The Person in Complete Context

The Whole of Theological Anthropology Distinguished

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preFace and beginningWord

From the beginning, the human narrative has been composed in incomplete terms, by fragmentary accounts or with misinformation. From such human narrative there have been formulated inadequate explanations and misleading conclusions about the human person. Theological anthropology has not been exempt from such a human narrative and from formulating such explanations and conclusions. Yet, we should expect more from theological anthropology; and by its theological nature the discipline of theological anthropology must expect more from itself, or its discourse likely shifts to a humanistic anthropology.

This study focuses on what we can and need to count on in theological anthropology, and therefore on what distinguishes the whole of theological anthropology. Accordingly, theological anthropology is responsible for definitive discourse on the uniqueness of the human person that distinguishes the whole person beyond any living species in the human context. To meet this responsibility, there are two main and vital issues any theological anthropology must answer:

1. What does it mean to be the human person God created?
2. What does God expect from this person?

Assuming that all persons need, if not want, to know 'where we came from, who we are, what we're made of and for', this study engages not only these questions but also these persons and their relationships—which certainly includes all of us directly engaged in theological anthropology discourse. For this theological and functional engagement to be fulfilled, theological anthropology must occupy the pivotal position and provide the vital function for the relational outcome that integrally constitutes the person in complete context: (1) to be whole together in the primacy of God's relational context, and (2) to live whole ontology and function into the human context based ongoingly in the primacy of God's relational process.

Therefore, to distinguish whole persons and those persons together in whole relationships necessarily is the primary responsibility of theological anthropology. Our theological anthropology is critical for determining the theological process we engage and epistemic process we are involved in, and for composing their relational outcome of whole theology and practice, which is required to be the person God created and expects from this person. In other words, whether the person is distinguished in whole ontology and function is directly contingent on whether the whole of theological anthropology is distinguished, notably beyond humanistic anthropology and its limits. For theological anthropology to be distinguished whole-ly, it must occupy its pivotal position on the whole of God's theological trajectory and must engage its vital function in the whole of Jesus' relational path—whose vulnerable Face intimately intruded into human life by the embodied Word, in order (1) to compose the complete context necessary for the person to emerge whole and (2) to constitute the ontology and function necessary to live 'new relationship together in wholeness'. Thus, the pressing challenge for theological

anthropology is to take up the responsibility of its pivotal position and vital function by conjointly (1) composing its theological trajectory to be compatible with the whole of God, and (2) living its relational path to be congruent with the whole of Jesus. Indeed, theological anthropology must be lived as well as discoursed; and anything less and any substitutes for theological anthropology is on a different theological trajectory and relational path that can only be incomplete, fragmentary, inadequate or misleading.

This study takes up this responsibility and engages the primacy of the relational context and process necessary to distinguish integrally the person in complete context and the whole of theological anthropology. Nothing less and no substitutes.

Chapter 1 The Narrative of Human Being

What are human beings…?[1]
Psalm 8:4

The ancient poet deliberated on the above question about human being. This deliberation is common to all of us, and whether in our awareness or subconsciousness it has engaged us at one time or another—evoking conclusions, promoting theories and explanations, or provoking ambiguity, confusion, even despair. Whatever optimism or pessimism emerges from such deliberation, whatever hopes or limitations and insufficiencies result, all depend on the context locating the human being in question. This context composes the narrative of human being that shapes *who* emerges and *what* results. In other words, the extent of this context(s) will define and determine the *what* and *who* of human being and, therefore, is critical to any discussion of human being and being human.

In his deliberation, the ancient poet includes the Creator ("…that you are mindful of them"), but it is unclear whether the poet is merely enhancing his limited context or pointing beyond to a further and deeper context defining and determining human being (cf. 1 Chr 29:14; Ps 144:3). In further deliberations, many observe a physical context (without a creator) of millions of years to compose a material narrative of human being. Others, unable to incorporate such an expansive context having no differentiation of design, purpose or meaning to distinguish the what and who of human being, turn to a more specific and often limited context to differentiate a unique narrative for humans, likely with a primary spiritual element (e.g. with the soul of dualism). Some attempt to reconcile the two positions in a somewhat hybrid narrative that differentiates the how and perhaps what of being human but not necessarily the who of human being (e.g. as does nonreductive physicalism). Each of the contexts locating the human being in question in these further deliberations composes either an incomplete or a fragmentary narrative, thereby rendering the what and who of human being incomplete and/or fragmentary.

This study extends our pervasive, if not consuming, deliberation by locating humans in complete context in order that *who* (defined as person) can be distinguished, so that *what* (determining being a person) is whole and not fragmentary, that is, in both ontology and function.

A Conscious Narrative

I begin our deliberation with a personal reflection. When I was growing up in Chicago (USA), I managed to attain a measure of academic and athletic success—having ascribed to me a label as "star" in my American football career. This happened despite my physical stature; I was always the smallest guy of the team, even more noticeable in

[1] Unless indicated differently, all Scripture is taken from the NRSV; any italics in Scripture throughout this study signify emphasis or further rendering of terms.

the locker room. I was not only physically small but being a racial minority (the only Asian American on the team and often the only one in classes) I was also physically different than the prevailing majority. So, I became self-conscious about my genes, yet I would be neither determined nor limited by those genes—at least in terms of being small.

My experience illustrates and points to two vital matters (ongoing issues) for being human and human being. First, my being human was not limited to biology and determined by my body, though my physical action irrefutably played a major role on the football field (this wasn't played out in my mind). From my physical context, limited strength and pain were a frequent source of feedback rendering me fearful and informing me not only that I can't do this but shouldn't—which my surrounding contexts (including my mom) reinforced in the constraining influence of culture. As my narrative illustrates, however, it is important to understand the influence of my will and the psychology of my mind (though not mind over matter), and how they interacted with my body to take me beyond any limitations of my genes, or to free me from self-imposed constraints and related cultural constraints shaped by my body (stereo)type. Some would interpret this interaction as the triumph of the soul/spirit over the body, espousing some form of dualism. Others opting out of dualism for a form of monism (as in nonreductive physicalism[2]) would advocate that this interaction demonstrates a higher level human function (notably the mind) having determining effect (if not cause) upon lower level human function (the body); this process is called supervenience, a quality (not a substance) in human being that is distinct from the body yet is inseparable from and interdependent with bodily function (namely the brain).[3]

I find both positions either inadequate to define my human being or insufficient to determine my being human. In discussion below, I will identify the context of dualism and why this is inadequate, if not a distortion, of human being; likewise, I will identify the context of nonreductive physicality and its indispensable supervenience as insufficient, if not misleading, for being human.[4] Meanwhile, my narrative continued to unfold in search for resolve in being human and in quest of what I would later understand as wholeness in human being.

This leads to the second vital matter or issue illustrated in my experience. No doubt my early experiences highlighted for me the benefits of prestige, along with related privilege and perhaps limited power or influence over others, which shaped my early life into adulthood. Yet, even though I wasn't a Christian during most of this period (becoming a Christian at twenty), there was something stirring or even agitating within me that would expand the context composing my narrative. More important than the above, these experiences illuminated the reality of an increasing dissatisfaction I felt being treated on this basis. That is, rising within me was a distinct consciousness of this unsettled feeling: I never felt during this period that *me* (who and what I really am) was received and accepted apart from my successes. Indeed, even at an early age, I was

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[2] Various aspects of nonreductive physicalism are discussed in Malcolm Jeeves, ed., *From Cells to Souls—and Beyond: Changing Portraits of Human Nature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004).

[3] Further discussion on supervenience is found in Dennis Bielfeldt, "The Peril and Promise of Supervenience for Scientific-Theological Discussion," and Niels Hendrik Gregersen, "God's Public Traffic: Holist versus Physicalist Supervenience," in Niels Henrik Gregersen, Willem B. Drees and Ulf Gorman, eds., *The Human Person in Science and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 117-188.

[4] Summary discussion of these views is found in Joel B. Green and Stuart L. Palmer, eds., *In Search of the Soul: Four Views of the Mind-Body Problem* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005).

suspicious of others' positive attention and I distinctly wanted *more* in relationships. Unknowingly, I was exercising a naïve yet valid version of a 'hermeneutic of suspicion', both to deconstruct images as well as to search deeper for what my consciousness was pointing to and wanting to fully emerge: the person, the unique human person underlying all that I did and had.

For physicalists rendered by determinism, the thoughts and feelings going on in my mind were not from a consciousness that can affect the behavior of our bodies but were a physically-caused experience known as an epiphenomenon (a phenomenon of physical cause having no other basis or effectiveness). Epiphenomenalism does not allow for consciousness to cause any further action to happen, no matter how real it seems and how strong the thought and deep the feeling. I don't doubt that my consciousness is inseparable from my brain and depends on biology, but I have no basis to discount the interdependent nature of this reflexive relationship or to deny the causal role my consciousness had in changing how I saw my body and the person signified together with it. Accordingly, I consider epiphenomenalism to be a narrowed-down explanation of human life that renders epiphenomenon a reduction of human function.

The underlying person being defined and determined on the basis of my abilities (what I have) and performance (what I do) unexpectedly emerged, but not surprisingly; this includes the realization that this was an inadequate and even unfair basis for who, what and how I *am*—the whole of my person that few recognized and affirmed, not even by my mother. How do I account for this emerging person? I say "unexpectedly emerged" since my social contexts and related cultural context did not advocate for this underlying person but, to the contrary, labored in and reinforced the prevailing human images shaped and constructed by what we do and have. Even had I been a Christian when my consciousness emerged, it would have been unexpected; my religious context most likely would have composed my narrative with the prevailing theological anthropology of reduced ontology and function—in other words, a religious context embedded in surrounding human contexts. Accordingly, the underlying person emerging despite the limits and constraints of these contexts can only be unexpected, yet the emerging reality of such person is not surprising.

I say that this emerging person is "not surprising" when, and only when, we pay attention and give priority (not in terms of total determination) to further and deeper contexts that can compose the narrative of human being beyond and more fully than prevailing contexts have up to the present. While acknowledging the provisional nature that all contexts must operate with, there are some contexts that take us deeper into the human narrative if we pay attention to them—pay attention not merely by observing behavior or monitoring brain activity. Paying attention, however, is not a simple process and may require some kind of wake-up call (cf. Mk 4:24; Rev 3:1-2); in addition, we may need a change in our interpretive framework and lens in order not to ignore certain contexts integral for human being (cf. Lk 8:18; Rev 2:2-4). Therefore, whatever is needed in our response, it should be unmistakable that the contexts we pay attention to or ignore are consequential for defining and determining the what and who of human being.

Human consciousness is one of those contextual areas of immediate interest that, on the one hand, has been widely interpreted while, on the other hand, has been given minimal attention to, that is, in terms of helping us understand our own person—if only by illuminating our unsettled condition or exposing our dissatisfaction. Yet, looking

beyond the psychological context of the mind, the ambiguity of and the ambivalence about our own consciousness involves our need for whole understanding of human consciousness.

There are two types of human consciousness that must be distinguished (and will be discussed more later): (1) consciousness of one's person, and (2) consciousness of one's self. The second type is self-consciousness focused on the outer in signified by reduced ontology and function, and thus is quantitatively oriented with any focus of 'in' not having much, if any, depth—demonstrated in my self-consciousness about my genes, which thankfully didn't prevail in my narrative. The first type is person-consciousness focused on the inner out constituted by whole ontology and function, and thus is qualitatively-relationally oriented with the focus on 'out' fully embodied and inseparable from the 'inner'—demonstrated in my growing awareness of how I wanted and needed to be seen and treated, an ongoing process unfolding not without issues and struggles yet more deeply distinguished in its outcome for my person and my lens of others as 'person', not as 'self'.

What type of consciousness we pay attention to will determine both what and how we pay attention, and thereby define who will be the outcome. Therefore, it is critical to distinguish human consciousness for the human narrative and vital to maintain it throughout our deliberation. The human consciousness we use will be the person we get, and the subsequent theological anthropology we get.

Human Narrative from the Beginning

An ongoing defining issue about human consciousness that must be understood and addressed accordingly unfolds as follows: Person-consciousness and self-consciousness are in ongoing tension, the process of which engages continuous contention with veiled conflict. If not adequately addressed and redefined by person-consciousness, self-consciousness will prevail over person-consciousness (even by default from the latter's lack) and render it indistinguishable—most notably accomplished by epistemological illusion and ontological simulation to construct human life in fragmentary function.

The two types of human consciousness and their respective processes are evident in the primordial garden. This context is jointly critical and pivotal for composing the narrative of human being from the beginning. Converging in the primordial garden are the various contexts that interact to compose a complete narrative of human being: the creation context, the evolutionary biology context, the psychological context of the mind, the relational context between Creator and humans, and humans with each other, all of which are integral for the context of human consciousness, and which are all subjected to, if not subject to, the ongoing contentious context of reductionism. Whether seen as historical or interpreted as allegorical, the primordial garden presents the most indispensable context and inescapable process that any significant deliberation of 'what is human being' must pay attention to necessarily and cannot ignore by necessity.

The narrative of human being emerges in the beginning distinctly in the context of human consciousness. This integral process is also both critical and pivotal for defining and determining the what and who of human being along with the how of being human. I

will highlight the human consciousness aspect of this narrative here, with further discussion below.

In the creation narrative, the human male and female came before each other "naked and were not ashamed" (Gen 2:25). So, what's so significant about this? From an evolutionary biology context animals have done this for millions of years; and such a natural outcome would be expected for Homo sapiens, so "what else is new," that is, unique emerging? Well, nothing significant is if we remain within the limits of the physicalist's composition of the human narrative that explains human changes from evolutionary adaptation. The reality, however, emerging along with and inseparable from the physical context cannot be ignored. Naked, yes, but not simply without any outer clothes, as the Hebrew term (*'arom*)[5] denotes. A physicalist-materialist's lens pays attention to human being from outer-in and likely limits this male and female coming together to natural sex without shame. What such a lens (including some non-materialists and dualists) overlooks or even ignores is human being from inner out and the presence, for example, of human masks worn both to shield the whole of human being and to prevent being human from the depth level of connection necessary to distinguish their wholeness in relationship together—the created condition of all persons distinguished in the qualitative image and relational likeness of God. The innermost of human being is indispensable and irreplaceable to distinguish the person and persons together whole-ly from inner out.

For this male and female to be naked and without shame involved a composition of the human narrative beyond the fragmenting terms of the body and marital sex between husband and wife. The Hebrew term for shame (*bosh*) involves confusion, disappointment, embarrassment or even dismay when things do not turn out as expected. What did they expect and what was their experience? Think about this male and female meeting on these terms for the first time and examining each other from the outer in. Obviously, our lens for beauty, femininity as well as masculinity shaped by culture would occupy our thoughts; likewise, perhaps, the competitive and survival needs from evolution could have shaped their lens. On what basis would there be no shame, confusion, disappointment, embarrassment or dismay? If what they saw of themselves were all there was and all they would get, it would not be difficult to imagine such feelings emerging. In deeper yet interrelated function, however, the lens of this male and female was not constrained to the outer in, and thus was not even limited to gender. Their connection emerged from the deep consciousness of human being from the inner out, the innermost of which can neither be adequately explained in physical terms nor even be

[5] Greek and Hebrew word studies used in this study are taken from the following sources: Horst Balz, Gerhard Schreider, eds., *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990); Colin Brown, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975); R. Laid Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., Bruce Waitke, eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980); Ernst Jenni, Claus Westermann, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. Mark E. Biddle, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997); Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974); Harold K. Moulton, ed., *The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978); W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1981); Spiros Zodhiates, ed., *Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible* (Chattanooga: AMG Publ., 1996).

sufficiently distinguished on the spiritual level. What we need to pay close attention to is the emergence of this human consciousness to compose the integral narrative for the conjoint whole of human being and being human. Most notably, the process of person-consciousness emerged to present the whole of human being without any masks or barriers (e.g. even the distinction of gender) in order to be involved with each other at the depth level necessary to distinguish their being human. In other words, the context of person-consciousness composes the human narrative in 'naked and without shame'—the whole ontology and function necessary to distinguish the human person.

While person-consciousness is clearly distinguished, we cannot ignore the reality that it is ongoingly subjected to the ceaseless contentious context of reductionism. If this context is ignored or not adequately paid attention to, this becomes consequential for person-consciousness being subject to reductionism. This consequential condition is critical for any deliberation on what is human being, and its influence has been prevalent, if not prevailing, even to today in theological anthropology discourse. This consequence on human consciousness is also exposed in the primordial garden, as we witness a shift to "the eyes of both of them were opened and they realized they were naked…and made coverings for themselves" (Gen 3:7, NIV); this extends to be covered not only with clothes but with titles, credentials, other personal resources, and covering up the person even with notions of gender. That is, "they put on a different interpretive lens that focused on the outer in of human being, which narrowed their attention to the outer-in parts that now defined them, which then became the basis for determining their fragmentary engagement of each other embodied in the outer in of being human." In this reality of being subjected to reductionism, person-consciousness made the consequential shift to self-consciousness, which could only compose the human narrative from outer in on the basis of reduced ontology and function.

"Naked," consequently, has a different meaning with an interpretive framework and lens from outer in that fragments persons into parts and thereby reduces the significance of persons to their parts or the sum of those parts, which does not add up to be whole. Whereas "naked" from inner out is still seen as naked yet embodied in the wholeness of *person*, who and what is "not ashamed" (whatever the physical form) but affirmed and honored, and therefore not reduced in ontology and function as seen from outer in with self-consciousness. The latter involves shaping of humans subtly constructed by the epistemological illusion and ontological simulation of reductionism, whereby self is defined and determined by the primacy of one's parts, that is, what one has (body, mind, soul) or does (namely in self-determination)—as evidenced above to compose the human narrative. In distinct contrast and even conflict, person-consciousness not only takes us to the depths of human being but also points beyond to that which distinguishes human uniqueness (discussed in chap. 4).

The two types of human consciousness evidenced in the primordial garden is a critical distinction to understand in our deliberation of what is human. Moreover, this distinction is pivotal in theological anthropology discourse in terms of the following:

1. What type of human consciousness is used in the theological task will determine what composes the human narrative and who emerges.
2. Which then defines the nature and extent of the epistemic field we will engage for the source of our knowledge and as the basis for our understanding.

3. Whereby our conclusions of human being and being human can neither exceed nor be significant beyond any limits and constraints of the epistemic field we engage and the type of human consciousness used in our theological task.

Therefore, we cannot ignore or minimize the importance of our human consciousness in order for theological anthropology to distinguish persons in whole ontology and function and not to render them fragmentary in reduced ontology and function. Such rendering (even with good intentions) is the basis of any unnecessary or even false dualism, and for material reductionism and related causal determinism.

A related note about human consciousness is helpful to account for. Paying attention to human consciousness should not stop when we go to sleep (literally, not figuratively). Human consciousness does not cease during our sleep (as witnessed in brain activity) but in fact may become less encumbered to illuminate the state of our human being. That's why dreams should not be ignored but examined. For example, a dream may highlight our self-consciousness to inform us of how embedded we are in reduced ontology and function. Ignoring or responding to such a dream can be pivotal to our human narrative and critical to opening us to person-consciousness (cf. 1 Sam 3; Dan 2ff; Acts 10:9ff). This raises a related question of whether human consciousness exists apart from the body (e.g. pointing to the soul), or when body parts are in crisis or don't function. Both questions engage the fragmentation of human being into separate parts (namely, body and soul) or a reduction into a part without the necessity or at the exclusion of the other part. This is a common engagement that ceases to assume the integrity of the whole person by failing to account for the various contexts integral for human consciousness, that is, distinctly person-consciousness.[6]

Furthermore, what we pay attention to in this human narrative from the beginning has added significance consequential for what is human being in the process of being human. Understanding the difference between "naked and without shame" (person-consciousness) and "seeing nakedness and covering up" (self-consciousness) is indispensable not only for what constitutes the vital nature of human life but, equally important, also for clearly illuminating the interrelated and inescapable matter of the human condition resulting from reductionism and its counter-relational work (discussed in chap. 3). The pervasive context of reductionism is an ongoing composing influence of the human narrative that must be paid close attention to in our deliberation and carefully accounted for in our discourse both in anthropology and theological anthropology. We cannot discuss or theorize about humans and their nature in the lab or in a vacuum isolated from everyday life (including our own), as if to assume the human condition is not an instrumental (if not causal) factor in defining and determining who, what and how humans are. Clarifying the connections underlying, we cannot ignore the human condition without fragmenting humans to the limits and constraints of reduced ontology and function (a clear indicator of self-consciousness). In other words, the human condition—in its various forms and expressions throughout human history, both individually and collectively, and likely subtle rather than extreme—signifies the outworking of human shaping and construction that skews, misleads and distorts the narrative of human being. Its implications inescapably involve consequences needing to

[6] For further deliberation, consider the recent experience of neurosurgeon Eben Alexander, *Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon's Journey into the Afterlife* (New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2012).

be accounted for, decisively addressed and reconstituted in our deliberations and theological task, in order that in our human narrative the nature of human being emerges whole in the ontology and function necessary by that nature to define and determine the whole of who, what and how we are—nothing less and no substitutes. With anything less and any substitutes, our ontology and function fall into the human condition by default, which then evolves inevitably with simulations of our human being and illusions of our function. This condition commonly composes too many Christian narratives.

The Whole Emerging from the Beginning

When the ancient poet deliberated on "what are human beings?" he specifically included the context of the Creator to compose the human narrative: "…that you are mindful of them…are *relationally involved* (*paqad*) with them." How so?

The question raised by the poet is focused more on the Creator than on human beings, though certainly he implies an interrelated structural condition and contextual process between them that he considers both definitive and conclusive. Accordingly, his question connects our deliberation back to the creation context—a context, of course, many don't acknowledge but others don't adequately utilize—composing the narrative focused on human being. In the creation context, the Creator declares about the human individual (even from inner out): "It is not good for *this individual* to be alone" (Gen 2:18, NIV), hereby enacting the Creator's mindful and relational involvement with human beings.

While only introducing this discussion now (with more in chap. 4), we need to consider what is being composed here. "Good" (*tob*) can be situational, a moral condition, about happiness or being righteous; compare how good is perceived from human observation (Gen 3:6). When attached to "to be alone," "not good" can easily be interpreted with all of the above, perhaps with difficulty about being righteous. Yet, in this creation context the Creator constituted the created order, whose design, meaning and purpose are both definitive and conclusive for the narrative of human being and being human. Though the creation narrative is usually rendered "to be alone," the Hebrew term (*bad*) can also be rendered "to be apart." The latter rendering composes a deeper sense of relationship and not being fully connected to someone else, that is, not merely an individual having someone to associate with. This nuance is significant to pay attention to because it takes the human narrative beyond situations and deeper than the heterosexual relations of marriage. "To be apart" is not just a situational condition but most definitively a relational condition distinguished only by the primacy of the created human order. In the human narrative, a person may be alone in a situation but indeed also feel lonely (pointing to person-consciousness) in the company of others, at church, even in a family or marriage because of relational distance, that is, "being apart," which the Creator defines as "not good."

In the design, meaning and purpose of the created human order the human narrative is composed conjointly (1) for human being "to be part" of the interrelated structural condition and contextual process with the Creator, and (2) for the function of being human "to be part" of the relationship together necessary to be whole as constituted by and thus in the whole ontology and function of their Creator. "Good" (*tob*), then, in

the creation context is only about being righteous (not about a moral condition but the function of an ontological condition); that is, good signifies the Creator's whole ontology and function constituting the righteousness of God (defining the whole of who, what and how God is). In whole terms, only creator God is good—the difficult lesson Jesus illuminated for the rich young ruler about the primacy distinguishing human being and being human as his followers (Mk 10:18). And human beings are constituted in this "good," in whole ontology and function in likeness of the righteous whole of who, what and how God is. Nothing less and no substitutes can constitute human beings as good, and any diminishment can only be "not good." Therefore, anything less and any substitute is "to be apart" from this distinguished whole, rendering human being reduced and being human fragmentary.

This summary context from the beginning composes the narrative with the ontology and function of human being and being human: For human beings, who are distinguished as persons, "to be apart is not 'being who, what and how they are in their whole ontology and function that is constituted in the very likeness of the Creator'."

Qualifying the Complete Context

"To be apart" signifies the human condition that prevails in the human narrative—a condition that must be accounted for in our deliberation of human being as well as accounted for in the human consciousness we use, in the methodology we employ and in the epistemic field we engage during the course of our function of being human.

In human consciousness (both self-consciousness and person-consciousness) no human (and few animals) wants "to be apart", that is, assuming we don't ignore it and pay attention. Yet, the matter of "to be apart" includes anything less and any substitutes of the whole distinguished in God's being and created by God in human being. This raises the question of how definitive and conclusive is this whole for human being and being human; and how can this whole be distinguished from any human shaping or construction? These are urgent questions needing to be addressed for qualifying the complete context from the beginning—which includes the primordial garden and its pivotal dynamic—that is requisite to compose the narrative of human beings in wholeness. If nothing less and no substitutes but this whole has no basis of significance, then anything less and any substitutes will be sufficient in our deliberation, even in the absence of mutual agreement (any level of consensus) or personal satisfaction.

At this point, a broader grasp of contextual issues will deepen our understanding. Both the creation context introduced above and the well-established context of evolutionary biology point to a cosmological context. The cosmological question about 'in the beginning' revolves around whether the human narrative is composed merely by physics or also beyond physicality, even beyond common notions of metaphysics. The idea of truth and what can be accepted as true have been formed by the knowledge of what exists in the universe in general and in human life in particular, though this epistemological engagement and related conclusions historically have been also shaped by a limited worldview (interpretive framework), cultural constraints (interpretive lens) and even by individual agenda (e.g. a growing problem in the scientific community

demonstrated by those seeking stature).[7] Supposedly, then, a valid definition of truth is determined only by what *is*. Yet, given the contextual issues that influence the formation and shape of what is true, the rhetorical question that Pilate raised to Jesus warrants further attention in our cosmological context and demands qualifying response for theological anthropology: "What is truth?" (Jn 18:38). Perhaps with the mis(dis)information composing so much so-called truth today, even among Christians, few would be willing to go further and deeper.

Our level of confidence in the knowledge we possess and use—interrelated knowledge for the universe and human life—is by its nature and must be in its practice contingent on two irreplaceable issues:

1. The source of our knowledge that both defines its significance and determines its scope beyond the limits and constraints of a narrowed-down epistemic field shaped by what is only self-referencing.[8]
2. A complete epistemic process—provisional in its knowledge and heuristic in its development—engaged by a non-fragmented interpretive framework and non-fragmenting interpretive lens that can address any fragmentation in order that any pieces/parts can be put together (*syniemi*, cf. Mk 8:17-21), not in sum total but in integral relationship together, whereby this epistemic process illuminates the whole necessary for our knowledge and understanding to have integrated significance to distinguish it beyond mere self-referencing, that is, that context of reductionism constrained to human shaping and construction (even of God, Ps 50:21)..

Obviously in today's climate, many have illusions about having confidence in their knowledge. In their bias, they have a hard time recognizing, for example, existing disparities in human life and thus they would resist or deny the existential truths of these human conditions. Psychologists refer to this kind of broad bias in perception as "*motivated cognition*": the skewed mindset engaged in mental actions that ignore, discount or downplay contradictory evidence in order to maintain coherence between their belief and reality. Do you see this today?

All affirmations, assertions and definitive statements of knowledge must give account of their source and, equally important, must account for how they relate to this source in the epistemic process. Clearly, we cannot and should not expect to experience resulting knowledge and to form conclusions of what is true beyond what our source, interpretive framework and lens allow. This necessarily applies to any theological engagement and any aspect of the theological task in anthropology, not as an obligatory methodology (e.g. for certainty or to be spiritually correct) but due to the pervasive and prevailing context of the epistemological, hermeneutical, ontological and relational

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[7] See Thomas Kuhn's discussion on the non-scientific influences shaping scientific theories, models and conclusions in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

[8] During his attempt to develop a "grand unified theory" (GUT), noted physicist Stephen Hawking gave up his quest for such a complete comprehensive theory for knowing the world in its innermost parts, because he concluded that this wasn't possible with the limited framework of science—that a physical theory can only be self-referencing and therefore can only be either inconsistent or incomplete. Discussed in Hans Küng, *The Beginning of All Things: Science and Religion* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 15-24.

influences of reductionism. In this context of reductionism, the reality of what *is* that determines the definition of truth becomes composed by epistemological illusion and ontological simulation for what ought to "be" in human life and function—as in the primordial garden, "you will not be *reduced*…you will be like God" (Gen 3:4-5).

This composition is commonly seen in the 'naturalistic fallacy', which consists in identifying what *is* with what ought to "be". This not only misleads the epistemic process but distorts it, thereby imposing limits and constraints on both the extent and validity of knowledge resulting. Moreover, such limited or constrained knowledge consistently confuses what *is* with self-referential notions of what ought to "be", all emerging from a fragmentary interpretive framework and lens that unfolded from the primordial garden ("…your eyes will be opened," Gen 3:5). This epistemic dynamic exists today in theological anthropology discourse, evident in dualism and even nonreductive physicalism.

