn. 1:14). Following this line of thought, John 1: 18 says, "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God.... . " At the conclusion of his prologue to the Gospel, the evangelist states emphatically, "God... [First in the Greek word order] no one has ever seen." 1:18.

Genesis of this discussion should affirm that it is the Word who was God, who is made flesh. How can a God become flesh, will be the core element of the discussion to come next. The language game in ancient New Testament Greek, ἐ-κένωσεν transl. *He stripped* himself, aor. -νόω *empty*. λαβῶν *by taking*, aor²

² A superior figure ² denotes strong or 2nd aorist (or future or perfect).

ptc λαμβάνω *take*. **ὁμοίωμα**⁷ *likeness* (Rom 8:3) indicates simply that in every respect he was like a man. **γενόμενος** aor² ptc γίνομαι *be born*; (v.8) *Become*. **σχῆμα**⁷ refers to his ‘at hand’ *appearance*, dat. Of respect §53. **εὑρεθείς** aor. ptc pass. εὕρισκω, pass. *be found to be*. With μορφή, ὁμοίωμα, σχῆμα note the different vbs: ὑπάρχων (divine nature), λαβών (human nature), γενόμενος (likeness of man), εὑρεθείς (appearance).

The translators here gave the literal meanings of the words “he *kenusen-stripped off* and *genumai- became or be born*”. How is the word *genumai* to be translated? It literally means “became” rather than just an outward appearance or of some kind of addition of nature to. The translation seems to mean that the Son was ‘stripped off’ his divine prerogatives if we take the word *he kenusen* and the same Son became a full man, if we take the meaning of *Genumai* literally to mean “become”.

In the first place there is no one assertion in this research saying that Christ is not God. This research affirms that Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. But His immutability doesn’t mean that His power would not be restricted for the actuality of suffering and death. God is immutable at the same time able to limit His power as he became */Genumai/* flesh.

What is at this venture is, how has the unity of the divine and the human been managed, be it in church history and in the Christology of the EOTC? It is true

ptc participle, participial

⁷ neut. nouns ending in -μα

v. verse

dat. dative

pass. passive (voice)

that Nestorius favored a simple moral union of the natures remaining distinct. Euthyches on the other extreme so mixed the natures forming a new “one”. Cyril a little bit in the middle said the unity is neither simple moral nor a total mix but perfect union like the soul and body. Chalcedon (451) is not so far from Cyril as the two natures are united but not as far as Cyril, saying they are perfectly united or not as far as Nestorius’s distinction towards twinity.

As we bring a comparison of Christology in the theological doings of the EOTC, the church follows Cyril, asserting the perfect unity against twinity, as God the Son has taken flesh from Mary, where the two are perfectly united as to make the human- divine and the divine- human (Maqarios Abba 2001 :46). In the EOTC Christology there is nothing missed by the human from the divine also nothing missed by the divine from the human. The divine heat is never minimized because of the perfect union with human; the human weakness is never swallowed by the divine because of the perfect union with the divine. The divine has made the human glorious also the human has made the divine truly human (Gorgorios Abba 1999 :89). This thinking, according to the EOTC serves the soteriological purpose making the divine part of the human.

Even though this is the official teaching, there are significant group named as the ‘Qibat’ believing the union has degraded the divine to zero level making the new nature in need of ‘unction’ by the Holy Spirit for His ministerial empowerment. Other in-groups known as the Tsega with a little bit modification said the unction happened while Jesus was getting baptized (Gorgorios 1999 :87).

The question is, if the divine is with full heat within the incarnation, how can the humiliation and crucifixion be a reality? To say it has been made zero, may not be close to the seeming truth but the divine empowerment must be seen managed in restriction and deactivation up until the resurrection, just for the mission of saving humanity. This management is because of the “becoming”.

Next issue is the whereabouts of the divine enablement or as to practicality of the divine enablement. It may be implied that the verb *Genumai* /becoming, should be there for the purpose of, 'not using', which actually means the enablements were not active. That is very consistent with the gist of our research here. Whether literal or idiomatic the verbs tell that divine enablement was in non-use, during the incarnation up until the crucifixion.

The same tone seems to be implied in Philippians 2:6-8. A simple reading of the Philippians Text in Chapter 2 verse 5-11, looks to have a structure like; 1-Vs 6; Christ's being in the very nature of God: 2-Vs 7-8: Christ's becoming new form (incarnation): 3-Vs 9-11; His exalted form.

As the interest here is to find out the substantial nature of Christ during the incarnation before the resurrection, our exegesis of the book of Philippians, in chapter 2 has focused on Vs 7-8. What do the words "emptied"; "humbled" imply? As we may see in various versions, variants from the base text are very visible. But the variants look like only on emphasis rather than on meaning, except in the King James Version which added a wholly other word to the 'emptied' saying; 'taking no reputation'. This doesn't bring any difference as far as meaning is concerned. When we see the next statements, the degree of variance is more as the phrase "being found in human form" is also said "in human likeness" and an extension of a word "in appearance" in the New American Bible version. What confuses may be the meaning of "human form"; "human likeness"; and "appearance". Does this imply that Jesus was not really in a human likeness, in the form of a servant, as this is measured in reality?

If we follow the Greek ὁμοίωμα⁷ likeness (Rom 8:3), it denies nothing of the content of μορφή but of itself indicates simply that in every respect he was like a man. When the outward appearance of Jesus is measured in content and

⁷ neut. nouns ending in -μα

likeness (μορφή, ὁμοίωμα), Jesus never missed any of the organs which any human being could have. F. F. Bruce adds that such expressions as “born in the likeness of man” and “found in human form” in Vs 7, should not mislead us; apart from the form, the consideration that they may belong to a pre-Pauline confession, there is a high probability that they represent alternative Greek renderings the Aramaic phrase *kēbar-‘enash* (“like a son of man”) in Dan 7:13 (Bruce 1989 :81-82).

Other scholars seem not to agree to such interpretation and have also extensively invested on this very text. Ralph P. Martin has summarized the literatures from 1900 through 1963 in his exhaustive study entitled *Carmen Christi*. But Martin has admitted that the text is still the occasion of much debate with lack of agreement to a precise nuance in modern commentaries from Dibelius to Fee (Martin 1989 :1-2). In this list D. G. Dunn has began from the poetic nature of the pretext so as to show the theocentric points coming out of the worship than Christology matters; Ernst Käsemann regarded it as mythological hymn, therefore difficult to argue on and he chose to focus on the kerygmatic dimension of the text (Martin 1989 :43). But this is all about establishing the boundry and the text only than setting the meaning.

As we try to get the meaning of the word “humbled” in Vs 8, all versions measure the ‘humbling’ process to the point of death and a death on the cross with no variance. As the death of Christ was backed up with data’s from history; Bible and Science in our research of the Corinthian letters (see chapter two part II of this thesis), this would again go into the line of argument we have done so far, that Christ has willfully been stripped off his divine enablement, only “functionally” not ontologically, within the imaginary walls of incarnation and resurrection, in humanity for the purpose of saving humanity.

Does this humbling clearly talk about the ‘God’ part or the ‘Man’ part? If we are talking about one person, like Chalcedony or Cyril, then it is God who was humbled. But if we are talking about two persons, like Nestorius may be, then the

God part has never experienced humbling, which doesn't seem to mean that way in Philippians 2:8; It rather tells one person, who was eternally in the image of God but condensed into an image of man and a slave.

Such a stand naturally differs from a classical view which generally underlines that God can never experience change, therefore no change of God during the process of incarnation. In addition to this, the classical view affirms that the Son added human nature, which this research is with a complete separation to such assertion; saying God the Son has not added but "become" as it is very clear in the *genumenos* of texts of John 1:14 and Phil 2:6-7.

So we would like to respond to possible questions arising against such assertions in this research. The first question is; who died on the cross? God the Son or Jesus the human? If we say God the Son died; we may be trapped in the snare of passibility-impassibility cases. If we say only the human nature faced death we still have to resolve the two person-one person controversy of Nestorius and Chalcedon. How can this be reasoned out without erasing the immutability of God and a preservation of one person Chalcedonies concept?

As we try to make a survey study of Christological developments, particularly within the last 100 years, the discussion on Philippians 2, has a diverse interpretation with still open ended conclusions. Here is a middle road not so far as denying impassibility but affirming Chalcedonies one person theory. God cannot change! But God can limit himself.

There is no change in his divine attributes; there will be no change at all forever and ever. But God's Omni nature can make Him able to act both ways in action and in non-action without changing or annihilating Himself. As there is no dissection in the nature of God there will be no change in nature whether within the Father or the Son or the Spirit. But the same nature in all the three may either be manifested in action or in non-action as it moves from the Ontological to

relational-functional state through the movement from creation to redemption and consummation.

In this case we see that this nature was functionally manifested in non-action, with the Son, for the sake of the saving mission, when God the Son was willing to become human and die on the cross. Simply speaking, the incarnation is a temporary limitation, non-activation of God the Son's divine enablement, as the Son has 'come out' of God (John 1:14), for the sake of a true experience of human suffering and death.

A bit more discussion here is the 'likeness of the Son with the rest of the Trinity, particularly as the "Son" should become "man". There is a question as to whether the original reading here is *μονογενῆς υἱός* (*monogenēs huīos*, one-of-a-kind Son) or *μονογενῆς θεός* (*monogenēs theos*, one-of-a-kind [Son, himself] God). With the acquisition of P⁶⁶ and P⁷⁵, both of which read *μονογενῆς θεός*, the preponderance of the evidence now leans in the direction of the latter reading. M. Harris (1992: 78–80) expresses a "strong preference" for *μονογενῆς θεός*, for at least four reasons: (1) it has superior MSsupport; (2) it represents the more difficult reading; (3) it serves as a more proper climax to the entire prologue, attributing deity to the Son by way of *inclusio* with 1:1 and 1:14; (4) it seems to account best for the other variants. Most likely, then, *μονογενῆς υἱός* represents a scribal assimilation to 3:16 and 3:18.

So how can we reconcile the impassibility issue with the case of the incarnation? It may be said that, in the impassible himself there is 'passible' (became/ἐγένετο), therefore the word became flesh. What is seen here as "the becoming and into what has the Word become" is mostly ignored by authorities from the then to now, as majority of them prefer to say God added flesh than God became flesh. This is a Nestorian notion as he preferred saying the 'Word' only dwelt in the flesh making the flesh as only a tent. But this exegesis does not rightly understand the "becoming" in Jn 1:14 and so leads to twinity so dividing between the two natures.

The text of John never hints the addition of the flesh into God but the God becoming flesh and the flesh is the exact flesh we know and we have; (Σάρξ refers, first, to the bodily substance, the *flesh* of circumcision, then the human body itself (frequently with a closer qualification, e.g., ἀσθένεια).

The resolution to defend the impassibility of God, by making the flesh an addition as asserted by most church fathers (see chapter 3 of this thesis), is not from the Text of John but from the theory that God is impassible. A resolution here says that, in the impassible himself there is passible, as everything (humanness, dynamism, dying) in the nature of creation has come out of Him, non other than Him, in the His creation/actualization acts, and is always in his control and sight. Therefore affirming impassibility, also admitting possibility of passibility within impassibility, as it comes for God who is ontologically the same but functionally or relationally changeable. Again affirming the 'becoming' than the addition which the testimony of John affirms against the line followed by most church fathers (for details see chapter 2 and 3 of this research).

Not only in John but the synoptic Gospels and Paul repeat this harmoniously. Luke 24:39, refers to the actual corporeality (appearance in person) of the resurrected Jesus in contrast to an incorporeal and unreal spirit. Acts cites the OT twice with the phrase πᾶσα σὰρξ, "all human beings" (2:17: Joel 3:1 LXX; 2:26: Ps 15:9 LXX). Acts 2:31 concludes from the incorruptibility of Jesus' σὰρξ that of the human σὰρξ (cf. 2:26f.); this refers to the resurrection body of Jesus (ψυχὴ in v. 27 are not repeated in v. 31), (Robert and Gerhard, 1990-1993c:230-232). In Heb 5:7 σὰρξ is used of Jesus' earthly existence; the "days of his *flesh*" are his days on earth.

One might ask a question like, was Jesus God during the incarnation? The synthesis of discussions so far leads us to a "yes" ; but in a positional manner, for Jesus was not robbed of His divine position yet the divine qualities were saved or in non-action for the purpose of saving through dying. This view that our Lord could not use some divine qualities as omnipresence and omniscience during His

time on earth- is denied by many including Calvin, Hodge, and Grudem whose positions we will evaluate below. But the opinion that the earthly Christ had limited usage of some divine qualities is held as well, by some Evangelicals as Millard Erickson (Erickson, *God in Three Persons*, 223,224; also in his *Christian Theology*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985).

Against Nestorius explanation of simultaneous acts of or Lord, some by his divine and some by his human, Erickson affirms the position that Jesus never exercises only His humanity or deity; it is always the “human-divine” that acts (*Christian Theology*, 1983 : 735).

This is never denying the co-equality of our Lord with God. But God the Son became less, as he became human because of his humanity and because of his willingness “not to use” his divine enablement’s, temporarily, for the sake of tasting weakness and death and the saving mission.

Now, the future holds the assurance of the second coming of the risen Lord. No one is able to say Jesus was man before incarnation and no one could also say Jesus was raised before he died. This tradition was there among the apostles in the very early year of Christianity (1st Cor.15:1-3; 5-7, 11).

Historical Frames

The history of the Christological understanding in the past two millennia seems to imply that the Christological formwork is continuously changing. Though, the substance and the salvation plan, which is only through Christ, basically remains the same. Pelican in his book “*Jesus through the Centuries*”, said that, what has the 1st C formula that says “Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever” to tell us in the 21st C? (Pelican :1-2). If therefore one were to study history as condiment and cosmetic, culture and commodity, one would probably be able to discover many of the continuities and many of the discontinuities- in the past three millennia.

Similarly the history of the images of Jesus illustrates the continuities and

discontinuities of the past two millennia simultaneously. One consequence of the discontinuity is the great variety and unevenness in the concepts and terms that have been used to describe this meaning, from the most naïve and unsophisticated to the most profound and complex (Pelican :4). Enough is said in Chapter 3 of this research concerning the historical dynamism of Christological thoughts in the history of the Christian church. We may need to focus on the rise of Christological revisions in the 19th Century.

The rise of the history of Christian doctrine at the beginning of the 19th C, as a historical discipline in its own right-distinct from the history of philosophy, from the history of Christian church, and from doctrinal theology, though continually related to all three of these fields-forms an important chapter in the history of modern scholarship. To borrow the distinction of Werner Elert, alongside the “dogma of Christ” there has always been the “image of Christ”. Jesus through the centuries is a history of the image (or images) of Christ”. For example, the efforts to portray the person of Jesus in visual form are likewise “artifacts” for our story (Pelican :6).

The next discussion on contextual responses will primarily focus on literatures of noted scholarly systematic Christological approaches such as Roger Olson, Berkhof, Grudem, Grenz and Erickson; then a review of the progressive research so far towards a synthesis as an application.

Roger E. Olson: Part IV Another Crisis Shakes the Church: *The Conflict over the Person of Christ*

Though the fight over the trinity seems to be settled, soon the bishops and theologians of Alexandria and Antioch with their respective followers were at one another’s theological throat over the nature of the God-man, Jesus Christ (Olson :198). As in the case of great Trinitarian controversy, what they all saw at stake was human salvation itself. If Jesus Christ was not both truly human (equally with us but not less human), and truly God (equally with God but not less divine), then how could he save us? It took three councils (Constantinople 381; Ephesus 325

and Chalcedon 451) to finalize the debate over Christology (Olson :199). This portion of the book treats the deep seated theological differences between the two great cities of eastern Christianity, Antioch and Alexandria (Olson 1999 :200).

The Schools of Antioch and Alexandria Clash over Christ

These two schools were situated in two important and rival cities of the then. Thus Alexandrian and Antiochene theologians diverged at their very roots-biblical interpretation (Olson 1999 :203). Their hermeneutical sight led them into divergent Christological views. While the Alexandrian was very much dominated by the divine as the divine is needed to transform the human so as to save it, the Antiochene were so much taken by the human, historical substance though they confessed the divinity of Christ (Olson :204). The Alexandrian soteriology was free divine gift and more of metaphysical where as the Antiochene soteriology being the work of the Son of God, was more of moral-ethical still needing mans free will and mind (Olson :205).

When it comes to Christology, taking Athanasius as sample from the Alexandrian camp believed that the human side of Christ was passive, as if the Logos took on himself the body without actually entering into human existence, which was called Word-flesh Christology (Olson :206). The Word-flesh Christology so horrified the Antiochenes, with their leading theologians Eustathius of Antioch, Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia, emphasizing much on the humanity of Christ and developing Word-man Christology (Olson :206).

From the Alexandrian side Apollinarius denied the human rational soul in Christ. The reason that Apollinarius “mutilated” the human in Jesus Christ was soteriological, of Course. For him as for most Alexandrians, salvation as deification was only possible if the whole of Christ is thoroughly controlled by the divine will and power (Olson :207). Theodore from the Antiochene side emphasized much on the distinction of the two nature and on the assuming of the Logos to the human and on the human to be assumed (Olson :209-210). This all led to one nature one person Christology by the Alexandrians and two nature one

person by the Antiochenes but not yet clear from both sides.

Nestorius and Cyril Bring the Controversy to a head

The Greek word *theotokos* the title of Virgin Mary is another bone of contest in the next theological debate. The real meaning does not make Mary the mother of God but the bearer of God. Although both eastern orthodox and Roman Catholic traditions highly revere Mary, the *Theotokos* title is really a pointer to belief in Jesus' true divinity, when Mary gave birth to her little boy, she gave birth to God (Olson :211).

Nestorius Patriarch at Constantinople came as a hero denouncing the *theotokos* which shocked all; both shocked and surprised the Alexandria spies as they were waiting to revenge their defeat on Apollinarius. The Antiochene Christology was on the ascendancy in 428 when Antiochenes favorite son, Nestorius, occupied the most powerful ecclesiastical position in the eastern half of the Roman empire. Back in Alexandria the Bishop, also a Patriarch due to the importance of the city- was a man named Cyril. Cyril was sound in his theology with strong back up from councils but was condemned of being a bridge to heresies like Apollinarianism and Monophysitism, also sending spies into Nestorius's chair as his eyes were on the position (Olson :212-213).

Nestorius was caught as he preached against calling Mary the Mother of God. His logic was that God cannot be born as he cannot die but was Christ the human nature which was born of Mary. So, he gave the congregation permission to call upon Mary the bearer of Christ (*Christotokos*) (Olson: 213).

Treatises of Nestorius and Cyril were not big commentaries as such but correspondences they had. Except the extremes on each side of the followers and supporters these guys may have said almost similar things nothing to be categorized as heresy. But they were in fact different in one thing. Nestorius's focus was on the humanity with his own human person and he argued that the incarnation is a mutual indwelling of two persons. He said the two persons are

united by a special kind of union which he called *synaphia which means conjunction* (Olson :216). Two natures and two persons but united in conjunction. For Nestorius the God person of the union worked the miracles but the human person suffered (Olson :217-218). This theory may ease the impassibility issue as God cannot suffer, but it denies the becoming of the Word into flesh. That is why it is fair to say there is a possibility of possibility in the impassible not through annihilation of one nature by the other but through the saving of one nature in non action for the possibility being human and being able to suffer and die. So Nestorius's solution cannot be conclusive.

