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An Anthropological Analysis of
Wolfhart Pannenberg and Karl Rahner with Regard to
God's Universal Will to Salvation

A Thesis
Presented to
the Division of Theological Studies
Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements of the Degree
Master of Arts in Theological Studies

Approved by: [Signature]

by
Anthony Joseph Ferriell
May 1994
ABSTRACT

An Anthropological Analysis of
Wolfhart Pannenberg and Karl Rahner with Regard to
God's Universal Will to Salvation
by
Anthony Joseph Ferriell

As Western cultures have become increasing pluralized religiously in the twentieth century, Christian theologians have raised the question whether they should engage in dialogue or evangelism with communicants from other faiths. Between these polarities there have been other solutions offered. Two very prominent ones which have gained viability in the theological arena have been the ideas of Wolfhart Pannenberg and Karl Rahner. Both theologians have maintained an exclusivism with regard to the supremacy of Christian revelation. Yet, how they have maintained the supremacy of the content has been radically different.

Both theologians are sympathetic to dialogue with other religions. Within this dialogue, however, they do not want to sacrifice the ultimate truth claims of Christian revelation. In so doing this, they have sought to formulate the supremacy of Christian revelation in relation to other religions without being condemnatory. As such, Pannenberg has sought to develop the idea of how Jesus Christ is the explicit fulfillment and anticipation of the history of religions. Rahner, on the other hand, has sought to develop
the idea of how the Christian revelation is implicitly mediated through the historical reality of other religions.

It is, then, the purpose of this thesis to examine and critique the insights of these theologians in relation to their anthropological thought. It will attempt to examine whether in arguing for the supremacy of Christian revelation with other religions if an implicit or explicit proclamation should be maintained with regard to the salvific purposes of Christ. Is it sufficient, given what is known about human nature, to say that there can be an anonymous appropriation of Christ's salvific work? Or, is an explicit and cognitive adherence of Christian revelation necessary for the appropriation of Christ's work?

The first chapter will, then, seek to understand Pannenberg and Rahner's thought on human sinfulness and self-alienation. This will be done in order to find a basis of understanding what it is in regards to that humans are in need of salvation.

The second chapter will examine their views with regard to the idea of coming to understand one's sinfulness and self-alienation through critical self-reflection. This will be done for the purpose of seeing whether humanity is capable of realizing their lostness apart from an external revelation.

The third chapter will examine Rahner's understanding of the way toward the appropriation of salvation in Christ. It will seek to do so with a critique and analysis of its inner
coherence and theological soundness.

The fourth chapter examine Pannenberg's understanding of the way to the appropriation of salvation in Christ. It will be done with a comparative analysis and critique with that of the ideas of Rahner.
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Anthony J. Ferriell

Wilmore, 1994
CHAPTER 1

Most religions of the world recognize that there is something fundamentally and basically wrong with the nature of unconverted or unenlightened human existence. "They all recognize... that ordinary human existence is defective, unsatisfactory, lacking."¹ This chapter will then examine the understanding Pannenberg and Rahner have of humanity's defective existence.

Pannenberg notes that the understanding of the human dilemma is one which has shifted from a reference to God, to one that emphasizes the problem of humanity in relation to itself. The problem has been framed in more of an anthropocentric thematic, rather than a theocentric one.² One model of this shift can be seen in the comparative views of Augustine and Kierkegaard. Both of these thinkers are Christian, and both portray an acute and convicting analysis of the problems of the natural human condition. Yet, since Kant cut the moral nature of humanity away from the order of nature,³ anthropological analysis has had to interpret itself more in reference to the immediate effects apart from the


For example, in Augustine's analysis, human defection is thought both in terms of its ultimate cause and immediate effects, whereas for Kierkegaard, it is construed more in terms of its immediate effects on the human condition. The presuppositional shift, with the Kantian reformation, has made this thematic shift of emphasis which Kierkegaard takes necessary for the Christian theologian to relate meaningfully in the modern theological context.

Rahner and Pannenberg both feel compelled, so to speak, to go the way of Kierkegaard in their anthropological analysis. Given that modern science and a large portion of theologians have not for a long time worked with a God-centered universe or existence, Christian theology must be done and proved on secularist's grounds. In other words, Pannenberg and Rahner both see the need to give Christian content a basis of proof and plausibility from secular data. Pannenberg states:

The aim is to lay theological claim to the human phenomena described in anthropological disciplines. To this end, the secular description is accepted as simply as a provisional version of the objective reality, a version that needs to be expanded and deepened by showing that anthropological datum itself contains a further and theologically relevant dimension.

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4 Pannenberg, 104.
5 Pannenberg, 104.
6 Pannenberg, 19-20.
Rahner in this regard elaborates as such:

Theology is a theology that can be genuinely preached to the extent it succeeds in establishing contact with the total secular self-understanding which man has in a particular epoch, succeeds in engaging conversation with it, in catching onto it, and in allowing itself to be enriched by it in its language and even more so in the very matter of theology itself.  

So to delimit the focus of topical analysis, the foundation will be laid for understanding Pannenberg and Rahner's anthropology with the problem of human alienation. The concept of human alienation was really popularized by Karl Marx. Alienation in the Marxian sense was thought in terms of economic and social categories brought by the ill effects of capitalism. According to Marx material wealth is the sum value of human existence. Capitalism as an economic system creates conditions whereby material wealth is placed impropotionately in the possession of the minority bourgeois, at the expense of the mass proletariat. This system in turn creates societal discontent since material wealth or property is a social and not an individual commodity. Thus capitalism, with its system of private ownership breeds alienation of the proletariat from the material wealth which is rightfully theirs.

Pannenberg notes that the "more socio-psychological


discussion of the concept of alienation has to large extent psychologized the Marxist concept... and reduced it to a subjective feeling of estrangement.\(^9\) The discussion and interpretation of the phenomena of psychological alienation is colored by various nuances of meaning and anthropological interpretations. Because of the concepts great variation of ideas and meanings, Israel states that he would prefer to discard the term altogether.\(^10\) Great complexity is bound to occur with the evolution of any widely used concept, however. For that reason, then, this thesis will interact with the concept of alienation as a categorical means of understanding human falleness.

With the idea of alienation and its concurrent symptom of a "subjective feeling of estrangement" in mind, Guinness offers an elaborated definition from which to work. He writes: "Whenever a man is not fulfilled by his own view of himself, his society or his environment, then he is at odds with himself and feels estranged, alienated and called into question."\(^11\) Guinness's description emphasizes a cognitive approach when he speaks of man being unfulfilled due to what could be called a faulty world-view. Alienation occurs when

\(^9\) Pannenberg, 274.
\(^10\) Pannenberg, 274.
one's view of self, society, and the surrounding environment does not fulfill one's ontological nature and true identity.

This conceptual perspective can be distinguished from a more existential or ontological based approach. This is an approach represented by Tillich. Tillich writes that alienation is caused by unbelief which is what he understands as "the act or state in which man in the totality of his being turns away from God."\textsuperscript{12} The "totality of being" here refers to man's knowledge, will, and emotions. Yet, this estrangement is predicated not on a cognitive volition or predisposition, but is rather founded on the very nature of ontological existence.

For instance Tillich states:

Unbelief is the disruption of man's cognitive participation in God. It should not be called the 'denial' of God. Questions and answers, whether positive or negative, already presuppose the loss of a cognitive union with God... Unbelief is the separation of man's will from the will of God. It should not be called 'disobedience'; for command, obedience, and disobedience already presuppose the separation of will from will.\textsuperscript{13}

Here it is seen that the separation of humanity from God, or the ground of all being is integral to authentic existence and God's purposeful communication. "In his existential self-realization he turns toward himself and his world and loses his essential unity with the ground of his being and


\textsuperscript{13} Tillich, 47-48.
his world." Again: "It is freedom and destiny in one and the same act. Man, in actualizing himself, turns to himself and away from God..."\textsuperscript{14}

In reflection, Guinness seems too cognitive in his definition, and Tillich too ontological.\textsuperscript{15} Nevertheless, both men provide two valid polar conceptions with which to think of the phenomenon of alienation. Therefore, in dealing with the concept of alienation, it will be viewed and analyzed in polar tension between the cognitive and ontological definitions given. Pannenberg and then Rahner will be examined individually within this framework. The examination will be done with the traditional theological categories of sin or concupiscence and guilt. This will be followed by a review, contrast, and analysis of the respective positions.

Pannenberg has a good deal of respect for Augustine's understanding of concupiscence. Pannenberg thinks Augustine stresses more clearly than most modern theologians both the origin and the effect of sin.

The relative superiority of Augustine's teaching of sin becomes clear from the fact that it allows us to do justice to both... the empirical manifestation of sin and its radical character, the full discovery of which is only made possible by the light of grace.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{14} Tillich, 47.

\textsuperscript{15} The reason for this will become evident through the course of the thesis.

\textsuperscript{16} Pannenberg, 93.
In the *City of God* Augustine describes concupiscence as a desire for things in a depraved and disordered way. It inverts the created order of nature by turning high things low and the low things high.\(^1\) It is a perverted desire for the temporal above the eternal, the creation over the creator. Here Augustine shares: "These inferior goods have their delights, but are not comparable to my God who made them all. It is in him that a just person takes delight; he is the joy of those who are true of heart."\(^2\)

For Augustine, then, sin is not merely a matter of wrong or unethical choices, but is rather a very distortion in character of the nature of being. At its root is an "arrogant claim to ungrounded superiority" which ascribes the origin of things to the ego rather than being attached "to the real origin of things."\(^3\) What leads one to concupiscence is pride. The pride in humanity is manifested as a claim to a position of importance that is unwarranted. It is the denial of subservience to God. This Augustine calls *superbia*. It is the distortion of *superbia* in the Augustinian analysis which provokes people to *cupiditas*: a perverse will to sin.\(^4\)


\(^3\) Pannenberg, 88.

\(^4\) Pannenberg, 87.
Pannenberg respects the Augustinian analysis for its psychological realism and subtlety of perception. He sees value in the Augustinian analysis in that it shows sin to be a "distortion of our relation to the world and to ourselves." Also, Augustine has shown that this estrangement "takes place for long periods more or less unnoticed, being simply implicit" in human consciousness. Yet, Pannenberg realizes that Augustine's formulation, for all of its merits is not completely valid for modern consciousness. The reason is that it embraces a presupposition of a hierarchical order contained in the universe. This is "an order in which everything comes forth from God and strives to return to him." As Pannenberg states:

(T)he modern era has made the knowledge of nature independent of the idea of God and in so doing has deprived this conception of a universal natural order of its claim to validity as a fundamental philosophical principle. Reflection on the divine origin of nature, if entertained at all, is regarded as secondary to the knowledge of nature provided by the natural sciences.

With this acknowledgment, however, Pannenberg marvels that the modern psychological descriptions of human alienation are fundamentally in accord with Augustine's analysis. This analysis is rooted in the idea of the preference given to the

21 Pannenberg, 94.
22 Pannenberg, 94.
23 Pannenberg, 94.
24 Pannenberg, 95.
self-centered ego over living authentically in reference to one's meaningful destination.

For a more contemporary analysis, Pannenberg finds particular value in Kierkegaard's analyses of anxiety and dread in relation to the idea of sin more effective for the presuppositions of modern consciousness. Kierkegaard sees human beings as a synthesis of finite and infinite reality. This idea is gathered from the fact that people, though obviously finite given their numerable limitations, are able to transcend to a certain degree their own barriers of constraint. This is seen in humanity's excentricity or openness to the world which makes humans qualitatively distinct from all other animals.²⁵

This is particularly manifested in self-consciousness. This is descriptive of the spirit of a person which forms a synthesis with the body and derives out of this unity self-conscious identity.²⁶ Yet, the ground of this synthesis of identity is not composed within the human self. Its ground is constituted in something other than the self. So, when a person tries to actuate self in freedom and self-authentication, Kierkegaard states that this will ultimately lead into a despairing to be oneself. "That self which he despairingly wishes to be is a self which he is not; what he

²⁵ Pannenberg, 97.
²⁶ Pannenberg, 98.
really wills is to tear his self away from the power which constituted it."^{27}

The human person knows a priori that freedom has its reality in him. This is not able to be actualized by the self-will since freedom is not solely grounded in self. Due to this realization of the possibility of freedom springs dread and anxiety. The only way to escape anxiety and achieve freedom is to posit one's identity in the ground of its very being. This ground for Kierkegaard is God. The way to posit one's being in freedom in God is through faith. 
"Faith is: that the self in being itself is grounded transparently in God."^{28} Freedom for Kierkegaard is not the possibility of being able to choose good from evil. As Pannenberg clarifies, it is "identical with the spirit, with the eternity that is present in the 'instant'."^{29}

With this brief backdrop on the ideas of sin and concupiscence in the thought of Augustine and Kierkegaard, a base has been layed for which to contrast and distinguish Pannenberg's conceptions against these classical thinkers.

Pannenberg has great appreciation for the ideas of Augustine and Kierkegaard in understanding the rootedness of

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^{27} Pannnenberg, 98.


^{29} Pannenberg, 101.
sin in human nature. He does not believe, however, that the classical traditions were able to grasp the voluntary character of sin. If sin is rooted in human nature, and it is an inevitability of existence, then Pannenberg argues that it cannot be called sin. "The concept of sin is inseparable from the ideas of responsibility and guilt. [This causes] the most serious objection against linking the idea of sin to the natural conditions of human existence."31

To avoid this problem without negating the truth which lies in the classical formulations of sin, Pannenberg makes a critical clarification in the understanding of sin in relation to human nature. In a seemingly paradoxical statement Pannenberg writes that "even if human beings are... sinners by nature, this does not mean that their nature as human beings is sinful."32 In this statement the understanding of human nature has two conceptions. One is the idea that humans are sinful by nature in virtue of the fact that the limitations of their natural condition restricts human exocentricity. Human limitations come into conflict with openness leaving the inevitable conflict of anxiety and sin.

Pannenberg, however, is emphatic to insist on a second

30 Pannenberg, 108.
31 Pannenberg, 110.
32 Pannenberg, 107.
way of looking at this. This is that human nature, meaning human essence or essentiality of being, as thought of in the ideas of self-consciousness, exocentricity, etc., does not cause a person to be sinful. Pannenberg contends that the giveness of self-love or human finitude in congruence with exocentricity will not automatically lead a person to sin. Again, it cannot be so since sin implies responsibility, and the classical conception of human sinfulness does not do justice to the issue of responsibility.

For sin to be sin, it has to be a responsible act committed by a person's conscious self. The proper question at this point is in what way does Pannenberg more explicitly develop the idea that humanity is sinful by nature, though this nature is not sinful in itself. This is resolved by Pannenberg's development of what could be understood as an eschatological orientation of human nature. Pannenberg describes this orientation in this fashion:

The essential nature is... not something that is always and everywhere [the same], but rather as something that is to characterize all the manifestations of human life insofar as human beings are to be human and live in keeping with their destination as human. The essential concept of the human person is an 'ought' concept, not, however, one that is applied extrinsically to the actual living of human life but one that is operative in the exocentric structure of this life.

33 Pannenberg, 107.

34 The reason why this writer uses this idea will become more evident as the thesis proceeds.

35 Pannenberg, 108.
Here Pannenberg places human nature in a tension of the what is and the what ought to be. "Human beings are given their 'what they are,' but only in the form of a task to be completed."

Humanity, in Pannenberg's view, is put within the task to fulfill a destiny which is beyond the giveness of their innate limitations. Within this tension between human destiny and human confinement, the will of the individual comes into play to either affirm or deny that which God calls the individual to, beyond limitation and confinement.