In the cosmological context, all knowledge is rendered provisional, though not necessarily relative or evolving. This has been an ongoing practice in physical science, for example, leading to new discoveries about the universe (now also considered a multi-verse). Yet, such practice has often not realized the underlying engagement exercised in this heuristic process; nor has it likely understood the direct correlation in the heuristic process between the knowledge available for discovery and the extent of its epistemic field. Here again, cosmology evidenced a major breakthrough in the heuristic process when its epistemic field shifted from a geocentric model to a heliocentric model of the universe. The cosmological context, however, continues to be the critical issue 'in the beginning' and indeed pivotal 'from the beginning', involving the epistemic field composing the human narrative and any related limits or constraints on the heuristic process defining human being and determining being human.

Some of these limits or constraints perhaps could be found in the world of neuroscience. Iain McGilchrist locates these heuristic and epistemic processes in the brain activity apparently of the right and left hemispheres. He concludes that each brain hemisphere represents different views of the world. The left hemisphere, for example, looks at parts or fragments and then makes generalized abstraction, aggregated from the parts. It is the special capacity of the left hemisphere to derive generalities—the dominant function characteristic of scientists—but these generalities have nothing to do with wholes because, as McGilchrist rightly notes, they are in fact necessarily built from parts, aspects, fragments of existing things within the universe; these things in themselves could never have been generalized. This knowledge gained from putting things together from bits—the knowledge called facts—is the only kind of knowledge permitted by science (at least in theory if not always in practice). Yet, this resultant sought-after "certainty," on which the left hemisphere concentrates in its need to be right, is also related to narrowness, with the effect that the more certain we become of something the less we see (perhaps like narrow-minded). Consequently, this knowledge, with its left hemisphere function, does not provide a good idea of the whole, but, at best, just a partial reconstruction of aspects of the whole.[9] And how we use this knowledge, and its underlying assumptions, may not only indicate perhaps the dominance of the left

[9] Iain McGilchrist, *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Modern World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

hemisphere but also will critically determine the breadth and depth of our perspective of the world and all who live in it.

With the provisional nature of knowledge, there is a certain degree of humility needed to openly engage the epistemic process without predetermining what can or cannot result. Epistemic humility minimizes being so predisposed. For engagement in the epistemic process to be unrestricted in its heuristic purpose and function, thus leading to any further knowledge and deeper understanding, there are distinct assumptions that need to be made. To hold to assumptions, to employ any assumptions, is to exercise a level of faith—which even scientists do, often without direct acknowledgement or clear realization. This does not involve a shift from rationalized thinking (as in science) to faith as faith is often perceived without any valid basis other than a believer's own supposition (even presupposition). To exercise faith is the function of trust extended necessarily to our epistemic field and the epistemic process in order to establish our level of confidence in any resulting knowledge; the practice of faith/trust varies but nevertheless is required and operative to engage a heuristic epistemic process. In no other area of knowledge is this more necessary than anthropology and understanding the nature of human being and the function of being human, the whole of the human person.

For the epistemic process in our deliberation of human beings to develop, the process must by its nature be heuristic. Yet, this heuristic epistemic process does not and is unable to go beyond its epistemic field; that is, it is distinctly limited and constrained to the extent of its epistemic field, no matter how much faith is exercised. Therefore, both science and theology are unable to explain, define and determine human beings any further than the knowledge available to them in their epistemology. This discussion consistently challenges our epistemic field and the interpretive framework and lens used for what we pay attention to and/or ignore in the epistemic process.

This brings us back to the cosmological question of how the human narrative is composed. Science and its knowledge are engaged in a heuristic process that, arguably, both exposes their limits and also inadvertently points to the source (cf. Rom 1:20) that takes them beyond those limits to the whole knowledge and understanding of reality and life—what *is* and not just what ought to "be". The provisional nature of knowledge also reveals the fragmentary condition of what can be observed, whether in the universe or in human life, with only parts to work with and attempt to piece together for an elusive whole. This fact reveals the basic reality of life: the whole cannot be achieved from mere parts (whatever their quantity or sum total); wholeness can neither be understood nor experienced from things which/who are only fragmentary.

The heuristic process of science, when engaged honestly and openly (a mistake to merely assume), acts just as Paul said the law in Judaism works to expose our limits and point us to the source of whole life (Gal 3:19,24). Likewise, Paul clearly distinguished that this law should not be the primary determinant of human function, which speaks to related parts in theology used misguidedly to construct the whole. Given their limits—and yet their rightful place and role in human life that should not be disregarded but affirmed for their heuristic purpose—science and adherence to the law (both of nature and of God) cannot be the primary source of self-understanding to determine human beings and construct human identity. Emerging from provisional knowledge within a limited epistemic field, such self-determination is merely self-referencing and cannot go beyond the limitations of human resources, even weakness and imperfection; nor can it

adequately account for these limits in its knowledge and understanding of life, thus rendering human ontology and function to illusion and simulation ("and you will be like God," Gen 3:5).

Epistemic as well as ontological humility are necessary in order for science and the law to engage the heuristic function of their nature, namely pointing to the source beyond human contextualization. To remain within the limits of human contextualization is to be susceptibly subjected to, and likely become subject to, the ongoing defining and determining influences of reductionism.

Theology by definition should "take us" beyond human contextualization, that is, not merely point us or lead us beyond in heuristic function but to distinguish indeed that source beyond—which/who is clearly the Subject of theology, theological engagement and the theological task. Yet, the theological task often has been rendered to mere human contextualization, either by design (e.g. natural theology, liberalism) or by default (e.g. much of evangelicalism). This is most evident in theological anthropology.

Knowledge and understanding of God depend foremost on their primary source, whose context by nature is beyond human contextualization. Furthermore, our interpretation of this source beyond must emerge from the interpretive framework compatible with this source in order for our knowledge and understanding of God to be congruent with the source distinguished from beyond. Certainly, if this source beyond is inaccessible, compatibility and congruence are irrelevant. Of course, if such an improbable source can have no valid basis for existing, then the burden is upon, for example, the scientific community to explain how and why its narrow epistemic field of probability can eliminate, discount or ignore the improbable in the heuristic process. Anthropology can be sustained in the limited epistemic field of physicality, yet what survives of human being in this context cannot be of significance for the human person. Conversely, theological anthropology cannot survive with only a limited epistemic field, yet even from such limits conventional theological anthropology, historically, has often sustained notions of human being that have little or no significance to the human person and the Creator. Knowledge and understanding of human beings are rooted in knowledge and understanding of their Creator; and the context composing the former is contingent on the context constituting the latter (cf. Jer 9:23-24; Jn 14:9; 17:3).

We cannot underestimate the importance vested 'in the beginning' for our understanding the whole as well as our need to be whole. And we can neither allow this to be diminished by science nor minimalized by philosophy as well as theology. Essentially, its importance involves no less than the search for identity, human identity, not in social terms but in primary terms of creation. Accordingly, this identity is inseparable from the identity of the Creator outside the universe, whose intrusive action set in motion the relational dynamic that holds the cosmos together in its innermost in the beginning, ongoingly from the beginning, to and through the end. The whole—in which human identity is defined and by which it is determined—constitutes the identity of God, the whole of whose creative action composes the universe and all in it. This created whole, however, was sadly fragmented by reductionism—the contrary of wholeness—making necessary the whole of God's salvific action to transform human being and thus all creation to be whole. Nothing less than this identity can be whole, and any substitute for this whole identity is only reductionism. This reductionism and its counter-relational work are consequential for the fragmentation of life constituting the human condition, not

in the beginning but *from* the beginning—as demonstrated in the primordial garden (Gen 3:1-7). Therefore, the search for identity has had a long history of human shaping and construction; underlying this history is the shift of ontology from inner out to outer in, and thereby the shift in function from qualitative to quantitative (cf. Gen 2:25 and 3:7). And, most certainly, this shift has restricted the epistemic process to limited (narrowed-down and fragmentary) knowledge and loads of information; moreover, it has prevented the involvement necessary to go further and deeper in the epistemic process for whole knowledge and understanding.[10]

Theological anthropology can only survive when the context of its source unmistakably distinguishes the Creator as Subject to compose the human narrative beyond the limits of physicality and conventional metaphysics. Theological anthropology becomes significant for the human person when the improbable theological trajectory of the Creator relationally intrudes the human context in order to clearly distinguish what *is* the nature of human being and the function of being human. When the epistemic field for theological anthropology incorporates this relational context and process, it also shifts the specific direction of our hermeneutical methodology: "to interpret nature in the light of grace and not the other way round," as Alan Torrance observes for theological anthropology. Its direction, he continues, "must think *from* God *to* humanity and not *from* our prevailing conception of humanity (and those facets of it deemed to be significant either by science or culture) *to* the transcendent." We can add in this respect that the theological task must be able to distinguish theological anthropology from anthropological theology (as sustained above). Torrance draws this conclusion:

> If theology is not to offer crude divine ratification of our prevailing scientific hypotheses and cultural affiliations, then God's self-disclosure at the heart of the Christian faith must be given a foundational and not a derivative role in the business of determining what it is to be human. The decision not to begin there inevitably amounts to a decision not to arrive there! What I am suggesting, therefore, is that the knowledge intrinsic to faith supplies the fundamental ontological categories with which to approach theological anthropology and cannot leave it to science, psychology, or philosophy to provide these. To refuse to operate in this manner amounts to a *de facto* denial either that God has given himself to be known in revelation or that God's self-revelation has any fundamental bearing on the interpretation of the shape and function of human existence.[11]

This brings us face to Face with the creation context and the cosmological question "Did God really say *that*?" (Gen 3:1, NIV). My basic assumption of faith about 'what are human beings' is that this living entity is a creature with a creator—without discounting the context of evolutionary biology but also not being limited to it or constrained by its pervasive thinking. My functional trust, extended in the epistemic process, arrives at the heuristic outcome that this creator is God based on direct relational self-disclosure; and this Creator-God has also revealed the knowledge and understanding

[10] McGilchrist locates this shift in the prevailing activity of the left brain hemisphere and its dominance in shaping the modern world. *The Master and His Emissary.*
[11] Alan J. Torrance, "What is a Person?" in Malcolm Jeeves, ed., *From Cells to Souls—and Beyond: Changing Portraits of Human Nature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 209, 211.

necessary of the human person in order to be definitive for theological anthropology to be complete, that is, whole in ontology and function and thus conclusive of its relational design, purpose and outcome.

When the context composing the narrative of human being and being human is complete, both the human person is illuminated to emerge whole and the human condition is exposed in its fragmentation "to be apart" from the whole. This can be summarized as follows:

> The human person (conjointly inseparable individually and corporately) is constituted in the relational context of the whole of God (or the trinitarian relational context of family) in which the human person emerges whole-ly by the relational process of the whole of God (i.e. the trinitarian relational process of family love). Apart from God's relational context and process, the epistemic field for human existence is narrowed down to quantitative terms, observing human life from outer in that can only be self-referencing—given the scope of its epistemic field and process—thereby fragmenting human existence into parts and rendering the human person incomplete, that is, reduced in ontology and function, and thus signifying the human condition "not good to be apart from the whole." The whole of God—who has also been theologically fragmented into parts, consequently obscuring the whole ontology and function distinguishing God—and God's relational context and process are irreplaceable for distinguishing the nature of human being, and therefore are irreducible and nonnegotiable for constituting being human only as persons in the image and likeness of God's whole ontology and function. Nothing less and no substitutes.

This critical relational context and process were established in the primordial garden, which the context of reductionism then renegotiated and reduced to fragment human persons to the outer in of reduced ontology and function. That was pivotal for what composed the human narrative—partial context or complete context. And these contexts remain critical and pivotal for the epistemic process of theological anthropology. Yet, there is another vital matter that cannot be ignored and must be addressed with our full attention. This involves the underlying language used in theological engagement and its task, and that composes its discourse and conclusions notably about human beings.

The Language of Theological Anthropology and Its Person

It is crucial for our theological anthropology in particular and theology in general to understand a distinction that is not interchangeable. Despite the indispensable place of the creation context to complete the context composing the narrative for human beings, it is insufficient, inadequate and incorrect for theological anthropology simply to reference the context of the Creator. As Subject, the Creator's context is not a referential context; and Creator-Subject's creative and communicative actions (as well as salvific) are only enacted in relational terms, never referential terms that diminish, minimalize or make secondary the primacy of God's relational design, purpose and function. In other words,

God acts simply in relational terms, which we quite simply often overlook or ignore. There is a basis for this.

The relational terms composing these relational actions can only be distinguished in Creator-Subject's relational context, and not a referential context in which this relational significance becomes elusive, gets obscured or is lost. This points to the underlying use of language. The use of relational terms and its language function for the purpose of communication in relationship. In contrast, and often in conflict, the use of referential terms and its language function for the purpose of transmitting information, which is only secondary at best to the primary function and purpose of relationship. Essentially, it can be said that referential language was not "designed" for the further development of qualitative communication in relationship but in reality went in the opposite direction that takes us away from qualitative relational connection. Historically, the referential language of prose evolved after poetry, and early poetry was sung, the qualitative significance of which was basic to communication in relationship and not the mere transmission of information.[12] McGilchrist locates this qualitative process in the function of the right brain hemisphere. This qualitative function of the right hemisphere, and its related view of the world, is in contrast to the quantitative reduction of words to the referential language of prose by the left hemisphere for its function not of communication in relationship but to merely make discourse about something.[13]

This further makes explicit the non-interchangeable terms composing the distinction between relational language and referential language. We need to understand this distinction to identify the language used by God and theological discourse because the two languages have distinctly different levels of significance, if not meaning. That is to say, language matters, and our working language will mean the difference between whole-ly knowing and understanding God and the human person, or merely having fragmentary knowledge and referential information about them. And we cannot boast of the former on the basis of having the latter, no matter the quantity we possess (cf. Jer 9:23-24).

Moreover, language matters because language both forms thought and makes functional any thought (notably human consciousness) antecedent to language. It has become increasingly apparent to modern scientific research that the language we speak shapes the way we see the world and even the way we think (not necessarily producing thought).[14] This points to the function of language not merely as a means of expression but also as a template imposing a constraint limiting what we see and the way we think. In his study of neuroscience, Iain McGilchrist states about language:

> It does not itself bring the landscape of the world in which we live into being. What it does, rather, is shape that landscape by fixing the 'counties' into which we divide it, defining *which* categories or types of entities we see there—how we carve it up.

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[12] See Oliver Sacks for a discussion on perfect pitch, tonal communication and protolanguage, *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brian* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008); see also Edward Foley, *From Age to Age: How Christians Have Celebrated the Eucharist* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1991), 9.

[13] McGilchrist, *The Master and his Emissary*, 105.

[14] Reported by Sharon Begley in "What's in a Word?" *Newsweek*, July 20, 2009, 31.

> In the process, language helps some things stand forward but by the same token makes others recede…. What language contributes is to firm up certain particular ways of seeing the world and give fixity to them. This has its good side, and its bad. It aids consistency of reference over time and space. But it can also exert a restrictive force on what and how we think. It represents a more *fixed version* of the world: it shapes, rather than grounds, our thinking.[15]

This modern awareness provides us with some understanding of the dynamic of referential language—how it works and what effect it has—that was set in motion from the primordial garden. The origination of referential language unfolded as God's relational language is narrowed down and God's command (*sawah*, Gen 2:16) is redefined from communication in God's relational terms to the transmission of information in referential terms. Detaching the command from Subject-God (or *de*-relationalizing it) removes God's words from their primary purpose only for relationship together. The command was clearly God's communication for the wholeness of their relationship together, not the mere transmission of information (the purpose of referential language) for humans to know merely what to do (the focus of referential terms). This inaugural referentialization of God's words (command) was extended later by the people of Israel whenever they transposed the commandments from God's relational language to referential language, and consequently shaped the covenant in narrow referential terms—essentially *de*-relationalizing the covenant from ongoing relationship with Subject-God.

The shift to referential language opened the door to shape, redefine or reconstruct the information transmitted by God to narrowed-down interpretation (what God really meant by that, "your eyes will be opened"), that is, to reduced referential terms that implies speaking for God on our own terms (signified in "to make one wise"). When referential language is the prevailing interpretive framework for our perceptual-interpretive lens, then this shapes the way we see God's revelation and the way we think about God's words—as modern science is rediscovering about language. Conjointly and inseparably, referential language also puts a constraint on our lens, thereby restricting what we see of God's revelation and limiting how we think about God's words ("you will not…"). This dynamic from referential language obviously redefines the subject matter in the theological task, and certainly continues to constrain its theological engagement, most notably and consequentially for theological anthropology. Any explanations and conclusions that emerge from the theological task in referential terms merely reflect the theological reflections of referential language. Any such theological statements have no theological significance; they only attempt to speak for God—most prominently with the illusion or simulations from reductionism ("you will be like God").

This pursuit of theological significance that was put into motion in the primordial garden needs to be accounted for in theological anthropology discourse. In referential language, theology's subject matter is narrowed down to terms that are disembodied (de-relationalized), fragmentary or elusive, without distinguishing the whole Subject, and therefore the whole human person. This is the designed purpose of referential language, and its use in the theological task has unavoidable consequences epistemologically, hermeneutically, ontologically and relationally.

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[15] Iain McGilchrist, *The Master and his Emissary*, 110.

It is important to understand in theological anthropology, and give account for theological anthropology discourse, that language and thought are interrelated in a reflexive dynamic, whereby one leads to the other and the converse of the other leading to the one. For example, the language of personhood leads to the thought of person-consciousness—assuming that it is relational language, whereas referential language leads to self-consciousness—while the thought of person-consciousness leads to the language of person*hood* made functional in person*ness*. That is, the thought or thinking we have before language formation involves human consciousness; and that consciousness (person-consciousness or self-consciousness) emerges in function through language (relational or referential). This reflexive dynamic illuminates how crucial it is for theological anthropology to understand the non-interchangeable distinction of language and to account for the language it uses to distinguish God, define God's revelation and determine the language that composes the human narrative.

This critical and pivotal issue is the interrelated reflexive dynamic unfolding in the primordial garden of the creation narrative. What composition unfolds in this narrative is contingent of the language used, which will be in either relational terms or referential terms leading only to a relational or referential outcome respectively. While language and thought are inseparably interrelated, the distinction of language and its terms is non-interchangeable. For theological anthropology, therefore, what type of human consciousness becomes functional for human beings depends on the language used to express it. Person-consciousness emerged clearly from inner out and unfolded in relational language ("naked and without shame"). Reductionism influenced the shift to outer in and to the referential language that focused on information and its transmission. Information, for example, about someone is a fragmentary account of someone who has been disembodied (or "dismembered" into parts, not de-physicalized) as a subject and de-relationalized down to those bits of information about them as some object. These referential terms of information about someone, no matter its quantity, render such human beings without the significance to be whole and thus unable to be known and understood in the wholeness of relationship together. Again in contrast and even conflict, relational language involves the communication of someone not as an object but distinguished only as subject in order that relational engagement takes place for the relational outcome of knowing and understanding the subject; and this relational process further involves reciprocal relationship together for mutually knowing and understanding each other in primary relational terms, not secondary referential terms.

God's revelation is distinguished solely in relational language, whose relational terms distinguish the Subject (as whole, not fragmented) who communicates the relational knowledge and understanding to compose the definitive human narrative in complete context, so that human beings are constituted conclusively in whole ontology and function. Anything less or any substitute shifts to referential language, even as it may highlight the creation narrative and information about the Creator.

On the basis of relational language, the humans of person-consciousness in the primordial garden unmistakably knew and understood "good" (Gen 2:18). However, and this is critical for those engaged in theological anthropology discourse and its task, by shifting to referential language—which then made functional a self-consciousness—these humans (and any who make this shift) were fragmented and de-relationalized by reductionism, and thus also would know "evil" (*ra'*, signifying of inferior quality that is

unable to measure up to being whole, Gen 3:5). "Knowing good and evil (i.e. not whole)" is a variable reality in the human narrative that is unavoidable in any significant deliberation of what are human beings. Correspondingly, and perhaps inescapably, claiming any level of such knowledge and understanding holds us accountable not only in our deliberations but most importantly how we live in our own narrative. Language, therefore, matters not only for theological anthropology and its person but for our person also.

The interaction between human consciousness and language—person-consciousness and relational language, self-consciousness and referential language—is either definitive or a shallow defining for the narrative of human being and *who* and *what* emerges to further either constitute (in person-consciousness) or shape and construct (in self-consciousness) being human. Language indeed matters for theological anthropology and for the person who emerges. For this outcome to be whole, it must by its nature be the relational outcome, not a referential outcome. Likewise by its nature, any theological anthropology discourse is inseparable from the person, that is, the person both distinguished in this discourse and the person making that discourse.

In other words, for theological anthropology to have integrity it must be embodied and lived, whether qualitatively in the primacy of relationship or quantitatively in referential (pre)occupation in secondary matter (an occupational hazard for those in the academy). For theological anthropology to be of significance, it must be embodied whole and live in person-consciousness with relational language only on relational terms.

The Reality of Theological Anthropology

Accordingly from the beginning, as we expand on the above deliberations, we are challenged by and accountable for this simple yet vulnerable reality:

> Theological anthropology is not a topic but a life,
> theological anthropology is not about subject matter but involves embodied subjects,
> therefore, theological anthropology must be lived and not just discoursed.

And any discussion on theological anthropology must be lived first by those presenting it; indeed, theological anthropology requires being lived experientially by its proponents, such that theological anthropology is not conceptual or theoretical but being the person God created in ontology and function, who is distinguished whole-ly by the image and likeness of Subject-Creator.

Consequently, it is inadequate for theological anthropology to inform our minds, particularly with referential information about human beings and on the nature of the person in referential terms. Nor is theological anthropology sufficient merely to reform our thinking on human being and being human, and thereby only signify who and what form the person in likely referential language. By its intrinsic nature, theological anthropology must transform our persons from inner out, without fragmenting the person into parts, for the sole outcome of whole ontology and function necessary ongoingly to constitute the person and persons in relationship together. Nothing less and no substitutes from theological anthropology can transform, though it may reform and likely inform.

Chapter 2 Human Development from the Beginning

Who told you that you were naked?
Genesis 3:11

From the beginning, human development has undergone stages, with mixed results for who and what has emerged. As illuminated in the above text, what has unfolded from human shaping and construction, and who has emerged in human identity formation, cannot be predetermined or simply determined even with the best models, explanations or intentions.

In these deliberations on human development—which should also include its lack of development—evolutionary biology has occupied center stage for the scientific audience. In this script various scenarios compose the human narrative, yet its denouement is unclear, nonexistent or still to be composed. This lack does not render the evolutionary narrative fiction, it only illuminates its limits or a gap in continuity to compose fully the narrative of what are human beings. I will not summarize the reality of the evolutionary biology context but hereby affirm its place in the development of Homo sapiens and the need to account for its position in human development.

It can be said, of course, that to really get to human development from the beginning we need to shift from molecular biology back to quantum physics. A reasonable question is 'Why is there nothing?'—that is, why does matter exist at all, much less evolve into human bodies? Scientists have theorized that matter is based on the Higgs' boson, the misidentified God particle, whose existence has been confirmed this past year by the Large Hadron Converter. As significant as this is in quantum physics to explain the emergence of matter, it is insufficient to provide a definitive answer to the question of Goethe's Faust: "What holds the world together in its innermost?"

Simple Object, Complex Subject

Natural selection is a simple idea, according to biologist Richard Dawkins, who simply defined it thus: "That the bodies that survive are the ones that are good at surviving, and they pass on the genes that made them good at surviving"—a distinctly slow and characteristically selfish process that determines changes in the frequency of genes in the gene pool as generations go by—"and that is evolution."[1]

From such a basis emerges a quite simple object quantifying human beings, or at least Homo sapiens. The question for anthropology, and theological anthropology specifically, is whether it is adequate to identify human beings as objects and sufficient to describe them only in quantitative terms. Is human life that simple?

[1] Quoted from an interview in *The Los Angeles Times*, November 30, 2013. See also Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

If I had "listened" to my genes, I never would have succeeded in football. To be told that I didn't have a choice because of my genes, and that my survival on the football field depended on those very genes, is not only an oversimplified framework and lens but an inconsistent explanation. To observe others and to see myself in these quantitative terms makes us only objects of determinism (of whatever source), and often victims of the selfish process of natural selection, without any human agency of having a voice, choice and determining action as subject. For example, females (both women and children) have long been used as objects of sex that likely involved being victims of rape. Males have long prevailed, even boasted, of their dominance that many have assumed to be a natural outcome, that is, a result if not right of gender evolution. As simple objects, natural selection has reduced human ontology and function to the selfish genes of self-determination.

The most distinctive anatomical trait for Homo sapiens is a large brain. Our brain, for example, is not only much larger than that of chimpanzees or gorillas but also much more complex. This complexity is expressed in human behavior, both as individuals and socially, in which primate societies do not approach the complexity of human social organization. Biologist Francisco Ayala highlights culture as a distinctive human social trait, "which may be understood as the set of nonstrictly biological human activities and creations." He continues:

> There are in humankind two kinds of heredity—the biological and the cultural, which may also be called organic and superorganic, or *endosomatic* and *exosomatic* systems of heredity. Biological inheritance in humans is very much like that in any other sexually reproducing organism; it is based on the transmission of genetic information encoded in DNA from one generation to the next by means of sex cells. Cultural inheritance, in contrast, is based on transmission of information by a teaching-learning process, which is in principle independent of biological parentage. Culture is transmitted by instruction and learning, by example and imitation, through books, newspapers and radio, television and motion pictures, through works of art, and by any other means of communication….
>
> Cultural inheritance makes possible for humans what no other organism can accomplish—the cumulative transmission of experience from generation to generation. Animals can learn from experience but they do not transmit their experiences…to the following generations….
>
> Cultural inheritance makes possible cultural evolution, that is, the evolution of knowledge, social structures, ethics, and all other components that make up human culture. Cultural inheritance makes possible a new mode of adaptation to the environment that is not available to nonhuman organisms—adaptation by means of culture. Organisms in general adapt to the environment by means of natural selection, by changing over generations their genetic constitution to suit the demands of the environment. But human, and humans alone, can also adapt by changing the environment to suit the needs of their genes…. For the last few millennia humans

have been adapting the environments to their genes more often than their genes to the environments.[2]

In human development, we witness a distinct shift from simple object to complex subject. This complexity by its nature must be accounted for in order for anthropology to be sufficient and theological anthropology to be whole. Yet, this latter outcome can only emerge from a further and deeper epistemic field that can include the contexts necessary to complete the narrative of what are human beings. Whereas the cultural context is necessary for definition of social organization and the relationality of the social order, this all can be observed in quantitative terms that would render them inadequate for who and what emerge. In modern culture, for example, technology has compounded the issue of who and what emerge. Ironically, this reality is illuminated by Jaron Lanier, a computer scientist known as the father of virtual reality technology.

> Something started to go wrong with the digital revolution around the turn of the twenty-first century. The World Wide Web was flooded by a torrent of petty designs sometimes called web 2.0.…
>
> Communication is now often experienced as a superhuman phenomenon that towers above individuals. A new generation has come of age with a reduced expectation of what a person can be, and of who each person might become.… We make up extensions of your being, like remote eyes and ears (webcams and mobile phones) and expanded memory (the world of details you can search for online). These become the structures by which you connect to the world and other people. These structures in turn can change how you conceive of yourself and the world.
>
> How so?
>
> The central mistake of recent digital culture is to chop up a network of individuals so finely that you end up with mush. You then start to care about the abstraction of the network more than the real people who are networked, even though the network by itself is meaningless. Only the people were ever meaningful.…
>
> The new designs on the verge of being locked in, the web 2.0 designs, actively demand that people define themselves downward.… The deep meaning of personhood is being reduced by illusions of bits [b(inary) (dig)its].[3]

There remains a gap in the complexity of human development between biological evolution and cultural evolution that cannot be filled by quantitative terms. Something qualitative is needed both to balance the quantitative and to constitute human development in its primacy.

Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio appears to get at something qualitative in function integral to the human brain. In his explanation of how consciousness (a mind with a self) develops, he promotes the following:

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[2] Francisco J. Ayala, "Human Nature: One Evolutionist's View," in Warren S. Brown, Nancey Murphy and H. Norton Malony, eds., *Whatever Happened to the Soul? Scientific and Theological Portraits of Human Nature* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 38-39.

[3] Jaron Lanier, *You Are Not a Gadget: A Manifesto* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), 3-20.

> Feelings are often ignored in accounts of consciousness. Can there be consciousness without feelings? No.… I hypothesized that feeling states are generated largely by brain-stem neural systems as a result of their particular design and position vis-à-vis the body.
>
> Why should perceptual maps, which are neural and physical events, feel like anything at all?... In brief, in the complex interconnectivity of these brain-stem nuclei, one would find the beginning of an explanation for why feelings—in this case, primordial feelings—feel like something.
>
> Another layer of the answer as to why perceptual maps of the body should feel like anything calls for evolutionary reasoning. If perceptual maps of the body are to be effective in leading an organism toward avoidance of pain and seeking of pleasure, they should not only feel like something, they actually *ought* to feel like something.… A related aspect of the answer points to the functional divide between pleasure and pain states, which are correlated, respectively, with optimal and smooth life-managing operations, in the case of pleasure, and impeded, problem-ridden life-managing operations, in the case of pain.
>
> The neural design that enables qualia provides the brain with *felt* perceptions, a sense of pure experience. After a protagonist is added to the process, the experience is claimed by its newly minted owner, the self.[4]

Yet, since Damasio points only to the brain as the source of these qualitative feelings for a conscious self, his epistemic field is too narrow to adequately give definition to the qualitative that is needed to constitute the primary for human development. Consequently, neuroscience's notion of the qualitative is determined by the limits of the quantitative, which is certainly insufficient to answer what is primary in holding together the complexity of persons in the innermost.