Overall, it seems, Cyril's real contribution to Christology is the doctrine of the hypostatic union. This becomes the great church's foundation for explaining and expressing the mystery of the incarnation of God in Christ. For Cyril there was no human person subject to the incarnation. Mary, Cyril argued, gave birth to God in the flesh (Olson :218). For Cyril the incarnation switched off the human soul and switched on the divine soul therefore God became human and suffered. His famous formula was God did not come into a man, but he 'truly' becomes man while remaining God (Olson :219).

Though Cyril is said to be ambiguous by Grenz, the battle seems to favor him therefore Cyril succeeded in making the council of Ephesus to be real in 431. The council decided against Nestorius but pulled Cyril to compromise a bit in at least recognizing the two natures, yet he remained preferring the one nature after the union, though this all compromise did not make his Alexandrian followers happy (Olson :220-221).

Chalcedon Protects the Mystery

All cases one way or the other, either left or right, were circulating around soteriology. Jesus Christ's importance was as Savior of the World. Everyone agreed that in order to accomplish salvation he had to be truly God and truly man (Olson :222). After the council of Ephesus, deposition of Nestorius and the union formula didn't seem final. The Antiochenes were giving shelter to some Pelagian

teachings which was condemned as heresy by Rome. Having the two person's formula making the union as just conjugation and moral one, they somewhat tilted towards saying that salvation comes as we follow Christ's moral examples (Olson :223).

This made their case worse. The Immediate successor of Cyril was Dioscorus who did nothing than to reflate the war between the two cities. He out rightly rejected the 433 reunion formula as the one nature in Christ is the only Orthodox. His parallel counterpart was the Antiochene favorite and next candidate for the patriarchy of Constantinople. The possible war needed only a spark which happened in the person of a certain humble monk of Constantinople named Eutyches, who believed and thought that after the union no talk of two natures but mixed to be hybrid and totally swallowed by the divine (Olson :225-227).

A robber synod was called which ended in affirming Eutyches and also a blood shed here and there as far as killing patriarch Flavian. These unsettlements generally led to the Chalcedonies council held in October 25, 451 A.D. . After much debate, a new formulary faith was agreed upon based heavily on language; concepts in Leo's Tome and Cyril's letters to Nestorius and John of Antioch (228-231).The result of the council of Chalcedon and its Christological definition was a permanent schism within the Eastern Church. Significant portions of churches of Syria (Persia and Arabia) refused to accept the new statement, and set off themselves from the Great Church and remained Nestorian. Most of the Christian churches in Egypt also refused to accept the new faith and split off forming their own independent monophysite churches (Olson :232).

Fallout from the Conflict Continues

While the Eastern Church was caught up in Christological controversy, the Western church was consumed by debates and conflicts and over the true nature of the church. Unfortunately, many western Christians-both Roman Catholic and protestant-know little or nothing about post-Chalcedonian Christological

controversies in the east (Olson :238-239). A question left unresolved in many church leaders mind was this: what constitutes a complete manhood (humanity)? What is the minimum which it must retain if it is to be called complete (Olson :240)?

All parties in the great Christological debates seemed locked into the belief that nature and person necessarily go together so that in order for a nature to be real and complete it has to have a person to give; real existence as opposed to abstract existence (Olson :242). Leontius of Byzantium seem to offer the solution. Leontius of Byzantium's works have never been translated into English. They are generally known in the west by their Latin titles: *Contra Nestorianos et Eutychianos*...

Justinian, a powerful Emperor of the time, who was crowned in 527, got excellent ways of defending Chalcedon through the works of Leontinus (Olson 1999 :243-244). Leontinus first agreed with the Alexandrians and foremost that the eternal divine Logos/Word, the Son of God, is the subject of the incarnation. The one and the only personality of Jesus is God the Son. But against the Alexandrians he rejected the idea of the impersonality of the humanity of Christ-Cyril's *anhypostasia*.

Leontinus proposal was that while the person of the human Christ can never exist with out hypostasis it can also be *anhypostasized* in another. The human nature of Christ was personalized in the person of the Logos (Olson :245). Natural procedures of these for Leontinus are; conjugation as an agreement of two retaining their natures (Nestorius) or a hybrid with no retaining but a third nature out of the two (Euthyches) and thirdly two things may be so united that their distinct natures subsist in a single hypostasis, which was Leontinus's proposal for the council of 553 (Olson :245-246).

The argument continued with no end in sight even after Chalcedon. In all the arguments, the parties seem to hold rival attitudes claiming victory, labeling each other as losers. The debate on the nature of Christ was not as important to the

mass as it was so important to the camps fighting either side. In addition the debate seems so political than salvific. What requires one to be saved? May be a firm faith upon the death and resurrection of Lord Jesus Christ and that Jesus Christ is God forever and ever. Extended knowledge on the natures and the way they conjugated is secondary as far as the lay believer is concerned.

Though, all the above arguments have never touched the case of taking both the human and the divine materially in Christ. The Idea of saying 'Christ was only human while he was on earth' demands a clear justification of the whereabouts of His former divine qualities.

Christological discussions in Berkhof

Christology is treated in Berkhof's systematic theology, in a sequence such as, the doctrine in history (Part I), the relation between Anthropology and Christology (in which human kind was created in the image of God but fallen therefore in need of a redeemer), therefore Christology gives the remedy; then the evolution of the doctrine before the reformation and after the reformation (Berkhof 1953 :305-308). Part two deals with names and natures of Christ. The names of Christ has a similar treatment in Berkhof as elsewhere, but his treatment of the natures of Christ strictly sticks to Chalcedon 451, against those in the age of reason during the 18th Century, who claimed to have found nothing more than a man in Christ. Among these; Schleiermacher , Ritschl, Wendt, and the liberal school represented by Harnack, the eschatological School of Weiss and Schweitzer are main ones in the list, who agree in the denuding Christ of His true deity, and reducing Him into human dimensions (Berkhof :316).

Berkhof underlined that it is of the utmost importance to maintain the doctrine of the two natures, as it was formulated by the council of Chalcedon and is contained in our confessional standards (Berkhof :316). He argued that two natures are necessary for the scriptural doctrine of the atonement (Berkhof :319).

Another important element considered in the treatments of Berkhof is the Unipersonality of Christ, which is the discussion of God and Man in one person. Berkhof said, at Chalcedon 451, we are simply told what Jesus is, without any attempt to show how He became what He is. He took upon Himself our humanity and not, as Brunner reminds us, that the man Jesus acquired divinity. This is a movement from God to man rather than a vice versa (Berkhof :321). Under his treatments of the effects of the union of the two natures in one person, an issue of mutability/immutability is discussed. Berkhof said no change in the divine nature, making it remained impassible, as He is incapable of suffering and death, free from ignorance, and insusceptible to weakness and temptation. Here, Berkhof corrects the understanding that the divine took upon himself the human'. Berkhof said that the person of the Son of God became incarnate (Berkhof :323).

Important question worthy of discussion here is if the two natures are governed under one person, how will the two natures communicate to each other? The same person is divine, Omni, unchangeable etc... in one hand and a man of sorrow, limited knowledge, limited power, subject to human interests and misery on another hand. As far as rationality is concerned, this case is not argued well in Berkhof, but just said, may be through undivided and unmixed unity; or through an operation of grace or anointing upon the man (Berkhof :324).

Berkhof also discussed the kenosis doctrine, which had its glory in the middle of the 19th century, as another alternative to the mystery of the communication of the two natures. According to the Lutheran theologians who made extensive use of such a theory, it is simply a self limitation of the God-man, where he laid aside the actual use of his divine attributes. In the actual Kenoticists however, the Logos in the incarnation was denuded of all his attributes and was reduced to mere potentiality (Berkhof :325). One way or another, Berkhof said, Thomasius, Delitzsch, Cosby, Gess H.W Beecher, Ebrard, Martenson and Gore line up in the kenotistic camp (Berkhof :326).

Let's raise one important question. Which nature should die in order to make the atonement effectual? The divine or the human? Or the same one person in the divine and the human? If we say the human we would fall in the trap of Nestorianism who so divided between the two natures, the actions of the two natures as well. If we say the divine only died still the Nestorian division and the Creedal confession that the divine will never experience death will be in danger. If we say the divine-human, the possibility of the death of the divine demands due elaboration.

Berkhof continued the discussion on the states of Christ. The word 'State' according to him, denotes- relationship or position rather than condition. This argument began to bloom in the 17th Century though traces of it were in the *communicatio idiomatum* of the Lutherans (Berkhof :331). Two states are in view here; the humiliation and the exaltation. Here the reformed theology divides the humiliation into two such as: the emptying (that he laid aside the divine majesty) and secondly he became subject to the demands and to the curse of the law) (Berkhof :332). This happened only to the human Jesus not the Logos, according to the Lutherans, therefore the incarnation is excluded from the humiliation process. According to the Lutherans, the exaltation began during the descent into Hades and then through the resurrection and ascension. In the reformed theology the person of the mediator is the subject of exaltation (Berkhof :344).

Then Berkhof concludes his discussion of Christology by adding the offices of Christ such as the prophetic, the priestly (atonement and Intercessory works) and kingly offices (Berkhof :356-410).

This research prefers the simple self-limitation of God-man as the self-limitation is a necessity if salvation should be an effective reality. Christ is originally God and was with God (Jn 1:1). Christ was willing to come out of God and became man (Jn 1:14). As to the whereabouts of the 'divine power' during the realization of the incarnation, it may be said that the divine enablement's are never robbed of him but confined into self-limit of non-action for the working out of all human

frailty, for the purpose of activating humanness, suffering and death. The divine enablements's, been there in Him, belongs to Him forever, but were disabled temporarily. The self-limit is not extinction but a stance in the willing defenseless position.

Who became man? Who died? It was "Him" or the same person who became man and died, therefore the uni-person serves both natures, starting the incarnation all the way through eternity.

The effect of suffering and death during the incarnation and His crucifixion affects his entire person not only his human nature. Therefore, this research underlines that the God became man, suffered, died and rose, as these experiences were before him, way back before actualization, and are in His control forever. He is able to stay alive, as he is still able to yield Himself unto death and to gain victory over death.

Christological Discussions in Grudem

Grudem follows almost the same outline of Christology in most systematics, in his pages 529-634. Under his discussion of the person of Christ, Grudem has raised a question like *how is Jesus fully God and fully Man, yet one person*. As it is presented before, Berkhof's way of treatment is more on the theological discussions here and there, then scriptural proofs for this or that and finally his stand. A little deviating, Grudem prefers more to start with scriptural proofs for a theory or assumption. Therefore the question above is more or less treated by a discussion on the humanity of Christ first and then the deity of Christ (Grudem 1994 :529).

The first proof given by Grudem for the humanity of Christ is the virgin birth referring to (Matt 1:18,20,24-25; Lk 1:35 3:23). In the virgin birth, according to Grudem, Jesus has not inherited sin because his descent was through the woman only not through the man-Adam (Grudem :530). The same time, no sin or sinful acts in Him though He could have sinned as his human part could be

and has been tempted (Grudem :537-540).

Another proof for humanity given by Grudem is his human weaknesses and limitations with a human Body, Human Mind, Human Soul and Human emotions. He said, people near Jesus saw him as only human (Grudem :531-535). For all his arguments, enough biblical quotes are forwarded, though the texts referred may not necessarily be proofs as Grudem might claim.

The same way Grudem continued to quote scriptural claims for the Deity of Christ. This scriptural claims include John 1:1,18; John 20:28; Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1 :8 etc... Additional proof is the Greek term Kyrios (Lord) (Grudem : 544). Here Kyrios or Kurios seems confusedly presented.

Grudem then went on giving strong Claims to Deity, evidences also that Jesus Possessed Attributes of Deity (Grudem :545-552) , still all backed up with plenty scriptural quotes. He then concluded saying Jesus is truly and fully man and God. His name is rightly called “Emmanuel,” that is “God with us” (Matt 1:23) (Grudem :552). The next series discussions in Grudem evaluated Christological thought frames before Chalcedon 451, Apollinarianism, Nestorianism, Eutuchianism and the solution in the Chalcedonian definition (Grudem : 553-558).

Communication of the two natures is also treated in Grudem but not clearly argued as Berkhof does. It is even not clear as he said that the “post resurrected Jesus is everywhere but not the man as if the man Jesus is left aside somewhere in heaven in its own term (Grudem :559). He said the baby Jesus at the manger Bethlehem was also upholding the universe at the same time. The question to Grudem is “where is his limitation then”? Or what is the incarnation all about?

Does the Bible affirm the human nature of Christ as presented in Grudem’s discussions? This is very true. Does the Bible affirm the deity of Christ as presented in Grrudem’s quotations? This is also very true. Does the Bible tell that the baby Jesus was upholding the universe at the same time being a human

baby, as presented in Grudem's discussion? Nowhere is this hinted but probably quoted from Grudem's theological heat. Does the Bible say the post resurrected Jesus and his humanity are divided, as presented in Grudem's discussion above? Nowhere the Bible says so, but only in Grudem's theological heat.

This research asserts that, Christ in the baby manger is the same Christ/Logos in eternity, as far as person is concerned but the baby manger Christ is only a true baby as far as empowerment is concerned.

Christological Discussions in Grenz

Theological persuasion for Grenz as we see in his Book "*Theology for the Community of God*, 1994" is concerning the community and the kingdom of God. His Christological treatment also allies with fellowship of Jesus the Christ with God. For Grenz, Christology is the believing community reflecting the confession of faith in Jesus as "God with us." Grenz said, at the heart of Christology in turn is the confession that God is present in Jesus (Grenz, 1994 :245); But in what way? Grenz himself asks. Before he gave the answer to his own question, Grenz made evaluation of developments of the affirmation of Jesus Deity in the midst of heretic temptations (Grenz :246-249).

According to Grenz theologians from Augustine to Luther declared that affirmation of Jesus Deity must come from the witnesses of Gospel narratives. The Pietists said any knowledge in the head must base the heart. In 1900 thinkers divorced the Christ of faith from the Jesus of History (Grenz :249). The 20th Century introduced the Christ of the kerygma, as presented in the works of Martin Kahler, Emil Brunner, Karl Barth, and Rudolf Bultmann. All in all what is foundational for Grenz's Christology is the history of Jesus Nazareth (Grenz :251).

Next, proposals are given by Grenz in the affirmation of Jesus' perfect life or sinlessness which is a proof for his perfect humanity and his deity (Grenz :252-253). Jesus' teachings, Jesus death, Jesus' claims, Jesus resurrection are given

as proofs for God-man thesis. Therefore, Grenz says, “we affirm that Jesus is divine on the basis of his history” (Grenz :251-261).

The implications of Jesus as one with God, is explained in the functional-ontological plays by Grenz. Jesus is portrayed as the revealer of God. As the task of revealing God is a divine activity which Jesus carries out, for he is revealing the essence of God (Jn 14:9). The revealer cannot be separated from what is revealed. As a consequence of this connection, Jesus participates by necessity in the essential nature of the one he reveals. He must be ontologically one with God and share in the divine essence which he exemplifies. A self giving compassionate God is seen here through the incarnation (Grenz :264-266).

From the unity or fellowship of Jesus with God, Grenz shifted to the affirmation that Jesus is true human. He said, Jesus, in other words is, the revelation of humanness as intended by God and humanness of Jesus in a broader sense is the eternal kingdom, life in which God intends for us to participate. Kingdom living is life-in-community (Grenz :282-283).

Concerning the fellowship of Deity and Humanity in Jesus, Grenz, said, as Christians, we affirm that Jesus of Nazareth is at the same time both truly divine and truly human. This is standard Chalcedonies orthodox Christianity. However, Grenz said, to say Jesus is fully divine and fully human is inherently paradoxical (Grenz :294-295). Grenz tried to give solution to such mystery by the Logos occurrence (330 times according to his statistics) in the New Testament. The Logos (the principle of the universe), therefore, was connected to the rationality and understandability of the world (Grenz: 300-301). The other additional alternative is the “Son” as in ancient near east “son” is a name given to only persons believed to be offspring of gods (Grenz :302).

Concerning the incarnation, Grenz still followed the historical development. He referred to the Chalcedonian formulation and said, “in the incarnation, the Son did not unite with the human person, but with human nature, which gained existence in its connection with the *Logos (enhypostasis)*. As the consequence of

the incarnation, the one person Jesus Christ enjoys the properties of the two natures (*communicatio idiomatum*), (Grenz :306-307). Grenz also raised the kenosis theory but as only with flows and swiftly moved to modifications of kenosis theory.

The reformulated kenosis theory postulates that in the incarnation the Logos did not lay aside the divine attributes themselves, nor those powers inherent to deity. Rather, the Son gave up the independent exercise of these powers (Grenz :307). Then he concluded his incarnational discussions with a critique of incarnational Christology (Grenz :308); Significance of the incarnation (Grenz: 309); Jesus Preexistence (Grenz : 311); and the virgin birth (Grenz :314).

What does Grenz mean while he said “the revealer cannot be separated from what is revealed”? The divine can reveal Himself through any tool but this can never make the tool necessarily divine. What does Grenz mean by the independent exercises of the powers? If he meant that the human limited power only was active and the divine was non-active, this research also affirms that. But if Grenz is implying that there was a simultaneous action one after the other according to the cases in front, this is a repetition of Nestorians’ not Chalcedony.

Christological Discussions in Erickson

Erickson in His book “Christian Theology, 1998” begun his discussion by the search for the historical Jesus. Erickson listed thinkers who line up in this contest, such as David Strauss, Ernest Renan, Adolf von Harnack, which in many ways represents the pinnacle, in his treatise of the ‘non miraculous Jesus’ and the end of the search for Jesus (Erickson, 1998 :679-680).

According to Erickson, Albert Schweitzer in His ‘*Quest for the Historical Jesus*’, almost put an end to the liberal thoughts. Martin Kahler in His Historical Jesus and the Historic Biblical Christ also added a new value to end up liberal stands, about the historical Jesus (Erickson :681). Then, Erickson very lightly discussed issues of ‘Christology from above’ and issues of ‘Christology from below’ with

their strengths and weaknesses (Erickson :682-688).

Erickson as he mostly does, entertained both extremes and brought them together through what he calls an alternative approach, which he also puts as evangelical stand (Erickson :689). In this model, the two factors are held in conjunction: neither the Jesus of History alone, nor the Christ of Faith alone, but the charismatic Christ as the key that unlocks the historical Jesus (Erickson : 691). With other issues as 'the person of Christ'; 'the Deity of Christ'; 'Functional Christology'; 'the Humanity of Christ', Erickson follows almost similar outline with the above Scholars, particularly Berkhof and Grudem; with a substantial treatment of the historical developments upon each item of Christology, biblical proofs and then a middle way position in all (Erickson :692-738).