A crucial question, however, for grasping Pannenberg's doctrine of sin and responsibility relates to the issue of where the possibility for human freedom is derived. Off hand, Pannenberg rejects the idea of responsibility construed in terms of independent authorship of an action which is indifferent to the circumstances which surround a choice. He thinks that to speak of responsibility in terms of causality, whether primary or secondary, places ethics into the realm of removing responsibility as much as explaining it. "Those who are the authors of actions may well refuse responsibility... by showing the motives that led to the actions; the closely woven net of motives can always be used to show why the actions had to occur as they did."  

Rather, Pannenberg would concur with Ricoeur, when he

36 Pannenberg, 108.

37 Pannenberg, 112.
states: "Man had the consciousness of responsibility before having had the consciousness of being cause, agent, author." Pannenberg contends that this "consciousness of responsibility" only comes when a moral imperative corresponding to a moral action becomes a part of the agents identity.

Responsibility and the demand or expectation of responsibility have their basis in legal or moral imperatives that prescribe what the character of my action ought to be. But these imperatives are binding only if they are accepted by agents as conditions for their own identity.

Pannenberg is here concerned that his readers understand that true ethical relation to a person must be understood in terms of ownership of the imperative, rather than forced behavior.

Pannenberg states that "mankind... is never finally determined in the sense of a fixed concept of human essence; in contrast to animals, humans are essentially 'open'." The essence of humanity is still a task to be completed, and as has been shown by behavioral anthropology, "man must always orient his drives." Since then human nature is still in the process of formation and cannot be locked into any fixed and permanent system, Pannenberg then seeks to understand human nature in its most concrete form, its


39 Pannenberg, 113.

In this regard Pannenberg writes that "human nature is the history of the realization of human destiny." Thus, no mode of moral conceptuality can be legitimately placed on a person outside of his specific framework of historical realization and exposure. This is a critical point. Pannenberg does not believe that a moral command is necessarily a part of a person's specific constitution. A moral imperative must be accepted as a part of one's identity before the human person can be responsible for it. Otherwise, if a person has not seen the moral imperative in relation to self-identity, it has no real or actual correspondence to the person as a binding quality of obedience.

What, then, does Pannenberg see to be morally binding for the human subject without violating the subject's freedom? There are two basic answers to this question: one is related to a formal freedom and the other to a real freedom. Formal freedom for Pannenberg is similar to the Socratic notion that people are always free to choose what they perceive as good for them. In fact, they always choose in congruence to that perception. This is for Pannenberg what he means by formal freedom.

As Pannenberg expresses: "(T)he persons making the

choice cannot but regard the object chosen as a good; otherwise they would not have chosen it."42 He argues that it is impossible to choose against the good or against God. The reason for this is that God is "the ground of the person's own future selfhood and therefore as the very embodiment of all that is good."43 One cannot explicitly reject God or the good; that person can only enclose himself in his own finitude.

When a person does, however, appear to explicitly reject God, this is because that person perceives the idea of God as being a merely human construct. On the other hand, when one believes God to be real and rejects His commandments, "this is due to doubt whether this or that is in fact God's will."44 Pannenberg even believes that one who is compelled to act by an addiction or compulsive behavior chooses according to what that person perceives to be in his best interest in the moment of the choice.45

With all of this, Pannenberg is in no way to be construed as a moral relativist. He writes that "it is possible... that the persons choosing are mistaken about what is good for them."46 He realizes that the perception of

42 Pannenberg, Anthro., 117.
43 Pannenberg, Anthro., 116.
44 Pannenberg, Anthro., 116.
45 Pannenberg, Anthro., 117.
46 Pannenberg, Anthro., 117.
what is good may be objectively in error, nonetheless the perceiver believes the choice to be in his best interest, and thus acts accordingly. The objective law of God may be realized, and perhaps agreed to, but the person agreeing may nonetheless be

inclined either to regard his directives as not applying to our situation or even to doubt that such laws can have God's authority behind them, once the content of his demands is in opposition to a fixed behavioral orientation based on instinct.\(^4^7\)

Also Pannenberg addresses the severity of choosing an objective wrong when it appears subjectively good:

Only the power of the lie that says that good is evil and evil good and deceptively offers us life as the reward for sin—only this deceitful character of sin enables us to understand how, even though the power to choose remains intact from the formal standpoint, human beings can nonetheless choose what is objectively evil, and choose it not through negligence but by compulsion.\(^4^8\)

So it is seen that formal freedom, as Pannenberg understands it, is the power which enables a person to choose what is felt to be for his own good, whether right or wrong. Yet, this is not the only freedom by which humanity acts. There is also what Pannenberg refers to as real freedom. This is the freedom which enables one to fulfill one's eschatological destiny.

Real freedom is a call or summons given to a person to full selfhood and identity. It is not a call to make a

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48 Pannenberg, *Anthro.*, 118.
choice whether one does or does not want selfhood, though. It is a summons which is grounded in God, and with it comes the realization of responsibility and meaning. "The call to freedom is always to a harmonization of one's behavior with one's own destiny. This call is therefore... not a freedom to choose between good and its opposite."49 Neutrality of decision is more related to ambivalence and non-identity. Actual freedom is empowerment to be as one should be.

Pannenberg's idea of real freedom will be more fully explored in the second chapter of this thesis. It is important for now, at least, to know that human beings function under two modes of realization in order to understand Pannenberg's concept of responsibility for sin and its relation to guilt. The first is formal freedom which allows a person to act according to that which is relatively thought to be for personal good. The second is real freedom which allows one to act according to what is in fact for personal good, in keeping with destiny and selfhood.

The question now arises as to where real responsibility and culpability for evil actions lie within this volitional scheme. For how can one be blamed for wrong doing when he cannot help what he does, since it is always at the moment conceived of as the perceived good? or when one does lead a good and a self-fulfilled life, is it not merely because

49 Pannenberg, Anthro., 116.
that one was summoned to the realization to do so? These and other questions like them will be answered later. Suffice it now, though, to turn Pannenberg's understanding of guilt and alienation.

Pannenberg distinguishes the concepts of alienation and guilt in a functional sense, but relates them in an affective understanding. Pannenberg, referring to alienation in the fashion of Guinness, writes: "The state of alienation makes itself known to human beings in feelings of malaise and discontent or of anxiety and general depression."50 Guilt consciousness, on the other hand, is what Pannenberg describes, as the height of affective alienation "when the tribunal of my own conscience condemns me."51

He elaborates further that alienation has a more indeterminate root, where as guilt is the opposite. Alienation, for instance, is made known to people through feelings. The root of its cause is deeper. Alienated persons feel as they do by the "fact [of being] removed from their true selves and pushed into questioning their identity."52 This loss of identity occurs when individuals feel themselves locked out of their destiny and exocentric orientation, and pushed back upon their egos, merely reduced

50 Pannenberg, Anthro., 285.
51 Pannenberg, Anthro., 285.
52 Pannenberg, Anthro., 285.
to them. This, however, is not an instantaneous or immediately conscious process.

The process of alienation may begin as a separation from a specified counterpart, but it tends to a generalized state of estrangement and apartness in which the ego falls back upon itself. The indeterminacy is essential to the feeling of self-alienation in particular. In the indeterminate feeling of personal non-identity the identity that is lacking is not grasped clearly, and for this reason the non-identity too remains vague. 53

What has just been described falls largely in line with what has earlier been described regarding Pannenberg's view of sin causing alienation to people's identities through loss of destiny into egocentricity. This, as Kierkegaard, too, suggests, causes several affective disorders. Yet, its nature is indeterminate due to its relation to non-identity. Pannenberg's thought here appears consistent with his analysis of human blindness to sin. An entering into self-alienation through non-identity is premised on ignorance of true identity for Pannenberg.

The stage has been set to inquire how can guilt consciousness be derived from mis-apperception caused by unavoidable ignorance. Consciousness of guilt is distinguished from alienation, according to Pannenberg, due to its determinancy. This determinancy is based on the violation of a norm by a culpable individual. This culpability implies that... there is a clear knowledge not only of

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53 Pannenberg, Anthro., 286.
personal identity and the demands that this identity makes on personal behavior but also of the person's own failure and the nonidentity this creates.\textsuperscript{54}

Thus, it appears that guilt stems from an awareness of violating that which is to be a normal part of one's known identity. It is the height of awareness of self-alienation in that its affliction is derived from the culprit's own self-awareness of self-violation.

It is difficult to see how Pannenberg manages this interpretation of guilt (as self-violation) with the Socratic premise of formal freedom, and his eschatological notion of real freedom. It seems that in each mode of freedom, a person is still determined toward which action to commit, since the action will be predicated on an apparent good or a heightened sense of authentic self-determination. To this Pannenberg answers that guilt consciousness is not based "on the consciousness of being the author of an act, but on the readiness to answer for its consequences."\textsuperscript{55} With a full acceptance of the consequences comes an identification of self with the act, and thus a responsibility for its occurrence. "He does not simply accept it willy-nilly but takes it upon himself and in this way becomes to and for himself the author of his act."\textsuperscript{56}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{54} Pannenberg, \textit{Anthro.}, 292.
\bibitem{55} Pannenberg, \textit{Anthro.}, 292.
\bibitem{56} Pannenberg, \textit{Anthro.}, 292.
\end{thebibliography}
Paul Ricoeur's view on this matter concurs with Pannenberg's and provides some illumination into the substance behind Pannenberg's thought. Ricoeur writes:

No doubt we can say that this guilt is already responsibility, if we mean that being responsible is being capable of answering for the consequences of an act; but this consciousness of responsibility is only an appendage of the consciousness of being charged with the weight of punishment in anticipation; it does not proceed from the consciousness of being the author of... The sociology of responsibility is very illuminating at this point; man had the consciousness of responsibility before having the consciousness of being cause, agent, author.\textsuperscript{57}

Having examined Pannenberg's thought, it is now in order to turn Rahner's thought on alienation as it regards sin and guilt.

In order to comprehend what Rahner says on sin and guilt, it is necessary to understand his doctrine of freedom. This is for the reason of connecting guilt for wrong actions with regard to justifiable culpability; or, the degree of responsibility for the action committed. To this issue, it will be found that Rahner construes the notion of freedom quite differently from Pannenberg. In doing so, he appears to provide a system which allows for more authentic self-determination.

To start off, Rahner is in agreement with Pannenberg on what freedom is not. Rahner disavows the notion that freedom is one faculty among others in the human constitution which

\textsuperscript{57} Ricoeur, 102.
allows the subject to stand apart from alternatives and neutrally make arbitrary choices. This is an approach Rahner views to be too simplistic and pseudo-empirical. Rahner's understanding of freedom could be labelled as anthropologically wholistic and not one which is given over to segmenting a particular faculty of the human subject, i.e. the free-will.

Freedom, argues Rahner, relates to the single whole of human existence. It is not something found behind "physical, biological, exterior and historical temporality of the subject." Rather, freedom is the actualization of the whole human subject. Freedom allows the self to be self in the subjectivity of its identity. This freedom is not a datum of any identifiably observable or empirical experience. The unity of freedom in the expression of the whole person "is antecedent to the individual acts and events of human life as the condition of their possibility..." It cannot be categorized since it is the a priori premise from which all categorization is possible.

Rahner states that the experience and knowledge of freedom are derived from a person's transcendental experience of self. Human beings are transcendent beings.

58 Rahner, 94.
59 Rahner, 94.
60 Rahner, 95.
In spite of the finiteness of his system man is always present to himself in his entirety. He can place everything in question. In his openness to everything and anything, whatever can come to expression can be at least a question for him. In the fact that he affirms the possibility of a merely finite horizon. In the fact that he experiences his finiteness radically, he reaches beyond this finiteness and experiences himself as a transcendent being, as spirit.\textsuperscript{61}

In the same way, freedom and responsibility are known as particularities of one's subjectivity in transcendental experience. Yet, this transcendental experience is not like one experience among other experiences. Rahner states that this freedom cannot be objectively represented in and of itself as other objects can be. It can only be spoken of by use of an abstract concept of it.\textsuperscript{62}

Another distinguishing point on Rahner's doctrine of freedom is its teleological character. Often freedom is thought of for the purpose of letting one achieve some uninterrupted, consecutive chain of events. Rahner sees the teleological character of freedom as being much greater than what was just described. Freedom has a necessity about it. This necessity, however, is not like the necessity of physical events with recurring and unalterable chains of causation. Freedom is the capacity for subjectivity that cannot be derived nor explained from such a sequence.\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{61} Rahner, 32.
\textsuperscript{62} Rahner, 20.
\textsuperscript{63} Rahner, 95.
Rahner elaborates in this fashion:

Freedom therefore is not the capacity to do something which is always able to be revised, but the capacity to do something final and definitive. It is the capacity of a subject who by this freedom is to achieve his final and irrevocable self.  

Freedom is not like the occurrence of other events which "goes on generating itself, and becoming something else and being reduced to something else in its antecedents and consequences." Freedom seeks for the development and final actualization of the self. This final actualization, Rahner states, will not take place until eternity. Yet this temporal life is geared toward actualization in eternity. 

"[I]n our passage through the multiplicity of the temporal we are performing this event of freedom, we are forming the eternity which we ourselves are becoming."

To form the eternity "which we ourselves are becoming" implies that the transcendental quality which human beings possess is geared toward a transcendental future. This aspect of Rahner's thought will be developed further on. It suffices now, in order to set the base of understanding sin and guilt, to realize that Rahner's transcendental ontology is oriented toward a transcendental teleology. So with this summarization of Rahner's doctrine of sin and freedom, the

64 Rahner, 96.
65 Rahner, 96.
66 Rahner, 96.
Rahner states that the subjects of sin and guilt are crucial matters for Christianity, since it is a religion a salvation. Yet they are issues that modern humanity is affectively bothered by in real tangible or immediate ways.\(^6^7\) Part of the reason for this, Rahner explains, is that "modern social sciences have a thousand ways and means to 'unmask' the experience of man's guilt before God and to demolish it as a false taboo."\(^6^8\) What was once thought to be a real morality is now thought of as social norms. This sociological conception has done much to diminish the idea and thus the affective reality of guilt.

Rahner argues, however, that much of this conception is false. Each person, in whatever realm of existence is ultimately responsible and morally accountable to some ultimate standards, whether thematically realized or not. Even the person who fights against all moral conflicts and experiences "as something which only plunges people into neurotic anxiety would do that once again with the ardor of something which he must do."\(^6^9\) The fact of the matter is that humans are moral beings by transcendental necessity.\(^7^0\)

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67 Rahner, 91.
68 Rahner, 91.
69 Rahner, 91.
70 Rahner, 92.
This sense of morality has everything to do with the transcendental giveness of human freedom. For this freedom is not of a neutral quality which allows persons to make either/or choices, but choices that have definitive and lasting consequence. This kind of teleological and developmental emphasis can take no other than a moral quality given the weight of its importance. Yet, granting that Rahner's description of freedom and its moral quality is real to experience, the question can be raised as to where the source of this giveness of experience stems?

Rahner's answer to this question is that idea which people call God. God is the source of what Rahner refers to as the horizon of absolute transcendentality.\(^7_1\) This horizon is what allows human subjects to be free. "For wherever there is no such infinite horizon, such an existent is locked up within itself in a definite and intrinsic limitation, without knowing this explicitly itself, and for this reason it is not free either."\(^7_2\) For without an infinity for human subjects to be posited on, there could be no transcendence since the finite cannot move beyond itself in any way by standing on its own terms. Thus the source and ground of humanity's transcendental subjectivity is the infinite being, God.

\(^7_1\) Rahner, 98.