The human person in physical-material context is incomplete and must be examined in the surrounding context in which humans live. This certainly includes culture but cannot be condensed into culture, especially in limited quantitative and referential terms (as does Ayala). There is further social dimension to the surrounding context that is dynamically integrated with the qualitative to constitute the primary for human being and the primacy for being human. In the surrounding social context, human consciousness must be distinct from 'self-centricity' in order for human development to progress. Human consciousness is consciousness either of one's self (self-consciousness) or person (person-consciousness) within one's surrounding context, of which one is only part—and to be apart from is problematic. Self-centricity, however, is an even more narrowed-down focus on self than self-consciousness, around which the surrounding context directly or indirectly revolves that skews this social context to constrain human development—for example, as evident in individualism and a me-generation. A parallel distinction was illuminated in the universe by a heliocentric model (cf. human

[4] Antonio Damasio, *Self Comes to Mind: Constructing the Conscious Brain* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2010), 242, 56, 259, 262.

consciousness) versus a geocentric model (cf. self-centricity), with similar consequences for the development of human ontology and function. Science in general has yet to discover the surrounding context of human development that indeed distinguishes the human person; evolutionary biology in particular can be considered still to have a geocentric lens of the universe and the human narrative. At the same time, theological anthropology has not clearly illuminated the surrounding context with a heliocentric lens to distinguish the human person from fragmentary shaping and construction.

Remarkably, in an interrelated function with the qualitative (in terms of feelings) is a social function (about relationships), which appears also integral to the human brain. In conjoint function with the qualitative, there is the relational that emerges for neuroscience to explain what it means to be human. Consider the social function of the brain in neuroscientist John Cacioppo's research on loneliness:

> To understand the full capacity of humans, one needs to appreciate not only the memory and computational power of the brain but its capacity for representing, understanding, and connecting with other individuals. That is, one needs to recognize that we have evolved a powerful, meaning-making *social* brain.
>
> Our research suggests that "not lonely"—there is no better, more specific term for it—is also, like "not thirsty" or "not in pain," very much part of the normal state. Health and well-being for a member of our species requires, among other things, being satisfied and secure in our bonds with other people, a condition of "not being lonely" that, for want of a better word, we call social connection.
>
> It should not be surprising, then, that the sensory experience of social connection, deeply woven into who we are, helps regulate our physiological and emotional equilibrium. The social environment affects the neural and hormonal signals that govern our behavior, and our behavior, in turn, creates changes in the social environment that affect our neural and hormonal processes.
>
> Because early humans were more likely to survive when they stuck together, evolution reinforced the preference for strong human bonds by selecting genes that support pleasure in company and produce feelings of unease when involuntarily alone. Moreover…evolution fashioned us not only to feel good when connected but to feel secure. The vitally important corollary is that evolution shaped us not only to feel bad in isolation, but to feel insecure, as in physically threatened.
>
> Our brains and bodies are designed to function in aggregates, not in isolation. That is the essence of an obligatorily gregarious species. The attempt to function in denial of our need for others, whether that need is great or small in any given individual, violates our design specifications.… Social connection is a fundamental part of the human operating (and organizing) system itself.
>
> Social neuroscience shows us not only that there is no magical boundary between mind and body, but that the boundaries we have always assumed to exist between ourselves and others are not nearly as fixed as we once imagined.

> A great deal of what it means to be human, perhaps a great deal more than philosophy, religion, or even science realized until very recently, is to be social.[5]

Despite the limits built into its findings, these qualitative and relational aspects observed by neuroscience help draw attention, if not point us, to what is primary in human development.

The surrounding context still needs to be more inclusive and to expand our epistemic field for a complete context to compose the human narrative. If the qualitative and relational cannot be further distinguished to take us deeper than the brain, the human narrative is relegated to some form of determinism, and thereby likely is composed by selfish genes.

As we transition further from a simple object in quantitative terms to a complex subject who is constituted jointly in qualitative and relational terms, we need to more deeply account for human development if the human person truly is to emerge in the human context. Two major responses attempting to account for this in theological anthropology are noted here.

For many in theological anthropology, the gap in the complexity of human development historically has been assumed to be closed by making a qualitative shift to dualism (body and soul/spirit). Whatever its variation, dualism signifies the constituting basis that is considered to distinguish the human person from the beginning. Even more important—and perhaps its primary concern exposing its limits—dualism accounts for the continued existence of the person in the future, namely after bodily death.

The body and soul issue will be discussed further in Section II, "The Person in God's Context." In our current discussion of human development, body and soul are better rendered the quantitative (outer aspect, dimension, even substance) of the person and the qualitative (inner aspect, dimension, substance) of the person, with the qualitative as primary and necessary to distinguish the whole person. The problem then needing to be addressed is if the qualitative can be separated from the quantitative, for example, as different substances; and the question needing to be answered is what kind of person remains after such a separation?

Some elements of Greek philosophy separate the immaterial from the material, hereby providing a basis for the separate existence of body and soul. This influence has prevailed in much theological anthropology discourse, yet we have to think (and likely rethink) beyond these terms in order to gain the depth of understanding of the *whole* in which the human person is distinguished in ontology and function (discussed further in chap. 4). This understanding must by the nature of being whole go beyond fragmentary thinking and terms, and further than their narrow epistemic field and deeper than their limited epistemic process.

There is little doubt that human beings have both an inner and an outer aspect or dimension—which modern science increasingly affirms in its limited heuristic process—but much dispute over an inner substance. Neuroscience helps highlight the inner but quantifies its function. This is problematic because the integrity of the qualitative is compromised or lost if it is determined by the quantitative. Understandably, dualism is

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[5] John T. Cacioppo and William Patrick, *loneliness: Human Nature and the Need for Social Connection* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008), x, 8, 11, 15, 127, 167, 201.

promoted in order to both distinguish the inner in its significance and constitute its primacy for human being. In spite of good intentions, dualism also compromises the integrity of the inner by disembodying the qualitative; that is, by making the qualitative inner a separate entity, this fragments the whole person (defined from inner out and not from outer in as neuroscience does), thereby inadvertently rendering the human person to reduced ontology and function—as if to be "without shame" in the primordial garden but also without being "naked". Moreover, disembodying the qualitative reduces human ontology and function to an over-individualized condition that also de-relationalizes the primacy of relationships in the Creator's design and purpose to be whole—"not good for the individual to be apart" from this whole. The sum result, then, no longer distinguishes this qualitative in the primary nor can this qualitative constitute human development in the primacy of relationships necessary to be whole.

What's at stake here is not whether the qualitative survives in the form of the soul but whether the person can and ever does emerge from a disembodied (and de-relationalized) qualitative condition. If it does, then this prompts, even begs, the question 'why were we embodied (and relationalized) in the beginning?'—a condition that would leave us without purpose and meaning that is contrary to "naked and without *confusion*" and is "not good to be apart."

Certainly, it also is not good for the body to be apart from the qualitative and defining human beings only from the outer in without the depth of significance of the inner. Dualism, however, was an unnecessary attempt to establish the qualitative, and is not successful in constituting what is primary in human being and for being human. The search for wholeness has been warranted, yet its outcome remains elusive in the human context. Forms of monism have been promoted, perhaps less about finding the whole and more about countering dualism. Nonreductive physicality is one form of monism suggested to define human nature and determine human development.

The transition from a simple object in quantitative terms to a complex subject in whole terms (quantitative, qualitative and relational) is not without struggle that often involves conflict and even contradiction. In my opinion, nonreductive physicalism reflects this struggle. Those who promote nonreductive physicality rightfully want to have the qualitative in all its functional significance, yet while maintaining the qualitative's interrelated condition with the quantitative (namely the body, notably the brain) in mutual effectiveness (not necessarily bilateral in cause)—an apparent ongoing struggle for its advocates. Their alternative duality (advocating no substance) is proposed in direct conflict with dualism (advocating substance of soul) in order to compose the human narrative with the primary context of the physical without its determinism. Physicalism alone is deterministic, which is a reduction of human ontology and function. In attempting to avoid this reductionism intrinsic to physicalism, supervenience—that is, higher level function of mental processes effectively acting on lower level function for a more complete outcome based on the whole and not mere parts, without denying dependence on physical processes—becomes the recourse for determinism by establishing this top-down causal efficacy in mutual effectiveness with the quantitative. Hence, the label of nonreductive physicalism/physicality.

Since nonreductive physicality is formulated with the primary context of the physical, we need to understand it is also shaped in the human context and by all that prevails in it along with the physical. Taking this into consideration, it is highly likely

that nonreductive physicality with its indispensable function of supervenience—in its struggle as noted above—consists of a naturalistic fallacy: identifying what "is" with what "ought" to be. That is, by pointing to a top-down causal influence from mental processes that emerges for levels of causal efficacy—notably as brains have become larger and more complex—supervenience assumes that this is a higher level function influencing lower level function in a way significant for the whole over merely parts. Moreover, if McGilchrist is correct about left-right hemisphere brain functions (noted in chap. 1), this so-called higher level function could be merely the left hemisphere's dominance over the distinctly qualitative right hemisphere. In other words, nonreductive physicalism confuses what is (the prevalence of the quantitative and the prevailing condition of reductionism) with what ought to be (the primacy of the qualitative and the prominence of the whole person).

What ought to be indeed ought to be but the human person does not emerge from what ought to be; and no assumption will make what is what ought to be. Human development progresses only from what actually exists; and what prevails is fragmentary and reduced, therefore unable to function whole or develop wholeness. Supervenience not only confuses what ought to be with what will be when supervened, but it also ignores the reality that its mental processes have been shaped by the fragmentation prevailing in what is.

The complex human subject-person needs to be understood beyond developments of the brain and the surrounding social context. We have to go further and deeper for this understanding of the person to be complete. Human beings are subjected to and become subject to a broader and deeper influence from reductionism, rendering them more to an object position (implicitly or unknowingly) in quantitative terms from outer in and thus constraining subject human person from emerging and developing. This influence, for example, is noted in pervasive efforts of self-determination, which define the person from outer in by what one does and has. Such pervading efforts increasingly necessitate limiting the epistemic field (or composing context) in order to establish, accordingly, the certainty in anthropology needed to highlight the centrality of self in epistemology (cognition and information processing) and human function (behavior regulation, cf. Gen 11:1-5). Engagement in this reductionism (explicitly or implicitly, knowingly or inadvertently) renders all of us and our development to a narrowed epistemic field yielding only reduced ontology and function—the result of what is despite pointing to a supervening top-down influence of what ought to be. In my assessment, nonreductive physicalism works out of a narrow epistemic field that limits its understanding of the qualitative, the primary and the whole constituting human ontology and function, whereby it also contradicts itself in reduced ontology and function—to be discussed further in Section II.

The complex subject emerges and develops in person-consciousness from the inner out, which is distinguished conjointly by the qualitative as primary and by the primacy of relationships to vulnerably constitute whole ontology and function. This distinguishes the person-consciousness of being "whole-ly naked from the depth of 'inner' and the full embodiment of 'out', and not disappointed in relationship together." Anything less and any substitutes of the primary and this primacy render human development to an object position in self-consciousness from the outer in to signify

reduced ontology and function—that is, being "naked in fragmentary parts and covering up the whole to avoid being vulnerable."

The question persists, then, for all persons, "On what basis are you naked?"

Human Identity Formation

There is no significance to deliberations of human being in isolation, as if human life can be observed in a vacuum. The person as a subject (not a mere object) is complex because of qualitative involvement in relationships within the surrounding social context; and the subject's qualitative-relational involvement is critical to understand for who and what define the person emerging. In the past with his natural philosophy, Aristotle considered relations only in quantitative terms that, unlike substances (properties things have), cannot exist independently. This led to a hard distinction between substances and relations, in which relations are not essential, for example, to what a human being is. This, as F. LeRon Shults notes in his discussion on theological anthropology, "came to be orthodoxy in Western philosophy that the relations of a thing to other things are not essential to defining or knowing what that thing is."[6] Aristotle's model may be used as a Procrustean bed to shape a simple object but it cannot contain the complex subject-person, whose ontological identity is also composed in relationships with others. The qualitative and the relational converge dynamically and irreducibly in the integral process of identity formation for the complex subject-person.

Identity formation is not a simple process. No single identity forms the whole of a person's identity, which can include physical, family, social, cultural, ethnic, racial, class, age and gender identities. Yet, there are primary and secondary identities that go into defining who and what persons are. The determining process for our identities involves the extent and depth of our relationships. It is not only critical for any anthropology to understand this but vital notably in theological anthropology for who emerges and what develops and survives.

Relationality (notably social relatedness and community) has received increasing attention in theological anthropology, and rightly so; Aristotle's influence has been too far-reaching and longstanding. A distinction needs to be made about relationality, however, between simple association and complex relationship. Simple objects have simple associations but cannot have complex relationship since that requires the vulnerable involvement of a subject for reciprocal relationship together. Complex subjects can have complex relationships but also simple associations, depending on the level of their involvement—with vulnerability the determining factor, an issue noticeably absent in theological anthropology. The extent and depth of involvement determines having either complex relationship or simple association; and it is on this basis that identities are formed and their significance is determined.

Relationships are the key to human identity. The identity of who and what emerge, develop and thereby survive is keyed to the quantitative (simple association) or qualitative (complex relationship) significance of their relationships. Accordingly, the

[6] F. LeRon Shults, *Reforming Theological Anthropology: After the Philosophical Turn to Relationality* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 15.

identity of the person emerging, developing and surviving is contingent on the extent and depth of distinctly vulnerable relationships. Yet, being vulnerable is rarely addressed, if discussed at all, in theological anthropology's focus on relationality. The dynamic tension between "they were naked, that is, whole-ly embodied before each other from inner out, and were not confused" and "they were embodied before each other from outer in, and they put on masks" discloses the extent of the relationships of the persons in the primordial garden, and reveals the depth of their involvement; and on this basis, it determined who and what emerged, developed and survived. Theological anthropology needs to account for these relationships. Here again, it is critical for all persons to understand (1) on what basis we are naked and (2) what needs to be addressed in our relationships in order for human identity to be complete.

Furthermore, integral to this relational process is the primary ontological identity that constitutes human identity. The Creator's question "Where are you?" is not a referential question seeking information about the location of the person. This is a critical question in relational language, which composes the primary relational context and process, seeking to establish the whole of who and what human identity is. Relationships, therefore, become the hermeneutical, epistemological and ontological keys to knowing and understanding the human person, unlocking the doors to both defining the who of human being and determining the what of being human.

Reciprocal relationships with others, foremost with the whole of God, feed back the epistemological clarification and hermeneutic correction necessary for whole knowledge and understanding of the person and persons together in relationships. And Christians and their theological anthropology continue to need this epistemological clarification and hermeneutic correction for their ontology and function to be whole. This relational context and process is indispensable for knowing and understanding the human person, and irreplaceable for deeply knowing and understanding other persons (including God, cf. Jer 9:24), and, likely most important, fully knowing and understanding even our own person. Without this vulnerable level of relational involvement, the identity of the person whom we think we know and understand is a mere assumption having little if any basis in reality.

There are no shortcuts to the development of the person constituted in whole ontology and function. The human context presents ongoing challenges to the person with alternatives of anything less and any substitute of the whole, which fragment the person in epistemological illusion and ontological simulation that can only signify reduced ontology and function. The whole person does not emerge until the human context sufficiently includes the primary contexts needed to compose the human narrative in complete context. Moreover, of immeasurable importance, while the whole person does not emerge apart from complete context, the person does not develop and survive unless this person in the surrounding context can adequately address the human condition.

It is critically within and inescapably from the human condition that theological anthropology must account for the integrated development of the complex subject and complex relationships in order for the whole person clearly to be distinguished in its

discourse and, indeed, to be significant in the lives of its proponents. The person who is presented and lived can be nothing less and no substitute.

Therefore, the question once again emerges to pursue our person, which all Christians in their explicit or implicit theological anthropology cannot avoid, even by ignoring in their bias: “Where are you?”

Chapter 3 The Human Condition from the Beginning

You will not *be reduced*.
Genesis 3:4

The human condition prevailing in the human context has been noticeably lacking or absent in theological anthropology discourse. Either too much is assumed about this condition or too little discussion takes place about it. And not enough is said when discussion does focus on the human condition. This is curious because how significantly can we discuss, define, determine, know and understand the person (individually and collectively) in human context without factoring in the human condition? The consequence for theological anthropology and its ongoing implications reverberate throughout human life, notably converging on the development and survival of the whole person and relationship together in wholeness.

In 2008, the United Nations declared rape as an act of war, no longer accepting the determinism by men on women. That is to say, by this declaration the U.N. essentially ceased being complicit to what can be considered acts of natural selection, enacted by selfish genes. Such acts are demonstrated, for example, in Zimbabwe, Southern Africa, where HIV infected men purposefully rape virgin girls (even as young as 3) with the false notion that they will be cured for survival.[1] Many would call this global condition a moral issue. There is certainly some truth in this but the underlying and prevailing issue involves how the human person is defined (as in reduced terms from outer in), and on this basis determining how they are related to and treated (such as fragmentary objects)—the issue of the human condition.

The prevailing human condition from the beginning has been the hardest on the female person but is the most consequential on the male person. In spite of the constraints of the human condition, all females of any age also need to reject their position as objects determined by males and raise their voice in a vital expression as subjects in human agency; their survival not as females but as persons depends on it. Compared to females, all males are faced with the more vulnerable shift to the qualitative inner-out subject engaging in reciprocal relationship together—not a simple shift under the dominating influence of the human condition. Yet, like females, their emergence, development and survival as whole persons also depend on it.

Theological anthropology has the pivotal position and provides the vital function for this outcome for all persons, without human distinctions. The full truth in the above condition involves theological anthropology and the ontology and function it distinguishes for the whole person. This is the only person who can emerge and develop to address, confront and make whole the human condition, not merely a moral condition.

[1] These systematic rapes are documented in a video by Michealene Cristini Risley, "Tapestries of Hope," 2009.

Condition Emerging from the Beginning

If selfish genes have dominated human development from the beginning, there is no other composition to the human narrative. I contend, however, this does not compose the human condition, nor can natural selection account for the whole in human development. Human development and progress in human achievement have to be differentiated, since the former is qualitatively oriented while the latter is quantitatively oriented. Consequently, what each lens pays attention to or ignores is different, with different and even conflicting results. For example, social media has greatly expanded the quantity of human connections and, in the progress, reduced the quality of human communication and relationships, along with the persons so engaged.[2] This modern reduction pervades further by hookup relationships dominating youth-young adult culture in the U.S.

What unfolds here emerges from redefining the human person in quantitative terms from outer in (mainly preoccupied with the secondary over the primary). This reduces the person to one's parts (notably in multi-tasking or insignificant connections) and results in fragmenting both the whole person in ontology and function as well as persons' relationships together. Such results cannot be confused with human development, yet human achievement is often mistaken for it and such so-called progress becomes a pervasive substitute for it. Moreover, if such results occur from natural selection, physical determinism certainly has a dark forecast for human life that perhaps warrants fatalism. At the same time, for theological anthropology to shed light on the human narrative, it must clearly illuminate the human condition from the beginning in order to spotlight who and what distinguishes the whole person—whose whole ontology and function are needed to emerge, develop and survive to expose, confront and make whole the human condition.

The fragmentation of the whole person from inner out to outer in emerged from the beginning—not in an evolutionary process of simple objects but in a qualitative relational process of complex subjects. In the creation narrative, a critical dynamic took place in the primordial garden that has been oversimplified (e.g. by spiritualizing it) or lacking in understanding (e.g. not understanding its repercussions on the whole person). As introduced earlier (and discussed further in chap. 4), wholeness is the irreducible and nonnegotiable created ontology and function constituted integrally by the qualitative and relational. Anything less and any substitutes for the human person and persons in relationship together are simply reductions of creation; this condition is what unfolds in the primordial garden (Gen 3:1-13).

This critical dynamic unfolding in the primordial garden underlies (and ongoingly contends for) the reduction of persons to compose the human condition. What we need to understand fully is less about what Satan does and involves more what the persons do. In the female person's perceptual field (with her brain fully engaged), the fruit she saw evoked feelings of delight, feelings which cannot be reduced to mere sensory matter (as Damasio does, noted in chap. 2). She desired it as a means for gaining knowledge and

[2] The effects of technology on the quality of human life are discussed by Sherry Turkle in *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other* (New York: Basic Books, 2011).

wisdom in referential terms (a prevailing practice today, Gen 3:6), even though she already had whole knowledge and understanding in relational terms (an overlooked practice today, Gen 1:27-28; 2:25). Whether she thought about the fruit as an alternative means prior to this pivotal moment is unknown, but she appeared clearly satisfied with her created condition in whole ontology and function integrated in whole relationship together (implied in *bosh*, "without disappointment or dismay" about both persons being "embodied whole from inner out," 2:25); and thus she also appeared satisfied with the Creator in relational terms. Additionally, along with the Creator's creative action from inner out being satisfying, the Creator's communicative action directly (not indirectly or implicitly) in relationship with them was not displeasing ("but God said," 3:3). This all changed when a sweeping assumption was framed as a fact: "You will not surely *be reduced*" (3:4, NIV).

In the reality of relational terms, the feelings evoked by the fruit should also have evoked—as Cacioppo identified in the social brain (noted in chap. 2)—feelings of insecurity, perhaps even pain, about losing whole relationship together with the Creator and with the other person. Why the feelings about the fruit had more influence than the feelings about whole relationship involved the above assumption, and therefore this person's perceptual-interpretive framework and lens making the following pivotal shift in function:

> The shift from inner out to outer in (focused on bodily nakedness), from the qualitative to the quantitative (focused on fruit), from the relational to the referential (of knowledge and wisdom), therefore from what is primary to secondary things ("good for food…a delight to the eyes…desired to make one wise") that preoccupied human function accordingly.

This pivotal shift involved a higher level human function, which reveals the absence of supervenience assumed by nonreductive physicalism. Rather, what is unfolding is the encompassing reality of the reductionist dynamic of the human condition. What emerged is ongoingly evidenced in the pervading human effort for self-determination—which in a limited way could also describe selfish genes—and the prominent human shaping of relationships on self-conscious terms ("clothed" and "hiding"). This shift makes evident when self-consciousness ("naked and fragmented") emerged to displace person-consciousness ("naked and whole"). What fully accounts for this pivotal shift from wholeness and its resulting fragmentary actions is reductionism (insufficiently defined as disobedience) and its ongoing counter-relational presence and influence: that which counters the whole in creation and conflicts with the whole of the Creator, thereby elevating the quantitative as primary over the qualitative and substituting referential terms for relational terms to renegotiate the primacy of relationship together.

The shift from wholeness, simply stated, is the shift to anything less and any substitutes, all of which composes the human condition. The knowledge and understanding of this pivotal shift cannot be overstated. Nor can it be understated that anything less and any substitutes will be reductions, since they render us by default to the human condition. We make sweeping assumptions that our knowledge and understanding are not reductions when they are framed as facts or sound theories. Anything less and any substitutes have prevailed in the human narrative and have even been presented as whole

for human life—all counter to the reality that nothing less and no substitutes constitute the whole. The sum consequence, even by default, on human being and being human—and who and what can emerge or develop—is the human condition, emerging from the beginning by the seemingly reasonable assumption "we will not be reduced," especially if our knowledge and understanding have some basis in the probability framework of fact.

Distinction between Fact and Reality

The human context, by the nature of its limited epistemic field, imposes limits that preclude conclusive knowledge and understanding of human life. When the prevailing human condition is factored into the human context—a condition that is inescapable, though commonly ignored or even denied—not only are there limits imposed but also constraints. The dynamic interaction between limits and constraints also unfolded in the primordial garden. When the question was raised "Did God really say *that*?" (Gen 3:1, NIV), not only was the epistemic field limited to only the human context but the epistemic field was further narrowed down and constrained in interpretation and meaning to a reductionist bias. In other words, the constraints of the human condition are always imposed to fulfill a reductionist purpose, and therefore quite naturally and very conveniently converge with the limits of the human context for this result. This is further demonstrated by the assumption "You will not surely be reduced." Their convergence makes constraints less distinguishable and limits more reasonable, despite the pervasive existence of this defining interaction between them, and thereby render us to a default human condition.

The constraints, now inseparable from the human context, explicitly or implicitly diminish, minimalize or distort our knowledge and understanding of human life, such that without epistemological clarification and hermeneutic correction human life is rendered to epistemological illusions (e.g. "not be reduced") and ontological simulations (e.g. "covered" and "hidden"). That is, not rendered necessarily to fictions—though many essentially live a lie or believe in lies about themselves—but to various facts of life that in actuality do not adequately or truly represent reality in human life, only the limits and constraints of the human context. Any anthropology is subjected to these same limits and constraints, but whether a discourse is subject to them depends directly on having epistemological clarification and hermeneutic correction from a larger epistemic field (discussed further in Sec. II).

This prompts questions about our knowledge and understanding, their level and their basis in fact or reality. There is no doubt that fact and reality certainly overlap at various points. A fact may reliably observe and represent what exists, but whether it observes the extent of reality and represents its depth involve the further issue of validity. Validity statements on the extent and depth of reality cannot be based on a limited epistemic field that is also narrowed down by the constraints of a biased interpretive framework. A reliable fact does not necessarily mean it has validity for reality, but only reliable on the basis of its limits and constraints. Therefore, fact and reality should not be considered synonymous or confused as the other.

There is a critical distinction between fact and reality that needs to be maintained:

> Facts are from the limited epistemic field of the human context, which are observed and interpreted from a framework and lens influenced by the constraints of the human context—and thereby raising issues of how valid the facts represent what truly exists (what *is*). Reality is subjected to these limits and constraints, and to some extent is shaped by them but not defined and determined by them as facts are; and reality also can go beyond these limits and constraints, and does so when constituted in an epistemic field beyond the human context. However, facts are unable to go beyond these limits and constraints by the nature of their probability framework that inescapably limits and constrains them to the human context and the reductionist bias of the human condition.

The parameters of anthropology are defined by the human context. Understandably, anthropology depends on the facts from this narrow and biased epistemic field to compose its discourse. Given the above limits and constraints under which anthropology works, theological anthropology must be clearly distinguished from its counterpart in order for its own discourse to go beyond the limits of the human context and rise above the constraints of the human condition—and thereby compose validity statements. In its primary function, theological anthropology must fully account for the human condition and unmistakably distinguish the reality of the whole person in ontology and function from any reductionism. Not distinguishing this reality renders the person by default to the human condition.

Our knowledge and understanding of reductionism need to advance to the depth level of its counter-relational work. The primary means for this heuristic epistemic process is contingent on 'the presence of the whole' for the integral function to expose reductionism and illuminate the whole (to be discussed in Sec. II). Indeed, the reality of reductionism also needs the definitive presence of the whole, since reductionism's sole purpose for existence is to counter the whole—the whole of creation, the whole person and the whole of God. The reality interacting here that we need to embrace is the presence of the whole with its subsequent reduction.

The qualitative relational presence of the whole emerged in the human context from the beginning prior to reductionism's unfolding, which is why those persons knew what is "good and not good (apart from the whole)" before experiencing reductionism. Ever since, however, there has been an ongoing difficulty, struggle and even confusion distinguishing the reality of the whole and its distinction from reductionism. This reflects in part the genius of reductionism to confuse fact (and related assumptions) and reality and blur their distinction, hereby obscuring the primary focus on what is whole from inner out with a secondary focus on fragmentary parts from outer in.

This contrary and pivotal dynamic emerged from the beginning and continues its predominant influence today to confound our knowledge and understanding of human persons, including our own. Does this signify being embedded in the human context and the need still to be redeemed from the human condition? A default mode makes this a reality for us, whether we recognize it or not.

And as far as theological anthropology goes (or doesn't go), has reductionism in fact composed its human narrative and its assumed "reality" of human being and being human? If in practice such theology reflects or reinforces reduced ontology and function,

then this has become a reality that continues to influence our persons and relationships—even to determine by default.

Its Ongoing Implications

Anything less and any substitutes of the whole, particularly the whole ontology and function of the person, can be found along a wide spectrum of expression. We tend to look at human fragmentation and reduction at one end of this spectrum, located in more extreme forms of expression. The genius of reductionism even promotes this perception so that our interpretive lens either does not pay attention to or even tends to essentially deny the wider range of the spectrum, thus making it difficult to locate anything less and any substitutes of the whole. The consequence is that most of the spectrum engages the human condition by default.

What the persons in the primordial garden paid attention to and ignored due to their shift to a perceptual-interpretive framework focused on the outer in are critical to understand. This reduced lens supposedly would have given them greater perception ("your eyes will be opened") but in reality did the opposite instead—unmistakably fragmenting what was integral for the whole:

1. What the Creator created, by obscuring the qualitative with the quantitative.
2. What the Creator communicated in the primacy of relationship, by narrowing the epistemic field with a biased lens to redefine the terms of relationship (in reality, God did say that).