Concerning the unity of the person of Jesus Christ, after a review of all the historical developments, Erickson puts his alternative position:

1- The incarnation was more an addition of human attributes than a loss of divine attributes, and his proofs are from Phil 2:3-7. With almost no enough discussion he just jumps to quote Col 2:9.

2-Jesus acted always as divinity-humanity not independently or alternatively, but limitation of the divine because of the human, through what he calls a circumstance induced limitation (Erickson :751-752).

As it was discussed before at the beginning of this chapter, noted theologians and systematicians including Erickson seem to ignore "the becoming/*egneto*" in John 1 :14. The becoming is a box of limitation. The person is the same but the power is limited. This research fully agrees to sayings that Jesus acted always as divinity-humanity not independently or alternatively. But a compromise method by Erickson is more confusing than salvific to the Christological field.

Counteractive Arguments

We have seen that it was the Logos-God who became man. In any discussion of

the nature of Christ referring the divine status of Him from eternity is beyond question, as far as the position in this research is concerned. Then the exegetical analysis so far proved that this God became Man. The process is referred as the becoming than an addition of humanness as far as John 1:14 is concerned. The hub of the argument here goes like saying the notion of taking both Human and Devine materially in the incarnate Christ needs theological justification, for the very decree of human salvation needs Christ's complete becoming into Human (Phil 2:5-11 and Mark 15:33-38).

The debates we have seen so far tell, so distinguishing between the two natures as far as an independent exercise of the two in Nestorius and a little bit in Grenz, so uniting as far as losing former identities in Euthyches, protecting the natures in perfect unity within the frame of one nature and one person in Cyril, protecting the mystery of two natures and uni-person in Chalcedon 451, two things may be so united that their distinct natures subsist in a single hypostasis, which was Leontinus's proposal for the council of 553. These are basic frames on the continuum. Recent scholars are still entertaining the case yet most of them with a faithful position to Chalcedon.

In the analysis of Christological discussions in the EOTC concerning the 'perfect unity' of Cyril and 'duality' of Chalcedon, we have seen that, "Unity" according to the EOTC never implies the two former entities lost their former natures. It rather tells that the two have been united not to separate, not to remain two, not to be treated independently, but to be one, retaining their former individual qualities (See Heretics inside...p 127). EOTC's Christological analysis also underlines that, in order for the needed perfect unity to be effectual, there needs for some elements to be eliminated. For example, sinful nature is surely a scandal for the unity, therefore should be eliminated. The logic here is that the 'Son of God' cannot be a savior at the same time hold sinful nature from the human part. This must be done away for soteriological purposes, so as the innocent lamb may be sacrificed as a ransom to remove the sin of humanity (Heretics...127). Therefore incarnational analysis of "perfect Unity/*Tewhado*" is the central key to understand

EOTC Christology. Habtemariam Workneh the late dean of Trinity College of the EOTC similarly said *“We accept both unity and duality in Christ who in acting performed as one. Christ, in whom humanity and divinity were united in one person and one nature, was crucified on the cross”*.

The Chalcedonies Creed (451 A D), sees a united duality without separation, retaining their individual natures, getting united through a process of the conquering role of the person of Word/Logos, with no confusion or mix and with no losing of the former qualities (Heretics inside...:128) .

But it is discussed in chapter three that just before Chalcedon, Cyril has articulated the “union”, a little bit differently from Chalcedon, Saying; “two natures”, coordinated to leave back duality and/or twinity and became “Unity” towards one, but not to remain two (Kidanewold :85). Against Euthyches, the unity is without confusion or mixture but just like the unity of the Soul and Body under one person in a Human being united not to be two, not to separate anymore, not to be seen divided.

In an interview done to 190 Evangelical Seminarians in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Christological analysis goes like; Christ held both Divine and Human qualities during His Earthly ministry.

1-This argument first stood as a defendant and with compassion not to belittle the personality of Christ by robbing off his divine qualities. Those who supported this view felt somewhat spiritual in defending Him through an offer of the divine qualities to the human material. This argument begs an answer for no question. This thesis is never tempted to deny the divinity of the Logos (Jn 1:1). Still this argument is not clear as to how much divine was materially there in the incarnate Christ.

All suggestions of the interviewee were flowing from some New Testament texts which are said to be supportive of this idea. The texts are mostly exposing Jesus’ miraculous deeds to heal the sick, walk on water, changing the water into wine,

calm the noisy killer storm, multiplying few loaf of bread to many, raising the dead and the likes (Mark 2:1-12, 6:45-50,8:1-10,John 2:1-11,4:50,5:1-9,6:1-14,9:1-11; 11:1-16). According to this argument this could never be done on a human level except through the application of the divine qualities. This may imply Nestorianism's independent acts of the two natures. At the same time simple face value quotation of verses has been a soft exegesis and only a simple reading meaning, which is evident especially Grudem which never heals the problem.

This argument also has applied a little bit of interpretative methods by combining the summery of the deeds of Jesus in the synoptic writers in addition to the approach of John the apostle in his Gospel. For example Jesus was described as the Messiah (Matthew), and the true servant (Mark), and the true man (Luke), and the true God (John) in the four documents of the Gospel history. Therefore according to the correspondents of this view, there is no way we can separate the divine nature from the human nature any time.

Evaluation of the analysis above:

First of all there is no need of defending Jesus. Whatever happened to Jesus has never happened suddenly. All was according to the decree and/or foreknowledge of God. At the same time what Christ confessed about Himself during his earthly ministry by itself is enough defense of who He is than anyone's sympathy to Him. In John 5:28-30 we see people amazed at what Christ has done, yet His response was a confirmation of His complete limitedness or incapacitated status. This was clear when he summarized all his deeds saying "By myself I can do nothing" vs. 30, (*the NIV study Bible*). Defending what is not there is simply exerting unnecessary and futile efforts. Let's not put our defense on what Christ has not said, but on what he said and who He really was during His earthly ministry.

Secondly each individual text picked to be indicator of Christ's Divine quality in His earthly ministry, rather affirm His humanity, because in those texts he clearly

mentioned to Himself as the son of man (Mark 2:10, 8:31).

What was then the causing fact and purpose of the miracles and some seemingly indicator sayings of divinity in some of Christ's deeds and sayings? Reply here will be simple. First of all miracles aimed to introduce the advent of the Kingdom of heaven through the presence of Christ.

Christ was performing miracles as an object lesson to preach and teach so that they may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that by believing they may have life (John 20: 30-31). At the same time Christ was introducing the advent of the kingdom of God through His physical presence in complete human situation for he who was originally God, and with God referred as the 'eternal Word/Logos', is now the Emmanuel with us to unite the divine dimension with the Human created dimension (John 1:1; Matt 1:23).

Generally the miracles were performed under the anointing of the Spirit upon the human Jesus (Luke: 4:19, 11:20) and they were all performed on a human level, as anyone anointed is also able to perform them through faith in Him (John 14:12).

Third an argument from a unified thought of the synoptic Gospels and the fourth Gospel has neglected the time of the documentation of the records. Most of these materials were documented after the resurrection event- some 25- 50 years after Christ's ascension in the 60-66 A.D. and 90-95 A.D. Therefore each individual writer was well aware of the status of Christ as fully human and fully divine at that time. Their orientation of the full picture (His former Divine, His complete humanness with the divinity only positional, in His earthly ministry, and His unlimited empowered Human-Divine status after His ascension) has influenced them to offer us the full picture.

We say this because some are seen misinterpreting views on issues of Divinity and Deity. Divine qualities are meant to imply all about the qualities rather than the positional status Christ has. Yes, divineness is the quality of God and God

only. This quality is shared by none except for the persons in the Godhead. Yet this aspect is about the nature rather than status issue. A problem in some counteraction is confusing the nature issue with the status issue. A middle way might be that all the nature holds the status holds, yet all the status holds might not be held by all the nature holds.

To make this idea more clear what Christ holds positionally is not held materially when it comes to his humanity. His nature has shifted from the unlimited divineness to the limited humanness, though His position is retained. Divineness is unlimitedness in every aspect but humanness is limitedness in every aspect.

Christ was willing to come from the unlimited dimension to the limited dimension for the purpose of saving humanity in humanity. None of us can argue saying the divine pre-existent Christ was having the human nature in his pre-existent form. No healthy person again would argue the unlimited has not imposed limitedness upon Himself when it comes to the reality of the incarnation process because that's what the incarnation is all about (the unlimited moving to the limited dimension).

Therefore the one who is eternally existent in the infinite existence was actualized in the finite existence, for ours sake, historically, some 2000 years back. His uncountable years in eternity were made countable as 1, 2, and 3 when He willed to be literally confined of the divine qualities.

Again, incarnation is primarily the shrink of divinity to Humanity. The divine infinite dimension was succeeded by the finite limited dimension for a while, at least some 30-33 yrs of Christ's stay as human, on this physical world, with actualized physical flesh, and with a geographical and cultural limitation of not beyond Palestine and its surroundings.

In addition to this, Christ has never denied his limited reality while he was on this earth. Some mentions of such incidents are as 1-His testimony of his limited Knowledge (Mk 5:13:30; 6:38; 9:21; Lk 2:46:13:32), He also said by myself I can

do nothing (John 5:30) etc....

Generally the incarnation is a historical occurrence with no change to the person of the divine Christ, with no less of deity, yet with radical change to his materiality, for the flesh was not part of the eternally pre-existent Christ, and then continued as a limited man till the finish of His walk on the cross, limiting His divine qualities, yet without being robbed of His deity.

Then the incarnation was succeeded by the resurrection where the blend of the divine and human qualities continued timelessly. To make this clear, personality, Deity, and Divinity, three terms found either intermingled or independently in the Bible. Person refers to identity, and deity refers to authority and power, whereas divinity refers to quality. Still personality is part of deity/ divinity.

What do we mean by saying Christ was only Human (nature wise not person wise) during His earthly ministry? Let's see this through series of successive points which we think would clarify the stand.

1-The very decree of human salvation demands a limitation of divinity to humanity. It is true that God could have saved us anyways for he is omnipotent but the ill of humanity would better be treated with the cure of humanity. An antibody treatment is natural and scientific practice in a disease control mechanism. Our body might be affected by a bacterial or viral disease and our body will also develop its own defense mechanism to do away with the next similar attacks. Is it not then logical for Christ to take the very nature of humanity in order to save humanity?

The process of incarnation by itself is defined as a practical, concrete and complete becomingness from the divine dimension to the Human dimension though the divine qualities were never robbed of Christ. The divine dimension is completely a different set of uncreated substance and the human dimension is a complete set of createdness. With this in mind it is impossible to say the divine was just mixed with the human and the human was sometimes borrowing the

divine as an aid for some of its activities, no independent exercise, no simultaneous alternation but an act of one human nature.

Still it seems fair to say that the person of Christ is not a created substance, at the same time is not a unity of two entities or identities. The eternal Christ referred as the word of God, who was the beginning and who was with God and who was God Himself, has become human/flesh without adding or changing his eternal uncreated person, but confining it into a temporary non-use (Jn 1:1-5).

Still Christ was neither robbed of his divine qualities nor were the divine qualities in use. It is just a voluntary nonuse of them for the purpose of saving humankind. No salvation can be attained through lending these qualities and avoiding human limitations. His willful limitation to humanness is also a willful exposure to whatever damages happened to him. His emptiness in human image and all his sufferings he willfully faced were never fake but real (Phil 2:5-11).

Such thinking bases its profoundness on texts of the New Testament as Phil 2:5-11, where Godly Image has completely and voluntarily shifted to Human image and the Human Image has later released the divine qualities right after humanness has completed its assignments. Another supportive text is Mark 15:33-37 where Christ's complete rejection was evident in His God forsaken "ABBA" shout and of his substitutionary death. People were saying his incapacitated status to defend himself from his accusers and this was not just fake drama but real historical phenomena. Hebrews 5:7-10 and 13:32, are also clear concerning the total dependency of Christ on God in His earthly ministry.

Some seemingly confusing texts like-Mark 2:5, John 18:5-8, are treated through a mirror of the above texts and concepts to never speak about the borrowing of the divine qualities sometimes as He wishes. In contrast these texts magnify the human power rather than divine power in practice, if they are rightly and contextually interpreted.

Ex- He was able to manage escape from his persecutors, well this can happen

and has happened to many human ministers in the biblical scenario as Elijah and Elisha, and to many even today. Escape can happen on the human level; therefore this couldn't be the case for divinity.

His Persecutors fell down when they were about to seize Him (John 18:5-8). He was not running to save himself from their drugging. Yes they failed but this has happened in a time when Christ was truly willing to suffer as a sacrifice to many. How could we say his activity and goal to save humanity, in His humanity, was sometimes interrupted by his divine attributes? Whether with or without His consciousness. This is completely a contradiction of the divine decree.

He released forgiveness therefore He used His divine quality (Mark 2:5). Was he using this opportunity as an object lesson to teach and preach or for a show of His Divine qualities? How could forgiveness come in the total scenario of the New Covenant? Is it not through a willful and complete becoming (Jn 1:14), to Humanness? All our forgiveness has come through the work of Christ in His incarnation where the divine substance is completely substituted by the human created material and was ready to share human predicament with the suffering on the cross. Then God's decree to forgive humanity through rejecting His eternal son on the cross was realized when Christ submitted his will to the will of the father (Mark 14:32-42, 15:34). Therefore Christ's confession of forgiveness was primarily a stepping stone to his next preaching and a prophetic utterance pointing towards the true forgiveness on the cross. Eucharistic practices of the Old Testament were effective in applying forgiveness parallel with what Jesus did in the above texts.

The eternal Son of God has been sent to the village of humanity in the existence of humanity with no exception of nature but fully human (Jn 17:3; Phil 2:11; Mark 15:39), in order to be abandoned for humanities sake, yet as the humanity of the historical Jesus was real, His divinity was also real as he was never robbed of His divine qualities. Still He willfully avoided them for the mission of saving humanity. There is no Soteriology without a reality of Humanity for Humanity is

the cure of Humanity. The difference is the saving agent is the God who became Human and who remained God-man for ever and ever to unite lost Humanity with God.

Possible question here is the uncertainty of indivisibility and irreducibility of being, personal or impersonal. Nazianzen said 'I see one torch, and cannot divide or measure out the undivided light' (Nazianzen Select orations NPNF : 40-41). Of course he said this in his discussion of the nature and unity of the trinity. Yet the rational here may be applicable to our discussion of the nature of Christ when he became flesh.

Irreducibility and indivisibility is likely to everything, leave alone God himself as a being. Ontological reductionism says the smallest units like atoms and molecules are naturally with the same content to the big whole (Poole :38). This is just saying the higher level phenomenon has emerged from a lower level phenomenon (Lennox 2007 :55). Anything reduced may still give a product with the same composition essentially.

This logic is primarily driven from the philosophical explanation that higher and complex nature out there has emerged from a combination of the lower atomistic or molecular elements. The same way human beings are machines for DNA. Such theory moves from the lowest to the complex, from what is there out to the origin, from the effect to the cause, making 'the origin' and 'the cause' to be the final product rather than a cause itself.

Since this logic basically corrupts established Theo-centric doctrine, in which God stands as a self-existing God, many may not be tempted with such erroneous explanations. First of all such reasoning has no substantial addition as to what might be the person, his feeling, joy and fear which are beyond any measurements.

This logic, applied to the incarnation, more or less may imply that in some way the divine will only have a size reduction rather than content reduction,

conclusively saying the divine Christ is in no way reducible, even during the incarnation and therefore the meaning of incarnation will be meaningless.

Biblical voices seem to go against this scientific rule. For example, what could one say concerning the loud cries and tears of Jesus to the one who could save him from death during the period between the walls of incarnation and resurrection other than reducibility (Heb 5:7). Mark 15:39, implies the absence of the divine enablement during the agony of Jesus on the cross. On the same line Philippians 2:6-8 confirms the above argument saying 'made Himself nothing. Trinity seems to share this reducibility positionally, yet this happened to Christ only when it comes to its physical application where the Son was reduced but not the father or the Holy Spirit (Psalm 8:5). If the scientific explanation and the biblical texts counteract each other the matter will then be left for sorts of responsible and reasonable choices to either the scientific rule or the biblical rules.

As a conclusion it might be said that we don't fully know therefore align ourselves with protection of the mystery, but we still continue to believe that a divine is able to limit himself without changing or destroying also Himself following His own will.

An attempt of trying to set a simple and down to earth kind of theological framework which may be a common heritage to all is an impossible task. As Kaufman said the mystery in God and the finitude of humanity makes the task fundamentally complicated. He added saying; theology is and has always been, an activity of imaginative construction by persons attempting to put together as comprehensive and coherent picture as they could of humanity in the world under God.

As knower's we should be willing to live harmoniously with mysteries. All humans are products of spermatoc fluid before they got the structure today. That spermatoc fluid is a sort of fluid which looks nothing but just a fluid, which is actually with the potential to be at the same time not yet. What could have happened to that simple fluid had it been not transferred into its mother's womb

and protected in there fed through the mothers system.

Fortunately enough it may be passed into the mother's womb and kept there for months to mature being fed through the system. Now it is no more fluid; the potential to be has begun to change into an actual being. Potential legs are becoming actual legs, potential bones are becoming actual bones, potential hands are becoming actual hands, the same with the nose, eye, ears, and so on.

As to what is the arithmetic behind, no one knows but every human being lives with such a mystery harmoniously, without hating to live as one who was once just spermatic but later a giant concrete living structure. We all don't know the original chemistry of the spermatic fluid, the same time we all don't know how a potential was ever destined to be actual yet we choose to live with such a mystery with no question.

Has anyone been angry because he/she doesn't know such mystery? Have we ever tried to reverse such a process and start a new in order to get the whole picture from zero to hero? Live alone trying, no one ever seem to take time and think and try to understand. Almost all of us happily live with it. The fact is we believe it but we don't know it.

See also the dynamism of growth. What I know is a little that I always need something to eat every day many times. I have been feeding myself for all the years lived. How much would it be the amount which I ate if it was been reversible, just to trace the amount? I think no one ever has troubled himself to record that or know that. Similarly I just ask without getting troubled by it. Yet, I know one thing that all the eating has contributed towards the dynamism of growth and aging to keep me active and alive within this existence.

We always change, and the change seems to be from zero to hero and then again from hero to zero dying every day. What is the mystery behind? Why birth? And why death? What is birth and what is really death? We don't really know but we seem to live harmoniously with such a mystery. We don't know fully but we

live with it believing it as a given.

Mothering is one of the secrets of nature. But mothers do not seem to worry or ask why they are mothers. Fathering is the secret of nature but fathers do not seem to care to know. They just father their kids. A mother is made mother by her siblings and a father is made father by his siblings. Do they care about the how and why of the siblings? I don't think so, but they try to be responsible as much as they can through some derive from unpredictable source.

All of us were almost nothing and we become something, then we are relating, depending on one another, we always change and we always age towards beauty and again towards nothingness. This looks uninterrupted vicious circle. No one asks why but chooses to live with the mystery. We don't know but we believe with 'a head passive' but the 'a heart active'. In your head you don't exactly know or you doubt but in your heart you can't deny therefore you believe. Faith of the self is a seldom questioned given fact.