\(^7_2\) Rahner, 98.
Now the source of humanity's freedom in transcendentality is not conceptually or thematically realized by most. God as the source of freedom often goes unrecognized, and in fact, on several occasions is explicitly denied. Rahner argues, however, that an unthematic and non-conceptual knowledge of God is always present for all persons, whether or not this is reflected upon, or even wrongly reflected upon. As such, since God is known and experienced in transcendentality, each person has responsibility to Him as the source, ground, and final destiny of their freedom.

How does this responsibility occur? This occurs as a freedom mediated through the concrete and objective experiences which encounters the human subject in the world. Within the varying events which confront the human subject in the world, each person may or may not choose to continue to act in congruence with the ground of their being. They may act authentically within the freedom of their transcendental subjectivity, or close themselves away within the smallness of their own finitude. In every confrontation in the concrete world there is given the opportunity for an unthematic yes or no to God, who gives people their freedom to walk in.

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73 Rahner, 98.
74 Rahner, 98.
75 Rahner, 98-99.
Rahner, here, elaborates:

Subjectivity and freedom imply and entail that this freedom with respect to the object of categorical experience within the absolute horizon of God, but it is also and in truth, although always in only a mediated way, a freedom which decides about God and with respect to God himself. In this sense we encounter God in a radical way everywhere as a question to our freedom, we encounter him unexpressed, unthematic, unobjectified and unspoken in all of the things of the world, and therefore and especially in our neighbor.\(^76\)

A crucial problem with making a decision against freedom is not only is it a denial against God, but also of one's self. In that a person's being and identity is grounded in the transcendental horizon of freedom, so is fulfillment of that being and identity. When confronted with the concrete reality of the world, a person who is closed to freedom goes against the ground of his own character, and thus participates in an act of self-negation. This in turn leaves the agent in a state of unauthenticity. For when a person says no to God, who is the source of his being, he cannot but help do so also to himself.\(^77\)

Though there is some clarity and coherence in understanding how sin and self-alienation occur in Rahner's scheme of thought, it is not so clear, however, as how one incurs personal guilt. The reason for this is because sin transpires in the realm of transcendental subjectivity. In that it transpires in this realm it is not clearly open to

\(^76\) Rahner, 101.

\(^77\) Rahner, 108.
objectification, analysis, and judgement. As Rahner states that human freedom has an *a priori* immediacy which is unable to be subjected to *a posteriori* analysis. So it is with a violation of this very same freedom in sin. This problem is made even more complex in that the derivative of the moral quality of human freedom occurs on an unthematic and non-conceptual level often times.

Rahner is aware of all of this and writes that "outside of the possibility of an absolute experience of one's own subjective evil objectifying itself in the world, [judgement] can really only claim to be probable at most."\(^{78}\) Here he explains that one can know the guilt of his own personal guilt, but never be for sure of that about others. This is a realm that is fully personal and not capable of being made aware of to others.

Rahner does say that people know for sure that this is a world which is co-determined by guilt. Yet to be able to pin-point what sector or place the evil of humanity comes from is something that cannot be done with certainty. Speaking of the consequences of an evil decision, Rahner gives this explanation:

> They only participate in it, and therefore they are inevitably characterized by ambiguity. For while history is still going on, it always remains obscure whether they really are historical, corporeal objectification of a definite good or evil free decision, or whether it only looks this way because this

\(^{78}\) Rahner, 108.
objectification has arisen only out of pre-personal necessities. 79

When Rahner speaks of pre-personal necessities, he is referring to that process where over-aggression is simply developmentally natural in the process of personalization.

In another place he describes it this way:

We could assume that unfortunate situations which are detrimental to freedom and which always have to be worked through in the development of the human race never arise out of a really subjectively evil decision, but that they are the early stages of a development which begins from far below and moves upwards, and is not yet finished. 80

Rahner, however, is explicit about the point that each honest person has a subjective awareness as to the reality of personal guilt. Not only this, the objectifications of personal guilt in the world do make themselves felt and known, no matter how ambiguously. In fact, it is within the historical ambiguity of evil that co-determines and shapes each person's freedom in subjectivity. For every decision is made in a concrete historical setting where the effects of guilt objectify themselves. Due to this a good act itself remains ambiguous. "It always remains burdened with consequences which could not really be intended because they lead to tragic impasses, and which disguise the good that was intended by one's own freedom." 81

79 Rahner, 107.
80 Rahner, 108.
81 Rahner, 109.
In light of this, Rahner states that "man [is] a being threatened radically by guilt."\(^{82}\) It is the threat of personal guilt and the guilt of others that should drive people to soberness and caution in estimating the positive possibilities of humankind. Rahner's own conclusion is that "there is for the human race in its concrete history no real possibility of ever overcoming once and for all this determination of the situation of freedom by guilt."\(^{83}\)

It is in this perspective, with a somewhat historical pessimism, that Rahner believes Christianity and thus theology should portray the reality of sin.

Now having given a summary observation of Rahner, this paper can proceed contrast and critically evaluate Pannenberg and Rahner respectively. This evaluation will not be done solely to assess the ultimate truth value of each position. Rather, it will be done to set some of the necessary moorings for further observation and analysis to be gleaned later on in this thesis. With this in mind, the paper shall examine in successive order their doctrines of freedom, sin, and then guilt.

Pannenberg and Rahner agree and differ considerably on the issue of freedom. They agree in that they see freedom as the starting point and basis from which moral responsibility

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82 Rahner, 109.

83 Rahner, 109.
and personal identity are to be derived. Freedom is concerned with self-determination. Self-determination is concerned with fulfilling one's identity in action. The fulfillment of personhood is a critical issue in the minds of both theologians. This is largely for the reason because they see God as the ground and source of every human's personhood. So the fulfillment of personhood as it is grounded in God and guided in freedom of self-expression is of essential importance. Any sort of anthropological coercion would be the demise of personal meaning.

The difference lies in how each theologian construes human self-determination. Pannenberg takes a soft or semi-deterministic view of the will, while Rahner adheres to more of a libertarian view. With Pannenberg's Socratic conception of the will, the human subject always does what is perceived to be for his own good at the moment of choice. This is at least in the realm of formal freedom. At the level of real freedom the subject does what is actually best with the realization of responsibility in identity with one's own personal destiny. Rahner, however, believes that the immediate power of self-determination is always and transcendentally present with the agent, giving that on the ability to exercise a yes or no toward the authentic movement of freedom.

To this it may be said that Rahner appears to assign a level of authentic spiritual realization (given the
unthematic experience) on a general level of human experience which Christianity has traditionally not found warranted. Though both theologians realize that God is the basis of all of humanity's freedom and destiny, Pannenberg appears still to draw a clearer distinction between God's immanence in natural grace, and God's special revelation of Himself in transcendence. Pannenberg's conception of the will appears to be in sounder theological territory, along with the likes of Kierkegaard and Augustine.

With regard to the area of sin, the theologians, though embarking on similar goals, appear nonetheless to take different paths. Sin for Rahner is failure to make an authentic decision when confronted by the concreteness of worldly reality. It is diverting from the subjectivity of one's freedom in making a decision of final and lasting consequence, to a decision that is abortive toward the individual's integral character. Pannenberg, though keeping with the emphasis on self-authentication, construes it more in terms of an exocentric destiny beyond the individual subject. To sin, in this case, is to avoid one's destiny with the closing in on the self in egocentricity.

Though both theological stances have valid points to make, Pannenberg appears to have hit the target in defining sin more accurately. This is disobedience or denial of God's will for one's life. Rahner, likewise, can be construed as saying the same thing, but in a different way. This,
however, cannot be easily done. For Rahner does not give much outward objectivity to the will of God in distinction from the will of the human subject. Instead, the will of God for Rahner is to act finally and decisively in authentication of human development. Pannenberg, on the other hand, sees the subject needing to be oriented toward an eschatological otherness. This is important in the Christian message for distinguishing the otherness of God, which relates to His will, in distinction from that of human beings.

On the subject of guilt, it seems that both theologians have a healthy recognition of its fact and consequence. Both understand it as an offense to God and a weight of corrective for the sins of humanity. On this point, any distinctions between Rahner and Pannenberg have little if any bearing for the purposes of this thesis. With that observation, then, this writer will forego any more comment on their understanding of guilt. It will, however, be an issue of great importance later on in the paper.
CHAPTER 2

It has been seen that Pannenberg and Rahner have well thought out doctrines on the issues of sin and guilt. The question which this chapter will seek to address is how the self-transcendent subject comes to understand the objectivity of personal sin and guilt. The previous chapter discussed conceptions of violating one's self-transcendence, this chapter aims at discovering how the self-transcendent subject comes to a knowledge of this violation. Niebuhr asks a similar question near the beginning of his Nature and Destiny of Man. "How can man be essentially evil if he knows himself to be so? What is the character of the ultimate subject, the quintessential I, which passes such devastating judgements upon itself as object?"¹

This same probing question must be extracted from the theologies of Pannenberg and Rahner. In order to see the depth of their understanding of the depravity of human nature, one must assess their understanding of the self-transcendent subject's knowledge and awareness of his personal state. Buber, in a similar fashion to Niebuhr, states that the ego or the quintessential I is able to stand outside of the self and cast judgement on it.

Consciousness of the I is not connected with the primitive of the instinct for self-preservation any more than with that of the other instincts. It is not the I

that wishes to propagate itself, but the body, that
knows of yet of no 1.2
As seen within the self-transcendent consciousness of
human nature, there is a dual reference point of human
consciousness: the ego and the self. As Buber seems to have
stated rightly, the ego has the capability to stand in
differentiation form the self or the body. Such a
constitutional organization of the psyche allows the
possibility for humans to engage in critical self-reflection.
The point now to be derived is what allowance does Rahner and
Pannenberg make for the awareness of sin through critical
self-reflection? or how much can the ego be distant from the
self to honestly engage the depth of its sinfulness?
This paper shall seek first to understand Pannenberg on
this issue, and then Rahner.

Pannenberg clearly stresses in his anthropology the
point that humanity has an exocentric orientation.
Pannenberg quotes Max Scheler with the observation that
exocentricity is the most general quality among humans and to
that extent is the most "fundamental characteristic of [that
which is] properly human."3 Animals, too, are exocentric.
In fact, they are more in tune with their environment than

2 Martin Buber, I and Thou, 2nd ed., trans. by Ronald

3 Wolfhart Pannenberg, Anthropology in Theological
Perspective, trans. Matthew J. O' Connel (Philadelphia:
are humans. Yet human exocentricity is distinct from that of the animals. Katz has pointed out in Animals and Men that animals live totally present in their environment, unaware of a real past or future.4 Humans, however, in their exocentricity are able to purposely distance themselves from their imposed environment. In this way humans are not absorbed into their impressions, but can experience "what is other as other."5

In that the human subject is capable of doing this, a level of self-transcendence is achieved. To experience that which is other as other is a capability only given to humans. To experience imposing phenomena as differentiated and uniquely distinct from self is to be able to rise above the pure objectivity of the material environment. It is to be subject in relation to all other imposing objectivity. This is an aspect of self-transcendent perception. As such, it places the exocentric quality of human relatability at a qualitative distinction from other animals.

In a person's self-distanciation from all other objects, there is also the power of free selectivity to be present to which-so-ever object the subject may choose. "This structure of behavior which allows human beings to direct themselves to the object as other also makes it possible for them to

4 Pannenberg, 61.

5 Pannenberg, 62.
distance themselves from it in favor of still another."⁶
Thus the subjective knower not only transcends in the act of
perception, but also the reality of perception itself.
Therefore, in the act of experience there is a fundamental
interchange between perceived reality and the ego.⁷

This interchange allows the knowing subject to take
phenomenal reality and compare it to other as other and to
the self. This is a higher order of knowing which allows the
human subject to embrace a generality of understanding.
This, of course, exceeds the knowledge gained of objects in
their momentary individuality.⁸ It moves one into the realm
of universals. So the exocentric orientation of humanity
structurally reveals to the subject a high degree of self-
knowledge. The knower has the capability of comparing and
contrasting his ego to self and to his environmental reality.

Pannenberg argues, as does Rahner, that this exocentric
orientation implicitly has a religious dimension to it. For
with the higher order of knowledge and its entrance into the
realm of universals, it can easily be inferred that this
knowledge does not have its grounding in individual
particularity. It must be grounded in some higher order of
being. Pannenberg, working from the thought of Plessner,

⁴⁶ Pannenberg, 67.
⁷ Pannenberg, 67.
⁸ Pannenberg, 68.
states it in this fashion:

I... transcend every finite content in the very act of grasping it. The experience need not mean that I abandon the finite objects; rather, I become conscious that these objects do not have their root in themselves. Thus the experience of transcending all finite contents leads to the consciousness of unqualified contingency of existence and thus to the idea of a ground of the world... or to God. 9

Whether this reality is grasped in these conceptual terms or not, Pannenberg writes that it is a "reality prior to them; the divine reality, even though they have not yet grasped this thematically as such, much less in this or that particular form." 10

This elaboration, thus far, may not appear pertinent to the issue of critical reflection in coming to a self-awareness of one's sin. Yet Pannenberg first wants to establish that humans have the capacity for a real knowledge of reality. This knowledge is not superficial, but is intricately interchanged with the intimate knowledge of self. Not only this, but in the act of knowing, divine reality is implicitly embraced. As such, the human subject would appear also to be natively oriented to sooner or later realize, or at least grapple with fundamental issues, i.e., the rights of reality and the guilt which occurs through transgressing those rights.

With Pannenberg's account of human exocentricity, it

9 Pannenberg, 69.
10 Pannenberg, 69.
would certainly appear that the capability for consciously grasping one's personal sin is possible. Pannenberg, however, realizes that the answer to this issue is not that easily answered. For the question was originally formulated earlier in this chapter if whether or not the ego can stand sufficiently apart from the self to provide an honest evaluation of one's sinfulness. Pannenberg's basic account of human exocentricity lends credence to the idea that the ego can relate in honesty to the self.

Yet there is another issue to be raised. Though granting that the exocentric orientation of understanding is sufficiently in tune for all people: is, however, the interpretation of the perceived reality always correct? or, in other words, is the self-understanding of the ego in relation with the self sufficiently oriented, for all, to correctly understand the exocentric data as it stands and is interpreted in relation to the subjective knower? If the interpreter does not interpret correctly, especially as it relates to morality and sin, then the exocentric orientation of knowledge is of little avail in bringing one to understand explicitly one's sinfulness. To glean what Pannenberg states on this issue, the paper now turns.

In short, the answer to the question raised is that there is no guarantee in Pannenberg's anthropological understanding that a person will be able to come to a knowledge of sinfulness through critical self-reflection.
This is an issue which revolves around the honesty of the relation of the self and the ego. For Pannenberg, in keeping with the ever openness of human nature, develops an anthropology of what could be called the openness of the self and the ego. Though granting a reality of the ego in distinction from the self, he does not see these as having fixed self-conceptual congruities in identity and moral formation.

Two classical views which stand in contrast to Pannenberg's are those of Fichte and Hume. Fichte believed that the ego and the self receive their unity in self-consciousness. For Fichte, self-consciousness is a fundamental and absolute given of all reality. Self-consciousness is a manifestation of God and a knowledge of it cannot be derived at from any other basis than itself. Yet this self-consciousness allows the power of the ego to identify with itself. In this identification, the ego positions itself on the ground of self-consciousness to be able to form and critically discover the identity of the self.