Countering God's creative and communicative actions was the result of these persons transposing their perception from inner out to outer in and inverting their priorities from the primary to the secondary—common and prevailing practices engaged along a wide spectrum to this day, even by the theological academy and church. The loss of both the qualitative and the primacy of relationship together are distinctly evident throughout contemporary human context, not only prominently amplified by modern social media and hookup culture. This continuing condition is clearly witnessed increasingly in our lack of qualitative sensitivity and relational awareness.

What we pay attention to and ignore about sin as reductionism are what we pay attention to and ignore about defining the person and engaging in relationships. They overlap inseparably and interact both unmistakably in the human context and undeniably in theology and practice. Therefore, a weak or insufficient view of sin is consequential for reductionism of the person and relationships. Conversely, any reduction of the person and relationships results in not paying attention to, ignoring or simply not understanding reductionism operating in the entire spectrum of human life and in its dynamic process fragmenting God's whole. And the consequence continuing for us even in following Christ is engagement in the human condition by default.

Thus, at the risk of understating it, it is indispensable to recognize and understand in our theology and practice:

> For reductionism, the part(s) is primary over the whole, with any sense of the whole (if considered at all) determined only by parts (even their sum); therefore, reductionism always counters the whole by fragmenting it, operating under the false assumption "you will not be reduced" that legitimates preoccupation with the secondary—which then promotes epistemological illusions and ontological simulations of the whole.

It is imperative to address reductionism in our theology and practice—most urgently our theological anthropology—to receive the epistemological clarification and hermeneutic correction needed to be whole in reality.

Reductionism's contrary dynamic is ongoingly consequential most significantly for the person and relationships, and this immeasurable influence has shaped our theology and practice. The accumulation of knowledge ("desired to make one wise"), for example, emerged from the beginning to define many human identities and status today, which are clearly enhanced and embellished by reductionism's referential knowledge (as evident in the academy). How much has this shaped the identity and function of Jesus' followers today? The redefinition of the person based on the parts of what they possess and can do in referential terms becomes the defining basis by which relationships with other persons so defined are engaged according to these reduced terms—evidencing the inescapable issues for ontology and function. Consequently, it is further indispensable to recognize and understand:

> Basic to reductionism counteracting God's whole is its ongoing counter-relational work, inverting the primacy of reciprocal relationships together—with the shaping of relationships with others (including God) on one's own limited terms as its most subtle practice located on the full spectrum of anything less and any substitutes. The relational consequence is converting complex (vulnerable) relationships into simple associations with a minimum of involvement measured according to one's own self-definition from outer in. One's own terms are composed at the loss of both the qualitative of the whole person from inner out and the relational of persons together in wholeness in their innermost.

If we do not acknowledge and understand the loss of the qualitative and the primacy of relationship together that emerged from the beginning, we certainly have no significant basis to recognize their loss in our midst, including in our own person and relationships.

The emergence of reductionism is not a human construction, for example, by selfish genes in natural selection, though such thinking does emerge from reductionism. The initial appearance of reductionism is often insufficient to understand the scope of this contrary dynamic in both its breadth and depth, and thus its ongoing implications. We, therefore, also need to recognize unmistakably and to understand entirely:

> Reductionism by its nature routinely imposes a narrowed perceptual-interpretive framework that reduces our lens with the following consequences:
> 1. limits the epistemic field to fragment our epistemology,
> 2. diminishes the ontology of all persons,
> 3. minimalizes any and all relationships.

Referentialization of our epistemic source—which includes the creation narrative and the Word—is the most significant, and least understood, consequence emerging from the dynamic of reductionism: "Did God really say that?...you will not surely be reduced." Moreover, this dynamic has unfolded, been long established and continues to extend itself in human contexts, even as the norm for the common notion of 'the common good'; this may in fact seek for wholeness but in reality reflects, reinforces or even sustains reductionism by default. This addresses us both to the globalization of reductionism and the matter of globalization as a social phenomenon of growing fact today that is a mere illusion and simulation of the whole and what wholeness is in reality.

If it is not apparent in your daily life, the influence of modernism as a worldview and its primacy of rationalizing in search of knowledge and truth have prevailed in determining the quality of life in most human contexts. We are all ongoingly influenced and shaped by the outcome of the modern enterprise of progress—whether from the physical and natural sciences or from related applied technologies, and even from theology. A most far-reaching result of this human project impacting humanity in its innermost is the globalization of the economy; and, as noted earlier, we are only beginning to grasp the impact of media technology on persons and relationships. Positive or negative, further development of globalization can be expected—and needs to be anticipated by those in the theological context—since, as sociologist Anthony Giddens states, "Modernity is inherently globalizing."[3] Both how globalization is unfolding and why it has emerged are equally important to recognize and understand. And understanding this age we live in necessarily requires understanding the scope of reductionism.

Along with the economic impact globalization has on peoples of the world, there is a dual phenomenon somewhat paradoxically characterizing globalization. On the one hand, the process is distinctly reductionist, for example, reducing the whole of persons and people to cheap labor, disposable goods or market pawns. On the other hand, globalization is breaking down national boundaries and provincialism to give us a glimpse of the interrelated whole of humanity, albeit in a convoluted sense.

Systems theory (for example, in ecology and family process) has provided further understanding of a whole as a working system of interrelated parts. There is a general tendency to perceive the sum of these parts as determining the whole, without the need for further understanding; yet in a process of synergism the whole functioning together is greater than the sum effects from the function of its individual parts. Inherent to the whole, however, is not merely a quantitative effect greater than the sum of its parts but more importantly a qualitative effect. Systems theory is a quantitative framework the use of which tends not to account for qualitative aspects. Thus its value is limited though nonetheless useful to help us understand the whole.

While philosophical postmodernism insightfully has exposed the reductionism in modernity and perhaps points to a holistic direction, postmodernity is neither instrumental in fully grasping reductionism nor significant in understanding the whole. Since the main voices of postmodernism do not speak of a definitive whole—only the need for it—a part (e.g. a person) cannot truly know the importance of *who* one is and is a part of, nor understand the primacy of *what* one is apart from, therefore never really

[3] Anthony Giddens, *The Consequence of Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), 63.

understanding the full significance of *how* being apart from the whole reduces that part(s) to something qualitatively less (or as God said, "not good"). In other words, we need a definitive whole in order to fully understand reductionism—acknowledging the presence of the whole emerging from the beginning and affirming the whole's trajectory in the human context. Without the ongoing presence and trajectory of the whole, we have no epistemological, hermeneutical, ontological and relational means to recognize, expose, confront and make whole the fragmentation of persons and relationships together to reduced ontology and function in our midst. Moreover, we need the presence and involvement of the Whole to provide the epistemological clarification and hermeneutic correction needed for our own theology and practice according to this human condition by default.

It is evident today that there is a critical gap in our understanding of the human condition, and perhaps a failure to take the human condition seriously. Directly interrelated, and most likely its determinant, a reduced theological anthropology not only fails to address the depth of the human condition but in reality obscures its depth, reinforces its breadth, or even conforms to this inescapable and unavoidable condition. The repercussions for us, of course, are that we do not account for our own practice of reductionism, and, interrelated, that we do not address our own function in the human condition; and this could subtly exist even if we are involved in changing the status quo. Our function manifests in three notable areas, which are three interrelated issues of ongoing major importance for ontology and function (addressed throughout this study):

1. How we define the person from outer in based more on the quantitative parts of what we do and have, and thereby function in our own person.
2. On this basis, this is how our person engages in relationships with other persons, whom we define in the same outer-in terms, to reduce the depth level of involvement in relationship together.
3. These reduced persons in reduced relationships together then become the defining and determining basis for how we practice our beliefs and consequently how relationships together function as the church and in the related academy.

These ongoing issues are the three inescapable issues for our ontology and function needing accountability. The pivotal shift from "embodied whole from inner out and not confused, disappointed in relationship together" to "embodied parts from outer in and reduced to relational distance" has ongoing consequences; and their implications directly challenge our theological anthropology and hold us accountable for its assumptions of ontology and function.

This shift to reductionism expressed in these inescapable issues for our ontology and function further expresses itself in interaction with three unavoidable issues for all practice that are necessary to account for in all moments:

1. The presentation of the person: the outer-in parts of our person presented to others that define and determine our primary identity, thereby conveying to others who and what we are based on these facts, not reality—that is, an ongoing presentation of self (e.g. "naked from outer in…") that is limited by covering up and masks.

2. The integrity and quality of our communication: our communication becomes shallow, ambiguous or misleading in the presentation process with others and how this communication compromises the integrity of relationship together (e.g. "the woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate," Gen 3:12).
3. The depth level of involvement in relationship: the involvement level engaged in this relationship is shaped by our identity presented and its related communication, and thus determined by levels of relational distance, not depth (e.g. "…they covered up," "I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself," Gen 3:10).

Regardless of who we are and what our place is in the human context, we all must account ongoingly for the type of person presented, the nature of our communication and the level of involvement engaged in our relationships. These are unavoidable issues that interact with the three inescapable issues, which together influence and shape our lives and need accountability even in the commonest expressions along the full width of the spectrum locating anything less and any substitutes of the whole.

The qualitative and relational aspects in human life necessary for whole ontology and function are neither sufficiently addressed nor deeply accounted for in theological anthropology discourse—including with the prominence of dualism, the emergence of supervenience and the focus on relationality. In spite of recent focus on the latter, there appears to be a status quo in theology and function above which we rarely rise—perhaps evident of a lack of qualitative sensitivity and relational awareness—and from which likely indicates our need for a critical and pivotal shift from reductionism back to the whole. This prompts a related question for theological anthropology: On what basis is the human condition defined and its resolution determined? The answer is either good news in relational terms or so-so news in referential terms, or perhaps disappointing news because it lacks qualitative and relational significance.

The surrounding human context (namely culture) commonly establishes the priorities of importance for life and practice. In the current global context, this larger context is having a further effect in reducing the priorities of local contexts by increasingly shifting, embedding and enslaving persons in secondary priorities and away from the primary qualitative and relational priorities. And, as neuroscience would confirm, this development is taking its toll on the minds and bodies of those affected.

The shift to the primacy of the secondary must further be understood in the underlying quest for certainty and/or the search for identity. This process engages a narrowing of the epistemic field to better grasp, explain and have certainty, for example, about what holds the person and world together in their innermost. Functionally, the process also necessitates reducing the qualitative-relational field of expectations from inner out (too demanding, vulnerable with uncertain results) to outer in for quantitative-referential terms that are easier to measure, perform and quantify the results of, for example, in the search for identity and finding one's place in human contexts (including church and academy). In other words, the shift to the primacy of the secondary and its preoccupation are not without specific purpose that motivates persons even in the

theological task and the practice of faith. Yet whatever certainty and identity result in secondary terms can only be incomplete, ambiguous or shallow.

The persons in the primordial garden redefined their theological anthropology and reduced their whole persons (from inner out with the qualitative heart in the primacy of relationship) in order to substitute an identity from outer in based on the secondary of what they had and did and thereby reshaped relationships. The consequence was the loss of wholeness in both the qualitative and the relational. In further understanding these critical dynamics, since their action to give priority to the secondary was made apart from the primacy of relationship, by implication the person (self) acted autonomously in the relationship based on one's own terms. Of further significance then, having assumed an identity apart from the primacy of relationship necessitated being involved in the effort of self-determination. If they had functioned inner out focused on the primary, they would have engaged the above situation by the primacy of relationship. This would have avoided the fragmentation of wholeness in relationship created by their self-autonomy and made unnecessary their attempt to construct an identity in the human context by self-determination, efforts which necessarily involve their shaping of relationships. Their loss of whole relationship together was evidenced in the relational consequence: "the eyes of both were *refocused to outer in* and they knew that they were naked and they *covered their person*…. 'I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself'" (Gen 3:7,10). These dynamics were extended further with the overlap of self-determination into the need for self-justification: "The woman whom you gave to be with me *in the primacy of relationship*, she gave me fruit…I ate" (3:12). For the person to be defined from outer in and determined by what they have and do, always necessitates a comparative process with human distinctions of 'better' or 'less', which then inevitably will involve efforts of self-determination. This self-definition forms the basis for self-conscious engagement in relationships, which make evident the inescapable issues for ontology and function discussed above.

All these dynamics converge to define the human condition and its engagement in the sin of reductionism. We need to broaden and deepen our understanding of sin to fully account for the human condition in our midst, notably efforts of self-determination and the human shaping of relationships. If we think that the human condition is about sin but understand sin only in terms of conventional moral-ethical failure (e.g. disobedience in the garden), then we do not account for the loss of the qualitative and the relational in everyday human life (even in the church and academy) that God clearly distinguished in created ontology and function of human persons—that qualitative image and relational likeness distinguishing the whole of God (discussed in chap. 4). The relational consequence "to be apart" unfolding from the primordial garden is the human condition of the loss of the primacy of whole relationship together and its prevailing relational distance, separation, brokenness, and thus loneliness—which even threatens the integrity of the human brain (per Cacioppo) as further evidence that this condition "is not good, pleasant, beautiful, delightful, precious, correct, righteous for persons to be apart from whole relationship together." How we tend to do relationship and what prevails in our relationships today are reductions of the primacy God created for whole relationships in his likeness; and the human shaping of relationships composes the human relational condition, which then is reflected, reinforced or sustained by any and all human shaping.

Furthermore, the whole person from inner out signified by the qualitative function of the heart needs renewed focus for understanding the human condition and needs to be restored in our theology and function—yet, merely discussing spirituality is inadequate. We cannot avoid addressing the human heart (our own to start) and the feelings associated with it because the whole of human identity is rooted in it—along with the consciousness of self noted by Damasio—and the depths of the human condition is tied to it. If neuroscience can talk about feelings as integral to the human function, why doesn't the theological academy discuss feelings as at the core of the human person? A major part of the answer relates to our theological anthropology having redefined the person without the primacy of the qualitative and relational; but interrelated, the main reason involves the human condition, that is, our intentional, unintentional or inadvertent engagement in the reductionism composing the human condition—notably in the self-determination preoccupied in the secondary ("good for...a delight to…desired to") and in the shaping of relationships ("unexposed and distant," cf. Gen 2:25). Consciousness as a person necessarily involves feelings—even for the whole of God (e.g. Gen 6:6; Jn 11:33,35; Eph 4:30)—which Damasio defines as essential for the self but locates feelings only in brain function to integrate mind and body. Theological anthropology, however, can and needs to go deeper to inner out to get to the qualitative function of heart to distinguish the whole person. Yet, as noted in the previous chapter, this is not about dualism, which goes 'inner' for an elusive soul but not 'out' adequately to embody the whole person without fragmenting into parts (soul and body); and nonreductive physicality has 'outer' but not sufficiently 'in' to constitute the depth of the whole person in ontology and function. The whole person is pointed to but is either fragmentary or not distinguished.

The qualitative inner out signified by heart function is more definitive to distinguish the whole person, with its integral function irreplaceable for both the body to be whole and relationships together to be whole (discussed in chap. 4). Therefore, a turn away from the heart in any context or function has an unavoidable consequence of the human condition. The qualitative loss signified in the human condition emerges when we become distant from our heart, constrained or detached from feelings, thereby insensitive or hardened—just as Jesus exposed (Mk 7:6; Jn 5:42) and Paul critiqued (Eph 4:17-19). This increasingly embeds human function in the outer in and reduces human ontology to ontological simulation. This is evidenced in the function of "hypocrites" (*hypokrites*, Mk 7:6). In referential terms, *hypokrites* and *hypokrisis* (hypocrisy, cf. Lk 12:1) are limited to pretension or falsehood, in acts to dissemble or deceive. In relational terms, the dynamic involves the person presented to others that is only from outer in and thus different from the whole person distinguished from inner out. Just as ancient Greek actors put on masks in a play, *hypokrites* engages in ontological simulation not necessarily with the intent to deceive but from what emerges by the nature of function from outer in. In other words, whatever the person presents to others, it is not whole and consequently cannot be counted on to be who and what the person is, which is not about the outer-in issue of deception but the inner-out issue of righteousness (who, what and how the person truly is). This dynamic engages the pivotal issue involving the ontology of the person and its effect on relationships. The consequence of such function in relational terms is always a qualitative relational consequence that may not be apparent at the quantitative level from outer in. The outer-in simulation masking its qualitative relational consequence is

exposed by Jesus notably in the relational act of worship: "This people honors me with their lips but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me" (Mk 7:6). Paul also later confronted Peter and exposed his outer-in simulation (*hypokrisis*) by the role-playing he engaged in focused on secondary matters, which even influenced Barnabas and others to function outer in (Gal 2:11-14). All this magnifies the three unavoidable issues for all practice that must be accounted for ongoingly.

The qualitative function of the heart is irreplaceable and inseparable from the primacy of whole relationship together. They are the irreducible and nonnegotiable outworking of the creation, for whose wholeness they are integral; therefore, their conjoint function are the keys for being whole that cannot be ignored or diminished. Anything less and any substitutes of the qualitative and the relational are reductions, which only signify the presence, influence and operation of the human condition. Any reductions or loss of the qualitative and relational render the person and persons together in relationship to fragmentary terms of human shaping; and this condition cannot be whole and consequently simply functions in the "not good to be apart" from God's whole—in spite of any aggregate determination made in referential terms. The reduction to human terms and shaping from outer in—signifying the human person assuming autonomy apart from the primacy of relationship—prevail in human life and pervade even in the church and the academy, notably in legitimated efforts of self-determination and self-justification (functionally, not theologically). The interrelated issues of self-autonomy, self-determination and self-justification are critical to understand in terms of the sin of reductionism if we are to pay attention to the human condition in our midst.

The breadth and depth of reductionism by its nature is anything less and any substitutes of the whole. This irrefutably composes a wide spectrum of shapes and expressions, even among Jesus' disciples and within gatherings of church (discussed below). All of these shapes and expressions of human ontology and function constitute the human condition—notably continuing by default, even due to fact—which prevail in the human context with the following consequence:

> To define human being and determine being human, to construct human identity and shape human relationships, under the limits and constraints of the quantitative over the qualitative, the referential over the relational—all preoccupied with the secondary over the primary, even embedded in secondary information/details about the primary, under the long-standing assumption: "You will not surely be reduced."

In reality, from the beginning to the present, theological discourse must be lived, and lived whole-ly, or be subject to the limits and constraints of the human context. Anything less and any substitutes in both our theological anthropology and its human ontology and function either ignore or reinforce the human condition in its depth, and therefore either sustains or even conforms to its breadth. This state of our theological anthropology and its ontology and function of the person in the human context counters the whole person constituted in God's context.

What assumptions do we make that "we have not been reduced"? And on what basis can we claim that "our eyes have been opened"?

Section II: The Person in God's Context

Chapter 4 The Whole Person Distinguished

Who is this that *obscures my plan and purpose* by words without knowledge?
Job 38:2

The responsibility of theological anthropology is to be theological—not physical, social or philosophical—and thus not to shape its theology anthropologically. This responsibility cannot be fulfilled as long as our epistemic field is restricted to the limits of the human context, and also by its constraints. To meet the responsibility of theological anthropology, we now examine the person in God's context.

As we deliberate further on the question raised by ancient poets (Ps 8:4; 144:3), we can learn from Job's experience. In his frustration or cynicism, and perhaps despair, Job initially raised the same question from an opposite approach: "What are human beings that you make *such a big deal* (*gadal*) of them, that you *even* set your heart (*leb*) on them and are *involved* (*paqad*) with them everyday…*all the time*?" (Job 7:17-18) What provoked Job's question specifically involved his own person in God's context.

First, Job experienced being the object of Satan's reductionism that defined his person by what he had and did (Job 1:10-11); but Job would not let his person be defined in those reduced terms (1:20-22). Then, Job's focus on his person was shifted from inner out (2:3) to outer in (2:4-5). When he also made the outer in primary, he was conflicted in person-consciousness and became self-conscious in his context with God (e.g. 10:1; 27:2). What unfolded is critical to the process of theological anthropology and basic to what and who constitute the person in God's context.

To answer his question about the person in God's context, Job narrowed his epistemic field (e.g. 23:3, 8-9) in order to explain his person from outer in, and why this was happening to his person in God's context. What Job experienced was a struggle common to all persons in God's context: the vacillation between inner out and outer in (19:26-27)—also between person-consciousness and self-consciousness; and the confusion that preoccupation in the outer in creates (19:19; 27:2; 29:2-5). In the midst of this struggle, Job's will remained focused on the primacy of relationship with God (2:9-10), even though his person-consciousness waned. His primary focus was the key that allowed him to receive feedback to his answers—answers which begged the question from God (38:2)—in order to engage the relational epistemic process with God for the heuristic function to know and understand his (including our) whole person in God's context. The relational outcome is theological anthropology.

In God's response to Job (38-41), God takes Job's epistemic field beyond the human context to establish the person in God's context, that is, the complete context necessary to compose the narrative for human being in whole ontology and being human in whole function (as in 38:36). Therefore, in Job's assumptions about the person in God's context, he realized his speculation was based on a narrow epistemic field and its hermeneutic limits (40:5); whereby he received God's direct relational response in this

relational epistemic process (42:4-5) that provided Job with the epistemological clarification and hermeneutic correction needed for whole knowledge and understanding contrary to his fragmentary knowledge and understanding (42:3). This relational outcome can only be experienced in the primacy of relationship with God in epistemic humility.

Thus, Job learned in being apart from God's relational context and relational epistemic process:

> Anything less than and any substitutes for the whole signify theological anthropology discourse that "obscures (*hashak*) God's plan and purpose (*'esah*) for the human person with words without whole knowledge and understanding" (*da'at*, 38:2); this is the reductionist result of attempting "to explain (*nāgad*) the person in God's context I did not understand, the person too distinguished (*pala*) for me to know from a limited epistemic field and narrow interpretive lens" (42:3).

The heuristic process does not and cannot go beyond its epistemic field. So, for example, both science and theology cannot explain, define and determine the human person any further than the knowledge available to them in their epistemology—though obviously this hasn't stopped speculative discourse from speaking about and even for God (sound familiar?). As we deliberate on the person in God's context, we need to learn from Job. He experienced ontological struggle when he focused on his outer in, which led to relational difficulty in reciprocal relationship with God. On the one hand, Job shared his feelings openly with God but then, on the other hand, he spoke for God on his own terms; and the latter involved both an epistemological and hermeneutical problem. The ontological, relational, epistemological and hermeneutical issues are critical for our knowledge and understanding of the whole person distinguished in God's context.

Distinguished from the Beginning

The person in God's context is distinguished (*pala*) just in the epistemic field of the whole of God's relational context, while integrally engaged in the relational epistemic process of God's communicative action (the relational Word from God, not referential). *Pala* signifies to separate, to be wonderful, that is to say, to distinguish beyond what exists in the human context and cannot be defined by its comparative terms, or the person is no longer distinguished. Thus, this person can be distinguished only by whole ontology and function uniquely constituted by God, the Creator, the distinguishing nature (no less than *pala*) of which was beyond Job's knowledge and understanding (42:3). God pointed Job back to the unique constitution of the person from inner out, who has whole knowledge (*hokmah*) in the 'inner' (*tuhot*) person and whole understanding (*biynah*) also in the 'inner' (*sekwiy*, Job 38:36). The 'inner' (meaning of Heb *tuhot* and *sekwiy* is uncertain) has no certainty in referential language because it signifies a relational term that cannot be known and understood in referential terms. The 'inner' that God points Job back to is in the beginning: the whole ontology and function uniquely constituted by God that distinguishes human persons beyond comparison in the qualitative image and relational likeness of the whole of God (Gen 1:26-27).

Evolutionary biology highlights the development of the physical body, including the brain, for Homo sapiens—that is, the bodily development of human antecedents in

physical form. While I affirm this physical development, science cannot assume that this physical body developed into the human person. Even with the development of the brain for higher level function unique to humans, the evolution process can only account at best for humans from the outer in. There is a limited quality within the quantitative structure of outer in that neuroscientist Damasio identified in the evolutionary development of the organism's interior (noted previously). This does not distinguish the whole person but only defines a fragmentary person without the significance of being whole from inner out. So, then, what is the 'inner' of the person and how do we account for it with the human body to integrally constitute the whole person from inner out?

We cannot limit the dynamic process of creation, either by the limits of our epistemic field or by the constraints of a biased hermeneutic lens, which applies to both science and theology in the realm of physics and metaphysics. In the creation narrative, the person is distinguished by the direct creative action of the Creator and not indirectly through an evolutionary process that strains for continuity and lacks significant purpose and meaning. At a specified, yet unknown, point in the creation process, the Creator explicitly acted on the developed physical body (the quantitative outer) to constitute the innermost ("breath of life," *neshamah hay*) with the qualitative inner ("living being," *nephesh*, Gen 2:7); the relational outcome was the whole person from inner out (the inseparably integrated qualitative and quantitative) distinguished irreducibly in the image and likeness of the Creator (Gen 1:26-27).

The qualitative inner of *nephesh* is problematic for the person in either of two ways. Either *nephesh* (Gen 1:30) is reduced when primacy is given to the quantitative and thus the outer in; this appears to be the *nephesh* signified by supervenience in nonreductive physicality that is linked to large brain development and function. All animals have *nephesh* but without the qualitative inner that distinguishes only the person (Gen 1:30). Or, *nephesh* is problematic when it is fragmented from the body, for example, as the soul, the substance of which does not distinguish the whole person even though it identifies the qualitative uniqueness of humans. The referential language composing the soul does not get to the depth of the qualitative inner of the person in God's context (cf. Job in Job 10:1; 27:2), because the inner was constituted by God in relational terms for whole ontology and function. The ancient poet even refers to *nephesh* as soul but further illuminates *qereb* as "all that is within me" (Ps 103:1), as "all my innermost being" (NIV) to signify the center, interior, the heart of a person's whole being (cf. human *ruah* and *qereb* in Zec 12:1). This distinction gets us to the depth of the qualitative inner that rendering *nephesh* as soul does not. The reduction or fragmentation of *nephesh* is critical to whether the person in God's context is whole-ly distinguished or merely referenced in some uniqueness.

The qualitative inner of the person can be considered as the inner person. This identity implies an outer person, which certainly would employ a dualism if inner and outer are perceived as separate substances as in some frameworks of Greek philosophy (material and immaterial, physical and spiritual). In Hebrew thinking, the inner (center) and outer (peripheral) aspects of the person function together dynamically to define the whole person and to constitute the integral person's whole ontology and function (cf. Rom 2:28-29). One functional aspect would not be seen apart from the other; nor would either be neglected, at least in theory, but which was problematic throughout Israel's history as the people in God's context (e.g. Dt 10:16; Isa 29:13).

In Hebrew terminology of the OT, the *nephesh* that God implanted of the whole of God into the human person is signified in ongoing function by the heart (*leb*). The function of the qualitative heart is critical for the whole person and holding together the person in the innermost. The biblical proverbs speak of the heart in the following terms:

> identified as "the wellspring" (starting point, *tosa'ot*) of the ongoing function of the human person (Prov 4:23); using the analogy to a mirror, the heart also functions as what gives definition to the person (Prov 27:19); and, when not reduced or fragmented ("at peace," i.e. wholeness), as giving life to "the body" (*basar*, referring to the outer aspect of the person, Prov 14:30, NIV), which describes the heart's integrating function for the whole person (inner and outer together).

Without the function of the heart, the whole person from inner out created by God is reduced to function from outer in, distant or separated from the heart. This functional condition was ongoingly critiqued by God and responded to for the inner-out change necessary to be whole (e.g. Gen 6:5-6; Dt 10:16; 30:6; 1 Sam 16:7; Isa 29:13; Jer 12:2; Eze 11:19; 18:31; 33:31; Joel 2:12-13). Later in God's strategic shift, Jesus made unmistakable that the openness of the heart ("in spirit and truth") is what the Father requires and seeks in reciprocal relationship together (Jn 4:23-24).

In Judaism, Paul had already been introduced to the importance of the heart (*leb*, e.g., Deut 6:4; 10:16; 11:13). Yet, Paul had not understood this importance for the ontology either of Israel as God's people or of his own person. He had not grasped the integrating function of the heart for the person (cf. Prov 4:23; 14:30; 27:19) until his own heart was exposed on the Damascus road, now vulnerable in relationship with the whole of God. I have assumed that this involved the retrospective journey of his person back to the human roots beyond his Jewish roots in Abraham. The original human roots, both for the individual-person and for the collective-persons together, define the heart as the center of human ontology, not the brain of neuroscience or the sub-atomic dynamics of physics. What is the difference of the heart and how is it significant?

The integrating function of the heart is irreplaceable. The mind may be able to provide quantitative unity (e.g. by identifying the association of parts) for the human person, as quantified in the brain by neuroscience. However, while this may be necessary and useful at times, it is never sufficient by itself to distinguish the whole person, nor adequate to experience the relationships necessary to be whole. Not even the higher level function of supervenience, as used by nonreductive physicalism, is sufficient to account for the qualitative whole needed to constitute persons in God's context.