A little more we may add concerning the things beyond our limits. It seems that we are able to sit and then to stand and then to walk and then to eat and then to use the CR for our waste system. Is it not wonderful to sit in the CR and relax through the process of displacing waste from our system and this happens very peacefully? Then we are able again to come out of the CR and walk confidently as if nothing happened. We again assume our routine activities getting energized through dynamism of life. Has any one asked why and how? I don't think so. There you go and you have a free air, a free sunshine, free rain, the greenery, rivers and oceans, riches of nature which was there and none of us have contributed for it to be there. May be our contribution these days is working against nature's dynamism destroying it for temporary selfish consumption.

Yes, natural resources were originally free but humanity is selfishly and greedily making them less enough for subsistence. One way or the other very few control it, greedily manipulate it and billions are suffering as a result of the greed.

Though, nature has its own frame of justice, that those who are now able to do

“anything” will no more be able. Those who greedily controlled everything and are renting everything which was originally provided freely will come to know that this is a time of justice within the dynamism of life.

All power, all glory and all authority starts to go down again, death stretches and holds with its strong grip and humanity comes to know the ontological anxiety borrowing the word from Paul Tillich. Once we were strong capable of doing this and that but now we are helplessly laid there awaiting death welcoming us.

But we all want to stay alive and try to push away death. We are happy to stay alive and enjoy life with all its miseries and mysteries’. No good bye until it is time to say good bye. No one had chance to taste life or existence before into it either to decide to live or not.

The Idea of God

Such a thought more or less leads us to the idea of the one who originates and controls such a system. This “One” is still a mystery that some consider it as Brahman in Vaidanta Monism. Others consider it as just ultimate force. Judaism points at him as the creator (Gen 1:1 and Jn 1:1-2).

Christianity fully followed the frames laid by the Jews through what is known as the God who successively revealed Himself as is recorded in the inspired documents of the Old Testament.

This revelation, Christians believe, became complete in the incarnation of Jesus Christ and in the death of God on the cross which made the mysterious “One” very accessible as “one of us” and all the incapacitated fallen existence is renovated through the justice of God inflicted upon Jesus over the Cross, which made God to die as to the point that life in its source everywhere was disconnected for hours; death and darkness have dominated the scene for a while (Lk 23:44)

A little more here which might unpack the enigma, is the consideration that

Christians on the ordinary level simply believe but we surely don't know. John 1:1-2 says "In the beginning there was the God, and the God was with God and the God was God" (paraphrasing mine). It tells us the beginning; it tells us that God was in the beginning, and God was with God and also God was God. How many Gods? What is meant by God and God with God and then God? The dilemma of the same single thing in oneness; the same single thing in plurality. John seems to use a word play here, trying to reflect both the oneness and duality by saying God and Word/Logos, but both God and the Logos is God.

The unity of God and the Logos is the divinity and the duality of the God and Logos is the person. The duality may also go towards the functional aspects/mission, where God is basically the origin and the Logos is the one who comes out of the origin, first to create and then redeem.

So this means God has come out of God to create; God has come out of God to redeem (Incarnation) and God has come out of God to die. Here comes more complication or mystery. How can God come out of God if God is one? Unless God is no more thought as "One" but plural; at least two. Or there is wisdom to see the oneness for one thing but the duality for another thing. Our finitude won't let us know such a mystery but we normally live with it as we all normally live with the mystery of nature within each one of us, let alone the mystery in the nature and communication of God.

The question still persists. How can God die if he is God? What does death mean for God? When does death become death? If the undying should die, he must come out from God context and enter into man context. This is because God never dies unless he comes out of Himself. But what has happened to God when God came out of God? It may be said that the infinity and undying nature of God yielded to the finitude and dying nature temporarily (from the incarnation up until the resurrection).

Within the temporary shifts from God context to man context; God remained God but the Logos was away from God in willful humiliation/incarnation. What was out

there for the God who came out from God? There was no God but this time just a spermatic (seed) Logos who came out from God, who is with the potential to be but also susceptible to die, facing the fate of any potential human being who could be able to be or not to be; who could be able to become a being or may not be able to become a being.

The Logos in the womb of Virgin Mary through all the process in her system was passing through the dynamism from potential into becoming a full structure. He was born as a weak baby, grew as a 'son' in Joseph's house, in Bethany, Galilee and Judea villages.

Once the God acted to step out of God, all fates of evil including death were out there for him but the God who sent the God is still in control of the fate of God while the Logos-God was out there. We imagine this because the Gospel history vividly tells us that the God was with him where the Logos was out there.

Yes the Logos was out there, and his fate was lingering in the face of man and in the face of the God. His growth dynamism was like any human being in the face of man and God (Lk 2:52). He is no more with God as before, as he willingly and for the sake of saving mission stepped out but the God or the Spirit of God was with him. God was with him who sent the God to earth into finiteness, into humanness.

The sending of the God to God is stretched not only into this earth, weakness, humanness but the destination of the sending is to the cross. On the cross the sending and the escorting of the God to the Logos has been replaced by the forsaking of the Logos on the Cross so that the God-Logos may experience death. Here, sending achieved its goal and was succeeded by forsaking (Mk 15:34).

What has the forsaking accomplished? While God was with God the togetherness provides all the packages of Omni nature. While God was sending God the togetherness rests upon the will of the God not the Logos. While the

Logos was heading towards the cross the togetherness was completely replaced by forsakenness so that the mystery of death could work on the Logos God. The God who forsook made the God to be able to die yet the God was still in control.

Why should God forsake God? So that God may be able to taste, limitedness, human misery, bear debt of sin and suffering, ultimately, God may be able to die. God forsook God because this should happen so; because God was able to save him; yes because God knows he will save God/Logos and bring him back to life.

Then the resurrection followed and victory of God against the strong grip of mystery, suffering and death. This is because, the God who forsook again came to kill the taste of death in the Logos therefore forsakenness begun to be replaced by togetherness. The Logos was back again to life and infinity and his former Omni nature (Acts 2:32; Rev 1:18).

Is suffering of God still “Maya”? Still mystery? How can a good God allow his creatures to suffer loss and limitedness, death etc? Who is responsible for suffering, confusion and loss of humanity? May be God or may be humanity. Who is this God and where does he live? In what form and quality is he? Monotheism; Trinitarianism, Henotheism, Polytheism... A God who is mystery, at the same time a God who can never be ignored. Very far from our head and logic but very near to our heart and comes to us through faith. We don't know but we just believe.

To make the above thesis more tangible let's think of the spermatic (seed) life dynamism. If we are able to live with the mystery of our birth, the mystery of our changing and aging dynamism, the mystery of the body, Soul and Spirit may be, three in one and one in three, or two in one and one in two, why is it difficult to live with God and believe in the saving power of Jesus the Logos God, who became man, suffered and died, rose again, even though his nature remains mystery to us. I think we don't really know but we believe.

Chapter Six

I Moving Towards Unity

1.1 Learning from Past Interreligious Dialogue Theories and Experiences

Interreligious dialogue is the vision of the time, possibly the best way of future missions. Before we try to go into details of interreligious dialogue methodologies regarding Soteriology-Christology, it is better to see when and how this interreligious dialogues begun? why dialogue is necessity? and what direction it has towards the future of world missions for a united action?

Initiatives of dialogue could go as far as the second Vatican council (1962-65), during the historic papacy of John Paul II, which the council stated decrees seeking deeper understanding particularly with eastern orthodoxy, also with various "ecclesial communities" (Noll Mark with others; 2008 :12-13). After this, many conferences and symposiums are held as for instance the one among protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox representatives on the place of Virgin Mary in theology and worship (Noll Mark ...2008 :15). See also the closing words of Chapter II of the Decree 'Unitatis Redintegration' – "...and how the road to unity may be made smooth" (Art.12, para.2), which well express the intention of this document. Abbott states that the Decree on Ecumenism– "marks the full entry of the Roman Catholic Church into the ecumenical movement." (Konig & Geldenhuys, 1983:147).

The Roman Catholic Church should get the credit for its commitment to work for the restoration of unity among all followers of Christ (Horgan Thaddeus 1990 :33). Olson asks; could there be unity without uniformity? How diverse can the parts be and still produce symphony? Diversity can be healthy, but it takes a mature person to handle it (Olson 1999 :591-592).

1.2 Delimitations

This chapter may borrow ideas from past ecumenical attempts done by the Roman Catholic Church through the efforts of John Paul II fifty years ago and other ecumenical initiations done by others like Prof. Y. Iisaka. However a reference to such authorities only aims to borrow methodologies in the ecumenical encounter so that the methods may be applied as tools in the unity process, rather than repeating the dream of uniting the Roman Catholic Church with others or so. At the same time this research never aims to initiate ecumenical relations with Islam. The research also affirms that there will be no compromise as to the exclusiveness of Christ in the reconciliation of humanity to God. The aim of this thesis is to hint unity opportunities between the EOTC and EEC.

1.3 Why Dialogue?

Dialogue, be it interreligious or inter-institutional of any kind, is a necessity for at least three main reasons. Number one reason is that dialogue is naturally there with us in our everyday bargains such as; how laws of society should be made, what will insure a society's prosperity, a dialogue between communities in how to promote trade, or planning together for a scientific research or so (Michael 1995 :75). Number two reason for the need of dialogue is the deep seated sentiments and competitions between religious groups, getting revealed through strife's, harsh animosity with uncontrolled terrorism and war. Third, this age is an age of connectivity; therefore dialogue is the best strategy of future missions.

1.4 Interreligious dialogue: Meaning and Significance

Aplinar Senapati, in his article on "Vincentian Charism and Formation in Asia Pacific" said, dialogue is identifying a common bond which we may find in every religious group; For example, he said; in India, the Hindu, Sikhs, Muslims and Christians share Indianness together. Senapati said, to live a life of religion is to

live it inter-religiously, i.e., to accept and adopt what is good in other religions. Believers of different religions should be open to the faith of other religions². As Hans Kung states: “There can be no peace among the nations without peace among the religions. There can be no peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions.” Senapati added the following comment;

Inter-religious dialogue is a challenge and a historical mandate for the believers today. In the present multi-religious and democratic societies, the believers of different religions are called to live and grow in dialogue with persons of other religions. So rooted in once own faith and traditions, the Christians should be open to the spiritual riches of other religions aiming at the mutual understanding and harmony. They should realize the fact that the followers belonging to different religions are “co-pilgrims guiding one another towards the one transcendent goal” (Pope John Paul II, Assisi, 1986). It implies that they have to avoid at all levels any tendency to become a monolithic and monocultural institution. “Inter-religious dialogue helps believers to say “no” to fundamentalism, fanaticism, extremism and say “yes” to the liberative values of each faith, to the basic values of the human person and community, and to their protection and promotion.” Dialogue leads to communion among individuals and of individuals with God. It can do this only in humility, dialogue and mutual respect, without laying claim to a superior insight or authority³.

However, a reference to this document is, first of all to show the need of dialogue whatever the results may be; secondly the literature itself never demands a replacement of the exclusive faith’s held by the dialogue participants. The literature clearly states “*rooted in once own faith and traditions, the Christians should be open to the spiritual riches of other religions aiming at the mutual understanding and harmony*”. This is just a call to Christ’s Church to be an agent of peace and prosperity. This may be true only and only through openness despite fundamentalism, be it on the EOTC’s side or the EEC.

What is essential to the evangelicals like the doctrine from John 14:6 or Gal 1:8, will remain a possible common bond which both denominations are confessing consciously-unconsciously? If we may be able to trace to such hidden commonalities serving as bonding lines, this may be a step towards unity.

²Prof. Y. Iisaka teaches political science at Gakushuin University. He was a visiting lecturer at the University of Nebraska (1961-2) and lecturer at Nagoya University.

Similarly, Yoshiaki Iisaka, treating dialogue issues in his article “*The Significance of Inter-religious Dialogue for World Peace*”, under the title “*A common Concern*” said; a common concern must underlie, if inter-religious dialogue is to be fruitfully conducted. Even though religions cannot always speak a common language, the underlying common concern for peace; a common concern for humanity may overcome this language barrier. This is because expressed language is only one means of communication among religions as well as among men of diverse racial, national, cultural and other backgrounds.

Difficulties in inter-religious dialogue so far have been derived from each religion's claims to absoluteness and monopoly of truth and justice, its exclusiveness and resultant crusading spirit, its sense of messianic mission, its rivalry in propagation and proselytization and so forth. With these premises, dogma easily leads to dogmatism by absolutizing its own position.

Preparation for dialogue must start with contrition and confirmation of common concerns to be shared by different religions. Peace, in the sense of man's being in harmony with the Ultimate One, is certainly such a common concern for any religion of the world (____; <http://nirc.nanzan-u.ac.jp/publications/ijrs/pdf/CRJ-234.pdf>).

1.5 Interreligious dialogue: Initiatives

Second Vatican Council was called by Pope John XXIII in 1962, and continued under Pope Paul VI until 1965 when it issued "The Documents of Vatican II," each on different aspects of church teaching and doctrine. The spirit and attitude of these documents were remarkably different from any the Roman Catholic Church had ever produced. They were full of scriptural references, and did not include any blatant "curses" on those who did not agree (as previous councils had done). Series of developments after that, particularly in his Encyclical letter 1995, *Ut Unum Sint*, which deals with the “Ministry of unity of the Bishop of Rome, should be taken seriously as far as religious dialogue is concerned (Braaten 2001 :1)”.

Along with the letter is the directory for the application of principles and norms of Ecumenism, present to the Ecumenical movement, and extensive vision of how a church understands the ecumenical movement; its goal, the means to achieve that goal, its successes so far, and the work still to be done (Braaten 2001 :10) also his series of visits to different ecumenical celebrations “with churches and ecclesial communities that are not in full communion with the catholic church. For him they vividly express the new ecumenical awareness that, despite existing separations, “we all belong to Christ”. The pope’s ecumenical devotion to unity is based on Jesus’ high priestly prayer in Ch 17 of St. John’s Gospel (Braaten 2001 :1).

Hermeneutical insights to the results of Vatican II as far as the articles are concerned are as diversified as the variety of the researchers. However, almost all agree that there is no change as far as doctrine and the status of the Roman Catholic Church is concerned. What is to be taken as a change is; reform in liturgy and openness towards dialogue and brotherhood: (The Catholic Chronicles IV; *What Did Vatican II Really Change?* Edited and compiled by Keith Green).

As also reported by David A Shannon in his reflections on the Decree on *Ecumenism: A Free Church perspective*; in series of meetings during July 18-21, 1984, in Berlin, and also after a year in June 24-30,1985, then 1986, 1987,1988; he summarized his five year experience as a participant in the Roman Catholic-Baptist International conversation. He said the decree begins by calling all to recognize God’s revelation in Jesus Christ. Then unity is a fact according to the Decree. The second chapter of the Decree sets forth principles for active participation in the ecumenical movement, beginning with a call to repentance and exhortation to live “spiritual ecumenism”. The decree also proposes theological study and dialogue. This is followed by a clear exposition of some of the issues involved in the quest for Christian unity, including, 1: confessing Jesus as God and Lord; 2: the relationship between scripture and the church 3: the sacrament of baptism; 4: the Lord’s supper; and 5: the application of the Gospel

to moral conduct (Horgan 1990 :34-35).

What captured our attention is his testimony that all the discussions uncovered no significant differences with regard to the doctrine of the person and work of Christ, although some did appear with regard to the appropriation of Christ's saving work (Horgan 1990 :39). In this document conversion is said to be grasped only in faith and in the practice of Christian discipleship, which is presented as a turning away from all that is opposed to God, contrary to Christ's teaching, and turning to God, to Christ, the Son, through the work of the Holy Spirit. Conversion and discipleship are related to one another as birth to life (Horgan 1990 :40-41).

Discussions concerned with the church according to Shannon, centered on "*koinonia* of the spirit" (Phil 2:1; 2 Cor 13:14) sharing in one reality held in common, which is being called to the fellowship of his Son (Horgan 1990 :44). Mission issues in Catholic emphasized more on incarnation, where as the Baptist emphasized on redemption of fallen humanity from sin (Horgan 1990 :46). The approach of the Baptists and the Catholics differ concerning salvation within non-Christian religions.

The Roman Catholics have brought to an end the negative attitude towards the non-Christian religions. The same time the council made it clear that the church "proclaims and is in duty bound to proclaim without fail, Christ who is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). On the other end, "Baptists" have issued that there is no other name given under heaven by which humankind must be saved (Acts 14:12) (Horgan 1990 :48).

1.6 Sample Language Games

Under this portion we will try to see some samples depicting religious language games, hinting potential clues for religious dialogue. Shankara, Ibn Sina known as Avicenna, Moses Maimonides or Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (Moses son of Maimon) listed some clues within this discussion as models with the key for

possible language games towards religious dialogue.

Shankara delivered a thought about the possibility of Brahmanism or Brahma sutra is an idea of monism in Hinduism (Meister ...2010 : 97). Shankara's thoughts sought to overcome the Vedanta insistence against the Brahman/Atman's fundamental unchanging reality, and he also sought that Brahman and Atman are in some respects different, but at the deepest level non different (*advaita Vedanta*). For Shankara the Atman which is identical with Brahman and which is the only ultimate reality, beyond nature, unconfused with nature, is the true Self and knowledge of this Atman can only save (*Moksha*) from *Samsara*. Appearance of plurality is entirely the work of ignorance (Meister 2010 :98). How then can Atman be known? Only through faith, only through revelation, the *Sruti* (Meister 2010 :105).

Ibn Sina known as Avicenna in the West lived (c 980-1037) in central Asia Bukhara. Focuses of his arguments are; God's existence, God's properties, theological language, divine providence and prophesy. For him the essence and existence of things differ from each other. He said series of causes without first cause is impossible. The first cause exists then the contingent effects continue to exist (Meister :107-108). The first cause may continue to exist without existing as its effects do, or as its contingent beings do (Meister :108).

Concerning divine properties and theological language, he denies that God can be composed of constitutive parts, like parts of a statement, which explains the meaning of his name. He never implies that his statements about God in human terms are equivocations (Meister :110). This creation is essentially good since its creator is perfectly good. Goodness is the property of God and evil is its non-existence or lack of some perfection proper to it. God cannot be non-existent and he cannot lack any perfection proper to him. Avicenna anyways divides evil into three as; metaphysical (the nonexistence or the lack of natural beings), natural (such as destructive fires and floods) and ethical (Meister :111-112).

Moses Maimonides or Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (Moses son of Maimon), was

born in Cordoba Spain 1135/8 and died 1204(Meister :117). At a young age he wrote an innovative commentary to the Mishnah, the core corpus of Jewish Law and his later book on commandments. Aquinas, Meister Eckhart, Leibnitz and Spinoza were all influenced by Maimonidas. He is very much controversial that interpretations of his works are diversified. Yet in his theistic views he implied negative theology like saying; we know only what God is not rather than who God is. His religious views are treated in three ways such as;1- semantics-meanings assigned to statements 2-dogmatics-meaning and truth value of dogmatic and 3-pragmatics-reasons for religious behavior (Meister : 119-126).