Thus in Fichte's scheme, the ego is able to achieve a high degree of independence for honest self-critical reflection. Fichte illustrates what is meant here:

I shall open my eyes, shall learn thoroughly to know myself, shall recognize that constraint... I shall thus-

11 Pannenberg, 203.
and, under that supposition, I shall necessarily-form my own mode of thought. I shall stand absolutely independent, thoroughly equipped and perfected through my own act and deed. The primitive source of all my other thought and of my life itself, that from which everything proceeds that can have existence in me, for me, or through me, the innermost spirit of my spirit, is no longer a foreign power, but it is, in the strictest possible sense, the product of my own will.\textsuperscript{12}

For any spirit of grandiosity that may come from Fichte's words, his statements illustrate a view of the great power and independence of the ego. Pannenberg states that contemporary psychology largely holds to the model of the ego as exemplified by Fichte.\textsuperscript{13}

Another spectrum of thought opposed to both Fichte and Pannenberg is that of Hume. Hume has a very empirically based concept of the ego. Hume relates ego identification "so closely to individual conscious experiences that the unity of the ego through time becomes secondary or even a pure product of the imagination."\textsuperscript{14} Hume noticed that when a person turns in reflection to self there is nothing there to be perceived except what is already perceived through perceptions from past experience: various ideas already empirically learned. "The ego is primarily given with the experiences of the moment."\textsuperscript{15}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} Johann G. Fichte, "The Vocation of Man," The European Philosophers From Descartes to Nietzsche, ed. Monroe C. Beardsley (New York: The Modern Library, 1992), 496-97.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Pannenberg, 201.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Pannenberg, 216.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Pannenberg, 216.
\end{itemize}
Treatise Concerning Human Nature that the ego is "nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an incredible rapidity, and are in perpetual flux and movement."\textsuperscript{16}

To these two classical positions, Pannenberg has some commonality, but also some substantial differences. Pannenberg, in his position, starts of by asserting that the identity of the ego is primarily tied as a mirror reflection to the consciousness of the self. Pannenberg notes that in a baby's initial stages of development, the self of the child does not distinguish himself from the self of the mother.\textsuperscript{17}

This is a distinction that comes through the acquisition of speech and object perception. As these are developed, the indexical reference point, the I, of the self comes into formation.\textsuperscript{18}

Yet as the I formulates with the development of object perception and speech, it takes on what Pannenberg states is an unthematic character. There grows in a child an awareness of self, but the awareness is of a primary nature, and is not introspectively expanded.\textsuperscript{19} So the primary awareness in the

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\textsuperscript{17} Pannenberg, 22.

\textsuperscript{18} The "indexical reference point" is that part of the self against which all things are checked.

\textsuperscript{19} Pannenberg, 222.
development of identity is the formation of the self before the ego. It is later, after the formation of self, that the ego supervenes on the self with the realization that it is part of the self's identity. It is with this supervening that the process of critical self-reflection begins.

Yet Pannenberg is clear to explain that the ego only has its continuity of identification with the already formed and ever-present self. The ego must find its position of identity on the self. It does not posit its own self in self-consciousness, or derive its being solely from a cluster of experiences. The ego is formulated constitutionally from the self in all its "states, qualities, and actions." Yet the ego is independent in several ways to the self, as in Buber's formulation.

Pannenberg elaborates:

When the individual ego knows itself, it can know that this identity is based on its self or exercise it as ego. It can distance itself from its bodily, its 'social,' and even its 'spiritual' self and in the course of its identity formation project ever new forms of the self. But it can also for the sake of its self, distance itself from its own ego... Finally, it can allow the ego to be determined by the self so that the ego gains the stability and the continuity that enable it to master the impulses of the id. 21

Thus it is seen that in Pannenberg's conceptuality of the ego there is understood to be a certain degree of autonomy. This autonomy allows it, in part, to shape the self's formation.

20 Pannenberg, 221.

21 Pannenberg, 222.
The formative process of the ego upon the self, however, is proceeded by the self's formation. "The cohesion and unity of the individual's life history are based on the self, not on the ego."\textsuperscript{22}

At this point there has been seen much discussion on the formation of the self's identity upon which the ego projects itself. There has not, however, been any word stated on how the self forms its identity. On this point, all that is really needed to be said is that the self's identity is determined in large by the experiences gained from its surrounding social structure. The self, Pannenberg states, is not completely determined by its existing social structure. The ego does not have to accept the social self. It can to one degree or another disregard the "classification and expectations assigned to it by others."\textsuperscript{23}

No one, though, can break totally free of their social self. The ego can only posit itself from the self. This self, which has in large been formed by society, is the only basis from which the ego stands to form both identification and self-judgement. Thus the individual subject within a society only has a limited degree of self-autonomy.

Pannenberg writes that "the acquisition of an acceptable measure of social recognition is indispensable as the basis

\textsuperscript{22} Pannenberg, 223.

\textsuperscript{23} Pannenberg, 223.
of all life in society..."24

This leads again to make the reiteration that the exocentric structure of human knowledge is not full-proof in leading the knower to interpret reality as it really is. The exocentric structure of knowledge is not guided along hard and fast lines of behavioral dispositions. One's social identity and the self-acceptance of that identity has several ramifications on the knower's perception of reality.25 As such, the question of coming honestly to a knowledge of one's sinfulness, through critical self-reflection, is an open question. There are no given referential points of knowledge where such an understanding may be attained, especially granting the relativity of assigned social roles in identity formation.

More will have to be stated about Pannenberg's position on this matter later. Having, however, drawn a sufficient amount of information from Pannenberg, it is now time to turn to Rahner's thought on the very same issue.

Rahner's anthropology is more accepting of the idea of a knowledge of sinfulness gained through critical self-reflection. A sinful act according to Rahner, one which incurs guilt, can only be knowingly committed.26 If it can

24 Pannenberg, 224.

25 Pannenberg, 72.

be knowingly committed then it can be obviously re-perceived through critical self-reflection. Rahner states that there can be "extremely reflectionless, forgotten, dissimulating or suppressed guilt, but not guilt brought about unknowingly and involuntarily."\textsuperscript{27} Rahner reasons that there are different degrees of guilt according to a person's knowledge and freedom, but there are no unknown sins.

Though Rahner's anthropology allows for a good deal of possibility in the discovery of one's sinfulness, there is still much ambiguity to this issue in relation to his theology. Rahner states that if a person commits guilty sin, it is done knowingly. In fact, in the act of transgression, there is self-determined reflection in the process. Yet in this reflection there is a certain vagueness regarding the sin being committed. It is clear that when one reflects in the midst of a sinful action that this person "always encounters himself in his reflection as someone who has already decided, i.e. as someone in a determined moral disposition", and never as one who makes a decision out of moral indifference.\textsuperscript{28}

With this reflection, however, the agent is unable with any certitude to trace the origin from which the action proceeds, whether it consists in the act itself or in a state

\textsuperscript{27} Rahner, 267.

\textsuperscript{28} Rahner, 268.
of sinfulness.

Guilt, in spite of its basically active character and its nature as an event, has a diffuse existence for us in the whole course of human history, even simply on account of the fact that ultimately our subsequent and always unfinished reflection and `analysis' can never resolve the conjunction of act and state, habitual disposition and new original decision, sin and sinfulness.\textsuperscript{29}

Since the world and its history in which humanity lives is so deeply characterized by the effects of sin, it is extremely difficult to discover that act which was originally produced or that one which stems from ill effects which has not "been stored up in a person's historical memory and thus be always available for renewed reflection."\textsuperscript{30}

Another difficulty which stems from the possibility of reflecting on sin is the ability to be able to attain objective knowledge through one's subjective judgement, which is itself subject to judgement. Rahner explains:

Reflection can never `catch up' with man for the simple reason that every reflection, whatever its pretensions to objectivity, is itself a morally good or evil act demanding a new reflection on its own quality and so on \textit{ad infinitum}.\textsuperscript{31}

So the idea of a pure intellectualistic reflection in coming to terms with one's sinfulness is out of the question for Rahner. There has to be another way which is more constitutive or in accordance with human transcendental

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{29} Rahner, 268.
  \item \textsuperscript{30} Rahner, 269.
  \item \textsuperscript{31} Rahner, 276.
\end{itemize}
nature.

Rahner, of course, acknowledges this. Humanity, he states, to know themselves must go beyond themselves. Self-consciousness is only attained by being conscious of something other than self. The person who catches sight of self only does so through perceiving another object. "Man always requires some material distinct from himself which will act as an Archimedian point, so to speak, from which alone he can attain himself." 32 This is due to humanity's transcendental orientation, or what Pannenberg calls exocentricity.

So with this given structural orientation of knowledge, pure introspection in subjectivity is a fruitless endeavor for self-knowledge. To attain the knowledge of one's sinfulness, it must be gained through a mediating form outside of the self. Rahner sees that humans need a sign which points to one's objective guilt. 33 This sign is not to be confused with the guilt itself, but rather serves as a constitutive pointer to the fact of guilt.

This constitutive sign is in reference to an objectively tangible offence against man's nature, against his due relationship to God which can be formulated as a law, and against the intramundane, ordered structure of persons and things in his surroundings, is the constitutive sign of the real revolt against God taking place in the depth of man's

32 Rahner, 269.  
33 Rahner, 270.
soul and utterly determining it. We call this objective falseness of man's concrete act a 'sign'.

Now as a sign, it will always point to the fact of guilt. Yet it will not always point directly to personal guilt. For the realized objective falseness, whether internal or external, may be induced by external factors which were not brought out by personally culpable factors. Rahner gives the example of drunkenness. Drunkenness is normally wrong because it offends against the health of a person both physically and spiritually. Yet Rahner states that there are some cases which are not culpable because the person may not have known about the harm from drunkenness, or was externally forced to get drunk. In both cases the person has neither the knowledge or the will to resist the harmful effects which drunkenness brings. This person cannot be considered culpable.

There are other cases in which drunkenness is brought about willingly and knowingly. These are the ones where the "concrete material or the sign-like manifestation of personal guilt, by and within which the personal turning-away from God realizes itself in concreto." So with a combined effect of one's a priori conditioned knowledge in freedom and the

34 Rahner, 270.
35 Rahner, 270.
36 Rahner, 270-71.
37 Rahner, 271.
constitutive sign bringing a concrete correlation to one's inner state, knowledge of one's sinfulness is possible.

Rahner admits, however, that this knowledge is really not that clear, and that its purposes are only provisional. Rahner states that the Scriptures are clear that no person can make absolute judgement about another person concerning his state before God. In the same way, a person is not allowed to pass absolute self-judgement declaring for himself either that a "justifying or sinful act has certainly taken place here and now."38 Though the constitutive sign of a human action is of an informative nature, the information that it gives is of an equivocal character.

This equivocal character of the sign is for the reason that it is imbedded in that intermediary reality which is outside of a person that is often times riddled with ambiguities of interpretation.39 Due to the ambiguity of the intermediate sign, one cannot be allowed to make an absolute judgement, but only a judgement that is provisional. Absolute judgement regarding one's sinfulness can only be reserved to God.

By 'not being absolutely clear to oneself', of 'not being able to deal definitively with oneself', this interpretation not only realizes a regrettable fact but also a basic and essential situation of the creature, since it is precisely at this point that the creature surrenders himself unconditionally to God.40

38 Rahner, 276.
39 Rahner, 276.
40 Rahner, 276.
Though a provisional awareness of one's sinfulness is all that is allowed to the human knower, it is, at least, a possibility which one must exercise, i.e. a serious consideration of one's sinful condition. The problem with humanity is not so much the problem of coming to an awareness of individual acts of sin, it is, rather, coming to terms with whether or not one is dealing with the fact of his openness to transcendent reality. Is one's whole being geared to what is true through all of life? Is one taking serious the reality of living in openness with the character of transcendent being?

These would appear to be for Rahner the questions which one can and must engage through critical self-reflection. This is the very issue that people living in inauthenticity would like to avoid. The reality of living authentically in self-transcendence is easily avoided. Yet if it is, one is living in disobedience to the call and will of God to aspire toward authenticity.

Rahner provides three reasons why the experience of transcendence is evaded. The first is the reason of naivete. Those who evade their transcendence for this reason do so because it simply does not make sense to get caught up in it. These people live in a concrete world at a distance from themselves, where reality can be controlled and manipulated.  

do. It is also very interesting and important to them.

The second reason is due to agnosticism. Those who embrace this as a reason for evading the issue of transcendence believe "that everything is encompassed in an ultimate question."42 To categorically sort through the ultimate questions of life is an impossibility. The best one can do is maintain a healthy scepticism. The third reason is because of nihilism. These are the people who go about their normal business to live the best that they can. However, in the final realization, after attaining all that is thought possible to be attained, they come to a point of despair and admit that the whole makes no sense. Instead of accepting the authenticity that is theirs, they simply state "that one does well to suppress the question about the meaning of it all and to reject it as an unanswerable and hence a meaningless question."43

In response to these points, Rahner provides some lucid observations. When it comes to confronting and interpreting reality, one cannot easily make the judgements like the three given above. In regard to the naive interpretation of existence, Rahner states that humans are dependent beings. They are in large conditioned by their history and very dependent on the reality about them.44 It is really

42 Rahner, Foundations, 32.
43 Rahner, Foundations, 33.
44 Rahner, Foundations, 43.
unrealistic and dishonest for people to think that they are their own lords in the immediacy of their own existence, and that questions about the ultimacy and meaning of existence are superfluous. This is for the very reason that their individuality is not the ground and basis of their existence. Its source and support come from something else, and this is what needs to be sought and questioned.

To the evasions of agnosticism and nihilism Rahner charges that these ideologies do not honestly confront the reality which faces them. When a person faces the absurdities and evil of existence, there is also within these experiences hope. This is the experience of hope toward a liberating freedom. Rahner says that which imposes real burdens on a person is also a source of blessing. Yet it is within the very burdens of life and the accompanying experience of hope that one gets caught within an unescapable sense of responsibility. In the pain, absurdity, and confusion of life, one must walk in hope toward liberation. This is in accordance with the transcendental character of humanity. To evade this in agnosticism or nihilism is simply a way to cover from the ultimate reality to which human nature is called.

Human beings in accordance with their transcendental nature are called to freedom. This freedom is to live

45 Rahner, Foundations, 33.
authentically with the true nature of their being. It is given to people as an a priori possibility. To know the absoluteness of each person's heart, whether toward good or bad, is not a possibility because of the ambiguity of human knowledge. There are, however, provisional factors and indicators that point people along the way in which they are to live. Yet these indicators and signs are not to point a person to the mere immediacy of their subjective reality, but ultimately to a trust and dependence on God.

Having now looked at some of the high points of Rahner's thought on critical self-reflection, the paper can now turn to evaluate Rahner's thought in comparison with Pannenberg's. A contrast and comparison will be given, then to be followed by some critical evaluation.

The first thing will be to note the similarities between the two theologians. Both hold to a view of the exocentricity of human knowledge, and both realize the ambiguity within that structural apprehension of knowledge. Rahner and Pannenberg see that humans only know themselves in relation to that which is outside of themselves. In that knowing, they transcend beyond that which is merely known. In their transcendence they move into the realm of finite relatability in the background of unlimitedness. This is where perception is capable of moving into the realm of universals. Thus this structure of universality gives the knowing subject the capability to move into knowledge about
ultime reality.

Yet in this openness to knowing universals and ultimate truths, there is an epistemic hindrance due to an ambiguity of perception. On this point Pannenberg and Rahner agree. Yet they appear to come to a disagreement on where the ambiguity lies within the exocentric structure of knowledge. For Pannenberg the ambiguity lies within the determinate structure of the knower. With Rahner it appears to be more in the ambiguity of the intermediary reality outside of the human knower. This is a critical point of distinction, especially as it relates to upcoming discussions with in this thesis.