The priority of the inner person over the outer is illustrated in the selection of Saul's replacement as king. When God sent Samuel to Jesse's household to anoint one of his sons chosen to be king (1 Sam 16:1-13), Samuel thought for sure that Eliab was the chosen one. Yet, God clarified that Samuel based his conclusion on what he perceived of Eliab's person through the lens of a reductionist framework using an outer-in approach (v. 7, "appearance," *mar'eh*, signifying outward appearance). Samuel had shifted to an outer-in approach in contrast to God who "looks at the heart" using an inner-out focus of personness. By returning to God's perceptual framework, Samuel was able to perceive the deeper qualitative significance of the whole person from the inner out, thus understanding the significance of David's outer features (*'ayin* and *tob*) reflecting his

inner person (v. 12). In contrast, the priority of the outer over the inner is illustrated in a subtle experience of Ezekiel, where his performance and reputation became the focus over the significance of his message (Eze 33:30-32)—an illusion that continues today, for example, where the medium becomes the message. His "audience" demonstrated a higher level function that is misleading; this further illustrates that supervenience only suggests what ought to be rather than results in real action.

The qualitative significance of the heart is not composed in referential language and terms but only distinguishes the person in relational terms that God "breathed" into human persons. *Nephesh* may be rendered "soul" but its functional significance is the heart (Dt 30:6; Rom 2:28-29). From the beginning, the heart defined and determined the qualitative innermost of the person in God's context and not the soul; the soul's prominence unfolded much later from the influence of philosophical thought, shaped by referential terms. The heart's significance only begins to define the image of God, yet the heart's function identifies why the heart is so vital to the person integrally in the image and likeness of God. God's creative action, design and purpose emerge only in relational language, the relational terms of which are not for unilateral relationship but reciprocal relationship together. Therefore, God's desires are to be vulnerably involved with the whole person in the primacy of relationship—intimate relationship together. Since the function of the heart integrally constitutes the whole person, God does not have the whole person for relationship until it involves the heart (Dt 10:14-16; Ps 95:7-11).

This may bring up a question that would be helpful to address. If God constituted the physical body with the qualitative inner to distinguish the human person from all other animals, how does relatedness further distinguish human persons since most animal life subsists in relatedness also? Not only does the qualitative distinguish the human person from inner out with the quantitative according to the image of God, but at this intersection of God's creative action relationship was now also constituted as never before (as in "not good to be apart")—conjointly and inseparably with the qualitative—to fully distinguish the human person as whole according to both the qualitative image of God and the relational likeness of the whole of God (namely God's relational ontology and function, discussed below). The primordial garden illuminates the integral dynamic of the qualitative and relational in its wholeness as well as its reduction—the convergence of the physical, psychological, the relational, the social and the cultural, which together go into defining and determining both the human person and subsequent human condition. Paying attention to only one (or some) of the above gives us a fragmentary or incomplete understanding of what it is to be human. The creation narrative provides us with not a detailed (much less scientific) account of humans but the integrated perspective (framework and lens) necessary to define and determine the whole person, as well as the underlying reductionism of the human condition. Therefore, these contexts, expanding parameters, limits and constraints are crucial for theological anthropology to distinguish what and who only can be the whole person in God's context.

The original human roots with Adam and Eve constituted each of them in their individual self, both with themselves in relationship together and with their Creator. Yet, Adam and Eve made two critical assumptions in the primordial garden: (1) that their ontology was reducible to human shaping, and (2) that their function was negotiable to human terms (Gen 3:6-10). Their reductionism reflects a shift from the qualitative inner out ("whole-ly naked and vulnerable," Gen 2:25) to the quantitative outer in ("naked

parts and covered up," Gen 3:7) without the integrating significance of the heart, thereby fragmenting the whole of human ontology down to one's parts. This is a pivotal qualitative and relational consequence for persons. Once the person becomes distant from, unaware of or detached from the heart, there is no qualitative means in function to integrate the whole person—leaving only fragmentary parts (however valuable or esteemed) that are unable to distinguish the person in God's context. Conjointly in creative function, there is no basis for deep involvement and intimate connection in relationships together without the qualitative function of the heart (Isa 29:13; Jer 12:2, cf. Eze 33:31); intimacy is based on hearts vulnerably open and coming together. The qualitative and relational consequence, as witnessed in the primordial garden, is an outer-in association together accompanied with shame, disappointment, confusion or dissatisfaction (*bosh*, Gen 2:25, cf. Eph 4:18). Only the conjoint function of the qualitative inner (signified by the heart) and the relational from innermost (signified by hearts coming together in intimacy) distinguish whole persons beyond comparison. Nothing less and no substitutes can claim to *pala* the person in God's context simply because these persons are constituted integrally in the image and likeness of the whole of God's ontology and function. This is the created whole of the person and of persons in relationship together from which "is not good to be apart" (Gen 2:18).

David certainly understood this since he was chosen by God based on his person from inner out, and he made his heart accountable and vulnerable to God (Ps 51:6, 10, 16-17; 139:23); and the reductionist substitutes from the outer in were understood to have no relational significance to God (cf. Ps 147:10). This is why David charged Solomon when he was chosen to build a temple dwelling for God: to respond to God and to be involved with your whole heart (*shalem*, *leb*) and the desire (*haphes*) of your person from inner out (*nephesh*) because God wants your whole person for relationship (1 Chron 28:9). This intimate relationship symbolized by the temple was extended to the hearts of the whole of humanity for relationship together as the whole of God's family (cf. Acts 15:8,9).

Conversely and conjointly, God acts only in relational terms and communicates only in relational language. Any person focused outer in does not make relational connection with God (as Job struggled, Job 23:3,8-9), and thus is unable to know and understand God merely by referential language, no matter the quantity of referential information about God (as the theological academy labors today). In reality, any such knowledge and understanding about God is simply self-referencing, whereby theological discourse becomes speaking for God from the cognitive level of the mind rather than receiving God's relational communication and expressing this relational knowledge and understanding of God from the depth level of the heart.

The human heart is irreplaceable to define and determine the whole person from inner out. Without the qualitative function of the heart to integrate the whole person, the only alternatives for persons are ontological simulations and epistemological illusions shaped by reductionism. This reduces persons from their essential reality in likeness of the *person*al Trinity to a virtual-augmented reality, which is the prevailing identity of persons being defined by the internet—notably determined by their function in social media. The heart's significance unfolds in relational terms for the relational outcome that we need to understand more deeply in the divine narrative composing the narrative of human being and being human: The whole of God ongoingly pursues, solely in relational

terms, the heart and wants our heart (as in 1 Sam 16:7; Prov 21:2; Jer 17:10; Lk 16:15; Rom 8:27; Rev 2:23)—that is, pursues only the whole person for vulnerable involvement in integral reciprocal relationship together in the integrity of the person's created likeness. The innermost person signified by heart function has the most significance to God and, though never separated from or at the neglect of the outer, always needs to have greater priority of importance for the person's definition and function to be distinguished in God's context. *To be* distinguished, however, this person can only be in uncommon likeness of the Trinity's whole ontology and function.

Persons in God's context cannot negotiate either the qualitative condition of their ontology or the relational terms of their function. Theological anthropology discourse must be engaged accordingly. For example, when discussing the social nature and character of human persons, it is insufficient for theological anthropology to talk about merely social relatedness and community to define and distinguish the human person. For nonnegotiated theological anthropology, the person is created in the qualitative image of God to function in relational likeness to the whole of God (discussed shortly). Without renegotiation, therefore, human persons are created in whole ontology and function for the primacy of relationship together solely in whole relational terms as follows:

> The qualitative ontology of the person's heart vulnerably opens to the hearts of other persons (including God) in order for the relational outcome of the primacy of relationship together to be nonnegotiably and irreducibly distinguished by the wholeness of intimate relationships—defined as hearts open and vulnerably connected together to be whole, that is, whole solely in the image and likeness of the whole of God ("not to be apart…but naked and relationally connected without disappointment").

When God's relational terms from inner out are shifted to referential terms from outer in (even unintentionally or perhaps inadvertently), something less or some substitute replaces the above and renders the person and relationships to fragmentary-reduced ontology and function without the primacy of the qualitative (with the function of the heart) and the relationship (in intimate relationships of wholeness). This qualitative and relational consequence no longer distinguishes persons in God's context, only shapes them in the limits of the human context by the constraints of the human condition ("to be apart…naked and relationally distant"). This is the human image constitutive of the human being and being human that embodies persons.

From the beginning, these two competing, contrary and conflicting dynamics have either constituted the person in the primary of God's relational context and process, or shaped (even embedded) the person in the secondary of the limits and prevailing constraints in the human context. Nevertheless, the image and likeness of God continue to be illuminated to conclusively distinguish the whole person in God's context.

In the Qualitative Image of God

As the image and likeness of God are further illuminated, there likely will occur an uncovering of theological anthropology—or making "naked" if you wish—that reveals

a person in a reshaped image or unlikeness of God. This will challenge our assumptions and be critical for the person (including our own) who emerges and develops.

There are two main and vital issues any theological anthropology must answer:

1. What does it mean to be the human person God created?
2. What does God expect from this person?

To expand on our discussion above, understanding the first issue is interrelated to the second. This mutual understanding thus unfolds in relationship together by the inseparable function of righteousness: defined as being the whole of who, what and how the person is that can be counted on by others to be that person in relationship together. Accordingly, any theological anthropology that adequately answers these two issues must by nature be integrated with righteousness, both God's and ours. Anything less and any substitutes in theological anthropology or for righteousness fragments the person into certain parts over other parts, with the relational consequence of being and living less than whole.

Ecclesiastes illuminates a simple reality of God's creative action that is easy to ignore not only to distinguish the human person but also God: "God has also *implanted* eternity in the hearts of persons" (Ecc 3:11, NIV). What is illuminated is the reality of being connected in ontology and function to something beyond our persons, which can be defined in whole knowledge and be satisfied in whole understanding solely by the whole of God, because that something is transcendent. Eternity (*'olam*) should not be seen as a referential term and thus here understood in cognitive terms (e.g. "a sense of past and future into their minds," NRSV), as part of human rationality and reasoning that traditionally is considered to compose the image of God. In this sense, *'olam* and any other connections thought to be made beyond the human person can also be considered mere epiphenomenon (appearing to be related but not really), without clearly accounting for a distinction between them.[1] The reality of eternity consists in relational language and helps constitute the qualitative innermost of the person in the image of God only in relational terms. In other words, having eternity in their hearts connects persons to the transcendent God—not just to some cognitive part of God but to the whole of God—in order to know the Trinity in relationship together (as Jesus prayed, Jn 17:3). Yet, there is a critical distinction that must be made between referential terms and relational terms in order to further know and understand the God behind the image distinguishing the human person. To know and understand God is the relational process to know and understand the person in the image of God.

What necessarily separates theism from deism is the clarity of God's qualitative presence and relational involvement. Theism assumes God's vulnerability, yet more likely has been described traditionally in referential terms not compatible to make connection with God's presence and involvement. Such a theism is certainly problematic to know and understand God other than with referential information merely about God, which in function is not significantly different from deism. This has obvious implications for the image of God and for persons dependent on that image to be distinguished. The

[1] Consider neurosurgeon Eben Alexander's recent experience of connecting with God while his brain was not functioning, in *Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon's Journey into the Afterlife* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2012).

vulnerable presence and relational involvement of God, however, is a relational reality that integrally distinguishes the whole ontology and function of God, who, on the basis of this qualitative relational reality, created the human person and relationships together in that image and likeness of God's incomparable ontology and function. To use Ecclesiastes' relational language: "God transplanted into the innermost of human persons not the breadth of linear time in chronological terms composed by a traditional lens of eternity but the depth of the image of the whole of God's ontology and function." What God transplanted did not deify the person ontologically (also not to be confused with panentheism) but constituted the person relationally to be whole together, whereby to relationally know and understand the God who is vulnerably present and relationally involved is to have whole knowledge and understanding of God's image and, on this qualitative relational basis, to know and understand the whole person distinguished by that image in God's relational context and process.

This irreversible connection of the person with the whole of God is the simple reality *'olam* signifies that theological anthropology is ongoingly accountable to constitute the person in the image of God: to constitute from inner out as a complex subject of person-consciousness involved in complex relationship both vulnerable and reciprocal, not to compose the person from outer in as a simple object of self-consciousness engaged in simple association. Yet, the reality of this connection is continuously subjected to reductionism and its counter-relational work that must also be addressed definitively with the whole, or fall into being subject to its obscuring influence. 'The presence of the whole' constitutes the image of God and makes functional this image for persons to live distinguished in its significance. How is 'the presence of the whole' vulnerable to be relationally involved for this vital relational outcome?

The qualitative image of God is known and understood conclusively only in the involved God in the beginning, the vulnerable God of the beginning, and indeed the transcendent God beyond—composed only in relational language according to relational terms by just the relational Word. On this basis, the presence and involvement of the relational Word from the beginning is the key for the ongoing presence of the whole to make functional the image of God. This heuristic process involves how we understand language and communication.

When we focus on listening to the words in language, we may or may not be focused on communication from another. Words in referential language are commonly what we use to transmit information to talk *about* something and to express how well we can talk about it, notably to explain it. *It* can also be *about* someone, such as God, in our discourse. Yet that other being remains impersonal if the focus is not on communication; the focus on words in referential language becomes an I/we-it relation rather than the I/we-you relationship involving communication. In referential language the other is just an object while in relational language the other is always a subject. This distinction is critical for determining the message unfolding in the words in and from the beginning.

"In the beginning" (*re'shiyt*, Gen 1:1; *arche*, Jn 1:1) are words that can denote first as to time, place, order or in terms of leadership; also can denote the starting point or cause of something commencing. Are these just words in referential language to transmit information, or is this communication from the Other outside the universe—perhaps both? The primacy of the latter can include secondary aspects of the former. Primacy given to the former, however, is incompatible with the latter and thus does not lead to the

primacy of communication in relationship; moreover, it remains fragmentary with its incomplete information—whatever its assumed precision, consistency and certainty—unable to be whole.

There are two major ways to understand "in the beginning": (1) in the context of time and space, is 'the beginning of time'; and, (2), within but not limited to the time-space context, is 'the starting point of relationship'. These views are not mutually exclusive, yet how they overlap can redefine the message in these words. Traditionally, the first interpretation tends not to include the full significance of the second, even though creation may be affirmed and the Creator acknowledged. "In the beginning," however, "was the Word" in person solely to communicate, not words in referential language to transmit information. A traditional interpretation is theologically distorted because, first, it reduces the qualitative whole (including the cosmos and all things in the universe) constituted by the Creator to only quantitative terms, and as a result, secondly, diminishes the relational significance of *what* the Creator created. Rather, in these relational language words with the Word, God communicated a definitive statement of God's communicative action as Subject—in contrast to merely transmitting information as Object to be observed—that can only be fully understood as relational work, that which synthesizes the creative work. This relational work does not render the physical universe (or material) as bad or diminish its significance but provides the whole understanding and meaning for what holds it together in its innermost.

What is the nature of the message God communicated with the Word? The definitive nature of the message unfolding with the Word in and from the beginning is (1) cosmological, (2) relational, and (3) whole. This leads us to the whole of Christology,[2] which is integral for theological anthropology. Yet, theological anthropology will not emerge whole from an overly christocentric Christology, that is, from a Christology that does not account for the whole of Jesus' person, who by his nature is inseparably integrated in relationship together with the whole of God (integral with the Father and the Spirit). This whole Christology, complete in its qualitative and relational significance, is only composed by the complete *face* of Christ (2 Cor 4:6)—the who, what and how in whole ontology and function—that must compose our Christology (*pleroma* Christology, Col 1:19; 2:9) in order for theological anthropology to be constituted with whole ontology and function in the image and likeness of the whole of God as embodied by Christ (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15). The embodied Word is the epistemological, hermeneutic, relational and ontological keys to God's self-disclosing communication, and understanding the whole ontology and function of both God and human persons—which is why the Father communicated the imperative relational message: "Listen to my Son" (Mt 17:5, cf. Lk 8:18). This is assuming, of course, the righteousness of the Word, that is, to be the whole of who, what and how he is and thus can be counted on to be this whole person in relationships.

As John's Gospel records (Jn 1:1-4) and Paul affirms (Col 1:16-17), the source of the Word was conjointly from outside the universe and the source of the universe's

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[2] A more complete discussion on Christology is found in my other studies, *Sanctified Christology: A Theological and Functional Study of the Whole of Jesus* (Christology Study, 2008), *The Whole of Paul and the Whole in His Theology: Theological Interpretation in Relational Epistemic Process* (Paul Study, 2010), *Jesus Into Paul: Embodying the Theology and Hermeneutic of the Whole Gospel* (Integration Study, 2012), available Online: http://4X12.org.

creation (Jn 1:10,18; 3:19). This cosmology is integral to the full identity of the Word and the quality and depth of the creative action communicated by the Word—whose dynamic context and process are unfolding from this source, notably recorded in the Gospel of John (Jn 1:4-5, 10-11,14,18; 3:19). This beginning is vital for understanding what unfolds.

Given the source, the Word cannot be reduced to be defined or determined in any manner by anything in the universe; in other words, the Word is *pala*, beyond comparison in the human context. If it were, this would result in the following: The Word would be part of the universe itself; or diminished to some aspect (e.g. category, order, species) of creation, even created itself; or otherwise anthropomorphized in human terms. The parameters of the universe can only narrow down the perception of reality outside the universe, which would constrain God in a box of human shaping and construction (Ps 50:21). Any of these reductions is consequential for the unfolding of the Word by reducing the qualitative depth and significance of the message that we call the gospel. Moreover, given the source, it is only the Word in the beginning that defines and determines the universe and all in it, that is, only on God's terms and not on human terms. The cosmological nature of this message unfolding with the Word necessitates our epistemic humility and requires our ontological deference.

Thus, only on this basis does the message of what unfolds and why become definitive. *What* the Creator created and *why* are understood not by the mere transmission of information by the Word in the beginning but only as the cosmological source of the message in integrated communicative-creative action as Subject for the primacy of relationship together. This integrally integrated dynamic constitutes the relational nature of the message unfolding with the Word.

Therefore, *what* the Creator created and *why* emerged in the beginning only as 'the starting point of relationship'; accordingly, the what and why are inseparable from the communicative action that unfolds with the Word. The relational nature of the Word ongoingly engages in communicative action, not in the transmission of information. In further and deeper unfolding of this relational dynamic, the Word embodied this relational communication in the vulnerable self-disclosures of the whole of God (Jn 17:4, 6-8; Col 1:19; 2:9). In his crucial prayer-communication to the Father, what the Son completed (*teleioo*) in revealing God was not to merely exhibit God for observation in order to impart some information or knowledge *about* God; that quantitative revelation is signified by the word *apokalypto*, which only refers to the object revealed. The Son, however, vulnerably *phaneroo* the Father, that is, more deeply "disclosed you to those whom you gave me"—referring specifically to those to whom the revelation is made in this relational context and process. *Phaneroo* signifies the further and deeper unfolding of the Word for the sole purpose of relationship together. Therefore, the nature of the message unfolding with the Word is always relational: "who came from the Father…" (Jn 1:14, NIV), "who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known" (Jn 1:18), "God so loved…gave his Son…send the Son" (Jn 3:16-17), "I am…to the Father" (Jn 14:6), "…they may know you…" (Jn 17:3), "I have made your name known to them…so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them" (Jn 17:26), "…what is heard comes through the word of Christ" (Rom 10:17), "Let the word of Christ dwell in you" (Col 3:16), "Listen! I am standing at the door *of your heart*,

knocking; if you hear my voice and *respond to me*, I will come in to you *for reciprocal relationship together*" (Rev 3:20).

Our understanding of the message unfolding with the Word from the beginning does not emerge from the textual words in referential language. This is not merely having referential knowledge and information about God but critically involves the distinguished process of whole-ly knowing God, which is only the relational outcome of deep involvement in relationship together as Jesus' family prayer makes definitive (notably of eternal life, Jn 17:3, cf. the disciples, Jn 14:9). Therefore, communication from the Word is composed by the primacy of relational language and only in relational terms that get quite intrusive because the relational Word speaks to our innermost. The significance of relational language defines, on the one hand, the qualitative ontology, relational nature and vulnerable function of the Word (signifying his glory, Jn 1:14) and, on the other, defines *what* was created and *why*. To define these secondarily by only referential language immediately diminishes what was created and minimalizes why, along with fragmenting the Word who created in the image and likeness of the whole of God.

The reality is compelling, despite not prevailing: We cannot substitute referential language for relational language and have the relational outcome of intimate relationship together. Even neuroscience recognizes the limits and consequences of referential language with the development of prose, in contrast to qualitative communication expressed in poetry, singing and music—all of which predate prose in the development of communication.[3] Does this speak to the prominence of poetic style in significant portions of Scripture?

The reality is further compelling and even less responded to: The relational dynamic from outside the universe does not emerge with referential language but only in the relational language of the Word solely for 'the starting point of relationship'. The unfolding of this relational dynamic embodied nothing less than the whole of the Word, whom Paul later made definitive theologically as 'the *pleroma* (fullness, complete, whole) of God' vulnerably self-disclosed (Col 1:19; 2:9). Nothing less than the whole of God emerged from outside the universe and was embodied in the Word to be vulnerably present and relationally involved with us, without any substitute of his wholeness. 'Nothing less and no substitutes' is critical for understanding the whole of God emerging from outside the universe in the beginning and this whole embodied in the person of Jesus. Any fragmentation of the whole of God and Jesus—for example, by referential language transmitting only information about God—not only reduces the ontology and function of God but also redefines what creator God created and why. This is critically consequential for both an incomplete theology of God (particularly Christology) and for an insufficient theological anthropology; theology that essentially becomes self-referencing and thus inconsistent and incomplete, that is fragmentary and consequently unable to be whole much less live whole. What defines our ontology and determines our function either emerge from the whole ontology and function of God, or are defined and determined by human shaping and construction, even with theological certainty and the ontological simulation and epistemological illusion advanced by it.

Definitively *what* was created and *why* are contingent on the whole ontology and function of God, and therefore contingent on the Word in the beginning, in whose image human being is created to be whole and in whose likeness all human ontology and

[3] See McGilchrist, *The Master and his Emissary*, 94-132.

function are created to live whole—to be and live whole together in relationship with the whole of God and God's creation (Gen 2:18,25, cf. Rom 8:17,19). The whole was not a product of some dialectic or abstract process; it was the relational outcome in the beginning of the whole of God's communicative-creative action. The *whole* emerged only with the Whole from outside the universe to constitute the whole of the universe and all in it in the innermost (Col 1:17). Moreover, the Whole does not become the universe (pantheism), nor is the universe all there is of the Whole (as in panentheism). The whole of God (the triune God) remains distinguished outside the universe and this Whole's likeness distinguishes the universe in the innermost to be whole. Though this wholeness was the reality in the beginning, reductionism fragmented the whole of human ontology and function, and also creation (Gen 3:7,10,17; cf. Rom 8:19-21). The good news, however, is the deeper unfolding of the Word to give the light to the innermost necessary to be whole, "who has shone in our hearts…" (2 Cor 4:6).

For Paul, there is definitive epistemological clarification in "the knowledge of the glory of the whole of God *vulnerably revealed by* the face of Christ *as the image of God*" (2 Cor 4:6). 'Glory' illuminates the being, nature and presence of God (as Moses requested, Ex 33:18), which reveals the qualitative heart of God's being, God's intimate relational nature and vulnerable presence (cf. Jn 17:22,24). The whole of Jesus magnified the heart of God's being, relational nature and vulnerable presence in the human context by embodying an improbable theological trajectory and intrusive relational path (Jn 1:14,18). The whole gospel illuminates this glory magnified in Christ as the image of God (2 Cor 4:4). From Paul's first encounter with Christ, he experienced this glory in relational terms.

On the Damascus road, Paul was contextualized by Jesus essentially in the experiential truth of the incarnation, not contextualized in Jewish mysticism (cf. *Merkabah*-vision in Eze 1). The incarnation was the embodiment of the whole of God's relational context and process, the extension in which Paul was contextualized both by Jesus and with Jesus to be made whole 'in Christ'. What Jesus embodied was vulnerably disclosed throughout the course of the incarnation; and this extension into Paul was the experiential truth for the basis of his Christology, which was integrated with further whole knowledge and understanding (*synesis*) from ongoing involvement with Christ and the Spirit in the relational epistemic process together to make conclusive Paul's *pleroma* (complete, whole) Christology.

The glory and image of God in the face of Christ disclosed in the incarnation are primary to the complex theological dynamics composing Paul's complete Christology. These dynamics illuminate the glory and image of God beyond their understanding in Judaism and further and deeper than in the Jesus tradition. In the OT, the image of God's glory is mainly characterized as strength and power (e.g. Ex 15:6,11; 16:6-8; Ps 24:7-10; 29:1-9; 59:9,17). The incarnation, however, deepens this image and glory of God to illuminate the qualitative heart, relational nature and vulnerable presence of God relationally disclosed by the whole of Jesus only for involvement in relationship together. This strategic shift did not exclude God's strength and power (as demonstrated by the resurrection) but presupposes God's reign (notably over darkness and now over death). On this basis, this strategic shift in Jesus' intrusive relational path fully focuses on God's relational response of grace whole-ly extended within the innermost of the human condition—that is, not merely in its situations and circumstances but more importantly to

the persons who are apart from the whole of God, in order to reconcile them to the relationship necessary to be whole together. This relational outcome can only emerge from the function of relationship, and the incarnation constitutes only this function. As the function of relationship, nothing happens without the experiential truth from the incarnation of the relational dynamic of the image and glory of God, not the conceptual image or doctrinal glory of God. The Jesus tradition rightly understood this relational outcome as only from God's grace yet did not fully understand the theological dynamics involved or the theological anthropology necessarily engaged. This gap was demonstrated at a church summit in Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-29) and by Peter's interpretive framework and lens prior (10:9-16, 34-36), for which Paul later still had to give hermeneutic correction to Peter's practice for the experiential truth of the whole gospel embodied by Jesus (Gal 2:14).

In the incarnation of God's relational dynamic determined only by the relational function of grace, Jesus fulfills the whole of God's thematic relational response to the inherent human relational need and problem (which neuroscience rightly identifies). By fulfilling God's relational response only in the dynamic of nothing less and no substitutes, Jesus embodied the wholeness of the image of God (*eikon*, Col 1:15). *Eikon* implies not merely a resemblance to but the total correspondence and likeness of its archetype, here the invisible God—just as Jesus claimed to his first disciples (Jn 14:9). The *eikon* of God is made definitive by the illumination (*photismos*) of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, whose vulnerable embodiment made God's qualitative being and relational nature functionally involved with persons for experiential truth in relationship together (2 Cor 4:4b,6). Beginning with his face-to-Face encounter with Jesus on the Damascus road, Paul experienced directly this relational dynamic of Christ's illumination now extended also to him. In this relational process with Jesus, God's relational function of grace and its outcome of intimate relational connection together (not mysticism) provided Paul with his ongoing experiential truth of the glory of God 'in Christ', the image of God. All this was to definitively establish for the church at Corinth "by the open statement of truth" (*phanerosis* from *phaneroo*, 4:2) that the relational dynamic is from God and not from human shaping (4:1). For Paul, the image of God was unmistakable in the relational dynamic of Christ's magnification of God's glory, which Paul simply integrates in "the gospel of the glory of Christ" (4:4b). This relational dynamic of the image and glory of God is essential for Paul's *pleroma* Christology (completeness, fullness, whole, Col 1:19; 2:9) because it signifies the whole of Jesus' person vulnerably embodied, magnified and involved for relationship together, fulfilling the following three functions unique to the face of Christ:

1. Whole knowledge and understanding of the whole of God's ontology as nothing less and no substitutes of God's qualitative being and relational nature (Christ the epistemological-theological key).

2. Whole knowledge and understanding of the whole of God's function in the relational context and process constituted only by God's relational terms of grace (Christ the hermeneutical key).

This "light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" can be seen only directly "in the face of Christ," which is made problematic if key epistemological, hermeneutic and functional distinctions and issues are not understood. Just as Paul did in his theological systemic framework, he continues in his theological forest to challenge assumptions of the cosmos, theological cognition and anthropology, and of the perceptual-interpretive framework (*phronema*) and lens (*phroneo*) used for this knowledge and understanding. Critical to Paul's *pleroma* Christology is the ongoing relational dynamic of wholeness from top down and inner out unique to the whole of God. By its nature from bottom up and outer in, reductionism is always positioned against God's whole to qualify it, redefine it, or shape it by human terms. "The face of Christ," not merely the concept of Christ, is crucial to which of these dynamics is engaged, and thereby who and what are illuminated and how they are received and responded to. Paul renounced reductionism's relational dynamic from outer in ("the shameful things that one hides," cf. the primordial garden), which would reduce his whole person; and he did not engage in bottom-up practice, which would compromise the whole of God's word ("falsify, distort," *doloo*, to dilute, water down, cheapen, as merchants did with wine to deceive consumers, 2 Cor 4:2). Paul's relational responsibility from God (*oikonomia*) functioned to present God's word in its fullness, complete, thus whole (*pleroo*, as Paul identified later, Col 1:25). The whole of God's word cannot be compromised without reducing what and who were embodied in the face of Christ, "the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" (2 Cor 4:4), "the hope of glory" (Col 1:27). Theological anthropology has this same relational responsibility.