1.7 Peace among us is peace of the World

If we claim to be agents of peace, this must first start within us-religious institutions. Peace within us is surely peace of the world. History reveals that causes of conflict and war mostly emerge among religions. We might say the wars ancient and current are not free of political agenda's, selfish interests of peoples and nations. Biblical samples tell that there was war between the Jew and Gentiles, Assyrians and the Jew or Babylonians and the Jew or the Greeks and the Romans from the ancient history; wars between the "Christians and the Muslims" during the middle ages; wars between the west camp and the Arab world concentrated in the middle east; big or small, the religious element is evident. One way or the other the religious philosophy behind the nations and political power plays characterize the political agenda.

If so, it is true that if the dialogue agents succeed making peace accepting each other; respecting each other; understanding each other; standing together on the common concerns; there will surely be peace in the world or peace among political powers. This even gives chance for the religious institutions to play a leading role in the political spectrum.

For example, if we examine the three major and ancient religions, Judaism Christianity and Islam, due to their common ancestry, all share many similarities. The Semitic traditions are classified as monotheistic religions. These are the

“People of Book” as they have their own distinctive Holy Scriptures. Hebrew Bible is shared by Judaism and Christianity and there are multiple biblical stories found in the Qur’an though with some variants and with changed focus. Judaism and Islam share many biblical prophets. In fact 26 of the “Hebrew Prophets” along with their stories are mentioned in the Qur’an. These prophetic traditions have ethical orientation and eschatological outlook. All emphasize upon the observance of divine law for human salvation is also common among many Jews and Muslims. Judaism and Islam prescribe circumcision and strict dietary laws. Both the traditions prescribe daily worship/prayers (*Avodah and Salat*) and specified amount of charity (*Tzedakah and Zakat*).

Christianity and Islam share Jesus, his virgin birth- hence veneration for Mary, his mission, his miracles and, to an extent, his resurrection and second coming. It is true that Muslims deny the deity of and incarnation of and salvation (mission) by Christ. This research reserves this claims uncompromised.

In reality many terms such as monotheism, scripture, prophets, law, salvation and eternal life carry quite different meanings in these faith traditions. In spite of the fact all share Abraham as a patriarch; they differ about his exact world view and belief system. The Qura’n maintains that Abraham was the strength of ethical monotheism and a staunch opponent of polytheism in all its forms.

It seems almost certain that the God of the Jews evolved gradually from the Canaanite El, who was in all likelihood the 'God of Abraham'...This all narration leads towards seeking principles and proposals to unite the EOTC and EEC.

II EOTC-EEC: Fertile Soil towards Ecumenicalism: Principles and Proposals

2.1 Current Treatments of Christology in EOTC

The early 5th century Monophysites, having been chased away at the counsel of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., faced persecution and found refuge in Ethiopia. It is also reported as the East-West or Catholic-Orthodox Or Anthioch-Alexandria Or Rome-Bazentine divorce (Sebhat Le ab Meseret 1996 :19). The migrants were

from Egypt and Syria.

Nine monks out of these migrants were aggressively involved in multiple missionary activities that they were accorded the title as '*tese_atu qedusan*' meaning 'the nine saints'. Establishing monasteries, applying translations into the then Ethiopic language and developing the liturgy was their main duty with the propagation of the monophysitic theology which they were abandoned by their own people (Metzeger, 1997 :221).

The question here is, is the EOTC Monophysitic now or what? Its current status and nature is accounted a little bit differently than what we see from the above discussion. For example a paper submitted to a consultation 'between the theologians of Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches' held at the university of Aarhus, Denmark in August 1964, the Very Rev 'Like Siltanat Habtemariam Workneh' *Habtemariam :1994), the then Dean of Ethiopian Holy Trinity Cathedral, said something not exactly like but not exactly monophysitic (____, Habtemariam 1994).

Basic difference as far as our survey is concerned here is that the Monophysite emphasizes a nature fully swallowed up by another nature to bring one out of the two. Whereas, Miaphysite terming distinctly points two natures perfectly united without change of their basic natures, without confusion of whatever elements from each against the thought of a mixture but a perfect unity of the two to bring one. From the above analysis it seems clear that the current official Christological position of the EOTC should be termed as Miaphysite rather than Monophysite.

A reinterpretation of Likeseltanat Habtemariam Workneh's research is more or less like: after the union numerical use of 'two' for one person is mistaken analogy or irrational. But it is logical to address 'Him' as one rather than two. In the Incarnation process when one speaks of the flesh, he/she duly speaks of the divine, and the vice versa. Co-equality and con-substantiality uncompromised, with the two natures perfectly united, and at the same time preserved their properties. A direct quote of him says;

*Incarnation is a divine mystery. The two natures of Godhead and manhood are perfectly united and Christ is thus one person and one nature from two natures. Christ is one incarnate nature of God the Word. After the union it is impossible to speak of Christ as being in two natures. By the union of the nature in the Incarnation the two natures became one nature, the natures being united without separation, without confusion, and without change. Neither of the two natures was assimilated by the other, the properties of the Devine Word was assimilated by the flesh and those of the flesh to the Divine Word. The Logos revealed Himself in our flesh and became man like us. He did all things that man does with the exception of sin (John 8:46). And at the same time was truly God. He is a God-man. He is co-equal and consubstantial with the father in his Godhead. He is perfectly united with us in the union being from two modes of life into one. The union of the Word with the flesh took place in the womb of the Virgin Mary. St John says: "the Word was made flesh...". In the same way we can say that also the flesh was made divine. The attributes of the flesh can be given to the Divine word and vice-versa. However the properties of each nature are preserved without change after the union. Therefore, we believe that Christ is one person and one nature, and thus is both divine and human. We speak of one because of the union. We hold "Miaphysis", composite nature, one united nature. Again, the Lord Jesus Christ is perfect man and perfect God. The word "perfect" closes the door to all quibble and prevarication. We accept both unity and duality in Christ who in acting performed as one. Christ, in whom humanity and divinity were united in one person and one nature, was crucified on the cross. The divine word without being united with the flesh cannot be crucified and subjected to death. If, on the other hand, only the human body was crucified, He could not save the world (*Habtemariam :1994).*

As the EOTC Christology affirms both unity and duality in Christ, but also says "who in acting performed as one", we don't see much difference here as compared to the chalcedonies confession which said "two natures in one person".

The EOTC Christological tradition never loses rationality yet as it comes to scriptural facts, there remain unresolved questions. For Example, what was the magnitude of the divine property within the flesh after the union done in the womb of Mary? How much was the divine heat in the human Jesus, during his earthy mission? If it is just equality and consubstantiality, how about meanings from texts like, Mark 15:39 and Philipians 2:4-7?

EOTC confession said, "Perfect union of the two natures yet never lost their original properties in the union". Does this mean the flesh is totally flesh with no change and the divine just divine with no change? If so what is then the incarnation? Abune Meqarios said, the fleshly heat was totally subsumed by perfect unity and the divine glory was totally subsumed to the flesh because of the perfect unity (Meqarios; *Megede Semay/Heavens way* 2001 :46).

On the same line, Abba Hailemariam Melese Ayenew, in his Doctoral Dissertation presented at the University of South Africa (Hailemariam 2009 :21), refined the official Christological doctrine of the EOTC in his way of designation, saying ontological explanation of the EOTC Christology is based on the theological emphasis of Cyril of Alexandria, who so said Christ is one incarnate nature of God the Word, at the same time against Nestorian interpretation, who so distinguished the two natures, and even more against Eutyches explanation, who made the two natures absorbed in just one during the incarnation union.

According to Abba Hailemariam, Monophysitism is a labeling of the Dyophysitists to line up EOTC's position with Eutyches. However, EOTC's Christological position rather bases itself in the historical understanding of Cyril of Alexandria, which should be termed as one united nature, *mia-physis*" in preservation of the properties of the natures rather than Monophysitism.

Another scholar of the EOTC has also released a book on the same title (Mebratu Kiros Gebru :2010), saying EOTC's Christology should be termed as *miaphysite* christology, which highlights the one-united (Tewahedo) nature of the Word of God incarnate. Besides, the book proves the orthodoxy of Ethiopian Christology, demonstrating how it is based on the Christology of St. Cyril of Alexandria (+ A.D. 444).

In all this discussions the church retains the *Theotokos* issue which may be the point of departure from EEC Christological understanding.

If we try to analyze what we've seen so far, it seems that EOTC's proposal only borrows terminology from Euthychianism-*monophysis*, in that it stressed one nature against what *diaphysites* might believe, as Christ having two natures. However, it is still away from *monophysitism* in that it stressed the preservation of the two natures without change after the union, and this is close to *diaphysis* theology, which underscores one perfectly united nature and one person from two, who is both divine and human.

From the above analysis it is clear that the official Christological position of the EOTC should be termed as *Miaphysite* rather than *Monophysite*. Basic difference as far as our survey is concerned here is that the *Monophysite* emphasizes a nature fully swallowed up by another nature to bring one out of the two. Whereas *Miaphysite* terming distinctly points to two natures perfectly united to bring forth one nature, without change of their basic natures, without confusion of whatever elements from each, against the thought of a mixture but a perfect unity of the two to bring one against the duality in unity of Chalcedon.

The Theotokos as far as the Ethiopian Orthodox Church literatures explain says;

The Divine nature (God the Word) was united with the human nature which He took of the Virgin Mary by the action of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit purified and sanctified the Virgin's womb so that the Child to whom she gave birth would inherit nothing of the original sin; the flesh formed of her blood was united with the Only-Begotten Son. This unity took place from the first moment of the Holy Pregnancy in the Virgin's womb. As a result of the unity of both natures-the Divine and the human-inside the Virgin's womb, one nature was formed out of both: "The One Nature of God the Incarnate Logos" as St. Cyril called it (Bitsue Wo Qidus Abune Meqarios- 2001 :22).

Therefore, we may say the EOTC Christological formula follows Cyril than Chalcedon. "Unity/*Tewhado*" in the EOTC teaching, means that the divine took the nature of humanity owning it and the human also took the divine nature (only in the case of Christ), leaving back its former duality, towards oneness(not necessarily employing one nature, as the natures are united but not assimilated). This incarnational explanation of the EOTC, is called Mia-Physis, not Monophysis (Dereje and Deqemezmur...2007 :28).

This analysis, according to the EOTC, has Biblical references. It is true that God is eternally God not to be man and also man is created man not to be God. But, the EOTC elaboration says, against the natural law, Isaiah 9:6 affirms that, a child is born with a mighty name. This prophesy seems against the natural law of "man be man: God be God", and also seemingly contradictory as a "sovereign God" and "a child" are seen woven together in the text.

The EOTC says this seeming contradiction or paradox gets resolved only and only in the EOTC "Unity/*Tewhado*", explanation , where the Christology of Unity

gives chance for God to become man(Jn 1 :14), and for man to become God(only in the person of Christ)(Isa 7:14). This is the ancient and confessional Orthodox incarnational analysis, underlying that the Son of God, while getting united with man, during the incarnation, twin-ness has disappeared and the son became “one Son”, not “two Sons”, “one person” not “two persons”. This will be true only and only through the mystery of “Unity/ *Tewhado*”.

Following Cyril’s articulation, the EOTC confesses that the divine took, only the flesh, [not soul and spirit, which has directly came down with the Word/Logos, therefore the EOTC accepts both unity and duality in Christ who in acting performed as one (Aymro and Joachim, 1970 :95). This analysis helps to avoid the “sin inheritance” disjunction, as the divine soul and spirit is free from any taint of sin (Dereje and Deqemezmur ... :136).

Sadly, this Christological analysis in the EOTC has remained only confessional, among few intellectual clergies and is facing worse degeneration in the process of History, through the unguided practices of the mass under the influence of state men like the Zera Yakob (1434-68) , Monk Teklehaimanot (1706-1721) etc (Atiya Aziz S., 1968 :148). That is why this research suggests Information-Communication and Education is the best tool towards unity and effective mission.

2.2 Fertile Soil towards Ecumenicalism

The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhado Church and the Ethiopian Evangelical Churches are the two major Christian denominations so to say, which are designated as representatives of Christianity in Ethiopia. As is stated in chapter one, the Catholic Church is also part of the Christian circle in Ethiopia but since the growth of the Catholics in Ethiopia is limited to one percent only, Catholic is not a case for our study.

As is referred in Chapter one ‘Evangelicals’ are not to be taken as one denomination if we are trying to see the issue as to what constitutes a

denomination. But as long as they are now having a consortium under the auspices of the Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia (ECFE), we will try to treat them as 'one group' just for the purpose of this research.

The Ethiopian Evangelical Churches are currently around 48 denominations united under a consortium known as Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia (ECFE). ECFE is the umbrella in which most evangelicals are represented formally through it, in a simply stated 'credo' as those who share the same faith in one God, who revealed Himself in trinity; Evangelicals believe that Christ is the only way to salvation and believers have never contributed to their salvation, whereas are all expected to persevere in faith.

Evangelicals in Ethiopia under the consortium of the Ethiopian Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia (ECFE) confessionally believe in one Holy Catholic Apostolic Church; therefore are organized to foster unity in diversity. The ECFE has also Para church associates, some of them Christian ministries and some of them Para church Christian organizations. Since there are also denominations which are not formally linked to the ECFE but are by default members, for the faith they confess, we prefer the abbreviation EEC than the ECFE just for the consumption of this thesis.

Well there may be a thought that this can never replace the status of the mass on Christology issues. But it should be clear that it is hard to identify the Christological understanding of the mass in both the EOTC and EEC, which ever line they align themselves. As far as experience tells, the theology of the mass is a doing type than a dogma type, a dynamic type than a fixed type, experiential type that doctrinal type.

For example, a significant group called "*Qibat /Anointing*" in the EOTC believe that the "Word/Logos" was changed to be man to the point of losing everything from the divine, then got fully united by the unction or the anointing of the Holy Spirit, to keep intact with divinity while he was getting baptized in the Jordan river (Aymro and Joachim 1970 :150). The 'Qibat' believed the union has degraded

the divine to zero level making the new nature in need of 'unction' by the Holy Spirit for His ministerial empowerment.

Other in-groups known as the Tsega with a little bit modification said the unction happened while Jesus was getting baptized (Gorgorios 1999 :87). This theory sets the divine, distinct from the human, which may seem Nestorian in the distinction aspects.

Against the "Qibat" teaching, the faithful fathers re-acted saying; if we say "the Word was changed", this is against the basic impassibility of the divine Word/God and opposes the continuous distinction between the divine and the human natures in Christ, therefore, charged the "*Qibat*" group as heretics. But since the group was backed up by the followers of the Monks like Ewostatewos, their teaching flourished dominating the Orthodox Christological understanding, particularly in Gojjam area, northwest Ethiopia (Aymro and Joachim 1970 :152).

As we evaluate major section seven of the book "*Sillassie Betewhado/Trinity in unity*" by Meseret Sibhat Le'ab, it talks about the common will in between the Father, the Son and the Spirit. Surprisingly this portion discussed the incarnation nature of Christ. It said "the Son became flesh and dwelt with us, born in a manger, born in the image of a slave (*be araya gaber*), born as a baby, escaped to Egypt, suffered in wilderness, famine, drought and needs, all human miseries have happened upon his fragile humanity". It then continues to say "this Son was the Word, and was with God, and was himself God, everything has happened by him and through him, who was the only begotten Son of God. But his pastoral nature made him Human". This doctrine telling the true humility of the 'Word' is official to EOTC.

In general Christology is treated independently in the above argument; one in the pre-incarnate stage and two in the incarnate stage. The mystery of the nature of Christ in between the walls of the incarnation and the resurrection, compared or contrasted to the pre-incarnate or post resurrected scenarios seems safely

ignored in the above analysis.

What is at this venture is, how has the unity of the divine and the human been managed, be it in church history and in the Christology of the EOTC? It is true that Nestorius favored a simple moral union of the natures remaining distinct, as if the divine only dwells like God somehow dwelling in us.

Euthyches, on the other extreme so mixed the natures to the extent of losing former identity of what soever, forming a new “one”.

Cyril a little bit in the middle said, the unity is neither simple moral, nor a total mix but perfect union like the soul and body. Cyril with his crew of 200 Bishops at council of Ephesus (431) asserted that, it is better to believe ‘God became man’ than to believe ‘God dwelt in man’. Chalcedon (451), is not so far from Cyril as the two natures are united but not perfectly as far as Cyril’s concept.

As we bring a comparison of Christology in the theological doings of the EOTC, the church follows Cyril, asserting the perfect unity against twinity, as God the Son has taken soul and body from Mary, for his humanity, to make the human-divine and the divine-human, through perfect unity (Maqarios Abba 2001 :46). In the EOTC Christology, there is nothing missed by the human from the divine also nothing missed by the divine from the human. The divine heat is never minimized because of the perfect union with human; the human weakness is never swallowed by the divine because of the perfect union with the divine. The divine has made the human glorious, also the human has made the divine truly human (Gorgorios Abba 1999 :89). The human nature with soul and body from Mary has perfectly united with the divine ‘Son’ to form one nature-one person. The perfect unity neither separates the natures, nor mixes the natures but keeps them together as ones’ soul and body. This thinking, according to the EOTC serves the soteriological purpose making the divine part of the human.

If the divine is with full heat within the incarnation, how can the humiliation and crucifixion be a reality? To say it has been made zero, may not be close to the seeming truth but the divine empowerment must be seen managed in restriction and deactivation up until the resurrection, for the mission of saving humanity.

What confuses may be the meaning of “human form”; “human likeness”; and “appearance”. Does this imply that Jesus was not really in a human likeness, in the form of a servant, as this is measured in reality?

If we follow the Greek ὁμοίωμα⁷ likeness (Rom 8:3), it denies nothing of the content of μορφή but of itself indicates simply that in every respect he was like a man. When the outward appearance of Jesus is measured in content and likeness (μορφή, ὁμοίωμα), Jesus never missed any of the organs which any human being could have. F. F. Bruce adds that such expressions as “born in the likeness of man” and “found in human form” in Vs 7 should not mislead us; apart from the form, the consideration that they may belong to a pre-Pauline confession, there is a high probability that they represent alternative Greek renderings the Aramaic phrase kebar-‘enash (“like a son of man”) in Daniel 7:13 (Bruce 1989 :81-82).

Here is a middle road may be, not so far as denying impassibility but affirming Chalcedonies one person theory. God cannot change! But God can limit himself. There is no change in his divine attributes; there will be no change at all forever and ever. But God’s Omni nature can make Him able to act both ways in action and in non-action without changing or annihilating Himself. As there is no dissection in the nature of God there will be no change in nature whether within the Father or the Son or the Spirit. But the same nature in all the three may either be manifested in action or in non-action as it moves from the Ontological to

⁷ neut. nouns ending in -μα

relational-functional state, like the movement from creation to redemption and consummation.