Pannenberg sees that a person's perception of reality has much to do with personal identity. One perceives what is beyond in relation to self. Yet one's own self-construal has an effect on reality as it is perceived. This does not go to say that the reality perceived does not have an effect on one's self-construal. It certainly does have an effect. Yet there is a reciprocity of relationship. So in Pannenberg's scheme of perceptual ambiguity of reality is based on the determinate character of the subjective knower.

In Rahner the ambiguity has not so much to do with any reflective problems in the knower, but in a natural incongruity between the knower and the perceived reality. The problem is not in the human subject's self-perception and identification. It lies rather in the subject's self-
transcendence in knowledge and the variable structure of the finite reality which is perceived. There is simply an epistemological incongruity which hampers, as Rahner says, any pretensions to objectivity. Thus for Rahner, humans have the need for subjective honesty in priority to outward clarity.

It is then possible for a person to have the ability to reflect on his sinfulness in Rahner's scheme of human knowing. The subjective awareness in transcendental knowing is always ready at hand. One is more accountable to what is within rather than something which is without. Authenticity has to do with being subjectively honest within while confronted with the ambiguity which comes from without. Though the ambiguity from within gives reflective signs of knowledge of what is within, the stress still remains with the priority of the subjective reality.

Pannenberg, on the other hand, sees more the need of humans to find identification and accountability from that reality which is other. The ambiguity from within makes this difficult as far as a pure understanding of self and reality goes. Therefore, there is not a given referential point on which one will necessarily be able to understand personal sinfulness. This is in part why Pannenberg holds to the Socratic understanding of the will. One does and can merely do as he sees to be for his own good. This is simply the relation of perception in movement with personal identity.
In this writer's view Pannenberg's account of the possibility of human self-critical reflection is more accurate than is Rahner's. Pannenberg's seems to be more fitting of the case for both a traditional understanding of spiritual blindness to sin and the nature of reality. Scripture repeatedly refers to the darkness which humanity is in about themselves and the nature of reality apart from the light of Christ. 46

Plus, giving the various and multitude of perspectives on evil and morality from individual to individual, and from culture to culture, it appears difficult to construe all humanity within an a priori structure of self-understanding like Rahner gives. Pannenberg seems correct to position the ego on the primacy of the self's development and understanding. One's self-construal is determined in large from the identity which has been personally given in the self's surrounding context. Teilhard de Chardin gives credence to the subtlety of this development when he writes: "Psychologically, our souls are incredibly subtle and complex: how can one fit them into a world of laws and formulas." 47

46 Pannenberg writes: "only in the light of a concern for a universal redemption have the signs of the universality of sin manifested their comprehensive character. The doctrine of the universality of sin was not taught until the advent of Christianity." see: Pannenberg, Anthro., 119-38.

This finally leads to the question of how one is to discover the problems and sins which hamper the realization of life's meaning. Is life's meaning to be discovered within the a priori structures of human consciousness? Or is there to be revelation which comes from outside human consciousness which brings the realization of this meaning? To these questions the following chapters will be devoted. This will be in regard to Rahner's doctrine of anonymous Christianity, and Pannenberg's understanding of Christocentric revelation.
CHAPTER 3

The issue to be discussed now is salvation. In order to
discuss Rahner's understanding of salvation, especially as it
relates to *anonymous* Christianity, it has been necessary to
examine with some depth Rahner's understanding of human
sinfulness. This chapter, then, will seek to focus on
understanding Rahner's doctrine of salvation and its
appropriation in relation to his understanding of human
sinfulness. It will be done so with a view of seeking out
the consistency of its relation to itself, and some possible
objections raised by other theological perspectives.

Earlier chapters of this thesis have looked into some of
the fundamental issues and themes surrounding Rahner's
doctrine of human sinfulness. This was not without
justification. Rahner states himself:

Guilt and sin are without doubt a central topic for
Christianity. For it understands itself as a religion
of redemption, as the event of the forgiveness of guilt
by God himself in his action on us in Jesus Christ, in
his death and resurrection. Christianity understands
man as a being whose free, sinful acts are not his
'private affair' which he himself can absolve by his own
power and strength. Rather, however much man's free
subjectivity is responsible for them, once they are done
they can be really overcome only by God's action.¹

So, then, this paper will now turn to the issue of God's
provision for salvation, and the human appropriation of that
salvation, in light of Rahner's understanding.

William V. Dych (New York: Cross Road, 1978), 90.
Rahner makes clear that the possibility for salvation from sin comes from God's universal will to save. Any source from which salvation springs is fundamentally constituted from this will. Out of God's universal will to salvation comes Rahner's doctrine of salvation history. Humanity has a transcendality of openness to the divine. This essence of openness is actualized in the concreteness of history. This transcendality of realization takes place by the divinizing self-communication of God. Rahner says this is a reality which is not just a part of simple existence.²

In order to understand Rahner's doctrine of salvation history, there will need to be some preliminary statements on Rahner's doctrine of God's self-communication to humanity. Rahner explains that the term self-communication in the context for which he uses it refers to the idea that "God in his own most proper reality makes himself the innermost constitutive reality of man."³ This is the ontological self-communication of God. This ontological knowledge cannot be construed as a knowledge which can be objectified or reified.

The ontological self-communication of God corresponds to humanity's essential being. It is in the part of "man whose being is being-present-to himself, and being personally

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² Rahner, 138.
³ Rahner, 116.
responsible for himself in self-consciousness and freedom."⁴
This communication occurs in the utmost part of human
transcendality. It is not a part of human reality which is
open to objectification or thematization. It is an aspect of
human existence that can be known and realized, but not
grasped. Yet, it is spirit which makes humans as they are as
transcendent beings.

Yet, what is more precisely meant by the idea of God's
self-communication? To answer this Rahner says that it is
necessary to look at human transcendental experience. Humans
are finite beings who have their source and ground of being
in the absolute God. This absolute grounding for finite
humanity is an existential mystery. This is for the reason
that the finite cannot comprehend the absolute, at least
thematically. For that which humanity is grounded in is
other than itself.

So God as the absolute ground of human existence and
source of human transcendence is not able to be grasped in
this mode of relation to human existence. However, in God's
act of self-communication, "he offers himself in his own
reality."⁵ In self-communication, God offers Himself in
closeness to humanity. He does not offer Himself as a thing
among other things, yet He does not remain aloof in His
transcendence from human comprehension and relatability.

⁴ Rahner, 117.
⁵ Rahner, 119.
Divine self-communication means, then, that God can communicate himself in his own reality to what is not divine without ceasing to be infinite reality and absolute mystery, and without man ceasing to be a finite existent different from God.6

This knowledge of God cannot be put in a system of human coordinates, but the godness of God, in this communication, remains a "holy mystery [and] becomes [a] radical and insuppressible reality for man."7

Rahner states that the self-communication of God takes place in the innate constitutive realm of the human subject. God does not communicate something secondary to Himself, nor does His communication cause an effect which is different from the human subject. "It is rather the real essence of that which constitutes the ontological relationship between God and creatures."8 It is, thus, an occurrence which is natural in the range of human experience, but supernatural in its quality. God's self-communication is natural in that it takes place in the innate transcendental framework of human comprehension. It is supernatural in that it is divine grace, given to all, which communicates forth God's love.

Because this grace is something other than human transcendental experience, or it is rather a modality of that experience,9 the human subject has the power to turn from it

6 Rahner, 119.
7 Rahner, 120.
8 Rahner, 122.
9 Rahner, 129.
with his transcendence. It is a grace which is given to all people, with the exclusion of no one. As such, it is a grace which all may receive or reject. Rahner explains that with this grace present to all, all may find relief and security from any forlornness or estrangement in their life. He writes:

It is the person who in the forlornness of his guilt still turns in trust to the mystery of his existence which is quietly present, and surrenders himself as one who even in his guilt no longer wants to understand himself in a self-centered and self-sufficient way, it is this person who experiences himself as one who does not forgive himself, but who is forgiven, and he experiences the forgiveness for which he receives as the hidden, forgiving and liberating love of God himself, who forgives in that he gives himself, because only in this way can there really be forgiveness once and for all.\(^{10}\)

So it is seen that with the self-communication of God, there is a real and loving grace offered to all people, with real and objective benefits. This is both as God attributes the benefits and as people accept them. With the knowledge then in mind of God's proffered grace in human transcendental experience, the preliminary basis has been layed in order to understand Rahner's doctrine of salvation history.

Rahner understands that humanity actualizes its essence in history. To put it more precisely, Rahner describes it this way:

[M]an as subject and as person is a historical being in such a way that he is historical precisely as a transcendent subject; his subjective essence of

\(^{10}\) Rahner, 131.
unlimited transcendentality is mediated historically to him in his knowledge and in his free self-realization.\textsuperscript{11} The implications of this are that the human experience of God's self-communication occur neither unhistorically, or as part of an unchanging, timeless experience. On the other hand, human transcendentality is not to be thought of in terms of a purely "temporal duration of a physical or biological phenomenon."\textsuperscript{12} No, the history of transcendentality in humankind is a history of the actions of humanity within and in response to the actions of God.

Rahner is clear that the history of salvation is a history which has its primacy in the action of God. This is seen in that all of human history is grounded in the free and loving self-communication of God.\textsuperscript{13} Yet in this initiation which is given by God, there is, on the other side, the free response of humanity to God's initiatory grace. To God's offer of free grace, humanity can give a transcendental \textbf{Yes} or \textbf{No} in response. Rahner thus states that the history of God's salvific acts is also the history of human salvation. The history of God's revelation is also the history of human faith.

This cannot be construed, however, as a synergistic

\textsuperscript{11} Rahner, 140.
\textsuperscript{12} Rahner, 140.
\textsuperscript{13} Rahner, 141.
process. There is a synthesis of the divine and human processes in salvation history, but the process as a whole is initiated and grounded in God's activity. "God is the ground of man's act of freedom, and in his own act he burdens man with the grace and the responsibility for his own accountable acts." Rahner's thought on history is not to be confused with a process development. God is other than the finite and is not dependent upon it. Yet God is able to communicate his essence into humanity's transcendental experience through history.

As this is the case, it follows that God has communicated His reality and grace of salvation through all parts of the world through all times. Yet this reality is communicated into the corporeality of human history. As it is given in its purity to the unthematic consciousness of humankind, it has not been without the by-product of explicit reflection. The human being as a whole person cannot simply live on the reality of implicit and immediate transcendental consciousness alone. The immediate and transcendental reality of divine communication to humans will inevitably be attempted to be recaptured in thematic reflection.

This is primarily for the reason that religious consciousness needs to be placed in a form of mediation. 

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14 Rahner, 142.
15 Rahner, 144.
This explicit form of mediation is the reason for cultic ritual and religious societies throughout all time and space of historical human consciousness. The mediated thematic will always fall short of representing the pure reality of divine experience. However, it is a necessary by-product, and for that reason is not to be shunned.

Rahner is clear that the ideas about God have their source of origin from the reality of God. Humanity can never have anything to do with God except that it has already been born by His grace. By this Rahner is not saying that there are not depraved interpretations of God, and sinful rejections of His self-communication.

But there is no history of religion which is the founding of religion by man alone, so that God then, fixed categorically in time and space, would come to meet this activity of man as its confirmation or condemnation and judgement.

The explicit interpretations, those both right and wrong, are nothing less than attempts to thematically grasp God's communication of His transcendent reality. Rahner affirms that Catholics must uphold the idea of God's universal salvific will and revelation against the pessimism of such theologians as Augustine and Calvin.

Now, having briefly discussed Rahner's doctrine of God's

16 Rahner, 146.
17 Rahner, 146.
18 Rahner, 147.
universal salvific will throughout all of history, there is an important and critical distinction Rahner draws within the context of this thinking. This distinction relates to the general and official histories of salvation. The general history of salvation has to do with that which has already been discussed: God's universal self-communication and salvific-will for all of humanity throughout all history. The official history of salvation has to do with that reality of God's acts in time in which He has given an explicit knowledge of Himself. This is the history of revelation as it is contained in the Old and New Testaments, and most specifically exemplified in the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The official history of revelation has appeared for two reasons: 1) that humanity may have a more adequate self-understanding of their religiosity, and 2) that Christ could be the ultimate salvific act, on the part of God, in redemption of humanity's lostness. Rahner states that the history of revelation contained in the Old and New Testaments, the prophets and the apostles give the correct objectification of divine transcendent experience. God through His self-communication to the apostles and prophets makes the knowledge of Himself explicit. "For we are dealing with the self-interpretation of the reality which is constituted by the personal self-communication of God, and hence by God himself."19

19 Rahner, 158.
Rahner says that the inspired prophets and apostles of the scriptures are grasping to understand the same light of faith which has been given to all religions. It is the same self-communication of God.

Looked at theologically and correctly, the prophet is none other than the believer who can express his transcendental experience of God correctly. Perhaps as distinguished from other believers, it is expressed in the prophets in such a way that it becomes for others too the correct and pure objectification of their own transcendental experience of God, and it can be recognized in its correctness and purity.20

In this way, the concreteness of the historical reality of God in transcendental experience is made explicit. It is such that a community of faith can more fully and adequately appreciate and live, that which is immediately implicit to them.21

More importantly, though, is that the ultimate act of God's self-communication is brought forth most explicitly in the incarnation of Jesus Christ.22 Rahner goes so far to say that the incarnation and the salvific action of Jesus Christ in history is the absolute self-communication of God. Rahner says that the self-communication of God in Jesus Christ is absolute "because we are dealing with the definitive salvation of the whole person and of the human race, and not with a particular situation of man."23

20 Rahner, 159.
21 Rahner, 161.
22 Rahner, 142.
23 Rahner, 205.
God's self-communication and salvation in Christ is absolute and definitive.

Yet, for the definitiveness of its salvific reality, Rahner points out that it is an outflow of God's universal salvific will, and not the basis of that salvific will. Rahner explains that it is not easy to see how the cross of Christ could be the reason for God's universal salvific will (I Tim.2:4), for there would have been nothing to predicate Christ's decision to go the cross in the first place. For God's saving will to be related solely to Christ would be meaningless from the beginning and would "contradict the fact that through the saving will of God Jesus Christ is meant from the very beginning to be the redeemer of the world."[24]

Though Christ constitutes a particularity in salvation history in time and space, its efficacy is manifested throughout the universal history of salvation. How, then, is this appropriated for those followers of differing beliefs than Christianity? Rahner answers this question generally with the idea that Christ is present through faith. This is the kind of faith which appropriates the "all-encompassing and all-pervasive mystery of reality..., the mystery which we call God, 'is present' for our salvation, offering forgiveness and divine life...."[25] This is offered in such a

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way that is final and irrevocable.