In Paul's *pleroma* Christology, the face of Christ is the exact *eikon* of God which magnifies the glory of God's qualitative being and relational nature in Christ's whole person and function, with the dynamic of nothing less and no substitutes. This dynamic of wholeness is indispensable for how the face of Christ is perceived and his function interpreted. In his whole-reductionism discourse, Paul pointed to the relational outcome or consequence of this issue of perceptual-interpretive framework as fundamental to the relational epistemic process necessary to "see [*augazo*, be illuminated by] the light" from top down ("God who…has shone") and from inner out ("in our hearts") "in the face of Christ" (2 Cor 4:4,6). The term "face" (*prosopon*) can be understood in two contrary dynamics: (1) like a mask worn in early Greek theatre to take on a different identity in a role or as in a masquerade (*metaschematizo*, cf. 2 Cor 11:13-15); or (2) "face" can signify the whole person, whose identity of who, what and how the person is is not hidden but made fully vulnerable to be whole-ly perceived and involved with (cf. what the Father seeks, Jn 4:23-24; note Num 12:6-8). The first dynamic functions from outer in (e.g. "that one hides," 2 Cor 4:2) while the second dynamic only functions from inner out (e.g. "by the open statement of the truth"). The interpretive framework of the first dynamic perceives only the outer face of Christ and thereby interprets Christ's function in mere referential terms or reductionist human terms. This outward approach is an incompatible interface with Christ's face of inner out, and creates distance and maintains barriers in relationship. The relational consequence is not seeing the light and consequently unable to make relational connection with the qualitative being and relational nature of God.

Contrary to the first dynamic, in the second dynamic the face of Christ is without reductionism of the whole of who, what and how God is—just as Jesus conclusively revealed to his disciples (Jn 14:9) and fulfilled for the Father (Jn 17:4,6,26). This is the

face vulnerably embodying, magnifying and involving the whole of God's glory—nothing less and no substitutes of God's qualitative being and relational nature—for relationship together. It is the only face and function that constitute *pleroma* Christology—"the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Cor 4:4). Moreover, then, this relational dynamic of the image and glory of God in Christ functions also to illuminate the whole knowledge and understanding of the face of Christ's function from inner out in God's relational context and process, whereby to function congruent to only God's relational terms of grace from top down. Christ's face and function together are irreducible and therefore indispensable for Christology to be complete. In Paul's *pleroma* Christology, Christ's face and function constitute the whole person vulnerably involved in relationship. The relational outcome, in contrast to the relational consequence above, is that the whole of God is now accessible for intimate relationship Face to face. The relational implication is that the function of this distinguished Face is compatible only with the human face in qualitative image and relational likeness of his for the qualitative-relational connection and involvement necessary to be whole-ly Face to face to Face.

This relational outcome is the purpose and function of the unequivocal image and glory of God vulnerably embodied by the whole of Jesus only for relationship together. Indispensably throughout the incarnation, Christ's function illuminated the whole knowledge and understanding of the qualitative image and relational likeness of God in which the human person and function were created; and by his qualitative-relational function between the manger and the cross, Christ also vulnerably demonstrates the ontological image and functional likeness to which human persons need to be restored for whole relationship together face to Face. Therefore, the relational dynamic of the image and glory of God is essential in Paul's *pleroma* Christology for a third function fulfilled in the distinguished face of Christ necessary for relationship together:

3. The qualitative image and relational likeness of the whole of God necessary for human ontology and function, as individual-person and collective-persons together in God's family, in the same dynamic as Christ of nothing less and no substitutes (Christ the functional key).

Without Jesus' whole person and function throughout the incarnation, whole knowledge and understanding of the image and glory of God would neither be illuminated for vulnerable self-disclosure in experiential truth, nor be definitive for vulnerable human reciprocal response in the image and likeness necessary for whole relationship together (2 Cor 3:18; Col 3:10). Theological anthropology becomes definitive only in the face of Christ and distinguishes the human person only in Face-to-face-to-Face relationship together.

In Paul's *pleroma* Christology, the above three qualitative-relational functions are vital for the epistemological clarification and hermeneutic correction necessary to be whole. Jesus constituted this dynamic of wholeness *in* the incarnation of his own person, and thereby constituted this dynamic for wholeness *by* his incarnation for all human life and function (Col 2:9-10). Therefore, this dynamic in the face of Christ was irreducible and nonnegotiable by the very nature of the *pleroma* of God. Anything less and any substitutes are reductionism of the *pleroma* of God, the image of God, the glory of God in the face of Christ, consequently reductionism of the human person and function—shifting

from the whole from top down to reductionism from bottom up, from the whole from inner out to reductionism from outer in. Paul's *oikonomia* to *pleroo* the word of God always fought jointly *against* this reductionism distorting and diluting it (*doloo*, 2 Cor 4:2) and *for* the whole gospel embodied by *pleroma* Christology. By its nature, theological anthropology must be nothing less.

The gospel of wholeness (Eph 6:15) is that Jesus embodied the vulnerable presence and relational involvement of the whole of God for the purpose of whole relationship together. Following Jesus only in relational terms (Jn 12:26), therefore, has the relational outcome in conjoint function to define the person created in the qualitative image of God (Col 3:10) and to distinguish the whole person from inner out (*metamorphoō*) in God's relational likeness (2 Cor 3:18). Only whole Christology is how 'the presence of the whole' has been vulnerable to be relationally involved to unfold this relational outcome that integrally distinguishes the person in the image of God. Theological anthropology must be on the same theological trajectory and relational path as Jesus to have this relational outcome. And this intensifies Jesus' relational imperative: "Follow me, my whole person in the primacy of relationship together" (Jn 12:26).

It is conclusive for theological anthropology that the person essential to God and distinguished in the Trinity is embodied by Jesus. Jesus' whole person, as Paul made definitive theologically, is the exact and whole "image of God…in the vulnerably present and relationally involved face of Christ." Jesus as *person* is not a referential concept or anthropomorphism imposed on him but his vulnerable function as "the image of the *transcendent* God…in *his person* all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell" (Col 1:15,19). His person as the image of God—along with the person of the Spirit, Jesus' relational replacement (Jn 14:16-18; 16:13-15; 2 Cor 3:17-18)—is essential for the human person both to know the qualitative significance and to have whole understanding of what it means to be and function as the person created in the image of God. There are certainly irreducible differences between God as Creator and creatures. As Jesus vulnerably disclosed (e.g. in his formative family prayer, Jn 17:21-23), however, there is also an irreducible likeness between the persons of the Trinity and the human person created in the image of the whole of God (cf. Col 3:10; Eph 4:24). Anything less and any substitute of God or humans has been reduced.

It is certainly correct that the qualitative difference of God is beyond comparison and is irreducible to human terms; and it is a necessary intention for any theological task to clearly distinguish this difference in order not to fall into any epistemological illusion by which God is defined or determined by any anthropomorphism from human contextualization. Nevertheless, the transcendent God beyond the universe vulnerably revealed the glory of God but not as simple Object to be observed for information (as implied in a doctrine of divine simplicity from philosophical theology). Rather, God is relationally disclosed simply as Subject to be involved only for relationship—the improbable theological trajectory and intrusive relational path that is unequivocally beyond comparison. The subsequent issue of insufficiently knowing and understanding God is a critical condition for theology to confront—given God's declaration for human boast in Jeremiah 9:23-24—or be rendered to a different theological trajectory from God and consequently, at best, to ontological simulation of God's being and human being. A different theological trajectory gets us into duplicating Job's error of using referential "words without knowledge" to discourse about the person in God's context.

This addresses the need for theological anthropology to fulfill its responsibility to be theological—not in referential terms but only in relational terms:

> Theological anthropology is the most accountable of the theological tasks for the whole knowledge and understanding of God and thereby of the human person, an interrelated qualitative condition and relational function that is irreducible and nonnegotiable. The glory of God beyond the universe has been vulnerably disclosed in relationship as whole person-Subject to be known (Jn 17:3,6,26, cf. Jn 14:9), in order to distinguish—beyond comparison indeed (*pala*)—human persons and relationships in the image and likeness of the whole of God (Jn 17:22-23).

For no greater purpose does the Father make imperative, "Listen *carefully* to my Son" (Mt 17:5).

So, from the beginning to the present, when God asks the person in theological anthropology, and our person in practice, "Where are you?" (Gen 3:9), God is not asking a referential question for information locating the person. The whole of God asks a relational question to distinguish the whole ontology and function of persons created in God's very own image and likeness, or perhaps to expose a reshaped image or *un*likeness.

In the Relational Likeness of God

Any uncovering of theological anthropology that reveals a person in the unlikeness of God may not be surprising, since it will no doubt involve issues about relationship that are not accounted for in relational terms. For example, what is the significance of John 4:23-24 and how is this interrelated to the person in Matthew 15:8? The answers should be at the core of theological anthropology to distinguish the person. Here again, the nature and extent of our Christology is the key, which is why we need to pay close attention to the whole of Jesus as the Father said (Mt 17:5, cf. Mk 4:24).

Integral to the relational likeness of God is the qualitative image of God, and conversely. Since God transplanted the heart of his being to the innermost of the human person to connect with the whole of God (Ecc 3:11), the whole person can only be distinguished from inner out and just in relational terms (as in Jn 4:23-24). However, any shift of focus to outer in also shifts to referential terms, as in "these people draw near with their mouths...while their hearts are far from me" (Isa 29:13, cf. Mt 15:8); and this is when relationship becomes a critical issue reflecting the unlikeness of God. The person (both Jesus' and ours) in his call must be accounted for in whole relationship terms or else reflect *un*likeness of God.

The embodied Word relationally communicated the whole knowledge and understanding of God to make definitive the functional reality of God's image and likeness (as Paul illuminated, 2 Cor 4:4,6), while also conclusively providing the epistemological clarification and hermeneutic correction of God's unlikeness (as Paul reflected, 2 Cor 3:14-18). Jesus distinguished the relational likeness of God in two relational contexts: (1) within the whole of God, the Trinity, together with the persons of

the Father and the Spirit, and (2) with other persons in human context, whether together or not.

1. Within the Whole of God

One of the main distinctions of whole Christology is not being overly christocentric, which may be problematic depending on how Jesus is defined. The traditional lens defining Jesus focuses on only parts of his person—namely on what he did, on his teachings and example—and not on the whole of Jesus. The whole of Jesus vulnerably embodied his whole person throughout the incarnation in the human context; and this involvement is indispensable to understand in his relationships with others that composed his intrusive relational path (to be discussed in the second relational context). Conjointly, the whole of Jesus' whole person uniquely embodied the vulnerable presence and intimate involvement of the whole of God, the Trinity. Christology remains incomplete when it does not encompass both Jesus' whole person throughout the incarnation and the whole of God whom his whole person embodied.

Moreover, by involving us directly in the trinitarian relational context and process, the whole of Jesus involves us in God's story, that is, the whole of God's thematic relational action in response to the human condition. We cannot perceive the whole of Jesus apart from God's story or we reduce the whole of *who* and *what* Jesus embodied as well as the whole of *how* he functioned. This reduction signifies a recontextualization of Jesus that relegates him to our situations and circumstances in history—just as many Jews (including some of his disciples) did with their messianic hopes. Accordingly, when the person Jesus distinguished (both divine and human) is fragmented to various parts of him (however notable), this puts Jesus on a different theological trajectory and relational path. For theological anthropology based on such a fragmentary Christology, Jesus' person is obscured from the relational ontology of the Trinity and their relational function together as the Whole, and consequently our persons struggle in the relational *un*likeness of God.

What is this relational likeness of the Trinity that Jesus vulnerably embodied to distinguish human persons? Some have attempted to define a relational idea of personhood in the later development of trinitarian theology. Niels Gregersen offers cautionary balance to emphasize that the interrelations between the divine persons are still thought to be unique to God and not related to human beings: "The question remains, however, whether it is possible to deduce a comprehensive ontology for the Trinity, and whether theologians of today should argue for such a direct derivation of the human concept of personhood from the trinitarian concept of the personhood of God." Noting differences between the trinitarian and the anthropological concepts of personhood, he points to Orthodox theologians' rejection of recent attempts to use the trinitarian concept as a general ontological model, and he continues: "Positive resemblances and suggestive proposals should not make us blind to remaining differences."[4]

The doctrine of the Trinity emerged in the fourth century as a response to theological conflict and reductionism. Arius specifically taught that Jesus was subordinate to God in substance (*ousia*) and was created (begotten by the Father). The

[4] Niels Henrik Gregersen, "Varieties of Personhood: Mapping the Issues" in Niels Gregersen, William B. Drees and Ulf Gorman, eds., *The Human Person in Science and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 11-12.

Council of Nicea (the Nicene Creed in 325) countered that Jesus was begotten (i.e. generated, not created) from the substance of the Father, of the same substance (*homoousios*) with God. In further response to another form of Arianism (from Eunomius: divine substance is unbegotten and only belongs to the Father), the Cappadocian fathers (Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus, between 358-380) formulated the distinction between the same substance of God and the different persons (*hypostasis*) of God, thus establishing the doctrine of the Trinity: one God existing in three persons.[5]

Essentially, from the fourth century into the twenty-first, we observe one aspect of God emphasized over another (e.g. the oneness of God or the divine threeness), and some aspect of God reduced (e.g. God's substance [*ousia*] or the persons/personhood [*hypostasis*] of God), as well as redefined or ignored (e.g. "begotten" or the relationality of the Trinity). If not in theology most certainly in function, these perceptions and interpretations profoundly affect how we define God—namely in the ontological and relational nature of the whole of God. I suggest that much of this theological difficulty can be resolved or prevented if trinitarian theology emerged first and foremost from complete Christology. This is the compelling antecedent Jesus' vulnerable disclosures made evident about him and the Father, which involved the Spirit together—and the only antecedent Paul made imperative for persons and relationship together in the church (Col 3:15).

John the Baptist testified that "I saw the Spirit…remain [*meno*, dwell] on him" at Jesus' baptism (Jn 1:32, cf. 3:34). From there, Luke's Gospel records that Jesus was full of the Spirit and led by the Spirit (Lk 4:1,14). These early accounts made evident the presence and function of the Spirit in Jesus' embodied life and practice, which Jesus himself confirmed (Lk 4:18, cf. Is 11:2; 42:1); and their function dynamically continued in Jesus' post-resurrection interactions (Acts 1:2) and continues in his post-ascension involvement (Acts 9:17; 13:2; 16:7) and discourse (Rev 2-3). In essence, the Spirit *meno* with Jesus together to constitute the trinitarian relational context and process. When Jesus told his disciples that he will send the Spirit to them as his relational replacement not leaving them as orphans (Jn 14:18), he pointed to the relational ontology between him, the Spirit and the Father (Jn 15:26; 16:13-15). This ontology that the trinitarian persons have in common as *One* is what Jesus vulnerably disclosed about his Father and himself.

The most significant relational function in the incarnation of how God does relationship is Jesus vulnerably disclosing his relationship with his Father. Ontologically, they are one and their persons are equally the same (consubstantial, Jn 10:30,38; 14:11,20; 16:15; 17:21), and thus inseparable (never "to be apart" except for one unfathomable experience on the cross, Mt 27:46). As trinitarian persons (not modes of being) in the qualitative significance of the whole of God (not tritheism), they are intimately bonded together in relationship (understood conceptually as perichoresis) and intimately involved with each other in love (Jn 5:20; 14:31; 15:9; 17:24). This is the relationship of God that Jesus functionally distinguishes of the whole of God, the Trinity.

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[5] J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, rev. (Peabody, MA: Prince Press, 2004), 252-69. Catherine Mowry LaCugna, ed. *Freeing Theology: the Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective* (San Francisco: Harper, 1993), 85-87. Stanley J Grenz, *Rediscovering the Triune God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 7-8.

To review Jesus' baptism and transfiguration (transformation), the Father openly said: "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased" (Mt 3:17; 17:5). The term for "to be well pleased" (*eudokeo*) can also be rendered "to delight." To be pleased with a son expresses a common bias about parental approval of what a child has done; on the other hand, to delight in a son deepens the focus on the whole person from inner out, with a deeper expression of what a parent feels in the primacy of relationship together. "Delight" better expresses the qualitative heart of the Father in intimate relationship with the Son focused on his qualitative whole person, and consequently should not be interpreted as the Father's approval of the Son's performance. This distinguishes that the Father delights in the Son and loves him for his whole person, not for what he does even in obedience to the Father. If we are predisposed to parental approval, we will ignore the deeper significance of their relational involvement.

Furthermore, it is important to pay attention to their language as they interact. In the Father's expression above, his words to the Son are simple, signifying the relational language of the heart, and therefore intimate. Jesus' language with the Father in the garden called Gethsemane (Mt 26:39,42) and on the cross (Mt 27:46) is painfully simple and disarmingly direct language—words also straight from his heart. There are no platitudes, formal phrases or "sacred terminology" in their interaction—simply communication from the heart, and thereby ongoing communion together in intimacy. Their intimate communion forms the basis for communion at the Lord's table to be in likeness, as the relational outcome of Jesus removing the veil for whole relationship together (2 Cor 3:16-18). Yet, their intimacy can easily be ignored by our relational distance or even be reduced to referential language by a non-relational quantitative perceptual-interpretive framework.

The theological and functional implications of their intimate relationship are critical for our whole knowledge and understanding of God. What is vulnerably disclosed distinguishes the relationship of God without anything less and any substitutes of who, what and how God is. The particular interaction at Gethsemane demonstrates the relational process of family love involved in the Trinity's relationship with each other. Consider again: what had been planned together even before creation and was now being fulfilled by the incarnation, the Son astonishingly did not want to continue; and imagine what the Father feels upon hearing the Son's request. This is a strong contrast to an earlier interaction (see Jn 12:27-28). Despite the unique circumstances, what we need to understand about the Trinity, and thereby function in likeness in our relationships, is why this interaction even happened at all.

Certainly human weakness is involved in this situation but this is not the significance of this interaction. The incarnation was integrally based on the principle of nothing less and no substitutes, and accordingly always functioned in relationship on the basis of nothing less and no substitutes. Why this interaction even happened at all is because by the nature of their relationship in the whole of God such an interaction could happen, was "designed" to happen, therefore was expected to happen—an outworking of God's relational righteousness. That is, what this interaction signifies is the complete openness (implying honesty) and vulnerableness of their whole person (not reduced to roles and performance in the Godhead) with each other in the intimate relational involvement of love as family constituted by their whole relationship together as One—which the Father also seeks from us (Jn 4:23-24). By being completely vulnerable here,

Jesus clearly illuminates how they do relationship together to distinguish the relationship of the Trinity, which Jesus also prays for us to experience (Jn 17:21-26). In other words, the trinitarian persons can and need to be their whole person before each other and intimately share with each other anything, so to speak—without the caution, restrictions or limits practiced in human relationships since the primordial garden to contrast "naked from inner out and without need for embellishment," and "naked from outer in and keeping relational distance". Anything less than and any substitutes of their whole person and these relationships necessary to be the whole of God no longer would constitute the Trinity (as qualitatively distinguished in whole relationship) and therefore becomes a reduction of God.

The relationship of God necessitates the function of the whole person, yet never centered on oneself and therefore always as a function of relationship in the trinitarian relational context of family and the trinitarian relational process of family love. What emerges from the relational dynamics disclosed between the Father and the Son is that the most significant function of relationship is signified by God's love. Their family love ongoingly constitutes the Trinity's relational oneness (intimate communion) illuminating the ontological triunity of God and distinguishing God's whole ontology and function from outside the universe. As the Father made evident at the Son's baptism and transfiguration, the Trinity's love engages only how they are involved with each other's person. The synergistic (and perichoretic) mystery of this qualitative involvement is so intimate that though three disclosed persons yet they are one Being (the ontological One), though distinct in function yet they are indistinguishably and indivisibly one together—without relational horizontal distance or vertical stratification (the relational Whole). And this relationship of God is disclosed not for our mere information but made accessible for us to experience in whole relationship together in likeness. This reciprocal relational experience is the integral purpose of Jesus' formative family prayer (Jn 17:20-26).

For relationship together in likeness, it is essential to understand the implied nature of *who* the Son and Father are and *what* they are in relationship together. This necessitates further examining two clear overlapping statements Jesus disclosed to define his relationship with the Father: (1) "The Father and I are one" (Jn 10:30; 17:11,22), and (2) "the Father is in me and I am in the Father" (Jn 10:38; 14:10-11,20; 17:21). We need to understand Jesus' definitive declarations both ontologically and relationally, thus expanding on the Greek concept of *perichoresis* in trinitarian theology.[6]

Jesus' first declaration of "The Father and I are one" (*heis eimi*) essentially revealed the dynamic existence (*eimi*, verb of existence) of their persons dwelling in each other together as one (*heis*). *Heis eimi* signifies the ontological oneness of the trinitarian persons in qualitative substance (or the traditional term consubstantial, *homoousios*), the nature of which cannot be differentiated in any of their persons from the whole of the triune God and differentiated in this sense from each other. Each trinitarian person is whole-ly God and an integral part of the whole of God, implying that each is incomplete without the others (pointing to the depth of pain Jesus shouted on the cross, Mt 27:46). Yet what Jesus disclosed is not the totality of God but only the whole of who and what God is and how God does relationship.

[6] For an overview of *perichoresis* in trinitarian theology, see Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *The Trinity: Global Perspectives* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007).

This raises two related theological issues to be aware of in this discussion. The first issue involves either reducing the persons of the Trinity (intentionally or inadvertently) into the whole of God's being such that they lose their uniqueness or 'personness', the loss of which becomes susceptible to modalism; or, on the other hand, overstating their uniqueness as persons opens the possibility of shifting into tritheism. The second issue involves reducing the whole of the Trinity (beyond our context in eternity called the immanent Trinity) into the so-called economic Trinity (directly involved with us in revelation for salvation) so that the transcendent God loses mystery.[7] This is not to imply two different Trinities but to clarify that God's self-revelation is only partial and thus provisional—not total, yet whole. Reducing the whole of each trinitarian person or the whole of God's being are consequential not only for our understanding of the triune God but also for understanding what is important about our persons and our relationships together in order to be whole in likeness of who, what and how God is.

In his formative family prayer, Jesus asked the Father that all his followers together may "be one as we are one" (Jn 17:11,21-22). To "be one" (*heis eimi*) is the same ontological oneness among his followers "just as" (*kathos*, in accordance with, have congruity with) God's ontological oneness (*heis eimi*); yet his followers' oneness does not include having ontological oneness *with* the triune God such that either they would be deified or God's being would become all of them (pantheism).

What Jesus prayed for that is included, however, involves his second declaration about his relationship with the Father that overlaps with their ontological oneness (*heis eimi*). "I am in the Father and the Father is in me" (*en eimi*, Jn 14:10-11) further reveals the ongoing existence (*eimi*) of their persons in the presence of and accompanied by (*en*) the other, thereby also signifying their relational oneness constituted by their intimate involvement with each other in full communion—just as their relationship demonstrated at his baptism, in his transfiguration, in the garden of Gethsemane and on the cross, along with the presence and function (*meno*) of the Spirit. This deep intimacy in relationship together (*en eimi*, their relational wholeness) is conjoined in the integral qualitative substance of their ontological oneness (*heis eimi*) to constitute the trinitarian persons in the indivisible and interdependent relationships together to be the whole of God, the Trinity as whole family. The integral reciprocating interaction of the ontological One and the relational Whole provides further functional understanding of *perichoresis*.

Their ontological and relational oneness constituted the embodied Word improbably beyond the explanation of physics and the understanding of metaphysics. The Son is the only one (*monogenes*) from outside the universe to fully exegete (*exegeomai*) the Father (Jn 1:18), not to merely inform us of the transcendent and holy God but to vulnerably make known the Father for intimate relationship together as his family (Jn 1:10-12), just as Jesus prayed (Jn 17:6,26). These relational aspects and functions provide the remaining basis for Jesus' claim that if we see the whole of his person we see the Father.

Whether before or after creation, God's action in relation to us is how God does relationship. This suggests *how* the triune God is throughout eternity because the righteous God cannot be inconsistent with the revelation of how God does relationship. This does not, however, define or describe the totality of the immanent Trinity, which

[7] For a discussion on these distinctions of the Trinity, see Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *The Trinity: Global Perspectives*.

cannot be reduced to only the economic Trinity—a differentiation which is helpful to maintain to counter reductionism. Definitively, we can only talk of God in relational terms of how the Trinity is with us—both before creation in anticipation of us and after with us in the human context to disclose the whole who, what and how of the Trinity..

If human persons are not or cannot be distinguished by the relational likeness of the Trinity, then human persons in relationships have no distinction from the social relatedness of all animals. Certainly, human history has strained for this clear distinction in human relations between persons, yet this reflects the human condition and not the nonexistence of the relational ontology of God constituting human likeness. The person in theological anthropology must have clear distinction by its created nature of "not good to be apart from the whole"; otherwise persons are not and cannot be distinguished (*pala*) in the human context and will merely reflect, reinforce or sustain the human condition.

2. With Other Persons in the Human Context

We also need to keep in clear distinction that the triune God does relationship in two distinct relational contexts, which certainly overlap yet must remain distinct in determining the terms for relationship. The improbable theological trajectory and intrusive relational path of the embodied whole of Jesus vulnerably addressed human persons in his relational language and not the prevailing referential language of the human context. The basis on which the terms for relationship are defined will determine what human ontology and function emerges, and thereby what persons emerge and how relationships unfold. This determining process is irreversible for both the human person and the human condition. Whole human ontology and function emerge from the relational terms in likeness of the Trinity, while reduced human ontology and function emerge from referential terms in unlikeness of the Trinity. For the relational outcome that distinguishes the person in God's relational likeness, it is vital to understand the relational language of the Word.

Basic to this relational language—implied in all communication, verbal and nonverbal, even during transmission with referential language—is imparting three *relational messages* implicit to what is communicated by sounds, gestures or words. These relational messages need to be distinguished for deeper understanding of the message communicated. All communication has not only a content aspect but also a relational aspect that helps us understand the significance of the content of communication. In these relational messages, which are usually implied, a person conveys to others one or all of the following messages:

1. Something about one's self, for example, how one sees, defines, or feels about oneself; Jesus' call to "Follow *me*" implies about his self that his whole person is vulnerably present and intimately involved, and is not about his teaching and example.
2. Something about one's view of the other(s), for example, how one sees, defines or feels about them; "*you* 'follow *me*'" implies that also your whole person is important, not what you have in resources or can do in service or mission as a disciple.
3. Something about their relationship together, for example, in what way one defines the relationship or what it means to that person; "*you* 'follow *me*' in *relationship*

together" implies about this relationship that it is very important to "*me*", and is the primary priority over serving.

These relational messages are vital to distinguish because they qualify the content aspect of all communication. The content alone of the words "follow me" easily become redefined by our terms, as demonstrated by prevailing inadequate interpretations for discipleship (even by the first disciples). Words by themselves, apart from the context of relational messages (e.g. tone of voice, look on one's face, speaking face to face or looking away), have less meaning, perhaps no meaning, or may even mean the opposite. As these relational messages are received and understood from the person communicating, there is a deeper basis for knowing that person and a fuller understanding of how to respond back.[8]

The significance of this relational language is found no more conclusively than in the Word's likely most compelling communication to us: "Follow me." And theological anthropology can be defined essentially as the unfolding of these relational words, which cannot be listened to in referential content but in the distinguished relational messages from the Word; this is demonstrated in Jesus' commonly misperceived interaction with Peter (Jn 21:15-22, to be discussed in chap. 5).

The relational language of the Word is further composed of these three relational messages, which integrally qualify the self-disclosures of the whole of God and help bring to light the needed understanding of God's whole thematic relational response to the human condition unfolding with the Word. Besides within the surrounding context, the deeper significance of the Word's words emerges in the relational context of understanding what the Word says of himself, or about other(s) or the relationship together, implied in his communication. The relational nature of the language and the messages from the whole Subject of the Word are irreducible and nonnegotiable for the relational outcome constituted by the Word, in and from the beginning, of the relationships together necessary to be whole, God's relational whole only on God's relational terms. This relational dynamic from outside the universe is vulnerably present and relationally involved with the unfolding of the Word to define and determine the whole nature of his message conjointly in the gospel and in his call.

The Trinity's relational involvement in the two relational contexts still involve the trinitarian relational context of family, and how God does relationship is consistent for both contexts. Moreover, in both contexts God still functions by the trinitarian relational process of family love. The enactment of family love, however, in the latter context requires a different relational process. Understanding the different relational processes is critical for our whole knowledge and understanding of the Trinity and trinitarian uniqueness, and inseparable for whole understanding of how we need to do relationship with the whole of God and with each other together to be whole.

For the whole and holy God to engage in relationship with us involves a very distinct relational process appearing both paradoxical and incompatible, which illuminates what matters most to God and therefore how God does relationships. In ultimate relational response to the human condition "to be apart," the Father extended his

[8] The conceptual dynamics of human communication are discussed in a classic study by Paul Watzlawick, Janet Helmick Beavin, Don D. Jackson, *Pragmatics of Human Communication: A Study of Interactional Patterns, Pathologies, and Paradoxes* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1967).

family love to us in the embodied trinitarian person of the Son (Jn 3:16-17). Yet, unlike how the trinitarian persons love each other in the Whole by a "horizontal" relational process between equals, the inherent inequality between Creator and creature necessitates a vertical relational process. This vertical process would appear to preclude the Trinity's intimate involvement in relational oneness (*en eimi*) as family together to be whole; that is a logical conclusion from interpreting this process separated from the whole relational context and process of God. Additionally critical to this vertical equation, the incompatibility between the holy God and sinful humanity compounds the difference of inequality between us. The perception of God's ultimate response from a quantitative lens might be that God reached down from the highest stratum of life to the lowest stratum of life to bridge the inequality, which certainly has some descriptive truth to it yet is notably insufficient both for understanding the Trinity and for an outcome beyond this intervention—for what Jesus saves us *to*.