During the perfect union, this nature of God was functionally manifested in non-action, while still retaining his Omni power, being incapacitated within the limits of human nature, for the sake of the saving mission to be true, when God the Son was willing to become human and die on the cross. Simply speaking, the incarnation is a temporary limitation, non-activation of God the Son's divine enablement, as the Son has 'come out' of God (John 1:1-14), for the sake of a true experience of human suffering and death.

With this presupposition a survey was made as to where the evangelicals in Ethiopia do stand? The questioners set for a survey of Christology within the theological doings of the Evangelicals were totally nine focusing on the role of the trinity in the creation process; the particular role of the trinity in the reciprocal union of Eucharistic duties from humanity to God and from God to humanity; the exclusive role of the Son during creation- if we can talk exclusivity at all; the exclusive role of the father in the incarnation process; how the trinity might have shared ,in the incarnation, the suffering and the Eucharistic sacrifice of Christ; whether Christ has solely carried the suffering and the Eucharistic duties or not? If yes what was the role of the father and the Holy Spirit? The difference between Monophysite, Diaphysite and Miaphysite theology/Christology and which one they personally accept and why? If there is any theological difference worthy to dye for? Etc.

These questions aimed not only for the consumption of this chapter alone but for the consumption of all the research. At the same time the goal is to trace into the common Christological heritages in the EOTC-EEC encounters. Yet we will more focus on the responses given for the questions like; whether Christ has solely carried the suffering on the cross or not and how; The difference between terminologies like Diaphysite/ Monophysite/ Miaphysite as to where the interviewee stands? Why? Out of these our expectation is to find out the

confessional stances, especially where the evangelicals may line up also if there is a need to die for ones Christological stand.

In order to accomplish this we selected 120 seminarians from different denominations. Rational of our selection was first of all, diversity of their traditional background, Lutheran; Baptist; Mennonite; Pentecostal, Presbyterian etc...; second their seminarian background so that we might gain easy articulation of deep Christological thoughts; third the nature of the interview questions where the interviewee is set in qualitative discussion.

In the responses to the question whether Christ has solely suffered on the cross or the Father and the Holy Spirit has shared him some way; Out of 120 interviewee 74.28% responded 'Yes' Christ has solely carried the suffering by himself with no participation of the divine. This tells the human element dominated much and Christ never utilized divine enabelments for his earthly journey.

7.14% responded yes and no as if the divine has somewhat shared the suffering either through knowledge or through decision and encouragement yet the pain was totally upon the human Christ. Our analysis sees that this group has no difference from the above explanation.

But the rest 18.57% said God was there energizing the human Jesus on the cross. This notion was made clear as some within this group have literally said that God sent an angel to support Christ. The measurments above tell that great ratio of the respondents stand on the side that Christ has never manipulated his divine power to avoid human misery and suffering.

When we come to apply these responses so as to trace the Christological whereabouts of the Evangelicals, if Christ has solely carried the agony on the cross, this therefore implies that two natures were either acting independently or only the human nature was reactive starting the incarnation up until crucifixion. This leads to either Nestorian Christology or kenotic Christology.

If Christ was somehow energized with divine power from inside or supported by external power in His suffering on the cross, this idea more tilts to either monophysitism for the two natures are seen mixed or still kenoticism because the human Jesus was supported externally by another power.

Therefore setting aside the confessional Christology of the EEC for the time being, the practical Christological conception of Christology among representative Evangelicals so to say, is neither clearly east nor west nor in between but a third view of some type which should be left for further study.

Is there something to die for such a thought? How about the current attitude from both sides? Are the existing Christological differences between the EOTC and the EEC worth dying for? My next questions to them were like;

1-Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhado Church Christological position is neither Diophysite nor Monophysite, as far as their claims now, but Miaphysite as to current scholarly literatures of the EOTC. What do you think is the difference between these three terminologies? Which one do you personally believe is Biblically sound and theologically viable?

2-Do you see a theological difference worthy to die for or it is just a terminology play?

3-Two natures in one person, one nature and one person from two, two natures perfectly united without change of identity, without confusion, with no mixture. Do you see any difference here? If so what and how?

Let's see results from our questioner survey. When we try to uncover the wrapping, Christological conceptions among EEC seem standing neither chalcedony nor non chalcedonic but somewhere in between. Results of the survey show that;

For the first question, out of 120 interviewee, (these *are all seminarians who I think should have a better understanding than the ordinary mass*), 61.43%

supported the Diaphysite theory. 27.14 % were not clear in their stand, seems confused. 8.57% supported the Miaphysite theory. 1% the supported both the Miaphysite and the Diaphysite. 1% supported the Monophysite theory . 1% rejected all theories as meaningless at all.

In an attempt to check deep into the same group to see if they really believe in what they meant, by asking them the 2nd and 3rd question 'if this is worthy to die for as far as dissecting the denominations? Also the real difference between the three theories' 62.8 % said there is nothing worthy to die for but the difference is clear. The rest 37.2% said it is a theological difference therefore it is worthy to die for.

Then those who said 'yes and no' with no clear stand were examined if the issue is worthy to die for; 63.15% out of this group said it is not worthy to die for. The rest 36% said it is worthy to die for.

As we can see from the above analysis, Evangelicals in Ethiopia are as diversified as their nature when it comes to Christology issue. Majority of them confess chalcedonic but this research has proved that deep inside, they are somewhere in between the chalcedonies and the non-chalcedonies. Therefore we cannot say for sure the Ethiopian evangelicals are clearly lining in the Chalcedonies (451 A. D) formula.

Yet one thing is very clear. Majority of evangelicals do not believe that these Christological theories are worthy to die for. Why do we need to examine the Christological understandings within both denominations? This is because chalcedonies 451 definition, though may be the best in its approach on Christological definition; we may say it is only theologically outstanding but not missiologically outstanding. Reasons for this are; it has been historically the epicenter of division between the east and the west. If so reconciliatory initiatives must set their foundation on things necessary to die for and/or to live for. That is why this research is firm in asking these basic questions, whether these Christological bargains are worthy to die for? We have found out that Diaphysite-

Monophysite-Miaphysite talks should not be taken as things worthy to die for.

Deep examination of Christ's nature may be theologically viable but not missiologically viable. Focusing on traditional orders is also divisive. What is needed may be is, the need to focus on what is important rather than what is not important.

For example, the way priests dress in EOTC tradition with the white or yellow robe, the T structure stick, the Holy chanting etc etc ...may be kept as it is and /or reshaped making it somewhat missiologically communicative, without replacing it by another tradition, be it evangelical or so. But the content of the traditional teaching-preaching, holy chanting etc etc on both sides... should be totally faithful to the truth. That is what matters rather than the long awaited unresolved discussions on the nature of Christ.

The EEC Christological conception is confessionally Chalcedonian. This is because many can easily articulate the nature of Christ was with two natures and one person all through the incarnation and the resurrection and after. Yet as it is stated above deep examinations rather imply another fact.

The question is will there be a possibility of unity confessing one faith? What kind of unity are we aiming at? What are we really commonly confessing still staying in our denominational boundaries?

To start with, maybe we have a lot confessional elements in common. Don't we have common roots in the apostolic tradition and the creeds (Nicene and Ephesian), except in Chalcedon which may be capitalized towards the big goal? (Haimanote Abew 1994 :22). Both denominations set salvation exclusively through Christ. There are lots of pillars confessed within both traditions. An official doctrinal reference of the EOTC entitled as "Haimanote Abew/Relection of the Fathers" is very clear here saying: "*Believing in the Father, the Son and the Holy-Spirit as on God...*" (Haimanote Abew 1994 :19). The EEC confesses the same thing. What set's them apart is insignificant compared to what may make

them partners in the soteriological mission of God.

So, the first step is identifying the common elements which both have within their respective circles consciously or unconsciously. After identifying what they have in common, we will then pass to the things which might be set apart for dialogue, then after, to the things which might be kept at a distance for more examination on each side of the spectrum.

For example, **first of all** there is a sort of spiritual unity which both churches rationally accord. That is; Christ's church is "one holy catholic apostolic church in its spiritual sense". Haimanote Abew literally says, "One congregation gathered by Christ's apostles..." (Haimanote Abew 1994 :19). The term 'Catholic' is not necessarily referring to the denominational Catholics but referring to the church universal as of the text in Eph 4. Therefore, the EOTC and EEC are one family in the body of Christ as far as soteriological mission is concerned.

Second, trials of ecumenism may be reinforced for mutual recognition and fellowship. There are positive initiations from both sides indicating a need for fellowship and mutual recognition. As it is referred in the former chapters of this thesis, a research document by revered *Nibure Id Elias Abreha*, the then vice secretary for the EOTC patriarch, presented in the presence of key leaders from all the three denominations mentioned above, on April 8th 2008, proposed fellowship of the three in five years plan and complete unity in the long term plan. This seems a little ambitious but the initiation is worth considering. We will come back to the detail analysis of this proposal later in this chapter.

Third, common purposes like development and relief may be embraced in one conciliar organizational alliance, still remaining in one's identity. This research is not aiming at a total assimilation of one by the other. Practical work out strategies, that is identifying areas where both entities may see the possibility of working together may be one of the proposals of this research and be presented as an initial discussion item in a platform where all leaders are represented. Detail doctrinal elements will not be part of the discussion agenda at this stage.

Both denominations will be allowed to retain spiritual quality within their identity in their mother denominations. Fostering unity and cooperation against competition is the goal of this research.

Fourth, Information, Communication and Educational tasks (IEC) must be singled out as prior tools to inform the confessional doctrines to the mass, through modern media's as far as making the confessional truths and research findings accessible to every body; ultimately education must be made available to all at all levels so that the dream of soteriological unity may be realized.

Having said this we applaud the initiation by the EOTC done on April 8th 2008, in a research paper presented by *Nibure ID Elias Abraha*, in the presence of His Excellency the late *bitsue we-kidus abune ze-membere Patriarch, wo echege axum, Aba Paulos*, the then president of the World Council of Churches(WCC); his excellency *Aba Birhaneyesus*, Patriarch of the Catholic Church in Ethiopia; and also the presence of the higher executives of the Evangelical Church's Fellowship of Ethiopia(ECFE), where I was also there as a board secretary for the ECFE and an eye witness of the initiatory role from the EOTC side.

We also applaud the positive response from the Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia (ECFE), allowing the presentations again in its own general assembly the same year, which I was still an eyewitness. That presentation was summarized in ten position statements which I have summarized them later in this part.

This hopefully is a ripe opportunity to grab and contribute academic thesis like this for the healthy dynamism of processing unity. Therefore, it is mandatory for the key leaders to be open for dialogue hearings from both sides around the table, be it short speech presentations or a research, either entertaining the need for mutual confidence, and also the need to face the discordant enemy through joint venture services.

One of the assumptions behind this thesis was that we see no indispensable

difference worthy to die for, between the so called *Diaphysite / Miaphysite* camps in the existential practice of Ethiopian Christianity, as far as dissecting the Christians Ethiopia. This is confirmed by the research so far. Let's refresh this discussion by referring back to the main problem statement and see if the research has achieved its presupposition.

2.3 Hints of common uniting elements from the Popular Songs within EOTC

A little bit examination of the practice of the mass in the EOTC theological doings exhibits that, the differences between the EOTC and EEC has resulted out of a focus on what is unimportant than what is important. Well one may argue that the level of importance depends on the interest of each group. However, so long as the two parties have the major things in common, that is what is important. For example both parties share the 66 books of the Bible in common as far as the translations emerged up until 1988. The difference is on the 15 books added from the apocryphal books. The Bible translated in 1988, for the EOTC consumption, itself clearly says the 15 books are 'additional'. What really is important? the things held in common (66) or the additional 15 apocryphal books?

Both parties do not argue much on the centrality of our Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, as both accept 1 Timothy 2:6-7; John 14:6; Acts 4:12. These texts are commonly held by both as authoritative references. In addition to this the EOTC is not monophysite- which make the nature of the incarnate Christ a total mix as far as losing all identity, it is neither diaphysite which the Church believes, so separates the two natures, but EOTC is Miaphysite which the church believes that the identity of the two natures are protected but under a perfect unity like the soul and body of any human being.

Some of the famous songs in the life and practice of the mass within the EOTC circle witness the same thing about the centrality of Christ. For example a popular song from the EOTC by "Alehegn Demas" released March 2013, is enough proof for the argument here. The tape has seven songs, where each

song tells the centrality of Christ. Let's try to write each lyric so that readers may do their own judgment of the content. We will spare 'song # 1' until later for a detailed discussion.

Song # II says:

I have seen the Lord's love on the cross
The lamb slain forgiving his killer
The Lord of the Oceans was forbidden water
Instead of water they gave him vinegar
Was crucified and bitten, his bones counted
For Adam to be free of his debts
Having the storms, tides, under his commands
Was detained by the Jew to save the whole world
Naked and spikes over his head
Gave away his flesh and blood so that we may eat
For Christ has paid all the debts
Adam has been free of all guilt.....

The song above purely tells the love of Christ, as He suffered on the cross to save the lost. There is nothing that the Evangelicals would say is non-Orthodox or the EOTC might say is evangelically biased. As the song is released from the hands of a purely an EOTC singer, it might be said that the beliefs of the mass are gradually confessing the true Orthodox doctrine.

Song # 3- of the same tape is all about praising Christ. Song # 4 is selected for

emphasis as it repeatedly tells the centrality of the cross;

Christ was crucified instead of the criminal

All our debts and transgressions were removed by his blood

Who among the generation has perceived this offer?

All agreed to punish him by death

Those who ate and drunk from his own hands

Made him suffer instead;

Was taken to Pilate for justice

But all shouted “crucify” “crucify”

They were beating him turn by turn

No one had compassion to spare him out of his misery

They made His grave with the evil doers

.....His lovers will surly stand on his right
hand.....

Song #5 is a testimony of a believer about the substitutionary death of Christ.

Song #6 is about Christ's sorrow and suffering on the cross.

Song # 1 is, praises to Mary as she is the mother of Christ, and still very subtly magnifies Christ. See how the poet narrated it;

Praises to Mary, Praises to the Virgin

No one is like her, from all creation

Neither the Seraphs nor the Cherub

For the 'divine fire' was in her womb
 Lord of creation in the Womb of Mary
 The one who was, who is and who lives forever
 God compassion came to us through you (Mary)
 We could have been Sodom unless
 otherwise.....

The song above is about Mary. However, there is nothing wrong offering due respect to Mary, as far as making this a matter of dissection between EOTC and EEC. Still, as one tries to look into the contents of line four, five, six and seven, it seems that the objective is not about Mary rather the one who is born of her, referred as the "divine fire; Lord of creation; one who was; who is and who lives forever...". Similarly the church confessionally retained the *Theotokos* issue which may be the point of departure from EEC Christological understanding.

It is true that these are not the only items to be checked as short lists. An issue of hierarchy, a "practice" of ritual (not the impact), yearly celebrations, general organizational matters etc etc...may be added to the list. But these things are neither theologically important nor soteriologically significant. Therefore, they may be left for the choice of each denomination. This hopefully is a ripe opportunity to grab and contribute academic thesis like this for the healthy dynamism of processing Christological-soteriological unity.

We see many common Christological heritages, which may be used as a foreground for the unity anticipated and elemental supportive inputs, crept in within the current stance of the EOTC-EEC. Currently the EOTC is 43.5% and the Protestants 18.6 % according to official statistical information accessed from (www.selamta.net.htm:accessed June 17, 2013).

Each group seem formerly standing for its own sect to the extent of dying for its

own claims. Our research question was articulated as; 'is there a meaning in the EOTC-EEC literatures, worthy to die for, to the extent keeping us antagonists? Our data's tell that there seems no insistence worthy to die for either in the official confessional literatures or in the interviews don for this survey, from both camps, therefore ample chance for harmony. Therefore we would bring these issues to the fore as a stepping stone towards possible unity.

This we say because first of all the paper presented by the official representative of the EOTC Patriarch office at the African union hall in Feb 8th 2009, has resulted in a positive response from the EEC side. The EEC in its 24th general assembly, held on April 8th 2009, had nailed the following positional statements in response to the EOTC proposal. The position paper of EEC may be summarized as;

- acknowledging the magnificent contribution of the EOTC to preserve Christianity in Ethiopia for the last 18 hundred years and the contribution of the Ethiopian Catholic church the last five hundred years and the golden contribution of the EEC to preserve and expand Christianity in Ethiopia the last hundred years;

- regretting, forgetting and forgiving the past that, having the same basic faith on the trinity and Christ, these three denominations were seen each other in animosity, competitive spirit and severe conflict;

- praising and applauding for the initiatives taken by the Ethiopian Bible Society(EBS) trying to bring these three denominations into close affinity these days, especially on the remarkable meeting held on Feb 8th 2009, in the African Unity meeting hall;

The EEC would therefore embrace the following positional statements
(enumeration mine and the EEC is seen replaced by ECFE as the minutes in the paper prefer this title):

- 1-the ECFE (EEC) accepts the unity initiation proposal presented for the three major denominations (the EOTC, ECC, and ECFE), upon the belief that these

three major Christian denominations have Trinitarian unity, as these was the prayer of our Lord in John 17;

2-the ECFE (EEC) accepts that there is Trinitarian and Christological commonality between them;

3-the same time the ECFE (EEC) sees that there are surely soteriological and liturgical application differences among them;

4-having these elements as facts the ECFE (EEC) sees that co-operational unity is possible; and also sees that a dynamic unity is possible from one to another through time;

5-therefore the tasks at hand would be avoiding any competition, sign of disrespect of whatsoever, but foster reverential attitude towards one another;

6-the ECFE (EEC) accepts cross-sectional free movement of members from one denomination to another, with no competition and understated attitudes and acts;

7-the ECFE (EEC) underscores that preaching should always be Christocentric rather than mere scolding of one another;

8-the ECFE (EEC) virtually avows that we all should capitalize on what unites us rather than what divides us;

9-the ECFE (EEC) would then be open for a dialogue on the differing elements so to say; by reinforcing the unifying opportunities attempted by the Bible societies and theological institutions;

10-the ECFE (EEC) also accepts that in addition to our common and main role of kerygmatic preaching, it would be the firm interest of the ECFE (EEC) to co-operate on development, health, apologetic and environmental national interests.

The position paper therefore concluded by underlining for the need of follow up and a task force to carry over.

Therefore we repeat our main quest: is there a meaning in the EOTC-EEC literatures, worthy to die for? Is Christ divided? one for the EOTC and the other for the EEC, as far as keeping us in our own denominational lines? No!

Another recent movement within the EOTC which may be seen as ripe opportunity towards unity and reformation of the body of Christ is the establishment of a council known as the National Ethiopian Church Renewal Council (NECRC). This group in its exclusive meeting held at TK building on June 29, 2013, also affirmed that nucleus of one dimension of faith is evident this time. Discussions in the whole day session are summarized as follows:

There was holy chanting/ with slow movement sacred dance, by group of singers with yellow dress- neck robes as the tradition of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhado Church (EOTC) until 9:10.

-The seminar was officially opened by the board Chair of National Ethiopian Churches Renewal Council here after referred as (NECRC), Mr. Aklilu Dogisso at 9:10 am.