It is here that the clarification needs to be made that the appropriation of God's universal salvific will is made divinely effective through the agency of the Holy Spirit. It is through the Spirit that those who hold to an explicit form of Christianity and those who hold to an implicit form are born of God. It is fully the regenerative power that makes both the possibility and the effectiveness of God's salvation. It is on this basis in which Rahner asserts that "Christ is present and operative in non-Christian believers and hence non-Christian religions in and through his Spirit."26

Rahner seeks through scholastic categories to show how the Spirit of Christ appropriates the salvation merited by Christ. In this way Rahner refers to the Spirit as the entelechy of the whole universal history of salvation and revelation.27 By entelechy, Rahner means that the Spirit is the universal potentiality of salvation manifesting Himself in the regenerative process of them who respond to His grace in faith. Yet Jesus Christ is the final cause and ultimate teleological manifestation of the salvific will of God that is actualized in the inner reality of the Spirit.28

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26 Rahner, Foundations, 316.
Now the Spirit actualizes His salvific process in conêgrui
ty with the concreteness of historical mediation. This media-
tion is necessary for the process of human historicity. As such, Jesus Christ is the high point of the Holy Spirit's historical mediation. Rahner explains:

\[\text{In so far as the event of Christ is the final cause of the communication of the Spirit to the world, it can truly be said that this Spirit is everywhere and from the outset the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the Logos of God became man. The Spirit who has been communicated to the world has himself, and not only in the intention of God which transcends the world and would be extrinsic to him, an intrinsic relation to Jesus Christ.}^{29}\]

Between the Spirit and Christ there is a relational difference. In that difference, however, there is a mutual conditioning so that the final effect and the cause are still the same.\(^{30}\)

Stemming from the issue of the Spirit's appropriation of Christ's salvific merit is the problem of how the historic particularity of the Christ event can be appropriated by the human subject in the non-particularity of transcendental experience. The problem does not have so much to do with the idea of God's self-communication. Rahner has dealt sufficiently with this through the notions of the entelechy of the Spirit and the final causality of Christ. What is more at issue is the eschatological direction for which salvation history and the definitives of human freedom finds

\[\text{29 Rahner, Foundations, 318.}\]

\[\text{30 Rahner, Foundations, 318.}\]
itself directed.

The problem can be more clearly stated in other words: Humanity is called to actualize itself in freedom toward a definitiveness and finality of action, a fulfillment and realization of being. The ultimate salvific act of Christ is the manifestation of the fulfillment and finality of God's self-communication. So it is clear that humanity is called to the finality of freedom, toward the finality of Christ's salvific action. The problem occurs, though, with the generality and non-particularity of human transcendental experience of the divine. For how is the finality and particularity for which universal salvation history aims to be realized in the generality of human transcendental experience? To this critical question the paper now turns.

In response to the critical question just raised, Rahner finds support in his doctrine of memory. When Rahner refers to memory, he does not mean simply the ability of recollecting past events. Memory as Rahner uses it has the rootage of its ideas in Plato and Augustine. At its base

31 Augustine writes: "Great is the power of memory, an awe-inspiring mystery, my God, a power of profound infinite multiplicity... See the broad plains and caves and caverns of my memory. The varieties there cannot be counted, and are, beyond any reckoning, full of inumerable things. Some are there through images, as in the case of all physical objects, some in the immediate presence like intellectual skills, some by indefinable notions or recorded impressions, as in the case of the mind's emotions, which the memory retains even when the mind is not experiencing them... I run through all these things, I fly here and there, and penetrate their working as far as I can. see: Augustine, Confessions, tr. Henry Chadwick (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992), book 10, sec. 26.
Rahner describes it as an "a priori principle of expectation, of searching, of hoping." The capacity of memory allows the human subject to experience historical reality as historical. Memory allows history to be experienced in its reality because it gives the human subject the categories by which to search, expect, and to hope for ultimate truth or ultimate salvation. As one opens himself up to this a priori category of experience, he does so in faith toward the ultimate and enduring expectation of salvation.

The anticipation that is within the experience of memory is not necessarily one which seeks its experience out in concrete history. Rather it is an anticipation that endures history and remains open to it. It is an orientation toward the incomprehensible mystery of God. This orientation is, however, mediated through the concreteness of history. This historical mediation can have the most varied contents and does not have to be composed of a religious thematic. This is not of acute importance at the level of transcendental experience. What is important is that the capacity of memory has a structure in which its individual elements each have a different place in time and space, and do not all possess the same significance. The searching anticipation which characterizes this structure belongs to the very essence of this memory. Insofar as history is a history of freedom... the capacity [of memory allows one] to make a decision of final and definitive validity.

32 Rahner, Foundations, 319.
33 Rahner, Foundations, 320.
34 Rahner, Foundations, 320.
Through the capacity of memory, humanity has the ability in transcendental openness to seek that which has true and lasting validity. The ongoing chain of events can be sorted out in such a way so that what is of permanent and lasting validity can be recognized and affirmed for personal significance. On the ground of the memory's capacity Rahner thinks the gulf is bridged between the orientation toward particularity in salvation history and the generality of transcendental experience. The ultimacy in Christ does not have to become a tangibly identical aim in salvation history for all people. The human memory in conjunction with God's gracious self-communication "searches in hope and in anticipation for that event in history in which a free decision about the salvific outcome of history is made and becomes tangible."

The basis from which Rahner has developed his doctrine of anonymous Christianity is now evident. Within the scope and history of God's universal salvific plan, one may appropriate Christ's merited activity without having an explicit knowledge of having done so. Those who acquire the salvific reality implicitly without knowing so explicitly are incorporated into the community of believers: the church, but their membership is not cognitively realized. Thus, these are anonymous Christians.

The question which now arises is the compatibility of Rahner's doctrine of anonymous Christianity with his understanding of human sinfulness. As far as a test for consistency and coherence, Rahner's doctrine of anonymous Christianity appears to square with his understanding of human sinfulness. Yet within this consistency it does not appear to be without its problems. Some of the pros and cons of Rahner's understanding of the anthropological situation within a universal salvation history will now be explored.

Rahner's understanding of human sinfulness as a break from the human transcendental orientation and fulfillment appears on target. Ultimate spirituality is moving away from self-autonomy toward the self-communication of God offered in grace. This grace is manifested immanently right in the immediate realm of human experience. It is a grace which holds humans responsible to act in freedom. Because of this Rahner states that "there can and must be present in every such act an unthematic 'yes' or 'no' to this God of original, transcendental experience." 36

One's accountability and realization of God is an ever present occurrence, though most of the time it is not cognitively realized. It also appears that Rahner says human accountability to God cannot be realized. One can never know for sure if one has willfully sinned or has been motivated by

36 Rahner, Foundations, 98.
forces for which he was unequipped to regulate.

The actual situation of a person's freedom... is not completely accessible to reflection, to examination of conscience which would be understood as a definitive statement of absolute certainty. A person never knows with absolute certainty whether the objectively guilty character of his actions, which he can perhaps establish unambiguously, is the objectification of a real and original decision of freedom saying 'no' to God, or whether it is more in the nature of a manipulation which has been imposed upon him and which he endures, and which has about it the character of necessity.37

By this Rahner is not saying one cannot know the subjective reality of personal guilt, for this is something he does affirm. Rather, the objectification of incremental acts of sin cannot be positively known. One can only understand sinfulness and guilt by the whole of reality, as it stands in the horizon of freedom and transcendence. The finite particulars are not completely verifiable.

This understanding of sinfulness is commendable in that it takes into account the universal dimensions of sin. Sin, for Rahner, is not privatized or segmented into the limiting consequential factors of individualism. For Rahner the scope of sin is a violation against the whole universal ground upon which finite reality stands. This appears to do justice to the biblical emphasis regarding the ultimacy of universal human accountability to God, as the creator and sustainer of all creation.

A problem which Rahner appears to encounter, though, is

that his scheme of human transcendality is unable to account for the personalness and humaness of sin in sinfulness. To understand what is meant by this, it is necessary to demonstrate some of the problematic elements of Rahner's construction of human transcendality. These revolve around the classic question of the contact between nature and grace in theology. How closely is the supernaturalness of grace and the naturalness of creation linked together?

It would appear in the theology of Rahner, they are linked too closely. To have God's self-communication so closely tied with in the natural processes of human activity does harm to the distinctiveness and personalness of relation between God and humanity. This does not go to say that there is no indirect or analogical knowledge of God given by grace in nature. Yet to intricately relate the natural transcendality of humanity with the manifestation of God's forgiving grace is too extreme.

Rahner does not seek in his theological formulation to destroy the transcendality of God. In fact, he seeks to protect God's transcendence from being too closely tied with human finitude by structuring the pure knowledge of God within the structure of non-thematic, unreflective human transcendality. This, however, is precisely the problem. Though Rahner guards against the notion of gaining a pure knowledge of God through idealistic rationality, he appears to fall into an equal blunder by making the knowledge of God
founded on an existential and subjective non-rationality.

God is a personal being and He is nothing short of personal. He cannot be known as a set of formulas, because formulas do not deal with personhood. Rahner has captured and explained this notion very well. On the other hand, God cannot be known or embraced as pure mystery. Mystery is an unexplained reality upon which there can be no substantive content to the human knower. God, though, is person, with definable attributes and characteristics. Though God in His fulness cannot be comprehended, He must to some degree be apprehended. To the degree that God is not cognitively apprehended is the degree to which He is not known, and vice-a-versa.

Rahner states that God can be known as mystery without being cognitively apprehended. If this is so, He is not known as a person, but as something less. This reduction of the knowledge of God to an ineffable unknown appears to reduce God to something other than He is in His personalness. As such, it is inadequate for developing a model of theological comprehension. Moreover, in that it inadequately understands God, it brings an inadequate understanding of human nature and the human situation.

This is because humanity is created in the image of God.

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38 As Barth asserts in his treatment of Anselm: faith must seek itself out in understanding or it is not complete. There must be some cognitive fulfilling of immediate revelation.
Humanity has also strayed from the perfection of God's image. As such the transcendental and personal God must reveal to humanity who they are, in a way that can objectively relate to the rationality of their humanity, in light of His creation and purpose, and in their fallenness. Rahner, however, blurs these categorical distinctions in the realm of the undefined, non-conceptual transcendality of human nature. As such, humanity is unable to gain an adequate knowledge of themselves because the ground of their personhood in buried in the amorphous, non-thematic actuality of a knowledge which is incapable of being cognitively grasped.

In this way, human accountability and relatability to God cannot be concretely determined. The primacy and actuality of its substance is too vague and transcendental to be relatedly discussed in concrete terms. Thus, sin cannot be understood in the concreteness of personhood and humanity. In this realm it can never be known for sure, for it is not here that sin is committed. Sin is committed in the realm of one's transcendental horizon. Though this is the touching point between God and humanity, it is not an adequate touching point for human understanding and relatability. It is a realm which cannot account for both the personhood of either God or humanity. Thus, if one seeks to locate sin in this area, it will be done at the expense of negating the concreteness and humaness of sin in human sinfulness.
Another problem with Rahner's transcendental understanding of Christianity is that its salvific orientation appears to be too oriented towards human subjectivity rather than the objectivity of God's grace. Rahner's theology is devoid of easy or cheap grace, and it does call for integrity of life before the will of God. This is commendable. Yet, salvation for Rahner is based on self-authenticity relating to God's grace rather than a salvation which leads to self-authenticity based and resting on God's grace.

Rahner makes this contention:

Anyone who does not close himself to God in an ultimate act of his life and his freedom through free and personal sin which he is really and subjectively guilty and for which he cannot shirk responsibility, this person finds salvation.\(^{39}\)

Salvation is based on one's openness in authenticity to the one's transcendental self. "[E]verything of significance for salvation is to be illuminated by referring it back to...transcendental being."\(^{40}\) If a person does not live his life in authenticity to the best of his ability then salvation is forfeited due to guilt.

Rahner, however, is not an advocate of works righteousness. This is because one cannot truly know whether any individual act or work one does is sinful or righteous.

\(^{39}\) Rahner. *Foundations*, 143.

This is an area of data not fully open to human judgement since it is a part of transcendality. One must rather give himself in openness to the ground of all reality which is beyond his finitude. As already observed, the objective mediatory elements which this will involve vary and are not of primary importance. What is important is that one is fully accountable and responsible to the ground of freedom, which is the ever present grace of God calling for a righteous decision.

Rahner in the case of salvation, as with human sinfulness, seems to have made the mistake of aligning too closely the reality of God into the natural and organic processes of humanity. Salvation is not something offered in a distinctly objective way which one can base one's spirituality and self-authenticity. It is linked right in the human process because the reality of God is also linked there, also. Thus, in order to be in a right relation to God, it is incumbent upon an individual to be in right relation to self, whatever that might mean through the variations of mediatorial forms which it is to be acted out.

It must be granted that this critique has been mainly directed at Rahner's idea of implicit or anonymous Christianity, and has not sought to bring to bear the explicit and objective understanding Rahner has of the Christian faith. Granting this, however, it needs to be realized that the explicit form of Christianity as
exemplified in Christ is only a secondary addition to implicit Christianity. At the heart of the substance, though, the implicit and explicit Christianity in Rahner's formulation is really the same. "In theological terms the 'light of faith' which is offered to every person, and the light by which the 'prophets' grasp and proclaim the divine message from the center of human existence is the same light."^41 Therefore, any critique made of Rahner's implicit Christianity applies in substance to Rahner's understanding of explicit Christianity.

There are more aspects of Rahner's doctrine to be examined in the next chapter. Suffice it to say for now, Rahner's understanding of human sinfulness and salvation fall short of a healthy anthropological conception by the fact that Rahner blurs the distinctive relations between the human and the divine. Authenticness and personalness of relation on both sides are hampered because the divine and human are made to function in a way that is less than personal. J.I. Packer, touching on a similar emphasis, writes:

Evangelical theology is at war with all views which graft salvation on to natural goodness or revelation on to natural knowledge, on the view that both views fail to grasp the sinfulness of sin and the graciousness of grace.^42

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^41 Rahner, Foundations, 159.

CHAPTER 4

Having looked to some extent at Rahner's thought, it will now be necessary to contrast his position with Pannenberg's and see what alternative Pannenberg offers to the issue of salvation and human sinfulness. A similar method will be followed in examining Pannenberg's thought as was used with Rahner. There will be an analysis of the consistency of his thought with regard to sin and salvation, and the soundness of his theological approach will be evaluated. This will be done with special comparison to Rahner.

Pannenberg, as seen, has a stronger awareness of the human predicament of sinfulness than does Rahner. One's alienation of self-identity and blindness as to the nature of one's true identity cannot be easily overcome. Pannenberg relates this counsel when speaking of those caught in their sinful condition: "Good advice is of little avail... The bondage of the will calls... for a liberation and, in the radical case, for a redemption that will establish the will's identity anew."1 This comment is consistent with the conclusions drawn in the second chapter which stated that Pannenberg's anthropology leaves no assurance that a person, through critical self-reflection, can discover the

objectivity of personal sinfulness. The precariousness of self-understanding is much too fragile for gaining an honest self-understanding. It is on this ground that Pannenberg seeks to place a greater emphasis on the need for explicit divine revelation for attaining self-authentication. Thus Pannenberg quotes Splett in saying that human beings need to be "awakened to themselves by a creative summons."2 There must be given an external impartation of understanding so humans can be brought to the freedom for which they are destined.

To the issue of coming to self-understanding Pannenberg argues that the basis must start with the revelation of Jesus Christ. By understanding Christ there can be both a "transforming [of] the already existing reality of man and his historical question about himself."3 Christ, who is the second Adam, demonstrates and makes way the realization of authentic human existence. Pannenberg sees Christ, the second man, to be the fulfillment of all that was longed for to complete the first man. This is contrasted to the Greek view of humanity which sees the essentiality of mankind in terms of an unchanging essence. Pannenberg argues, though, that the Christian teaching is that the original man was put

2 Pannenberg, 115.

in a state of history that was to be resolved in future anticipation. It is important to pause and to distinguish the view just presented with the traditional view that the original Adam was in a state of paradisiacal perfection. This perspective teaches that the coming of Christ was to bring humanity to a restoration of the original perfection possessed by the first parents of humanity. Pannenberg, in contrast, maintains that Paul did not teach that the first man was in a state of perfection. If one wants to hold to this view on tenuous premises, then it will become "almost impossible to incorporate a Christian understanding of man into a purely natural anthropology." Looking at the Pauline scheme of the relation between the first and the second Adam Pannenberg believes that a positive and necessary contribution to understanding the salvation of humanity can be made. In Christ there is seen a new aim for which all humanity, as fundamentally connected with Adam, are to move. This new aim consists in Christ's resurrection. This is contrasted with the Greeks who saw nothing of great value in humanity except the immortal soul. The resurrection of Jesus, however, applies not only to the

4 Pannenberg, "Christological Foundation," 89.
5 Pannenberg, "Christological Foundation," 89.
6 Pannenberg, "Christological Foundation," 90.
soul, but also the body. Christ reveals a future that relates to the whole essence of humanity.  