More significantly, God pursues us from a qualitatively different context (holy, uncommon) in a qualitatively different process (eternal and relational) to engage us for relationship together only on God's terms in the trinitarian relational context of family and process of family love. That is to say, unlike the Trinity's "horizontal" involvement of family love, God had to initiate family-love action vertically downward to us in response to our condition "to be apart" in order to reconcile us to come together in compatible relationships *en eimi* the whole of God, relational wholeness together. The mystery of this response of God's relational grace can only be understood in a vertical process, which must be distinguished not only from the "horizontal" relational process of how the Trinity loves among themselves, but also from any horizontal process implied (and imposed on God) in the reductions of this vertical process—reductions signified by renegotiating relationship with God on our terms, for example, as anthropomorphic friends of Jesus, or be illusions and simulations of closeness. This subtle renegotiation of terms—functionally, not necessarily theologically—pervades Christian and church practice (cf. the early disciples and the churches in Jesus' post-ascension discourse, Rev 2-3). Yet, without God's family-love initiative downward, there would be no compatible relational basis for God to connect with us or for us to connect with God, both initially and ongoingly.

In this qualitative relational process, the whole and holy God can only love us by a vertical relational process because of the inherent inequality between us. God can only do relationships as God, which Jesus embodied, and never on any other terms, specifically ours, which points to our not having ontological oneness (*heis eimi*) with God. Nevertheless, in spite of God's obvious distinguished ontology and superior position and authority, in loving us downward the Son came neither to perpetuate nor to expand the quantitative and qualitative differences between us, though his working assumptions never denied the extent of those differences. Nor did he come to condemn us to or bury us in those differences (Jn 3:17), which Paul clarified theologically (Rom 8:1). In the qualitative difference of God's family love, the whole of Jesus vulnerably disclosed how God does relationship for relationship together to be whole, which the Spirit's relational work extends for us to experience this primacy of reciprocal relationship further and deeper to completion. It is vital for us to understand the implications of this qualitative relational process engaged by the whole of God (cf. Jesus' footwashing)—both in our relationship with the Trinity and in our relationships together

as church, then in our relations with others to embody the good news of whole relationship together.

For the eternal and holy God to be extended to us in family-love action downward required the mystery of some paradoxical sense of "reduction" of God (cf. Jn 17:4-5), suggesting a quantitative-like reduction (not qualitative) of God that appears incompatible to the whole of God. The action of God's family love downward underlies the basis for the functional differences in the Trinity revealed to us in the Scriptures—functional differences present in the Trinity even prior to creation yet differences only about God in relation to us (Jn 3:16, cf. Rom 8:29, Eph 1:4-5, 1 Pet 1:2, 1 Jn 4:9-10). These differences among the trinitarian persons appear to suggest a stratified order of their relationships together. Jesus indicated that "the Father is greater than I" (*meizon*, greater, larger, more, Jn 14:28) only in terms of quantitative distinctions for role and function but not for qualitative distinction of their ontology. There is indeed a stratification of function in the Trinity, yet their different functions only have significance in the relational process of enacting family love downward to us. Their functional differences correspond to the economic Trinity, and Scripture provides no basis for a stratified order of relationships in the immanent Trinity in eternity. In other words, their functional differences are provisional and cannot be used to define the relational ontology of the totality of God. To make that application to the transcendent triune God can only be an assumption, the theory of which says more about ourselves than God. What the embodied whole of the Word of God vulnerably disclosed helps us understand the Trinity sufficiently to preclude such an assumption.

As the Word of God who created all things, the Son embodied the most significant function of subordinating himself to extend family love downward (as Paul highlighted, Phil 2:6-8). This subordinate action of family love is further extended downward by the Spirit as the Son's relational replacement to complete what the Son established (Jn 14:16,18,26). God's initiative downward in the Son, however, must be distinguished from a view that the transcendent God needed an intermediary (i.e. Jesus) to do this for God—a form of Arianism that claims Jesus is less than God in deity, being or substance (*ousia*). Despite any apparent sense of quantitative reduction of God to enact family love downward, the incarnation was the nothing-less-and-no-substitute God revealing how the whole of God does relationship.

The relational context and process of God's focus on human persons (even before creation) and involvement with us (during and after creation) compose the functional differences in the Trinity necessary for God to love us downward. Each of the trinitarian persons has a distinct role in function together as the whole of God to extend family love in response to the human relational condition. Thus it is in this relational context and process that the Trinity's functional differences need to be examined to understand the significance of trinitarian uniqueness. There are two approaches to the Trinity's differences that we can take. One approach is a static and more quantitative descriptive account of their different functions and roles in somewhat fixed relationships, all composed in referential terms. For example, gender complementarians use this approach to establish the primacy of an authority structure within the Trinity that extends to marriage and usually to church. Meanwhile, many gender egalitarians use the same approach but come to different conclusions about the meaning of the Trinity's functional

differences—sometimes even to deny them; the primary focus remains on human leadership and roles also, though who occupies them is open to both genders.

The other approach to the Trinity's differences is more dynamic and qualitative, focusing on the relational process in which their differences occur. While this approach fully accounts for the different functions and roles in the Trinity, the relational significance of those functions involves how each of the trinitarian persons fulfilled a part of the total vertical relational process to love us downward as the whole of God, not as different parts of God. This is a pivotal distinction distinguishing God's relational work of love being vulnerably involved with us, from merely God's referential work of redemption to save us from sin. In this qualitative approach, the primary significance shifts from authority (or leadership) and roles to love and relationships. When churches assess their practice in terms of likeness of the Trinity, they need to understand which approach to the Trinity they use. For example, the successful and highly regarded churches in Ephesus and Sardis certainly must have had an abundance of leadership and role performance to generate the quantitative extent of their church practices, yet Jesus' post-ascension discourse exposed their major deficiency in the whole of God's primary function of love and primacy of whole relationship together (Rev 2-3). And, as Jesus made evident in this discourse, central to a church's assessment is the awareness of the influence of reductionism—the influence that narrows down qualitative sensitivity and relational awareness, notably to the limits of the quantitative and the secondary.

Understanding the relational significance of trinitarian differences requires more than the descriptive accounts of authority and roles; this is an observation made in referential terms. The more dynamic and qualitative approach by necessity goes beyond this to the qualitative whole of persons and relationships and the dynamic process in which they are involved to be whole and not fragmentary. This requires the theological framework that redefines persons not based on what they do (notably in roles) or have (namely authority) but on who and what they are in qualitative significance together, thus understanding relationships as a vulnerable process of the relational involvement in family love (as at Gethsemane) between such whole persons (unreduced by what they do or have) and not as relationships based merely on authority and roles (essentially reductionist distinctions, erased by Jesus' claims with the Father). Jesus' call composes only these persons and relationships. These qualitative relationships help us understand what is necessary to be whole as constituted in the Trinity, and whereby persons and the church are to live whole in likeness of the Trinity—which requires a compatible theological anthropology congruent with this theological trajectory and relational path and the persons and relationships together composing them.

When our relationships are defined and examined merely on the basis of roles, the focus is reduced to the quantitative definition of the person (at the very least by what one does in a role) and a quantitative description of relationships (e.g. a set of roles in a family) according to the performance of those roles. This is usually in a set order for different roles (as in a traditional family) or even mutually coexisting for undifferentiated roles (as in some non-traditional families). Yet this limited focus does not account for the variations that naturally occur in how a person sees a role, performs that role and engages it differently from one situation to another; for example, compare Jesus' initial prayer at Gethsemane of not wanting to go to the cross (Mt 26:39) with what he had clearly asserted in various situations earlier. Nor does this narrowed focus account for the

dynamic relational process in which all of this is taking place—the process necessary for roles to have relational significance; for example, examine Jesus' intimacy with the Father at Gethsemane and assess its significance for his role to die on the cross.

Moreover, when primacy is given to the Father's authority and role to define his person and also to constitute the relationships within the Trinity, this tends to imply two conclusions about the Trinity—if not as theological assumptions, certainly in how we functionally perceive God. The first implication for the Trinity is that everything is about and for primarily the Father (an assumption congruent with patriarchy); the Son and the Spirit are necessary but secondary in function to serve only the Father's desires. While there is some truth to this in terms of role description to extend love downward, the assumed or perceived functional imbalance reduces the ontological oneness (*heis eimi*) of the triune God, the ontological One. Interrelated, this imbalance created a further assumption or inadvertent perception of the Son's and Spirit's roles being "different thus less" (as in identity deficit) than the Father's, thereby operating in stratified relationships preventing the relational oneness (*en eimi*) necessary for the whole of God, the relational Whole. This points to the second implication for the Trinity, that such primacy of the Father also tends to imply a person who exists in relationships together without interdependence and essentially self-sufficient from the other trinitarian persons—similar to the function of individualism in Western families. This unintentional assumption or perception counters the ontological One and relational Whole by reducing the relational ontology of God as constituted in the Trinity, the innermost relational nature that is at the heart of who, what and how the whole of God is.

These two implied conclusions (or variations of them) about the Trinity are problematic for trinitarian theology, notably when integrated with the whole of Christology. They also have deeper implications for our practice of how we define persons, how we engage in relationships together and how these become primary for determining the practice of church, and in whose specific likeness our persons function and our church practice is—the three inescapable issues for ontology and function. While the priority of the Father's authority and role must be accounted for in the revelation available to us, our understanding of trinitarian functional differences deepens when examined in the relational context and process of the whole of God and God's thematic response to the human condition in the vertical process of love. God's self-revelation is about how the whole of God does relationship as the persons of the Trinity in response to us for relationship together in God's whole—the ultimate disclosure and response of which were embodied by the whole of Jesus. The keys for whole theology and practice emerge within this complete Christology.

In his vulnerable involvement of family love, Jesus confronted the relational human condition and restored persons (e.g. from reductionist human distinctions) to qualitative wholeness from inner out in relational terms in the relational likeness of the Trinity as God's own family. This was demonstrated in his relational interactions, for example, with the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:7-26), Levi (Mk 2:13-17), Zacchaeus (Lk 19:1-10), the prostitute (Lk 7:36-50), Martha's sister Mary (Lk 10:38-42), even including his mother Mary and beloved disciple John while on the cross (Jn 19:26-27)—making evident the qualitative innermost of the whole person in the qualitative image of God.

The ontological One and the relational Whole, which is the Trinity, is what the whole of Jesus embodied in his life and practice throughout the incarnation. Though

unique in function by their different roles in the whole of God's thematic relational response to the human condition, what primarily defines their trinitarian persons are not these role distinctions. To define them by their roles is to define the trinitarian persons by what they do, which would be a qualitative reduction of God to quantitative parts/aspects. This reduction makes role distinctions primary over the only purpose for their functional differences to love us downward, consequently reducing not only the qualitative substance of the Trinity but also the qualitative relational nature distinguishing God and its significance of what matters most to God, both as Creator and Savior.

For whole knowledge and understanding of God, role distinctions neither define the trinitarian persons nor determine their relationships together and how they do relationships with each other. God's self-disclosure is about God's relational nature and function only for relationship together. As disclosed of the persons of the Trinity, namely in the narratives of Jesus, the following relational summary can be made:

> The Father is how God does relationship as family—not about authority and influence; the Son is how God does relationship vulnerably—not about being the obedient subordinate; the Spirit is how God does relationship in the *whole*—not about the helper or mediator.

In their functional differences, God is always loving us downward for relationship together—to be whole, God's relational Whole.

The primacy of whole relationship together distinguishes the ontology and function of the Trinity. Anything less and any substitutes of the Trinity give primacy to secondary aspects, however important that aspect may be to the gospel. Therefore, we cannot utilize how each trinitarian person discloses an aspect of how God does relationship in loving downward in order to make reductionist distinctions between them, by which to eternally define their persons and determine their relationships, and by which we determine God's likeness in our persons and relationships. The consequence of such a reductionism of God alters the embodied whole of God's theological trajectory and relational path, with repercussions reverberating to the innermost. This reduces the primacy of the whole of God's desires, purpose and actions for redemptive reconciliation from our relational condition as well as ongoing tendency "to be apart." Furthermore, this reduction removes trinitarian uniqueness from the relational context of the eschatological big picture and from its relational process constituted by the primacy of how God does relationship within the Trinity and thereby in relationship to us. The shift from this primacy of the relationship of the Trinity reduces who, what and how God is and thereby can be counted on to be in relationship, that is, reduces the righteousness of God. The gospel then shifts away from this primacy and the experiential truth of whole relationship together to a referential truth of a truncated soteriology (only saved from sin without saved to God's whole). What irreducibly constitutes this nonnegotiable primacy in the Trinity's ontological One and relational Whole is how they function in their relationships *in* the whole of God *as* the whole of God and *for* the whole of God. This functional-relational oneness of the whole of God is not signified and cannot be constituted by their authority and roles. Primary function in the distinctions of authority and roles would not be sufficient to enable Jesus to say seeing him was seeing the Father, therefore would be

inadequate for God's whole ontology and function and our ontology and function in likeness.

This primacy of whole relationship together in the Trinity is irreducible to human contextualization and nonnegotiable to human shaping of relationships. The integral relationship of the Trinity is the righteousness of God that Jesus clearly made the primacy for his whole followers to seek first in God's kingdom-family to distinguish them from reductionism (Mt 6:33, cf. 5:20). The emphasis on authority and roles, however well-meaning, does not give us this primacy for relationships together to be whole as family in our innermost, nor is it sufficient to reconcile us from being apart—even if our relational condition "to be apart" only involves relational distance minimizing intimacy in our relationships. The further relational consequence of this emphasis strongly suggests relational and emotional orphans functioning in church as orphanage—no matter how successful and well-respected church practice is, as clearly exposed in the churches in Ephesus and Sardis by Jesus' post-ascension discourse for ecclesiology to be whole. Jesus disclosed definitively that this is not the likeness of the Trinity by which his church functions to be whole—at best only an ontological simulation and an epistemological illusion.

As the embodying of the whole of God and God's thematic relational action, Jesus is the relational and functional keys to the likeness of the Trinity necessary for the experiential truth of his gospel and its relational outcome in the relational significance of his church family. His declaration to be in the Father and the Father in him (*en eimi*) was not simply to inform us of the whole of God (*heis eimi*) but to provide the primary means to relationally know and experience the whole of God and relationally belong in God's family. As we understand this complete Christology, we more fully understand the deeper significance of his designation as "the only One." This primacy of whole relationship within the Trinity is distinguished only by their intimate communion and family love (Jn 3:35; Mk 1:11, Jn 5:20, Mt 17:5, Jn 14:31). Relationships of intimate communion and family love are both sufficient and necessary to constitute the whole of the triune God (*homoousios*) as well as to define the significance of the trinitarian persons (*hypostasis*) and to determine their integral relationships together (*perichoresis*). This intimate communion of family love is what matters most *to* God because it illuminates what's innermost *in* God and distinguishes what's most significant *of* God—not authority, different roles, unique functions—and what the whole of God saves *to*. This is the depth of what "the only One" foremost calls us to experience in relationship together *en eimi* with the Trinity, the relational Whole, and on this irreducible and nonnegotiable basis expects his distinguished followers to live *heis eimi* with each other for the ontological oneness of his church family in likeness of the Trinity, the ontological One—in fulfillment of his formative family prayer (Jn 17).

Therefore, our intimate relational involvement of family love signifies both the relational oneness with the Trinity in ongoing communion in the life of the triune God, and the relational and ontological oneness of God's family as church living to be whole in likeness of the relational ontology of the Trinity. This relational oneness is not about a structure of authority and roles, or a context determined by such distinctions, but oneness only from the function of relationships in the intimate relational process of family love. These ongoing dynamic relationships of family love, however, necessitate by its nature the qualitative innermost of God (Mt 5:8) and thus relationships only on God's terms (Jn

14:21; 15:9-10; 17:17-19). Intimate communion with the whole of the triune God cannot be based only on love, because God is holy. This relationship requires compatibility of qualitative innermost, and therefore the need for our transformation in order to have intimate relationship with the holy God. God's love downward does not supersede this necessity, only provides for it. Further interrelated, the whole of God's relational work of grace constitutes the redemptive reconciliation for our relationships in his family to be transformed to equalized and intimate relationships together necessary to be God's whole on God's whole relational terms, that is, in relational likeness of the whole of God.

In creation, God constituted the human person in the image of the qualitative innermost of the whole of God signified by the function of the heart, not in dualism but in wholeness (Gen 2:7). The trinitarian persons and human persons in likeness cannot be separated or reduced from this qualitative innermost and still be defined as whole persons. This wholeness signified by the heart is what the Father seeks in worshippers (Jn 4:23-24) to be in his presence to experience him (*horao*, Mt 5:8), and what the Son searches in church practice to be whole (Rev 2:23). This primacy of the heart challenges the level of our qualitative sensitivity and relational awareness and our assumptions of theological anthropology. The qualitative significance of the heart is an integral necessity for the primary definition of the person from inner out, both trinitarian and human, not the secondary definition of what they do (roles) or what they have (authority) from outer in, and therefore is vital for both human ontology and the ontology of the Trinity.

Complete Christology provides the keys necessary for trinitarian theology and thereby for theological anthropology to be whole. The Cappadocian fathers (between 358-380) formulated the initial doctrine of the Trinity by distinguishing the trinitarian persons (*hypostasis*) from substance (*ousia*) to clarify relationality; but they advanced the person as ontologically more important than substance in order to give priority to the relationality of the triune God—establishing a social trinitarianism—though for the Cappadocians their persons were based on begottenness and spiration. While this significantly countered the prevailing idea of God's essence as unrelated (or nonrelational), complete Christology does not allow reducing the importance of the qualitative substance of God—that is, the innermost of God who functions from inner out in the primacy of the heart. Jesus vulnerably disclosed his person and the innermost of his heart interacting together in relationship with the Father to make definitive both as necessary to define the whole of God (the ontological One) and the relationships (threeness) necessary to be whole (the relational Whole). In other words, God's whole relational terms composes only the primacy of both intimate and equalized reciprocating relationships together.

This lack of understanding the ontological One and relational Whole in trinitarian theology creates a gap in understanding the Trinity and as a result a gap in human function and church practice based on likeness of the Trinity. Complete Christology provides whole understanding of the qualitative significance of God to more deeply understand the relationality of the Trinity.[9] In trinitarian theology, the predominant explanatory basis for relationality has been the Greek idea of *perichoresis*: the

[9] For a broader development of this trinitarian theology, see my overlapping studies *The Person, the Trinity, the Church: the Call to be Whole and the Lure of Reductionism* (2006), and *Sanctified Christology: A Theological and Functional Study of the Whole of Jesus* (2008), online at http://www.4X12.org.

interpenetration of the trinitarian persons in dynamic interrelations with each other. The importance of *perichoresis* is certainly critical for our perceptual-interpretive framework (notably of Western influence) and it may be a conceptually more complete term to define the ontology of the Trinity. But this idea of relationality needs further and deeper understanding because it lacks the functional clarity to be of relational significance both to more deeply know the whole of God and to intimately experience who, what and how God is in relationship together. The Eastern church, rooted in trinitarian theology from the Cappadocians, appears to lack this functional clarity in their ecclesial practice based on the Trinity.[10] If this is accurate, I would explain this as primarily due to the functional absence of the whole person in their relationships together as church—given the reduction of *ousia* inadvertently diminishing the function of the heart and as a result unintentionally minimizing intimacy together. This shape of relationship together would not be the likeness of the Trinity. The whole of Jesus provides this clarity in how he vulnerably functions with his person in relationships throughout the incarnation—signifying his intrusive relational path—for which he holds his church accountable by family love as demonstrated in his post-ascension discourse on ecclesiology for be whole (summarized in Rev 3:19).

Without this clarity to establish relational significance, our Christian life and practice function less relationally specific in involvement with the whole of God—though the intention may be there—and as a result we function as persons and practice church apart from (lacking involvement in) the relationships necessary to be whole as God's family constituted in the Trinity, even though the idea may be understood. The lack of functional clarity has immeasurable ramifications for how the human person is perceived in the image of God and how our persons together were created in likeness of the Trinity, both of which are necessary for *imago Dei*. And the absence of clarity diminishes how those persons in God's image function in relationship together necessary to reflect the Trinity's likeness, as well as to represent God's whole and build God's family—all counter to Jesus' prayer distinguishing persons (both ours and God's) in the human context (Jn 17:20-23). This lack of the qualitative image and relational likeness of the whole of God opens the door to and tends to result in ontological simulations and epistemological illusions of the whole with reductionist substitutes from the human shaping of relationships together—the prevailing condition even in our churches and academy today. This is not the door that Jesus' relational and functional keys open, as he told the church in Philadelphia (Rev 3:7), which is why Jesus still knocks on many church doors for relationships together to be made whole—just as he did with the church in Laodicea (Rev 3:19-20).

The need for our fuller and deeper understanding of the Trinity goes beyond to be merely informed about God, which *perichoresis* tends to do. We need this whole understanding (*synesis*) to experience the whole of God for relationship, as the early disciples' lack with Jesus demonstrated (Jn 14:9). This is the only purpose of God's self-disclosure vulnerably embodied in the whole of Jesus, making complete Christology the necessary antecedent for trinitarian theology. In the incarnation, the whole of God ultimately emerges and converges for this relationship together, which Jesus intimately

[10] For a modern Eastern view conceptualizing personal being as a communal ontology of the Trinity and the church, see Eastern theologian John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985).

disclosed in functional clarity and experiential truth: to be relationally involved with God as whole persons together in the whole of God's family constituted in and by the Trinity. Jesus' call is composed by this relational language and terms. The whole experience of this relational reality of God's whole without reduction of its relational truth (e.g. to referential truth) has been the integrating theme of the Trinity's relational response to our human condition "to be apart" from the whole from the beginning in the primordial garden. Indeed, the whole of God's desires were formulated even before creation to restore us to the whole in the new creation, to be completed by the Spirit in God's eschatological plan concluding with the Son partaking of the last Passover cup at the ultimate table fellowship (cf. Mk 14:25).

As the Son fulfilled his earthly function to vulnerably embody God's family love downward to constitute his whole followers in the whole of God's family, his relational replacement, the Spirit, extends this family love by his reciprocal relational work to bring their new creation family to its ultimate relational conclusion. Trinitarian uniqueness emerges and integrally unfolds in complete Christology, which establishes the relational significance of the Spirit and his reciprocal relational work: as 'the presence of the ontological One and relational Whole' who continues to be vulnerably involved in relationship to distinguish and raise up to completion whole persons in whole relationships together in the qualitative image and relational likeness of God (2 Cor 3:17-18). Our theological anthropology cannot ignore the third person of the Trinity but must also engage this person ongoingly in the relational epistemic process for the knowledge and understanding necessary both for the whole of God and for the whole human person (Jn 15:26; 16:13-15; 1 Cor 2:9-16) and persons together in wholeness (Eph 2:19-22).

Distinguishing Theological Anthropology

The person in whole ontology and function cannot be distinguished without knowing and understanding and experiencing the qualitative image and relational likeness of the whole of God. As Job learned and theological anthropology needs to learn in relational terms, this knowledge and understanding are only accessed and received in the relational context and process of God's communicative action (the relational language of God's revelation, Job 42:3-6). God's self-disclosure is whole-ly distinguished solely in whole relational terms by the embodied Word as Subject person, who engaged the improbable theological trajectory and intrusive relational path (Jn 1:14,18) that constituted the vulnerable presence and relational involvement of the whole of God for our experience in relationship. That is to say, the relationship of God is distinguished and thus experienced only by relationship together from inner out signified by heart level involvement, therefore by intimate reciprocal relationship equalized in wholeness (as Jesus prayed, Jn 17:3, 6-8, 20-26). It is solely within the relational context and process of God's communicative action disclosed by the whole of Jesus that the image and likeness of God is understood and experienced in whole relational terms, not as mere knowledge in fragmentary referential terms. Anything less and any substitute of this person in our theological anthropology will be insufficient, and even distorted, to define and determine our person created in God's image and likeness—unable to distinguish the whole person in God's context ("not of the world") who is distinct from the human context while in it.

Moreover, to understand and experience this whole ontology and function in relational terms requires—without reduction or negotiation—reciprocal relational involvement with Jesus' person in "Follow after the whole of me," therefore also with the Father's person in family together, and with the Spirit's person for the relational conclusion.

In other words, theological anthropology cannot be discussed in whole terms unless the person is first experiencing the relational outcome of whole ontology and function with the Trinity. This is neither optional nor reducible to an overly Christocentric theology and practice. Accordingly, this relational outcome does not emerge from a theory, nor is there integral significance in our theological anthropology apart from this vulnerable involvement of our whole person (signified by heart not mind) in the primacy of relationship with the whole of God's vulnerable presence and relational involvement—that is, not mere association with God (e.g. engaged on the referential level of the mind) but the compatible response to God's that is congruent with God's relational context and process for reciprocal relationship together. This is the only person distinguishing theological anthropology in whole ontology and function, and whom our theological anthropology can distinguish in God's context composing Jesus' call.

Job's discourse on the person in God's context was composed with speculation, educated guesses if you wish. There were limits to his knowledge to understand what was indeed distinguished (*pala*) beyond the human context (Job 42:3), which required his epistemic humility to engage the relational epistemic process with God for necessary epistemological clarification and hermeneutic correction. This is the responsibility of theological anthropology that, by its theological nature, it must fully assume in order to *pala* the person in God's context.

Distinguishing the person in our theological anthropology depends on 'the presence of the Whole' in relational terms to jointly constitute theological anthropology's whole ontology and function as well as to expose any of its reduced ontology and function in our theology and practice. From the beginning, therefore, theological anthropology is the relational outcome of the integral dynamic of God's creative action and relational response of grace constituting the whole of God's presence and involvement to define and determine human ontology and function in the qualitative image and relational likeness of the Trinity. Based on the ongoing presence of the ontological One and relational Whole, it should be unmistakable also from the beginning to the present that anything less and any substitute of this whole is not theological anthropology but a distinctly different 'humanistic anthropology': namely, anthropology shaped and constructed by the epistemic limits of the human context and by the hermeneutical, relational and ontological constraints of the human condition. These limits and constraints are interrelated but the influence of the latter is notably the relational consequence of human self-determination explicitly or implicitly apart from God's context (cf. "to be desired to make one wise"), which results in anthropomorphic and anthropocentric human ontology and function lacking wholeness.

Theoretical models of the human person (e.g. generated by physical and social sciences) are at best constructed by incomplete knowledge—without even accounting for a biased hermeneutic lens—and thereby are insufficient to understand the human person and cannot be the basis for our theological anthropology (as Job learned). According to its nature, theological anthropology clarifies and integrates the knowledge of the human person illuminated by the Creator and magnified by the embodied Word for the integral

significance necessary to understand the whole of human ontology and function. The heuristic epistemic process of theological anthropology, therefore, inevitably involves deconstruction of other models of the human person in order for the epistemic clarification and hermeneutic correction needed to distinguish the whole person—which includes our models of the person and relationships that reflect more the influence from human contextualization. Also, within theological anthropology discourse past and present, I include dualism (body and soul), nonreductive physicalism (with the primacy of supervenience), and their emergent variations, in the category of models of reduced ontology and function needing deconstruction, epistemological clarification and/or hermeneutic correction.

Whether humanistic anthropology (e.g. from science) has validity in any aspect of human ontology and function is contingent on its compatibility and/or congruence with theological anthropology. Moreover, regardless of some aspect of humanistic anthropology having validity, it can only serve to support theological anthropology and by itself cannot be definitive of human ontology and function. Due to the nature of humanistic anthropology's limits in its epistemic process, its results are merely based on fragmentary knowledge and thus understanding that can never be complete and therefore whole (as physicist Hawking learned about the universe, noted previously). Humanistic anthropology, however, can be useful in the heuristic process—for example, to help integrate the physical outer with the qualitative inner yet without determinism—which God uses in the relational epistemic process to help us understand the theological anthropology of whole ontology and function.

This epistemic and methodological distinction is critical for the unmistakable nature of theological anthropology to be distinguished from humanistic anthropology. The latter at best can only be secondary to the primary emerging from and constituted by God's relational context and process. On this relational basis alone can our theological anthropology be distinguished and, thereby, whole-ly distinguish our person's ontology and function in the qualitative image and relational likeness of the whole of God—nothing less and no substitutes.

Chapter 5 Whole Ontology and Function *into* the Human Context

Walk *with* me and be *whole.*
Gen 17:1

Up to the time I became a Christian (at age 20) I tried to be a white person and not feel self-conscious as less in my minority status. Even as a little kid, I was always self-conscious of having a small nose compared to the pronounced ("enormous") size of my classmates' noses (males and females), and of having colored skin—where "yellow" also meant being a coward and weak, a yellow-belly, "don't be yellow!" as the saying goes. After I became a Christian, I tried to be a white Christian because that was the prevailing model of what a Christian was supposed to be. I eventually rejected defining myself by a distinctly deficit model—where being different from a dominant status/model always means being less—and shifted to become a minority Christian (notably Asian American).