-Next was corporate worship with all the attendants, the famous song "Hizbin Abeza-wosen assefa" 'God multiplied his people-His boundary'... - until 4:00 A.M.

-Then was the turn for Rev Belina Sarka-a known evangelical prophet in the nation, whose prophesies were true and down to earth the last 10 years. He prophesied that there surely is coming a time of true unity between the EOTC-EEC and the Ethiopian Catholics, and this will give ample chance to the abundant blessing coming to the nation for the next 100 yrs. According to him this abundance will over flow Africa, Asia (North Korea and China), Latin, Cuba and the rest of the world starting 2 years from now.

-At 10:45, came the key note speech by Dr Beta Mengistu- a summary of Acts 8, about the Ethiopian Ambassador of Queen Hindeque, during the apostolic revival of the New Testament; the pre Lutheran Ethiopian reformation of Father Estefan in 1402. He made us think of Harmonium Dew- the source of life moving slowly to the Sea of Galilee and Jordan River. But this life giving Dew dies as it is swallowed in the Dead Sea, a sea with no outlet therefore no life. Dr Beta said, the same way; it is unfortunate that the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhado Church (EOTC), lost the chance of renewal as the twisters overpowered the movement all the past 1700 yrs. Dr Beta said true Orthodox is the one who lives and dies for the truth.

-at 11:10 came evangelist Yared Tilahun saying God is not only a God of creation but also a God of renovation.

-at 11:55, a poem by Mss Lidia Teqa on the idea of the Old and New wine in either the Old or New jug, insisting for the need of the new Jug to the new wine.

-Then was the time (12:00 A.M.1:10 P.M)- for the major agenda of the day led by Master Getachew, Chief Executive of Kesate Birhan. He quoted from Ps 8:31-"Ethiopia will stretch its hand to God". Then he made his remarks of the huge change coming within the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhado Church; To list some;

1-The renewal change has never stopped;

2-These days preaching pure Gospel within the pulpits of EOTC is not forbidden though not official;

3-Known preachers of the EOTC have boldly started saying salvation belongs to Jesus who died for us;

4-Any one can ask whether “Mary can mediate salvation or not” but must be under the “context of mercy/Awde mihret” in the tradition of the EOTC;

5-The power of the Holy Spirit is ignited among the elderly and the monks within the EOTC;

6-Evangelicals in Ethiopia seem to stagnate but Gospel revival is very true within the EOTC currently;

7-No need to get shield hiding within the evangelical umbrella, but this is time to remain Orthodox at the same time Evangelical;

Then Master Getachew continued his historical analysis starting from the very beginning event of;

1-the entrance of Christianity to Ethiopia during the apostolic revival, where the Ethiopian returned back happily to his land touched by the Spirit (Acts 8/42 A.D);

2-Frumintius in 325 A.D; In 350 A.D., Christianity become an empire religion in Ethiopia. According to Master Getachew, until 385 A.D, meaning until the death of Frumintius Ethiopian Christianity was sound and strong;

3-International head quarters were in either Alexandria, or Ephesus or Anthioch or Constantine that Ethiopians had to get their leaders anointed from either of these places. Unfortunately said Master Getachew, the fate of Ethiopian Christianity fell into the hands of the Egyptians. According to him this had political game also as the Egyptians were aiming to kill the potential of the nation, then spare the Nile for themselves, that they advanced a new creed where Ethiopians may observe days of saints, where the majority of the days from the year were allotted for fasting or prayer, which actually made the nation crippled in poverty;

4-Surprisingly, the original and still the official faith statements of the EOTC is 100% similar to the apostolic creed; also 100% the same with the current evangelical faith statements;

5-Ethiopia was the president of the WCC until the sudden death of its patriarch Abune Paulos in June 2012;

6-the ancient Ethiopic NT versions tell that until the 4th C. Ethiopian Christianity was Apostolic and evangelical;

7-During those years Holy celebrated dates all refer to the deeds of Christ from his birth until His return, asserting that the EOTC was purely apostolic;

8-The pictorial NT version which is very ancient and exclusive to the nation was prepared so that those who are not able to read may be saved by learning the deeds of Christ from the very beginning chapter of Matthew up until the book of Revelation;

Master Getachew continued his analysis of the major contributions of the EOTC to the nation.

- 1- Billions got salvation through EOTC if we count from the NT time up until now;
- 2- Idolatry was condemned nationally 3000 years back during the reign of queen of Sheba in 2900 B.C.;
- 3- Ethiopian history is made to be Christian church history;
- 4- The EOTC is the reason for textuality in Ethiopia through its educational contribution of coining alphabets;
- 5- National borders and national identity was protected because of the philosophy that Ethiopians equally live and die for their faith and their nation, which is a teaching by the EOTC;
- 6- Strong social ties through fellowships like the (Tsiwa; Equb; Edir), are all from the smart influence by the EOTC; Interestingly Islam are allowed to live in the land as long as they live peacefully; But strong proscriptions kept the nation never to be overpowered by Islam. There are prohibitions like from "Islamic Food"; "Islamic way of dressing"; "Islamic way of peeing" etc etc... which actually protected the nation from Islamic invasion done to most of North Africa;

Master Getachew continued his analysis of reasons for the fall of the EOTC;

- 1- Starting from 385 A.D he said, the EOTC leadership was totally given to Egyptians as the Ethiopians were not confident to lead themselves; they were also left for political power play that this affected the strength of spirituality; 11 Patriarchs were assigned for the nation consecutively for 1100 yrs, through a reference made to "Fitha Negest"(Former Book of Law in Ethiopia); saying national leaders are forbidden to lead by the apostles of Jesus; Therefore Ethiopians were forbidden to build learning institutions, seminaries or universities of whatever, even though there were known universities in Alexandria in the then. According to Master Getachew the current autonomy of Ethiopian Synod is only 53 years;
- 2- Another reason for the failure of Ethiopian Christianity is because of monasticism which came down to Ethiopia by the so called 9 saints, who were banned at 451 A.D Chalcedonies Christological controversy. These saints thought to the Ethiopians that salvation is through effortful monastic experiences like fasting, praying, avoiding marriage; ascetic life, etc etc...
- 3- Invasion of Judith the Judiazer in the 11th Century is another reason for the failure of EOTC. Judith ruled the nation for 40 years, burned all churches;
- 4- Political power plays in 1270 A.D., to pull down power and the center of the government sit towards Showa from Lasta Lalibela by Abune Tekle Haimanot- the Monk with king Yiquno Amlack of Showa Region has also greatly contributed to the downfall of the spirituality of the EOTC; (Refer to Gedle Teklehaimanot; Creative fictitious stories of Stealing the Tablet of the ten commandments; part of the cross of Christ; Healing pictures of Saint Mary, etc etc...).
- 5- The ruthless king Zer'a Ya-iqob in 1434 E.C/1441 A.D.; who was fond of Saint Mary, translated many fictitious stories of mysticisms from different parts of the world; gravely persecuted followers of Abune Stefen in 14th C and made the renewal light to be

extinguished ;

6-Invasion of Gragne Mohammed / Mohammed the left handed/, in 1527 E.C., who attempted to relinquish Islam in the nation and turn down Christianity for 11 years;

7- Period of Judges in Ethiopia (1769 E.C.): The nation was disunited this time. Every region had its own King like; King of Gonder; King of Showa; King of Tigray etc etc... This time the political division also affected the EOTC. EOTC priests who might have failed from the standard spirituality somehow, like because of broken marriage, adultery, etc etc... Those who might have been disciplined and disregarded of their priestly status by the church started learning mystical divination practices to apply it over the adherents outside the temple. These disregarded illegal priests are customarily called Debtera's/ Divinizers. These divinizers/Debtera's use to write Heroic Fictions/Gedle/. Unfortunately the Heroic fictions are anti-Christ even anti- Mary that they killed the spirituality of the whole generation under EOTC. These divinizers also used to curse the land since the period of the Judges and have influenced majority of the adherents that this might also be taken as one of the causes for the fall of the EOTC.

Lights of Spiritual Renewals from 6th C A.D-19th C A.D. in EOTC

1-Yared the Poet was a 6th Century priest, father of the Unique Ethiopian Singing and lyrics who was emphasizing Jesus as the chief savior; he was famous for his stern comments against lay priests confusing Zion with Mary through his lyrics;

2-an attempt of breaking the yoke from Egypt in 10th century but unsuccessful;

3-Faithful spiritual fathers who challenged the idolatry of the king in 1278 E.C.;

4-The renewal of Gundagundi-under Father Estefen and his followers' against the unspiritual life of the King and the generation at large in 1394 E.C. These group were minority that anti forces with the king squashed them brutally;

5-Entrance of missionaries to Ethiopia in the 19th Century was also a light and Chance of renewal to EOTC;

6-The rise of evangelical Christianity in Ethiopia gave way towards reverting the EOTC to textuality. A rebirth of reading habit in the EOTC which was lost long way back because of traditionalism and divinizers/Debtera's influence;

7-Renewal of scholars like: Chief Taye 1853-1950; Blaten Geta Hiruy 1871-1931 ; Mersea Hazen Ejigu; Chief Kidanewolde; Chief Zenebe; Kentiba Gebrehiwot Bikedange; etc etc...

8-Total freedom of the Ethiopian Synod from the rulership of Egypt in 1951 E.C. and the birth of groups called, Haimanote Abew/Religion of the fathers and Army of Christ but the communist Derg government successfully dismantled these holy movement groups;

9-ushering of Sunday centers after 1963 E.C.; Close to 6 million EOTC members were followers of this movement but finally joined the evangelical union as they sought shelter while EOTC persecuted them;

10-Spiritual songs within EOTC by Zerge; Tifresh; Bgashaw; etc, etc...are very much emphasizing the centrality of Christ, these days;

11-Renewal is now the main agenda of the EOTC synod showing that the new

millennium is granting the final victory to the minority spiritual remnants;

Why are all these renewal chances unsuccessful?

1-Church and state were one and the same, all through, until the fall of the Monarchy-Emperor Haile Silassie, in Ethiopia in 1966 E.C/1975.

2-Media and communication tools were poor for almost none during the last 1900 years.

3-Renewal movers were ethnically bounded therefore national affectivity was impossible.

What time is it?

According to Master Getachew, this time is not a time of just movement but a time to lead movements towards unity and effectiveness.

Vision of NECRC

See National, Continental and International Church Renewals (Gen 12:3).

Main task forces of this renewal are National Council of :

1-Ethiopian Orthodox Tehadisso (Renewal)

2-Ethiopian Evangelical Tehadisso (Renewal)

3-Ye-yishak(Isaak) Brothers Tehadisso (Renewal)

Next Activities are of the council will be:

1-Organizing national leadership

2-Organizing strong inclusive media

3-Organizing and realizing national renewal constitution and by-laws

4-Establishing national Seminary of Excellence

5-Establishing support groups

The unity and renewal movement by NECRC is moving on. This group had another exclusive meeting on July 20, 2013 where I was also there as an eyewitness. The main theme of the symposium this time is examining why unity and renewal has been difficult actually impossible the last 17 hundred years. According to Memhir (cleric Title of EOTC scholars), Getachew Gebre Yesus (baptismal Name), main reasons subverting spiritual renewal opportunities and therefore unity in the last 17 hundred years are:

1-Diverging interpretative traditions in the practice of the EOTC, such as the

Andemta -which seeks the meaning of a text or a word from the scriptures one way or the other proceedings which may list up to 14 meanings to one text or verse, which let's either of the 14 meanings may be right;

2-the intermarriage of the state and church up until the down of the Monarchy in 1975. This bond with the government has had a strong crushing power to any of the renewal initiations in the history of the EOTC; The crushing process goes in a kind of saying "*Felit or Filt*" meaning "wisdom or hammer", signifying the possibility of deals with the renewal group, if not crushing. If monarchs are unhappy of a religious leader who actually applies the truth and may be a threat for government, the kings simply agree with other bandits within the religious circle and apply an outlawed law saying, "*Mistu ena nibretu leserawite; heywetu lafote*; meaning, the 'threat's' wife and possession should be given to the army of the king, and his life to the king's bullet";

3-As far as Texts are concerned the EOTC officially recognizes the Old and the New Testaments with the 39 plus 27 books. The church officially accepts only these as inspired but there are additions close to 15 non-canonical books but accepted by the church with low level canonical priority or uninspired and low level of authority used just for orders inside the church or managing disciples. However this position of the church is never made clear to the mass as far as leading a substantial number of the adherents to idolatry;

4-another bondage is unhealthy competition between the EOTC scholars (*lique*);

5-Pseudo-spiritual activities initiated during the dark age of the EOTC (12th C-18th C, especially the effect of Ahmed *Grange*'s conquest Islamizing almost all Christians in 1525. For forty years, only 1/10th of the adherents remained faithful through severe persecution and matrimonies. A reversal of this challenge was a sort of pseudo revival, where the remnant priests were applying a practice known as *Kedar* meaning re-baptizing the backslider restoring him to his former Christian membership.

6-Still more scandal was the deficient approach of the renewal initiators strategy mostly sided to one party only; For example the pre Lutheran reformation in Ethiopia by Father Estifanos in the late 14th C., in the place known as *Gunda Gundi-Tigray-North Ethiopia*, was so exclusive as far as staying away in inaccessible fenced monastery;

7-Ethiopian secretive orientation by itself is so exclusive and distanced from international civilization chances for long, as the people were alien to media and the likes;

8- Lack of visionary spiritual leader;

9-Scandal of renewal leaders themselves through moral pitfalls;

10-Interference of a third party which was repeatedly twisting renewal movements through Counter Reformation;

11-Lack of holistic renewal actions; attempts so far only focus on one end.

A retrospect view of the above 11 points is taken as basis for the next renewal therefore uniting force of the EOTC with the rest Christians in Ethiopia, under the initiative of the National Ethiopian Churches Renewal Council (NECRC).

The council is a consortium of EOTC members and EEC members dreaming a holistic renewal to the EOTC and ultimately unity through activities such as a preparation of governance manual; formation of leadership from all parties; establishing modern media and communication agency; establishing theological institution in which its curriculum is neither tilted to the west nor neglecting the native methodologies.

The prospective theological institution will be missionary oriented where the mission target is renewal and unity of the Christians in Ethiopia. The expected unity according to the council is diversity in unity not unity in diversity.

III Is Unity Possible?

The EOTC believes in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The EOTC believes that salvation is through Christ and Christ only. Exact statement from “*Haimanote Abew/Religion of the Fathers*” says “*We believe that our source of salvation is only Christ...*” (Haimanote Abew 1994 :22). The EEC does the same. Sadly enough the mass on both sides is uninformed , uneducated (theologically/doctrinally), also out of communication of such common beliefs and unity opportunities.

On confessional level what both denominations have in common is much greater than what makes them different whatever ways measured. God, Jesus, Spirit, Trinity, and the Bible (66 books), has a central place within the confessional theology of both denominations even though appropriation and meanings of such pillars differ.

The question is which one should get more priority if unity should be real? the pillars of faith as they are or their meanings and appropriations? If the focus is made on the pillars only, dialogue is possible. If the focus is made on the process of appropriation and meanings, dialogue is difficult if not impossible.

How much are the common faith pillars compared to the things which they don't share together? Let's give equal shares to each item above and see points of potential ecumenism and points of differences.

For Example, if we give 20% share to every pillar doctrines listed above the ratio is 100/40. They have 100 pts in common but only 40 pts set as difference. We may set the 100 as our common ground and say that we are one on that portion. We may set the 40 as a difference; the difference is on Saintology and Mariology. Still we leave a space for dialogue, to even make the 40 less. Lessening the 40 will then lead us to confess more of one faith and one family.

Before even an effort is made to minimize the differences, what they have in common is like 71.4 % and what they lack for unity is 28.9 %. Therefore the

EOTC and the EEC are more of a family than more of rivals and hostile denominations.

As discussed in chapter four of this thesis the book “*Heretics inside the temple*”, written by an EOTC priest, argues against the excesses of appropriation of the pillars during the liturgy and preaching. The book clearly says; on mediatory function, most of the above except Christ could not be competent for mediatory roles. The right reason for this according to the book is that;

- firstly all are created except Christ;
- Secondly, all cannot be everywhere at the same time, except the risen Christ;
- Third, Angels act only and only if they are sent by God not by men;
- Fourth, mediatory roles of Saints are developed in the traditions of the EOTC, following a wrong interpretation of Matthew 10:40-42 and Luke 16:18-31;
- Fifth attribution of mediatory role to Virgin Mary has developed out of a wrong interpretation of John 2:3. (Dereje& Deqemezmur Beza 2003 :23-33).

Anyways the ETOTC believes there is a mediatory communication from Man through either Saints including Mary, or Angels to God (Sisay Wogayehu 2013 :23). Against this, Evangelicals in Ethiopia believe that there is no active determinant will for the dead saints within the intermediate state to communicate God on behalf of the physically living saints. The Holy angeles also have no right to communicate any living physical being unless they are sent by God also no right to take messages from any living physical being to God. The arrow of communication is from God to man, not from man to God, and is through Jesus or the Holy Spirit mainly also, through angels sometimes, excluding saints who are existing in the intermediate state.

The spirituality on the EOTC side can still be appreciated but this concept doesn't seem to have commonness with the theology and practice about the mediatory process among the EEC. Obviously the EEC shares the reformed theology of

free access or priesthood of all believers towards God only through one mediator-Jesus.

The EEC theology of free access to God is rooted in the understanding that Christ has come down to the level of man so as the seemingly high and remote God may be viewed as immanently close as ever before. As this idea is also tasty to the EOTC, there we see chance to bridge through a dialogue on the reason of Jesus' incarnation and the role of Jesus as a mediator.

Referring to the criteria's suggested by the EOTC authority priest above, we may still hope uniting thought in mediatory roles of Christ, excluding Saints and Mary.

What is important at this juncture is that it is mandatory for the key leaders from both sides to be open for hearings from both sides around the table, be it short speech presentations or a research, either entertaining the need for mutual confidence; also the need to face the discordant enemy through joint venture services. Both denominations are expected to actively engage in Information-Education and Communication (IEC) proceedings as the mass in both sides is uninformed-uneducated and out of communication concerning such beliefs and unity opportunities.

Dreaming unity is a difficult as well as threatening trial especially for EOTC and EEC who were antagonistic and competitive entities for long; there seems a sort of ecumenical attraction from both sides now. Yet underlying reasons for the dividing walls are entailed with what the group calls "truth"; therefore the trail of unity would even seem much difficult. But our strategy is capitalizing on the fellowship initiatives done so far than focusing on what divides, for unity to be realized.

One short-cut approach to inter-religious dialogue is to conduct it on the level of religious philosophy or so-called comparative religion. It aims to elicit a lowest common denominator and the broadest generalizations. It may become a religious cosmopolitanism but never a religious internationalism which makes

possible a dialectical process of enriching each individual religion's identity as well as the Fellowship of religions

IV Principles and Proposals towards Unity

4.1 Freedom

The process of making one a proselyte is mostly done by enforcement at the expense of freedom. Even God the ultimate waits one to respond following his/her freedom. To the contrary the strategies of proselyting applied in Ethiopia so far bases itself on a wrong attitude of absolutism and enforcement. If the ultimate willfully let human beings to exercise their natural power of choice and freedom, how can one violate this at the expense of freedom? Therefore, any initiation of unity must be ready to be governed by the principle of freedom of human beings especially in the process of proselyting. There should be no imposition of legalistic formula from any side.