Who Christ is in His revelation reveals proleptically what all of humanity's future is to be. In Christ is revealed and given the manifestation of the love of God and the hope of humanity. Christ as God is part of the self-revelation of God. Christ is the revelation of God to humanity showing them what God has called humanity to be like. God calls humanity to self-realization in freedom with their destiny. This destiny is manifest for all to see in the revelation of Christ. "This is a direct consequence of the fundamental assumption that the first man is not yet in possession of his destiny—he only possesses it with the appearance of Jesus Christ."  

Pannenberg contends that any who would participate in the destiny and life revealed in Christ must do so "by faith and baptism and by the working of the Spirit and the love of God." Unless there is belief and an entering into the will of God, one cannot participate in the revelation of Jesus Christ. Pannenberg, unlike Rahner, does not slip in any idea that the reality of Christ's revelation can be participated in by an unthematic or non-cognitive kind of faith. "On the

7 Pannenberg, "Christological Foundation," 90.
8 Pannenberg, "Christological Foundation," 94.
9 Pannenberg, "Christological Foundation," 93.
contrary, it has its basis in an event which is a matter for knowing and which becomes known to us only by more or less inadequate information."10

Pannenberg grants that there are levels of understanding by which the knowledge of God's revelation in Christ is grasped. In order to have faith, though, one must at least presuppose the truth and correctness of God's revelation. Faith presupposes knowledge. "Knowledge is not a stage beyond faith, but leads into faith—and the more exact it is, the more certainty it does so."11 It is seen, then, that Pannenberg's epistemological order of knowing does not have room for an implicit, non-cognitive understanding of the gospel. For the exactness of one's knowledge of God's historical revelation determines the degree of one's faith.

In fact Pannenberg is antagonistic to the idea of a purely subjective and implicit faith:

Christian faith must not be merely equated with a merely subjective conviction that would allegedly compensate for the uncertainty of our historical knowledge about Jesus. Such a conviction would only be self-delusion.12

The objectivity of knowledge is something Pannenberg sees to be essential to faith. The objective comprehension of God's

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11 Pannenberg, "Revelation of God," 129.

breaking into human history is indispensable for our knowledge of Him. Any lack of understanding in this area cannot be buttressed by a faith experience. This is contrary to the human pattern and way of knowing.

At this point there needs to be made an important interjection. This has to do with Pannenberg's understanding of the history of religions. Pannenberg sees the need to establish an anthropological understanding of the religious nature of humanity. He wants to show that talk about God is not merely a subjective need which follows purely from human insecurity or delusion. Rather, he wants to demonstrate that the idea of God, as is seen in one form or another throughout history, is something fitting and constitutive of a genuine understanding of humanity. Not only this, but he desires to establish the phenomenological discussion of religion within a strong theocentric basis.

As the phenomenon of religion is discussed, it needs to be established not as a reality that is based in humanity. It needs to be seen as a reality which stems from God as the creator of humanity. Pannenberg works in this direction for the reason that an understanding of God is the presupposition behind a history and destiny that is fulfilled in Christ. Pannenberg speaking of Christ as He was intimately related to the Jewish context writes: "Only through Jesus does it become clear what the God of Israel really is and means. And yet this final understanding presupposes a knowledge of this
God prior to it and also a hope for God's presence."13

The key here in this statement is that Israel in accepting Christ had already been conditioned toward that in that they had a knowledge of Him and anticipated His presence. Pannenberg, thus, argues that the knowledge of Christ cannot be thought of as productive for the human condition, unless the revelation that is seen in Him is understood in the light of a primary understanding of deity and an anticipation of some salvation through that deity.

Pannenberg is right when he states that the gentiles do not share the same presuppositions as that of the Jews. How then do the gentiles come into the knowledge and realization of Christ as the savior? If this is a question which Protestants remain to leave unanswered, the revelation of Christ can hardly be considered of importance to all people.

But if we are convinced that human religious experiences and ideas are not merely fantastic images, but that they deal with a reality sui generis—in whatever queer and inadequate way this divine reality may have been understood by different religions—if we are aware of something 'behind' these, of something that we have to consider seriously, then also the God of Israel attains the status of a reality for us. Then it becomes relevant to ask wherein may consist his peculiarity as distinguished from other deities of other religions.14

To comprehend more fully what Pannenberg is seeking to accomplish with the themes just mentioned, the idea of human exocentricity must be reiterated. Except this time it must

13 Pannenberg, "Revelation of God," 104.
be done so within the scheme of historical consciousness and progress. Humans are beings who are primarily open to that which is beyond themselves. This does not only apply to the immediate spatial and temporal terms of their environment. It applies to the meaning of their lives as a history not yet fulfilled and waiting to be realized. What humanity is is not a given. It is something, rather, which is in process.

Pannenberg agrees with Dilthey who sees the historical process as one of finding meaning only as the future and the past are seen as reciprocally conditioning each other. "The significance of a particular event is grasped only when in lived experience the particular impression is related to the whole of life."15 This whole includes the past, present, and the future. The future, though, is unknown. Although it is unknown, it is a future to which all humanity by nature of their being is waiting and living in openness.

Only in light of the future shall the past and the present be fully realized. This remains to be seen in waiting and expectation. It is in this conjunction that Pannenberg places great emphasis on the Pauline thematic of the history and realization between the first and the second Adam. The second Adam shows the first Adam as a process in history waiting to be fulfilled and realized.

This is clearly the reason Pannenberg places such

15 Pannenberg, Anthro., 511.
emphasis on the revelatory knowledge gained through the life
and ministry of Christ.

In the history of Jesus a future was anticipated that has not yet appeared in its general bearing. Therefore those who penetrate into the meaning of Jesus' history will inevitably be led to God's not yet accomplished future, which nevertheless is held to have appeared already in and with Jesus when one speaks of his resurrection from the dead.\(^{16}\)

This is what Pannenberg contends regarding those who do not walk and live in the light of this revelation. They are not yet bound in the freedom which God desires them to have. They are still living in the presence and continuity of the first Adam. This continuity only supplies a general revelation of the awareness of divine reality and a basic openness to this reality in the historical process. It is Christ who provides an objective orientation into what the meaning and future of life holds.

In order to take seriously, then, the specific reality of the true God for humanity as revealed in Christ, Pannenberg argues that the general religious situation of humanity through history needs to be taken seriously. Christ must be realized as the ultimate fulfillment of the concrete history of humanity. It is Christ who opens the door for human destiny in freedom. Without this reality in a person's life, there is an incompleteness and a barrier in the way to the realization of authentic humanity.

\(^{16}\) Pannenberg, "Dogmatic Theses," 130.
So far the discussion of the authenticity of human existence in Pannenberg's thought has been rather general. It is now in order, since a general foundation has been laid for understanding Pannenberg's anthropology, to discover how he perceives an authentic existence in Christ is more specifically worked out.

Pannenberg in speaking of the way to salvation sees the apostle Paul as communicating in a clear fashion that one needs to die with Christ in the hope of being raised with Him. In light of Paul's assertion, Pannenberg raises the question as to the meaning of death to self. Another way of putting it is: who is the inmost self of Rom. 7:22 which delights in God as opposed to the old self which is alienated and estranged to God? Is it purely the new Adam which relates to the realization of one's destiny in God, or is it somehow linked with the always existing ego or empirical self?

In answer to these questions, Pannenberg gives an affirmative response to the idea that salvation and self-authentication have to do with both the empirical self and the new Adam. Pannenberg starts off by saying that the inmost self of Rom. 7:22 cannot be viewed as the ego of the natural man. "Rather, it is the human person as seen in the light of a person's destiny to salvation in Christ." From

this perspective, Pannenberg goes on to elaborate, that the "ego of the person I have been is profoundly different from what I consider myself to be, and yet it is identical." 

At this point Pannenberg's focus on spiritual conversion becomes very interesting. When a Christian examines his life in the scheme of originally being in Adam and subsequently being in Christ, there will be noticed traces of the in Christ while being in Adam. The self of a person when being in Christ is not changed, it is rather transformed and fulfilled. This revolves around Pannenberg's insight that all humanity, even those apart from Christ, are still oriented toward an idea of the divine and a need to be fulfilled in its presence.

A person who is alienated from his destiny is still a human being nonetheless, created in God's image. God still provides His love in natural grace and revelation toward that person. Even with this understanding of natural grace, Pannenberg insists that those in continuity with the first Adam need a measure of supernatural grace. This is a grace directed toward the center of one's identity which brings a transformation and reconstitution of self-understanding.

Pannenberg leans heavily on the insights of Luther at

18 Pannenberg, *Spirituality*, 98.
this point. Luther, in line with a Pauline emphasis, taught that in the event of regeneration, the subject himself is changed and not just some quality in the subject. This is in focus with Luther's teaching that we are justified outside ourselves in Christ. To go outside oneself means that there has to be a transforming of identity which is beyond the old self. "It is the power of faith that it places us outside ourselves, because in the act of trust our existence is built on the one to whom we entrust ourselves, to whom we quite literally leave ourselves."22

Yet this power to move outside ourselves is not a power which can be enacted by the old man. It is an act which must be engaged through a strength which enables people to be carried beyond themselves. This going out beyond self is able to be accomplished through the revelation of Christ.

In him we find our true freedom, the authentic self beyond what we were before. And yet, because of the saving love and promise of Christ offered to the sinner, it is our own self, the true identity of the person we were even before, now finally achieved, liberated not from some external bondage but from bondage to our old self.23

The transforming power of God which is appropriated by faith, Pannenberg contends, is grounded in none other than an explicit revelation of Christ. This is a revelation of grace.

extending personally from the love of God, authentically to the identity of the recipient.

In Pannenberg's understanding of regeneration there is witnessed the need for a radical transformation of the human subject against the radical effects and state of sin. This discovery is consistent with the observations of Pannenberg's understanding of the ego in relation to the self, as seen in chapter two of this thesis. The ego is positioned on and reciprocally effecting the human subject's self-constitution. This allows for a self-transcendality toward the orientation of freedom. Yet as Pannenberg points out, the range of freedom to which this state allows is very narrow, and it certainly falls short of leading one to realize one's personal destiny and meaning in Christ.24

There has now been given sufficient attention to Pannenberg's soteriological emphasis with regard to salvation history and human sinfulness. The thesis now comes to a critical juncture where it will not only discuss the validity and implications of Pannenberg's thought, but it will do so also in comparison to Rahner. Not only that, but also near the end of the thesis, the writer will draw his theological conclusions which have sprung from the study of the perspectives of Pannenberg and Rahner.

In chapter three of this thesis the conclusion was made

24 see: note 46 in chapter 2 of this thesis.
that Rahner draws to close of a connection between God's supernatural grace and humanity's natural condition. There is a blur created by Rahner's harmonization which works against the authentic relation between God in communication with humanity and humanity in their self-understanding. The question now arises if Pannenberg may open himself up to critiques of a similar or different nature.

When viewed from the perspective of keeping a balance of distinction between God's transcendence and His immanent relation to humanity, it does not appear that Pannenberg crosses the line of an artificial integration between the two. Humanity in a natural state is oriented toward an idea and desire for God which is grounded in God's grace. Yet the deeper reality of entering into a fulfilling relationship with God is something that is worked out in humanity's identity and growth. It is not simply an immediate a priori relation. God offers Himself to humanity in a relationship of consent.

Not only this, but God reveals Himself as person. The fullness of God is not able to be reduced to an abstract horizon of transcendence. Pannenberg maintains the objectivity of the knowledge of God in His revelation. God is known as a person who has a specific purpose for humanity as demonstrated and provided in Jesus Christ. This is the way God reveals Himself. A comprehension of Him cannot be regarded as something less than personal, or else one will
fall into the trap of idolatry.

Such a perspective of the reality of the transcendent God coming in His personalness with purpose for humanity has critical anthropological implications. Victor Frankl's logotherapeutic approach to psychotherapy appears to this writer to affirm and compliment some of the basic and valuable points found in Pannenberg's anthropology. This is basically viewed from the need which Frankl sees there to be for a real and an objective orientation in escaping all the neurotic and pathological behaviors and states which are so common to the human experience.

Frankl's description of the human need overlaps many of the convictions expressed by Pannenberg:

Self-transcendence is the essence of existence. Being human is directed toward something other than itself... Those authors who pretend to have overcome the dichotomy between object and subject are not aware that, as truly phenomenological analysis would reveal, there is no such thing as cognition outside the polar field of tension established between object and subject... One must recognize that being human profoundly means being engaged and entangled in a situation, and confronted with a world whose objectivity and reality is no way detracted from by the subjectivity of that 'being' who is 'in the world'.

Before progressing on, there are some points in this quote which need some elaboration. Frankl is a psychotherapist whose approach to self-understanding is deeply informed by existentialist philosophy. Unlike some

interpreters of existentialism, Frankl believes that existentialist thought can only succeed with an objective orientation toward a reference to meeting the authentic relation of the intentional will.

The more subjective interpretation contends that the subjective will must authentically fulfill itself in the meaninglessness of external and objective existence. It is only in pure intentionality that the ego in projection of the self can find meaning. Frankl sees this notion as faulty, however. This is because the human subject is not just an intentional being, but also a self-transcendent being. As such, in intentional orientation, there is a self-transcendent orientation to otherness in the world. The self-transcendent orientation, then, must be taken just as much into account as the subjective intentional orientation. In order to do this, though, one needs to take seriously the objectivity of the world outside of mere subjective being.

It is in this context of thinking that Frankl states:

Human beings are transcending themselves toward meanings which are something other than themselves, which are more than mere expressions of their selves, more than mere projections of these selves. Meanings are discovered but not invented.

It is in this vain that Frankl sees the ultimate human need as the will-to-meaning. This meaning is not merely a

26 Frankl, 50.
27 Frankl, 60.
projection of some idealized abstraction in the psychic conscious. It is something discovered in the real world in which humanity is a part of in historical experience.

Frankl suggests that humans long for a concrete purpose and task to fulfill. Each individual needs a task and a meaning oriented toward the uniqueness of the self-transcendent nature. This task and meaning cannot be ego oriented. "For what is demanded of man is not primarily fulfillment and realization of himself, but the actualization of specific tasks in his world."28 Again, speaking in regard to the self-transcendent nature of humanity, Frankl contends: "Only to the extent to which man fulfills a meaning out there in the world, does he fulfill himself. If he sets out to actualize himself rather than fulfill a meaning, self actualization immediately loses its justification."29

Enough has been stated about Frankl's thought in this regard. What is important is that Frankl has caught on to the idea that human exocentricity points to the fact that humans need a real and external meaning in relation to themselves for authentic existence. This is precisely what Pannenberg's theological orientation drives toward. Humanity has an orientation toward a fulfillment in deity which can only be directed to a real meaning and purpose in the

28 Viktor E. Frankl, From Death Camp to Existentialism, tr. Ilse Lasch (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959), 100.