4.2 Deal with deep seated Sentiments

First and foremost there must be a dead end to the past negative sentiment. Deep seated animosity must be let to come out to the fore, not for But for fruition of true repentance and reconciliation. Theology proper teaches repentance comes first positional before reconciliation. Many attempts of unity fail as they mostly overlook the first principle. The first principle is dealing with the past long awaited deep seated sentiments. If the agents of reconciliation are able to effectively deal with the past, the next initiative will stand on a guaranteed footing.

4.3 Deeper Understanding

How can unity vegetate unless otherwise there is openness for a deeper understanding? Leaders and members in each denomination must first be trained to develop an attitude of getting deeper understanding of the other religion.

4.4 Significance of dialogue

The agents of the religious institutions must first develop the attitude of dialoging rather than the attitude of competence or debates among themselves. Nobody learns from debates but from dialogues. Dialogue follows the principle of acceptance and respect. Dialogue naturally leads towards mutual understanding.

4.5 Control the Heresy of absolutism

No one can claim truth. Nobody is allowed to possess truth possessively for himself. Yes Jesus is the truth, the way, and the life but not anybody or any religion. Absolutism is theologically nonsensical and a scandal for unity. It is the worst heresy as it applies to ecumenism. We all belong to the truth not the truth necessarily being our exclusive possession.

4.6 Why Unity?

Unity is inescapable for many reasons. However, main reason to initiate unity is because of the demand of the age. Our time is an age of connectivity and necessarily demands unity. Religious institutions unaware of the time will simply be pushed away from the scene towards obsolescence. Religious institutions are first of all agents of life. If they are supposed to be life agents they should not let themselves die. How do they die? They die if they ignore the demand of the time. What if they die? There will be no expansion or growth. Therefore watching the demand of the time is a matter of existence for the religions themselves. They live, grow or expand if and only if they are ready to entertain the demand of the time which is connectivity and obviously stay united.

4.7 Seeking the lowest common denominator

How has the bits of animosity adhesiveness been in our attitudes? Isn't it by focusing on matters which separate us rather than those which may unite us? Agents of dialogue must always start from what is common to both rather than from what is uncommon to both. This is an issue of identifying the common bond

or things which the denominations share together. Unless otherwise the dream of unity is hardly feasible.

4.8 Prioritizing the connective agenda

What are the agenda's of dialogue? Should we settle every bit in order to bring unity? Which of the agenda's may be set with first or important priority? If we may be able to sort out the important ones, prioritizing out the important from those unimportant the next move towards unity will be smooth. Select the bits which work out for symphony.

4.9 Unity or Uniformity?

Even though we are created humans we are not created 100% uniform. In our uniformity there is diversity and all this is the beauty of nature. If this is true of nature so also theology proper, how can we expect uniformity? Therefore the dream of reconciliation should be unity rather than uniformity, respecting diversity and differences whether minor or major.

4.10 Something good in others

What good things do we see in the other group which we are deficient? Is it reasonable to ignore the good things just because they have not come from us? Once we open up to endorse the good things of others, then we will be ready for the next step towards making unity effective. Therefore we have to accept and adopt the good things in other religions.

4.11 Open up at the same time uncompromised

Opening up opens the door for unity. Opening up is not necessarily compromising "truth". What the religious institution claims to be true may be protected uncompromising obviously getting evaluated reasonably and realistically. But truth claims and absolutism should never stand blocking opening up.

Scholarly knowledge of Christ's nature doesn't necessarily serve for soteriological purposes, rather may serve for apologetic purposes; what saves us is not necessarily knowing the details concerning His nature or so, rather knowing and believing Him who died for our sins; who rose again as the exclusive savior.

4.11.1 *Dyophysite-two natures christology/ Monophysite-one nature christology/ Miaphysite* Christology-two perfectly united natures is simply a rational game. The argument on these matters simply divides the body of Christ. Such level of christology is not the concern or the head-ache of the actual beneficiaries (the mass) of the offer of salvation.

4.11.2 We should start unity initiatives capitalizing on what unites us like, Trinity which is common to both denominations, centrality of Jesus Christ still common to both denominations, the Bible with 81 % of its content common to both denominations, the "Holy Savior" the exclusive saving agent in the whole soteriological plan, still common to both denominations.

4.11.3 How much diverse are the parts, unity will not be difficult if the focus is on the whole. This is a matter of approach. There may be a difference with regard appropriation of Christ's work but there surely is no difference with regard to the person of Christ in both denominations.

4.11.4 Leaders on both ends should lead in identifying the common bond fostering unity. They should also be exemplary living interreligiously on common concerns.

4.11.5 Jesus' high priestly prayer in Ch 17 of St. John's Gospel belongs to all of us irrespective of our denominations. Leaders of each denomination need to repeatedly rehearse this prayer with the perspective of seeing all Christians in one fold.

4.11.6 Fostering full respect towards one another and openness for dialogue on matters of differences.

4.11.7 Both should start to accept and adopt what is good in the other party.

4.11.8 Believers of both denominations should be encouraged to open up to dialogues and understand the faith of others.

4.11.9 A common concern must underlie, if inter-religious dialogue is to be fruitfully conducted.

4.11.10 Start common cooperative charity and development centers.

4.11.11 Start a common platform for confession of common beliefs.

4.11.12 Start common evangelistic enterprises.

4.11.13 This proposal may be used as a tool to foster dialogue between the men of peace from both denominations.

Knowledge of our particular theology with more dialogues towards prioritization of what should come first, setting aside what is secondary or tertiary for each one denomination helps to get the common ground. Then the common Christological/soteriological ground should be endorsed officially by parishioners of each denomination.

With all this, Authority, Inerrancy and Infallibility of the scriptures should be the determinant factor wherever, whenever. As 'Believing Christ', is the main thing which puts anyone on the saved side. Soteriological dialogues in the practical field, mostly presents Jesus with no complication or apologetic rationale such as one of his nature and so on. "He saves", not necessarily the articulate knowledge/meaning of His person/nature.

Having said this, this research optimistically envisions bringing Ethiopian Christians together, back to their eschatological commanding position, where

Christ's church was practicing over the political spectrum, one way or the other, in the foundational 3-4 Centuries.

Chapter Seven

Conclusive remarks and Future Prospects

Main problem statement of this thesis was like, “EOTC is represented by more than 40 million people and Evangelicals in Ethiopia are more than 15 million. Each group stands for its own sect to the extent of dying for its claims. The question is ‘is there a meaning in the EOTC-EEC literatures, worthy to die for? to the extent keeping us disunited?

Key Questions of the research were:

1. Are there exegetical insights, particularly those concerning issues about the nature of Christ between the incarnation and the resurrection, which may influence the answers to the main problem?
2. Where do the Ethiopian Evangelicals stand in their theoretical conceptions of the nature of Christ in between the incarnation and resurrection? East or West?
3. What was the substantial nature of the incarnate Christ, just in between the incarnation and resurrection? What are the justifications?
4. How has this third question influenced the EOTC-Evangelical Christological dialogue?
5. What could be the possible dialogue link between the EOTC-EEC, which could bring them on the same platform?
7. Are the existing Christological-Soteriological differences between the EOTC and the EEC worth dying for?

The concern of this research was not to justify or modify the creedal statements or what Cyril said measuring it against Chalcedon or so. The aim here is to see roots of EOTC Christology and get options where we may clear some misconceptions about Cyril’s Christology so as to identify some crucial uniting lines between Cyril and Chalcedon with the Christology and soteriology of the West and East, lastly but not least, the Christological soteriological uniting lines

between the EOTC and the Evangelicals in Ethiopia.

In the previous six chapters this thesis basically treated the rift between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Catholic west, which is still an unresolved problem in the Continuum. The rift is also more than East-West, because it has dissected local African ethnic villages. Ethiopia is one of these localities affected by such a rift, and this rift presented this opportunity to re-examine the Christological-Soteriological stance of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhado Church (EOTC), Versus the Ethiopian Evangelical Churches (EEC). In a parallel way the research has attempted to identify the possible Christological-Soteriological dialogue links believing that these links may help bridge the long awaited gap that eclipsed the saving gift.

This research, therefore, sought to answer the question: “Can the Christological-soteriological rift between the EOTC and EEC, be somewhat bridged through establishing dialogue links?” Is there a meaning in the EOTC-EEC literatures, worthy to die for? Is Christ divided one for the EOTC and the other for the EEC, as far as keeping us in our own denominational caves?

Each chapter was an attempt to respond to Christological-soteriological questions which actually slanted in Ethiopian historical and sociological milieu. These questions are not necessarily global and timeless but predominantly very local and time bound.

One of the assumptions behind this thesis was that, Christological studies most of the time give due emphasis to creedal theological developments like the Nicene 325, the Constantinople I 381, Ephesus 431 and Chalcedon 451 and also post creedal historical-theological developments. It is proven that Christological treatments in the creeds very much focus on Christ’s post-resurrected scenario as the chalcedonian assertion underlines full humanity and full divinity of Christ.

This research preferred to do exegesis of biblical texts from the Christological point of view; then see applications in the creedal proceedings; the first chapter dealing with problem statement, history of Christianity in Ethiopia, religious history, particularly of the EOTC and the EEC. Chapter two is with an attempt to do exegesis of the New Testament Christology.

All arguments in the exegesis of the Gospel of John, the Synoptics, and Letters of Paul cohere in one thing. Christ who is God and the radiant of God's being (Jn 1:1) has become man (Jn 1:14), descended to the level of a slave, to the point of death, as crucifixion details are recorded for us in all the four Gospel narrations Matthew 27:37, 40; Mark 15:30, 31, 32; Luke 23:36, 38; John 19:19, 1 Corinthians 15; Galatians 3; and Phillipians 2:7-8. Therefore, the degree of the divine enabement in the human Christ was limited to zero level in between the walls of incarnation and resurrection so as the soteriological mission may be meaningful.

The hypostatic union of the divine with the human in all the process was a perfect unity, like the soul and body as in the analysis of Cyril, where Cyril is not basically far from Chalcedon while he asserted that the two natures have preserved their identity with no mixing or confusion but in perfect unity, which is not in Nestorius or Eutichus.

Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church according to (A.H.M Jones and Elizabeth Monroe 1962 :31) is one of the five Oriental Orthodox Churches, which does not accept the definition of the council of Chalcedon. The church has now developed its own Christological exposition based on St. Cyril's formulation. It is interesting to note that the EOTC takes Cyril's Christology very seriously, and so the church calls herself "*Tewahedo Church*," meaning a church that believes in the perfect union of the humanity and divinity of Christ without change (*wulate*), confusion or mixture (*tusahe*), separation (*filtet*) and division (*bu-dae*).

But the word tewahedo and the expression in it: "one nature" of Christ "from two natures", does not indicate the presence of one single and dominating nature in Christ that resulted from the absorption of one of the natures into the other; rather it implies "one united nature-miaphysis in preservation of the properties of the natures "(Cheif Rev Derje & Deqemezmur Beza, *Heretics inside the Temple...*,126).

The phrase "mia-physis" in Cyril's formula does not mean "single one-monos" or "simple numerical one" nature, but one composite or united nature. Hence, "monophysite" Christology is entirely different from "miaphysite" Christology, and miaphysitism is none other than the "tewahedo".

This flow analysis hints the huge possibility of soteriological unity on Christological stands between the East and West, also between the EOTC and the EEC in Ethiopia.

Next comes Chapter three with a sweeping survey of Christology within the frames of church history. Chapter four dealt with a review of EOTC and EEC Christological literatures and traditions which led the discussion to discovering the common doctrinal elements between the EOTC and EEC. Common elements discovered were;

- Monotheism;
- A Jesus shared in common, obviously with a different understanding as far as His nature is concerned;
- Common Trinitarian beliefs;
- A Holy Spirit shared in common;
- A Bible shared in common, even though the EOTC added the apocryphal books (not as official but just as explanatory literatures).

Before even an effort is made to minimize the differences, what they have in common is like 71.4 % and what they lack for unity is 28.9 %. Therefore the EOTC and the EEC are more of a family than more of rivals and hostile denominations.

As discussed in chapter four of this thesis the book “*Heretics inside the temple*”, written by an EOTC priest, argues against the excesses of appropriation of the pillars during the liturgy and preaching. The book clearly says; on mediatory function, most of the above except Christ could not be competent for mediatory roles. The right reason for this according to the book is that;

- Firstly all are created except Christ;
- Secondly, all cannot be everywhere at the same time, except the risen Christ;
- Third, Angels act only and only if they are sent by God not by men;
- Fourth, mediatory roles of Saints are developed in the traditions of the EOTC, following a wrong interpretation of Matthew 10:40-42 and Luke 16:18-31;
- Fifth attribution of mediatory role to Virgin Mary has developed out of a wrong interpretation of John 2:3. (Dereje& Deqemezmur Beza 2003 :23-33).

As far as the basic difference is concerned, the divergence lies on Angliology, Saintology and Mariology. It is true that the EOTC believes there is a mediatory communication from Man through either Saints including Mary, or Angels to God (Sisay Wogayehu 2013 :23). Against this, Evangelicals in Ethiopia believe that there is no active determinant will for the dead saints within the intermediate state to communicate God on behalf of the physically living saints. The Holy angeles also have no right to communicate any living physical being unless they are sent by God; also no right to take messages from any living physical being to God.

The effective way of communication is from God to man, not from man to God, and is through Jesus or the Holy Spirit mainly, may be through angels sometimes

if and only if they are sent by God. This excludes saints who exist in the intermediate state.

Chapter four and six on similar concerns concluded with survey questioners done to 120 seminarians; where the data tells that majority of evangelicals do not believe that the Christological theories of EOTC and EEC are worthy to die for as far as making the EOTC and EEC enemies.

Chapter Five dealt with reflective epistemological critique, polemically arguing for or against contextual response to the readings and crucial contextual questions concerning the status and nature of Christ during his earthly ministry.

Then chapter six continued with an exploratory findings and a huge possibility of unity in diversity, with eleven major principles and twelve point proposals to initiate family reunion between the EOTC and EEC.

Some promising unity initiatives are at pledge now; however these initiatives demand a holistic renewal movement to all Christian churches be it Orthodox, Catholic or evangelical in Ethiopia.

The assumption behind this thesis was that there is no indispensable difference worthy to die for, between the so called Diaphysite / Miaphysite camps in the existential religious practice of Ethiopia, as far as dissecting Christians.

For example as far as the hypostatic union with the possibility and impassibility issues, this research proposes a middle road not so far as denying impassibility but affirming Chalcedonies one person theory. God cannot change! But God can limit himself. There is no change in his divine attributes and there will be no change at all forever and ever. But God's Omni nature can make him able to act both ways in action and in non-action without changing or annihilating Himself. So, as there is no dissection in the nature of God there will be no change in nature whether within the Father or the Son or the Spirit. But the same nature in all the three may either be manifested in action or in non-action as it moves from

the Ontological to relational-functional state through the movement from creation to redemption and consummation.

Therefore, a delivery of a proposal for a Christological-soteriological dialogue between EOTC and EEC opens the door to reunite the Christian church of Ethiopia.

As far as the prior presupposition is concerned this research proceeding proposed that there are common Christological-Soteriological heritages, which may be used as a foreground for the unity anticipated, also elemental supportive inputs crept in within the current stance of the EOTC-EEC.

Scholarly Christological discussions mostly deal with the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, either differentiating the divine from the Human, or so mixing the divine and the human, or putting the two natures in perfect unity or a complete annihilation of the human by the divine. This is all like the two natures perfectly united and one person en-hypostasized or the divine person en-hypostasized the human nature. In a wider case we may say the Christological discussion dissected christendom as Chalcedonies and non-chalcedonies or the East Camp and the West camp.

If the two natures share a common person, where the person referred here is not from Mary but the eternal person, the divine Son, this person could be enhypostasized into the flesh from Mary, through a dynamic flow of life into both natures. Then right after the incarnation, what belongs to the divine also belongs to the human. The question is, how much of the empowerment is live in the two natures? But if the two natures are so divided as in Nestorius, these may lead that the two natures have their own independent person, independent acts as well.

This research proposed that the total working out of this unity may be true through the non-action of the divine enablement while retaining His full ontological power, also retaining His deity positionally for a limited period of time, just in between the incarnation and the resurrection. Surprisingly scholarly

Christological explanation remained as a mystery of the incarnation, whether one says God only dwelt in the flesh, or God became flesh or God swallowed the role of flesh etc etc.... At the same time such proceedings have only been a scholarly concern than the concern of the mass.

- Therefore, this research asserts that scholarly knowledge of Christ's nature doesn't necessarily serve for soteriological purposes; rather may serve for apologetic purposes; what saves the ordinary advocate is believing in Christ as the exclusive savior. This is very true to both denominations (EOTC and EEC) as far as this research is concerned.
- Knowledge of our particular theology with more dialogues towards prioritization of what should come first; setting aside what is secondary or tertiary for each one denomination, helps to get the common ground.
- Then the common Trinitarian/Christological/soteriological ground should be endorsed officially by parishioners of each denomination. The discussion so far exhibited that what may unite these denominations is far greater than what divides them. Therefore if priority is given to what is in common than what separates, unity is possible.
- This research optimistically envisions seeing Christians in a common forum or platform as far as Christology-Soteriology is concerned. Christians could be brought back to their eschatological commanding position, where the church was practicing over the political spectrum, one way or the other, in the foundational 3-4 Centuries.
- This research proposes a common platform for common confessions and joint venture for Christian missions, and holistic activities. Christ saves, not necessarily the articulate knowledge of His person/nature. This thesis proposes a simple soteriological teaching-preaching with unreserved commitment to Inform, Educate and Communicate (IEC) such truth to the mass on both sides.
- Dyophysite/ Monophysite/ Miaphysite Christology is not the concern of

the actual beneficiaries of the offer of salvation. These theories may be part of curricular activities on higher levels like seminaries or so but not necessarily part of building common faith and unity.

Therefore critical question of this research was: is there a meaning in the EOTC-Evangelical literatures, worthy to die for? Is Christ divided one for the EOTC and the other for the EEC, as far as keeping us in our own denominational lines? The answer from the literatures and data's gathered shows that this issue is never worthy to die for. Christ is the exclusive savior as far as literatures of both denominations tell. Christ is not divided.

Borrowing what Olson asked; could there be unity without uniformity? Yes, there could be unity without uniformity. The unity dreamed here in this research never dreams to bring uniformity. The two denominations have stayed long within their own boundaries, different traditions, different cultures and experiences that they surely will never betray their past to the extent of being uniform. Uniformity is even difficult within their units.

However, unity is possible if the above principles and proposals may be entertained in a common forum. Therefore, a delivery of such a proposal for Christological-Soteriological dialogue between EOTC and EEC optimistically opens the door to reunite the Christian church of Ethiopia.

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