29 Frankl, Will to Meaning, 38.
revelation of Christ. Christ is the one external otherness to which all humanity is ultimately to be directed.

A point needs now to be injected in regard to Frankl and Pannenberg. When Frankl speaks of the will-to-meaning, what meaning does he believe people will find if they look for that objective meaning external to them? Frankl answers this by saying that meaning is unique to each person. He prefers not to use the term relative. Relativism does not allow for the possibility of external meaning. Uniqueness, however, signifies a quality of relation where each person must find that which is suitable to their particular existence and status in life.30

The emphasis on uniqueness, however, does not really get too far, if at all, beyond a relativistic understanding of meaning. For if there is not an ultimate meaning to which all other meanings are held accountable, then one can simply not traverse beyond the relativity of meaning. To assert the uniqueness of meaning as opposed to the relativity of meaning does not provide any ultimate point of reference for which any particular meaning can be checked with regard to its truth content.

Pannenberg's anthropological orientation appears to move beyond the impasse created by Frankl's uniqueness of meaning without denying logo-therapy's valid insights. Pannenberg

30 Frankl, Will to Meaning, 54.
writes that "a 'truth' that would simply be my truth and would not at least claim to be universal and valid for every human being could not remain true even for me." Pannenberg has no association with relativity, and boldly claims the absoluteness of truth in Christ for all humanity. Pannenberg recognizes, however, the precariousness of each human situation in the process of identity orientation. In this sense Pannenberg affirms what could be called a uniqueness of understanding.

In this uniqueness of understanding, Pannenberg contends that there is a history of identity formation in coming to understand truth. No one can take truth and force it upon a person who is unable to understand it. In this sense there is seen anthropologically something similar to Frankl's uniqueness of meaning. The difference with Pannenberg is that meaning is not unique, but the human process of conforming to the nature and reality of that meaning is unique from person to person. There is an exocentric orientation in Pannenberg's anthropology which understands the relativity of meaning as a means toward receptivity to the absoluteness of Christ's revelation.

Thomas Oden in a 1974 article brings some confirmation to these observations. Oden expresses a good deal of hope

31 Pannenberg, Anthro., 15.

32 Thomas C. Oden, "The Human Potential and Evangelical Hope," Dialog 13 (1974): 121-28. The writer spoke recently to Dr. Oden, and he said that he does not closely identify with his earlier writings on psycho-therapy any longer.
that Pannenberg's theological orientation might contribute a
great deal toward a reorienting of the therapeutic process. Oden sees Pannenberg ushering in a new optimism and rationalism moving theology "away from the introverted, subjectivized momentum of existentialism." The subjective and anti-rational orientation of which came out of the 50's and 60's created a rut of self-introspection without a basis for offering authentic meaning and identity. Pannenberg presents for Oden a fresh attempt to break out of that.

This rethinking of theology can also bring a rethinking of the therapeutic process. Oden expresses his thoughts in this way with regard to the theology of hope:

[T]herapeutic transactions are so enmeshed in human limitation, despair, guilt and anxiety. Therapy must deal with those limits. I would hypothesize that if the individual in therapy could envision and experience a larger embrace of the historical process, and an affirmation of its end, then that would be immensely constructive in achieving the desired outcomes in psychotherapy. Historical awareness is therapeutic, I believe not only with respect to digging into one's past, but with respect to affirming and embracing the future, the whole future, and finally its end.

Here again the idea of the need to engage oneself in the whole of objective existence for the realization of an authentic life is reaffirmed. This can be foremostly embraced in the revelation of Christ. Again Oden shares:

Psychology, like history, is full of inner contradictions, but when each part is held in light of

33 Oden, 124.
34 Oden, 125.
the anticipated whole, all contradictions are in principle, even if not in fact, resolved and viewed wholistically. The meaning of any event is seen in the light of its end. For Christians, this end has appeared in Jesus' resurrection.35

Oden seems to correctly point out that life is full of so many contradictions that it is difficult to conceive how one can live authentically on a purely subjective basis. There is needed an objective revelation by which the human subject can be able to adequately interpret life's vicissitudes and conflicts.

Carl Jung offers a similar thought:

Just as man, as a social being, cannot in the long run exist without a tie to the community, so the individual will never find real justification for his existence, and his own spiritual and moral autonomy, anywhere except in an extramundane principle capable of relativizing the overpowering influence of external factors.36

Jung in his psycho-therapeutic approach realizes the need for something ultimate and beyond the mere lateral plane of being that can give meaning to the apparent relativity and absurdities of existence. Humanity, as socially and outwardly connected beings, must believe in something more reliable than themselves and their immediate environment.

It is now evident that Pannenberg's anthropology is at least a plausible way of viewing the human condition.

35 Oden, 127.

Rahner's anthropological approach, however, is not without its attractors. To do justice to this evaluative process it will be necessary to view some of positive aspects that have been given with regard to his approach.

Niel Pembroke has developed an interesting idea by contrasting the psychological insights of Erik Erikson with the anthropological perspective of Rahner and developing the affinities between the two. Pembroke's thesis is that Rahner's understanding of the supernatural existential and faith are nearly identical to Erikson's development of the life cycle theory.

Erikson's life cycle represents an understanding whereby in the course of one's life development there is the need to develop a healthy personality. According to the aim of the life cycle development "a healthy personality actively masters his environment, shows a unity of personality, and is able to perceive the world and himself correctly."  

Erikson's life cycle theory is based on the epigenetic principle. This principle states that there is an inbuilt ground plan by which everything grows accordingly. Every area of growth takes on a particular time of ascendency. "Once each part has been through its key time, the parts are brought together to form a functional whole."  

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level of ascendance it is necessary that when the ascendent part integrates with the whole that it does so in continuity and not in discordance if a healthy personality is to be developed.

Erikson's life cycle theory has eight stages of development. The eight stages correspond to the virtues of ego development. These stages are described in terms of possible polarities to which the subject may attain. These polarities are as follows: basic trust versus basic mistrust, autonomy versus shame and doubt, initiative versus guilt, industry versus inferiority, identity versus identity confusion, intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation, and integrity versus despair.39

In order to successfully bridge each phase of development it is necessary that one forms a self-continuity between the role and stage adjustments consigned to the person along the epigenetic principle. Identity formation is the key to the life cycle approach. Pembroke, then, takes this conception and finds in it a harmonization with Rahner's idea of anonymous faith. Pembroke sees Rahner's notion of accepting oneself completely in faith identical with Erikson's identity formation process.

Pembroke points out that when Rahner speaks of accepting oneself completely, key terms which he uses are conscience

39 Pembroke, 82.
and moral decision. This follows along the line that if a person fully walks in accordance to conscience, this person does so in full acceptance of himself and God. This is because this person is in tune and obedient to the transcendental reality implicit in being. Pembroke quotes Rahner in reference to the atheist:

To this extent the acceptance of human transcendence in faith... can be found in an atheist... given that he is absolutely obedient to the dictates of conscience and so accepts himself and God, at least unreflectively, insofar as he actually realizes his own transcendence.  

Pembroke hypothesizes what Rahner would do if he were to reflect on Erikson's life cycle theory. Pembroke imagines Rahner would say something like this:

When we honestly face the task of coming to a sense of 'I' (identity and fidelity); we lovingly commit ourselves to others (intimacy and love); when we truly care for what has been generated (generativity and care); and when we courageously look 'life itself in the face of death itself' (integrity and wisdom)... we accept ourselves completely and come to faith.

This is a very interesting connection which Pembroke makes. To truly live authentically as Rahner purports transcendence calls people to do, an approach like Erikson's life cycle theory appears to better explain and facilitate that authenticity which is needed in coming to anonymous faith.

Since the reality of God is part of the human reality in

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40 Pembroke, 84.
41 Pembroke, 84.
42 Pembroke, 85.
transcendence, acceptance of self, then, is a necessary corollary of accepting God. Embracing life as it corresponds to all of existence for humanity, at whatever stage of development, is comparable to embracing God. Buber writes that "he... who gives his whole being to addressing the Thou of his life... addresses God." 43

Pembroke's harmonizing of Rahner and Erikson appears valid. Yet, does a mixture of the thoughts of these two men provide an adequate account of the way to authentic human existence? This will depend on how one wants to account for the fundamental phenomenon of human exocentricity. Can the exocentric nature of humanity be fulfilled with only a true and specific orientation towards objective reality, or will a general range of various mediating forms serve the human quest for meaning and identity in relation to one's subjective formation and self understanding? and if one accepts the premise that Jesus Christ is the way to a life of authentic existence, does a knowledge of his reality have to be received explicitly as Pannenberg maintains, or is an implicit knowledge sufficient, as Rahner contends?

It is the view of this writer that, at least, without an explicit knowledge and acceptance of Jesus Christ as redeemer it is not possible to attain the fulness of authentic existence for which God, the personal ground of human

reality, desires all people to attain. This is for the reason that the life and work of Jesus Christ is so uniquely distinct from all other phenomena: whether natural, religious, or ideological. For this reason it is difficult to conceive how one can fulfill the destiny of one's life in Christ without having at least a basic cognitive perception of it.

What Christ is and has done does not simply fill a lacking need in human existence. It proclaims loudly who humanity is in their estrangement from God. It is not merely a basic part of temporal reality, which can easily be overlooked. It is the personal revelation of God which proclaims both judgement and freedom to human sinfulness. It does not appear that this has directly much to do with accepting oneself, it appears more to do with accepting what God has done for and on behalf of humanity.

John Hick, however, has recently argued that all of the great religions of the world are essentially trying to move human beings to the same reality. This idea does not apply to Rahner directly. It does, though, allow Rahner's idea of implicit Christianity to be taken more seriously if there is reason to believe that the ideas and symbols in other religions are comparable to those of Christianity. If this is so then the mediatorial forms in other religions, it could be argued, are sufficient for one to have enough cognitive substance in order to attain the reality of Christ's
redeeming work, while not quite knowing it.

Hick suggests that there is a "generic concept of salvation/liberation, which takes a different specific form in each of the great traditions, is that of the transformation of human existence from self-centeredness to Reality-centeredness." For example, Hinduism requires a transcending of the ego, and it seeks to accomplish this by various rituals and exercises. In regard to Buddhism, Hick quotes Abe in saying that "Buddhist salvation is... nothing other than an awakening to reality through the death of the ego." Judaism is a religion of apocalyptic hope. It seeks for God to bring his ultimate peace within history for corporate humanity. Hick points out that Islam does not really have a conception of salvation or liberation. Rather, in Islam it is a matter of continual self-surrender leading to peace with God.

Hick is insistent that in all these forms, religious and emotional vitality can be experienced. What is interesting, though, is Hick's treatment of Christianity in his comparison with all the other religions. Here is how he expresses the

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45 Hick, 36.
46 Hick, 41.
47 Hick, 47.
48 Hick, 48.
In the Hindu and Buddhist traditions, as we have seen, the salvific change that is experienced is explicitly thought of as a radical turning from ego to the ultimately Real. Within the Christian tradition a like turning occurs, consisting in the self-giving in faith to God's limitless sovereignty and grace, which engenders a new spirit of trust and joy which in turn frees the believer from anxious self-concern and makes him or her a channel of divine love to the world. 49

After presenting this definition, Hick moves right to the point of refuting the idea that Christian salvation is based on Christ's atonement as opposed to his idea of ego turning. To say that Christian salvation is based on an act that God has done (in Christ's atoning work) for humanity would stifle Hick from being able to place Christianity in his schematic orientation of mere human ego adjustment. To say that there is a religion, i.e. Christianity, whose offer of salvation is based on what God has done and that humanity can only act in a secondary response to that primary act, is quite radical.

Hick refutes the idea of the atonement on two grounds: 1) there have been so many different interpretations of the doctrine so as to make it practically useless, and 2) that its biblical basis is largely due to Paul's misconstrual of what and who Christ was all about. 50 To answer the

49 Hick, 43-44.
50 Hick, 44-46.
objections of Hick toward the doctrine of the atonement would be too lengthy for the purposes of this chapter, and it has been done sufficiently in other places.  

It is enough to say at this point that most of the Christian world throughout history has held to the doctrine of the atonement. It has been a central article of faith, and the large majority of orthodox communicants of the Christian faith are unable to fit into Hick's religious construction. Either he must find some way to account for those who hold to the atonement as the basis of their salvation in his religious schematic, or simply exclude them as irreligious. This writer does not think that either is an option for Hick within the confines of his schematic.

This writer contends that the revelation of salvation offered through Jesus Christ is so unique that no thematic mediating form offered in the other religions can be an adequate personal and cognitive substitute. Emil Brunner addressing a similar context from which Hick speaks writes:

For whereas the relative theory of religion regards the basic element in all religions as the essence of religion, and that distinguishing them from one another as nonessential, so far as the Biblical faith is concerned the exact opposite is true: it is the distinctive element that is essential, and all that the Christian faith may have in common with all other religions is nonessential.  


Brunner understands the prime essential of the Christian faith to be the revelation of Jesus Christ, consisting of His life, death, and resurrection.

All this leads back to the question of the need for the explicit revelation of Christ in order to fulfill humanity's exocentric nature. This paper has argued thus far in favor of the need for an explicit understanding of the gospel, in order to appropriate the salvific grace offered in Christ. It has argued this way on several grounds. For one, to say that God's self-communicating presence is transcendentally present in the temporal affairs of immanent existence is damaging on two accounts. It depersonalizes the character of God which leads to a subtle idolatry. It also blurs the unique and distinctive personal relation between God and humanity. This in essence damages the understanding of the humaness of humanity.

Another problem is that Rahner's supernatural existential appears to force the reality of God on humanity. In that the self-communication of God is ever present, humanity can never have the ability in freedom to reject God. As wrong as it is to reject God, it would also be wrong for God to continue to force His reality upon those who want nothing to do with Him. This would be a violation of human personhood. Rahner, however, does not appear to be able to escape this with his understanding of the supernatural existential.
It has also been argued that the content of what a person believes is extremely significant. As both Rahner and Pannenberg agree, one of the most basic features of human nature is self-transcendence. Self-transcendence leads one to move beyond oneself toward something beyond. This something beyond is not mere environment. It is beyond the environment toward ultimate meaning and purpose. Should it be asserted that the meaning beyond is not really important in so far as it concerns specific content? This would not be unreasonable. A meaning without a specific content and truth orientation is meaningless. Meaning by definition must have descriptive and specific content. Could it not be in light of the human exocentric orientation that humans all over seek to believe objective truth? It appears that an a priori condition which no one can reasonably escape. Rahner's anonymous Christianity states that this is an orientation however which does not need to be filled in truth, at least explicitly.

It seems then that if Rahner says that the grace of God is received in a person's life when that one lives authentically, Rahner does not have an appropriate understanding of what people need to live authentically. Nothing short of truth and guidance will fulfill the exocentric need of humanity. This is just what is offered in the revelation of Christ.

Pannenberg's eschatalogical framework, on the other
hand, takes into account humanity's openness to the future, while providing a grounded certainty for what will happen according to the past. This ground is in the provision and revelation of Christ. It accounts for the humaness of humanity while bringing them into relation with the transcendent God.

Against the cloud of relativity and introverted subjectivism so predominant in modern anthropologies, Pannenberg seems to offer a fresh approach to understanding the human condition on a Christocentric basis. This is positive in that it is putting forth a strong hearing of a historically oriented understanding of humanity's need for Christ in a theological world that has not given serious attention to it. Pannenberg has maintained the object and subject distinction between God and humanity, while providing latitude for human development. This is all done in a theistic orientation which affirms the true origin and end of human dignity and purpose. This seems to this writer to be a significant contribution in the modern context.
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