The presence of the whole (not white), however, increasingly convicted my person-consciousness that I was still defining my person from outer in, engaged in a comparative process of self-consciousness that continued to reduce me to what I had (as a minority) and fragmented my person into the parts of what I did (even in serving God). Not only did I have to address the question of my person "Where are you?" but as a dedicated Christian I also had to confront the question "What are you doing here?" (as Elijah was, 1 Kg 19:9). My person-consciousness would not avoid the reality that I wasn't distinguished (beyond self-conscious comparison) as the person God created (original and new) in whole ontology and function.

God's ongoing (read pursuing) relational response of grace challenged the basic assumptions I was making about the person God created, what it means to be that person and what God expects from this person. Ironically, even most resources on Christian growth and spiritual formation made the same assumptions, yet not surprisingly due to an underlying theological anthropology inadequately, if not incorrectly, defining the person. God's continued vulnerable presence and relational involvement urgently challenges the same assumptions of theological anthropology in order to distinguish its two vital issues further defined (introduced earlier in chap. 4):

1. What does it mean to live in whole ontology and function as the person God created who is not "to be apart"?
2. What does God expect from this whole person while in the human context in order to distinguish the person from "to be apart"?

The integral focus distinguishing theological anthropology involves knowing and understanding what it means for human persons to be whole, God's qualitative and relational whole in the human context. Therefore, theological anthropology must provide this critical perceptual-interpretive framework and lens for the person and persons in

relationship together to be whole, to live whole in the human context and to make whole the human condition; and conjointly, to provide the necessary epistemological clarification and hermeneutic correction for these persons to expose any reduced ontology and function that renders them "to be apart".

Integral Identity from the Beginning

When God was grieved by how persons functioned in the human context, Noah was the exception whom God identified as a righteous and blameless person who walked with God (Gen 6:5-9). In God's relational response of grace to the human condition, God constituted a relational covenant with Abraham, whose reciprocal relational response gave account of Abraham's involvement as righteousness (Gen 12:1-4; 15:4-6, cf. Rom 4:3,11; Gal 3:6). God also made definitive the terms for relationship together: Abraham's ongoing reciprocal relational response in righteousness was, irreducibly and nonnegotiably, "walk before me and be blameless" (Gen 17:1). What distinguished their identity with the equation using the metric of righteousness and blameless?

There is an integral identity emerging from the beginning that signifies the ontology and function of persons who are distinguished in the human context—which our theological anthropology must compose with nothing less and no substitutes. As discussed previously, righteousness (*ṣĕdāqâh*) needs to be understood as a relational term in relational language (notably in a juridical process about a covenant), which involves the relational dynamic of the whole of who, what and how a person is that others can count on to be this whole person in relationship together—a trust essential to significant relationships, without which render relationships tentative, shallow or broken. Righteousness in referential terms becomes an attribute merely describing information about someone, which is insufficient to account for the dynamic function of the whole person's relational involvement. For God, the ancient poet declares, righteousness is the ongoing determinant that establishes God's relational path—the whole of who, what and how God is that can be counted on in relationship (Ps 85:13). In relational terms, righteousness confirms that the person presented to others in relationship is truly the person one says one is.

In other words, righteousness is critical for the identity of persons (including God) to be distinguished from prevailing identities in the human context that do not identify the whole person; righteousness composes a true identity of the person. Yet, integral to this identity distinguishing persons in righteousness is the further relational dynamic to be *tamiym* (blameless), which also must be understood as a relational term in relational language. What is the relational function of *tamiym*?

Regarding what's expected of the person God created and living as that person in the human context, we know the following: the qualitative innermost that constitutes the whole person from inner out is the function of the heart, which is the unmistakable function that God expects and seeks. The heart's qualitative function is embodied in relational terms by righteousness to involve the true identity of the person from inner out, and not an identity of something less or some substitute from outer in (as shaped in human history from the beginning). This relational function is further embodied by *tamiym*.

The heart signifies the unmistakable function of what God seeks: the whole person, nothing less and no substitutes. When God made conclusive to Abraham the terms for covenant relationship together, the LORD appeared to him directly and said clearly in order to constitute Abraham's relational response: "Walk before me, and be blameless" (Gen 17:1). That is, "be involved with me in relationship together by being blameless (*tamiym*)." The tendency is to render "blameless" as moral purity and/or ethical perfection (cf. Gen 6:9), notably in Judaism by observance of the law (cf. 2 Sam 22:23-24). With this lens, even Paul perceived his righteousness as "blameless" (Phil 3:6). Yet *tamiym* denotes to be complete, whole, and is not about mere moral and ethical purity. Beyond this limited perception, *tamiym* involves the ontology of being whole, namely the whole person from inner out involved in the primacy of relationship together. Integrated with righteousness, *tamiym* completes the relational function to involve jointly the true and whole identity of the person—the integral identity embodied by Noah and Abraham that God expects of persons in reciprocal relationship together.

In God's relational nature, the only way God engages in covenant relationship is by reciprocal relationship and never by unilateral relationship. The relational terms of reciprocal relationship together require the whole person's involvement, which then requires the human agency of a person's will to fulfill the terms for reciprocal relationship with righteousness and being whole. God holds human persons responsible for their human agency created for reciprocal relationship and holds accountable their choices of will in relationship together both in God's context and the human context—"Where are you?" and "what are you doing here?"

From the beginning, however, this integral identity has been diminished or minimalized under various assumptions (most notably "You will not be reduced"), even with epistemological illusion (e.g. "your eyes will be opened") and ontological simulation (ultimately, "you will be like God"). The focus on purity, for example, was problematic, and still is today in Christian ethics in terms of ethical perfection. In Israel's history purity often was measured functionally by a code shaped by human contextualization, and thus focused more on what persons were responsible to do (fragmentary quantitative behavior) rather than on the primary function of being involved in relationship together (integral qualitative behavior, cf. 1 Sam 15:22; Jer 7:22-23; Hos 6:6; Mic 6:6-8; Mt 5:21-48). When such practice was operating, this demonstrated a redefinition of human ontology from inner out to outer in, thereby reducing persons to the measured indicators of what they did and had—and measured in a comparative process of self-consciousness to quantify a basis for human boasting (cf. Jer 9:23; Mk 7:5,14-19; Acts 10:13-14). Moreover, in this reductionist process the metric for Israel's identity became more about land and nation-state rather than about a people and covenant relationship together, more about religious culture (e.g. ethnocentricism with quantitative identity markers) and politics (e.g. nationalism), rather than about the primacy of relationship together (both corporate and personal) in the image and likeness of God and having theological significance as God's relational whole on God's relational terms. In other words, Israel's history became the frequent narrative of God's people diminishing the covenant relationship and their identity by getting defined, determined, embedded, even enslaved, in the surrounding human context (cf. Jer 3:10; 12:2; Eze 33:31). This identity equation also applied to the tradition of certain Pharisees during Paul's time (see

Jesus' penetrating analysis, Mt 15:1-20, cf. the Qumran Essenes' critique[1]); more importantly, this reductionism pointed to the integral basis for Jesus' nonnegotiable terms for relationship together: that our righteousness be distinguished beyond these particular Pharisees (Mt 5:20).

These reductions all fragmented the integrated functional and relational significance of *tamiym* that God made conclusive to constitute Abraham in covenant relationship together. To be "blameless" by its nature must be fully integrated with *what* and *who* God seeks to be involved with, which cannot be measured by mere quantitative and referential terms. Therefore, "blameless" is both inseparable from the qualitative function of the heart and irreducible of the ontology of the whole person from inner out, whose true identity can only be embodied by the relational function of righteousness. As a Pharisee who rigorously observed the law, Paul had considered his righteousness to be "blameless" (Phil 3:6). Yet Jesus previously had exposed the reductionist practices of certain Pharisees in Paul's day and their underlying ontology of the person from outer in without the significance of the heart (as noted above). The critical assessment of one's faith must account for the ontology of the whole person. That is to say, to be blameless is nothing less and no substitutes for being whole as created in the image and likeness of the whole of God. For Abraham, this was the integrated functional and relational significance of his involvement with God signifying his faith, and therefore constituting the necessary relationship together of the covenant on God's relational terms from inner out, which is embodied just by righteousness.

This integral relational function of righteousness and *tamiym* is beautifully embodied by the wisdom of the ancient poet when he uses *shalom* to express the wholeness of *tamiym*: "righteousness and wholeness will kiss each other" (Ps 85:10)—indeed, since they are functionally inseparable in the bond of the primacy of relationship. It is on the basis of this integrated functional and relational significance that those whose life and practice are *tamiym* in the primacy of their relational work are blessed along with Abraham (cf. Ps 119:1). Paul did not receive this blessing on the Damascus road for his rigorous faith as a Pharisee and intense service to God (albeit persecuting the church). On the contrary, *tamiym* signifies the *epistemological clarification* and *hermeneutical correction* he experienced instead. It is this definitive whole that redefined Paul's person from inner out and newly determined his life, practice, thought and theology. What further defines this whole that God expects persons to be in relationship together?

First, we cannot think or describe in quantitative static terms that which is qualitatively dynamic, though not the same as being 'in process'. In the whole's functional significance, being whole or wholeness is understood as involving necessarily the following:

> Being whole, wholeness, constitutes the ongoing life and function of the whole of God (the Trinity), who created human life and function with the ontology of the person in the qualitative image of God, and thus the person was created whole signified by the qualitative function of the heart; this function of the person is integrated inseparably to the created design and purpose for relationships and the relational involvement necessary together to be whole in likeness of the relational ontology of the Trinity—nothing less and no substitutes (cf. Gen 1:27; 2:18; Col

[1] See 4QNah 1:2,7; 2:2-3; 3:3,8.

> 3:10-11). Therefore, the individual person alone is never sufficient to complete being whole, no matter what substance is attributed to the individual; to be whole by its created nature in the image and likeness of the whole of God involves also the relationships together necessary to be whole, God's relational whole. This also is signified by how each person in the Trinity is understood (as discussed in chap. 4). No trinitarian person alone is the whole of God. That is, each trinitarian person is whole-ly God but is not complete in being the whole of God apart from the other trinitarian persons; necessarily by its nature only the three trinitarian persons together constitute the relational ontology of the Trinity—in whose likeness human persons in relationship together have been created and thus must function together by its nature to be whole, God's relational whole.

Anything less and any substitutes are reductions of the whole—that is, "to be apart" in ontology and function—thus can never reflect, experience or represent wholeness; at best they are only the ontological simulations and functional illusions from reductionism and its counter-relational workings. These are critical ongoing issues that Christians in their theological anthropology need to better understand to distinguish the person God created and expects to live while in the human context.

Unfolding in tense juxtaposition with the integral identity emerging from the beginning is a diminished or minimalized identity equation for persons. To be whole in ontology and function is to live distinguished (*pala*) beyond the comparative process of human distinctions that define and determine persons in reduced ontology and function—as in human context's prevailing models (e.g. determining Israel, 1 Sam 8:5,18-20), promoted ideals (e.g. defining the early disciples, Lk 9:46; 22:24), and pervading templates (e.g. the influence of social media today). Living according to the comparative process of human distinctions requires a perceptual-interpretive framework and lens that makes an underlying assumption of defining persons by what they do and have from outer in. This self-definition becomes primary also for how others are defined, and, on this basis, how relationships are engaged, which then determines how relationships together (e.g. as church) are practiced—the three inescapable issues for our ontology and function (discussed previously in chap. 3).

What equation and metric we pay attention to or ignore in the created narrative due to our interpretive lens is critical to whether the whole identity of the person emerges or a diminished, minimalized identity unfolds. The qualitative innermost of the image of God in God's relational likeness defines the whole ontology and function of human persons (Gen 1:26-27). In the first creation narrative immediately after this definition in the image and likeness of God, the work of human persons is described (1:26b) and the purpose human persons are to fulfill (1:28). Our perception of the person and person-consciousness become problematic if the above order is inverted (if only by emphasis) and the primary source of defining the human person becomes "the work"—that is, basing the person on what we do, no matter how God-related or directed. Such a focus is consequential for the whole person and the whole of God.

The human persons' choice away from the relational terms of God precipitated conditions outside the primordial garden that would make work difficult (Gen 3:17-19) and human purpose a struggle (3:15-16). Life as God created is not being redefined here; God's created design and purpose remain unaltered. Yet, what is subject to redefinition is

the human person's self-perception—influenced by the workings of "who told you that you were naked?"—making it now problematic how the person functions; work, for example, was never to be done in any manner. Nowhere is the susceptibility to redefining the person and person-consciousness greater than in relation to work (or what we do) outside the primordial garden. It is vital to reexamine this influence on our practice after this pivotal shift in the primordial garden and how it affects our perceptual-interpretive framework determining what we pay attention to or ignore, thus predisposing us even to inadvertent or unintentional practices. This is of critical importance for how we see the person today and what human activity determines person-consciousness distinguished from self-consciousness—the function of theological anthropology.

The significance of "work made difficult" is not about how hard it can be but about its controlling influence on the person such that work becomes what defines that person from outer in. This influence tends to be enslaving, if not in quantitative ways (for example, time and energy), certainly on more qualitative matters (like self-worth). "*Who* you are" becomes about "what you do." And "*what* you are" becomes determined by how much you accomplish in "what you do"—notably measured in a comparative process with others. In this process a great deal is at stake here—and the drive for a payoff can be consuming. Consequently, the primary investments made in this lifestyle are bonded to work-related activity (vocational and avocational). Invariably, then, this process of defining ourselves by what we do or have becomes an unavoidable comparative process in relation to other persons, thus creating quantitative distinctions between persons, with relational consequences—notably stratified relationships, which, when formalized, become systems of inequality (the basis for Paul's concern, Gal 3:26-28; 5:6; 6:15).

At the very least, defining the person by what one does conflicts with how God created us and thus defines us; and it inverts the created order by designating (even inadvertently) secondary matter (like work to be done, even if assigned by God) to the primary position, thus reducing (even unintentionally) the primary matter of God's qualitative relational design and purpose for the person and relationships to a lower priority in actual practice. This consequence can happen despite having a theology in place affirming the primacy of God's design and purpose—a consequence often seen among Christian workers while doing Christian service. This not only reduces the whole of God's qualitative innermost transplanted into us but also conflicts with it, and thus counters God's expectations of the person as one lives in the human context—no matter how sacrificial and dedicated to God.

The often subtle shift in the identity equation to redefining the person away from the qualitative significance of the heart increasingly becomes quantitative (things measured in quantified terms for more certainty, or identified primarily by rationality for more control), increasingly transposes the secondary over the primary, and shapes substitutes for the qualitative significance of persons distinguished in the image and likeness of God. This shift amplifies human consciousness of the parts that compose human distinctions—that is, heightens self-consciousness of what we do and have in order to define (or measure up) ourselves in a comparative process. As this self-consciousness increases, there is a correlated decrease in person-consciousness. Accordingly, as person-consciousness fades, there is a proportional decrease in a person's qualitative sensitivity and relational awareness. The lack of qualitative sensitivity and relational awareness is a critical condition for the person in the human context, resulting

in a self increasingly distant from the heart and in relationships, that is, increasingly "to be apart" and unable to live in ontology and function by the qualitative image and relational likeness of God.

Critically, this pivotal shift has immediate, though often not apparent, relational consequences: This reductionism not only conflicts with how God created us and thereby defines us, it conflicts with how God vulnerably is involved with us, therefore confounding relationship with God. Theological anthropology needs to understand this relationship in its reciprocal nature and the whole person in compatible relational terms in order to whole-ly distinguish God's design, purpose and desires that are indeed distinguished from "to be apart".

From the beginning Adam was not created for what he could do and the activity simply of *doing something*, whether work related or not, though a part of his function was to work. We can essentially define this aspect of work as what we connote by the function of making a living. In creation, however, work was not designed for this end in itself; accordingly, work could not be done in any manner but was engaged on two distinct terms. When God "put the man in the primordial garden to work" (Gen 2:8,15), it was clear the Creator established ("put" *siym*, establish, appoint) this creature in the work. Thus, the first term for work was that it was to be undertaken within the functional context as creature in relationship to Creator—that is, *the relational context*. Secondly, God was clear about the terms (command, desires, 2:16) for engaging work in this context and that involvement in this necessary relational context was only on God's terms—thus, *the relational process* defined by God, the whole and holy God beyond the universe. These two distinct terms for work are significant only as relational terms; referential terms may reference the information of these terms but they do not compose their qualitative function in the primacy of relationship.

This relational context and process of creation are fundamental for a valid function of work and most importantly are intrinsic to the primary function of the whole person as created in the likeness of the triune God. This integral dynamic constitutes the basis that distinguishes persons and relationships. How a person functions is determined by how the person is defined and perceived in this relational context and process. This definition of the person determines not only how we do work but even more significant to God also determines how we do relationships together. How we do relationship with God is determined by our relational involvement and reciprocal response as whole persons to the whole being of God, yet not by our referential terms but only on God's relational terms. The relational context and process of how we engage in relationship with God is signified by the reciprocal relational involvement of worship and not defined by how we do work for God, even though serving is part of our response of worship—part of a complete relational response.

It is not a coincidence that the term for "work" ('*abad*, 2:15) is the same term used for worship in the OT denoting service. The authentic worship of God must also involve the relational response of service distinctly based on relational submission, adoration and praise, always defined in relational terms to distinguish the primacy of relationship together. These responses together (forming the acronym PASS) constitute worship and signify how to engage in relationship with God; worship is the functional *pass* to the intimate presence of God. Therefore, *how* work (or service) is to be done must function by engaging in this primary relational purpose as designed by the Creator in

relationship with the created person. Without involvement in this relational context and process, work (or service) has no relational significance to God and thus has either little meaning or no qualitative fulfillment for the person created in God's image. Reductionism of any dimension of creation has far-reaching repercussions on our person today, on our relationships and consequently on how relationships together as church is practiced.

We need to more deeply understand in function that the person was created with a qualitative function intrinsic to God, the quality of which work (or doing something, even service) by itself did not have (a condition God defined as "not good," Gen 2:18); and, therefore, the function of work (or what we do, even for God) could not fulfill this qualitative function—no matter the nature of the work nor the extent of experience from it. This qualitative function for the human person that God implanted in creation was whole-ly relational. God "breathed" in us the primacy of relationship in likeness to the whole of the triune God, by which the Trinity is intimately involved with each other and now intimately involved with us.

In the creation narrative (Gen 2:18) God may appear focused on the work as the purpose for which Eve was created. That emphasis would be inconsistent with how God defines the person and, once again, would invert the primary priority of God's created design and purpose. Further, this emphasis on what we do becomes problematic because it predisposes us in a reductionist interpretive framework affecting not only how we define ourselves but also how we do relationships and thus how we practice church. This includes how spiritual gifts are perceived and the emphasis on giftedness to define the person and to appoint church leadership. We need to return to God's created order so that we can more deeply understand both our person and also understand God, including the nature of both as well as our relationship together.

"To be alone" (*bad*) is necessarily rendered "to be apart" in God's created order, because it illuminates the whole in creation from which "is not good to be apart." The difference between "to be alone" and "to be apart" is immeasurable since for Adam it was not just the secondary matter of having no one to share space with, no one to keep him company or to do things with (particularly the work). "To be apart" is not just a situational condition but most importantly a relational condition. A person can be alone in a situation but also feel lonely in the company of others, at church, even in a family or marriage because of relational distance—"to be apart." This rendering is more reflective of the dynamic process of relationship in God's created design and purpose—and needs to replace the conventional "to be alone" not only in our reading but in our theology and practice.

What the person Adam (thus all persons) needed in the above context had little to do with help for work but everything concerned with his primary function, the quality of which work cannot provide or fulfill. This concern was God's focus and provision for the first human person. God's equation constituting human identity only involves relationship fundamental to human make-up constituted in the image and relational likeness of the triune God, involving reciprocal relationship basic to the function of the whole person (from inner out), involving intimate reciprocal relationship primary (above all else) to the created order of life. This is the primacy of the created context and process of inter-person relationships: the relational context and process of the whole of God.

God created Adam initially without this human relational context, though the relational context and process existed between him and God. Yet, created life in the human context could not remain solitary because of the image and likeness of this relational triune God. The human person was never meant "to be apart." Eve completed the inter-person relational nature of human life, which was predicated on the intimate relational nature of the triune God, constituted first in the intimate relational communion between the persons of the Trinity and then by that same communion between God and human persons. Into this deeper qualitative context of inter-person relationships we all were created and for this distinguished relational purpose our lives are designed. It is from this trinitarian relational context and by this trinitarian relational process that God is glorified in the reciprocal relational response of worship—not by the focus of what we do, even in worship, which renders us to self-consciousness increasingly distant from our hearts and in relationships (cf. Isa 29:13; Mk 7:6-8).

Therefore, the primary work God created us for and expects from us is whole-ly *relational work.* All other work is not only secondary and subordinate to relational work but to be undertaken and engaged according to this primary work of relationship. And relational work in our reciprocal involvement with God is the foremost priority, which by God's relational nature also includes relational involvement with others that no other work has priority or more importance over—the relational significance of God's two summary terms for relationship together in the relational involvement of love (Mt 22:37-40). This relational work is what God expects from the whole person, and what constitutes the person to live whole in the human context.

As discussed earlier about the three inescapable issues for our ontology and function, this relational work is contingent on their outworking: (1) defining our person from the inner out, and (2) on this qualitative basis, relational work emerges from compatible involvement in relationships that (3) determine whole relationships together, not fragmentary, distant or secondary relations. This integral identity is both true and whole because it is constituted by the conjoint relational function of righteousness and the whole of *tamiym*. It is critical for all Christians in their theological anthropology to understand and thus vital to make definitive: How God defines the whole person is how God expects persons to be and thereby to live whole in the human context.

The integral identity of these persons further involves addressing the ongoing interdependence between the three inescapable issues for ontology and function and the three unavoidable issues for all practice (also discussed previously in chap. 3): (1) the integrity of the whole person presented to others, which by the nature of this person's created image and likeness must be presented in relational terms, not presented in referential terms; (2) the qualitative significance of communication in relational language that 'the whole person presented to others' expresses to these others; and (3) the deep level of relational involvement this whole person engages with those others for relationship together to be whole—all of which are constituted by the conjoint relational function of righteousness and being whole. As these three inescapable issues and three unavoidable issues converge in ongoing interaction, what emerges to distinguish persons is this integral identity of persons true and whole from inner out; and what continues is for these persons to be distinguished (*pala*) in the human context and not "to be apart".

Variable Ontology and Function

Human ontology and function is not a static condition, though certainly created whole in a definitive qualitative and relational condition that is not subject to a relative process of determination or emergence. Human ontology and function was created whole in the beginning. The issue from the beginning, however, is whether this ontology and function will continue to be whole by living whole. This outcome certainly was not predetermined, nor can we consider it our default condition and mode.

To continue to be whole is a qualitative function of person-consciousness that focuses on the person from inner out, that is, on the whole person. Yet, the whole person is not a simple object operating within the parameters of a predetermined condition or behavioral pattern. Rather, contrary to some theories of the person, the whole person is a complex subject whose function includes human agency composed by the will that further distinguishes the person's uniqueness created by God.

Yet, a complex subject cannot be oversimplified in its human agency. A qualifier is raised by genetic limitations of brain function (e.g. mentally challenged), those suffering brain dysfunction (e.g. Alzheimer's) and mind disorders that appear to lack human agency or lose human will—seemingly rendering them simple objects. This observation can only be made of a person from outer in; and any of its conclusions can neither account for variable ontology and function nor explain reduced ontology and function. While certain qualitative and relational functions may demonstrate a lack, if not appear lost, this involves the complexity of the human subject. The qualitative innermost constituting the uniqueness and human agency of the person functions integrally in the person as a whole, thus never separated from the body (whatever its condition), for example, in the spiritual substance of the soul, nor determined solely by the physical workings of the body. Regardless of any lack in the physical workings of the body, the qualitative innermost of the whole person still functions without being determined by the body and without being apart from the body in a separate function of the soul. How do we account for these persons then?

The complex human subject is manifested in different outward forms, all of which cannot be explained. For example, any lack of physical capacity does not relegate a person to reduced ontology and function, though variable ontology and function is still possible for such a person. Each of these different forms, however, should not be perceived in the comparative process of prevailing human distinctions that compose a deficit model identifying those differences as less. This has obvious relational implications for those cultures and traditions that have favored certain persons (e.g. by race) and discriminate against others (e.g. by class, gender, age). Such practice is not only ethically and morally unacceptable for the global church, but most important it exposes the sin as reductionism of persons embodying the church in reduced ontology and function.

What is definitive of the complex human subject in any form is this reality: "It is not good to be apart" from the whole that God created for all human ontology and function in the qualitative image and relational likeness of God, and therefore any human subject can be affirmed and needs to be lived in whole ontology and function—even if conditions, situations and circumstances appear to the contrary, as it does for the persons discussed above. This challenges both our assumptions about persons who are different

and how we define them and engage them in relationship. Any differences from our perceptual-interpretive lens that we impose on them reflect our reduced ontology and function, not theirs.

As a complex subject in the human context, the human will is responsible for the perceptual-interpretive lens used to focus either inner out or outer in on the person, albeit with the influence of the surrounding context. Person-consciousness is intrinsic to being created whole but ongoing person-consciousness involves the person's will. The person's choice also can include using a lens focused on the person from outer in, which then shifts from person-consciousness to self-consciousness (as witnessed in the primordial garden). The vacillation between person-consciousness and self-consciousness is a reality of human agency that all persons assume by the function of their will, and that all persons are responsible for in living with whole ontology and function or reduced ontology and function—necessitating the careful and vulnerable examination of "Where are you?" and "what are you doing here?" And the further reality from the beginning needing to be understood is that self-consciousness and its lens of outer in have become the default choice. Unless this reality is addressed with the reality of human agency, the default mode will prevail in human consciousness and the perceptual-interpretive lens used. Moreover, this process of reality is nonnegotiable and thus is not amendable by a hybrid consciousness.

Along with the lens used for the person and the human consciousness engaged, the human will is also responsible for the type of work engaged in. Given the reciprocal nature of whole relationships together, relational work is primary. How this work is perceived and the extent in which it is engaged—if it is perceived or engaged at all—unfold from the person's will. For example, if the deliberate choice is not made to engage the primacy of relational work, secondary work becomes the primary focus either by intention or by default. In other words, the will is central to what ontology and function emerges from the person. Theological anthropology must be able to account for variable ontology and function. The soul of dualism and supervenience of nonreductive physicalism are insufficient to explain human agency and to define whole ontology and function. For example, the qualitative sensitivity and relational awareness of person-consciousness are not defined merely by a soul, nor is their lack explained by supervenience.

Person-consciousness and the primacy of relational work are integral and thus inseparable for the whole ontology and function created by God. We cannot integrate person-consciousness with mere simple association with others, nor can we engage the primacy of relational work with self-consciousness. Person-consciousness is relational work, the primacy of which distinguishes the relational involvement of the whole person defined from inner out. The integral interaction between person-consciousness and relational work is both irreducible and nonnegotiable.

Yet, from the beginning relational work has been further problematic for persons whenever a reductionist interpretive framework misperceives God's purpose for creating Eve and the significance of her relationship with Adam. These are vital issues necessary to include in theological anthropology discourse to understand what adds or subtracts in the relational equation of God's created (original and new) design and purpose, particularly for relationships together constituting the church. Critical to our deeper understanding of the purpose for Eve's creation is the focus on the kind of work

emphasized in the creation narrative. If you translate the Hebrew expression '*ezer kenegdo* as "a helper suitable for him" (Gen 2:18 NIV), thus interpreting the woman as an assistant or helpmate to the man (as gender complementarians do), then the focus is on the work in the primordial garden with the emphasis on "what they did." Or if you translate it "a power [or strength] corresponding to man"[2] with the interpretation of Eve corresponding to Adam in every way, even "be his equal" (as gender egalitarians do), the focus can be on any type of work with the emphasis still on "what they do." Both of these interpretations and perceptions minimize or even preclude the primacy of relational work, the nonnegotiable relational work in God's design and purpose for relationships between persons distinguished by God's qualitative image and relational likeness. This is the consequence because an emphasis on "what we do" reduces the qualitative focus of how we function in relationships in order to be whole merely to performing a role.

It is also not sufficient to say that Adam was lonely and needed a proper counterpart because he was living without community. While these conditions existed, community and its formation connote different perceptions to persons, the very least of which may not even involve intimate relationships as understood in the community (communion) of the Trinity. Yet, God did not create Eve for Adam in order to have simply a collective dimension to life called community or a social context within which to do their living. This has deep implications notably for relationships together composing the church and the basis for constituting this gathering in distinguished terms from other gatherings in the human context. By necessity this is true for churches in both the global South and North, though the emphasis would be different in each sector.

As signified by also being created in God's image, Eve was created for the primacy of relationship, thus for the completion of the human relational context by which their persons (from inner out) could now involve themselves in the relational process constituted in the triune God and signified by both the qualitative image and relational likeness of God. Without the completion of this relational context and process, a person(s) would "be apart"—a condition God defines as "not good" but which has been normative for the human condition and has become the norm for gatherings in the human context, even among Christians.

Eve's purpose was neither about working the primordial garden nor filling the earth, especially as we have come to define those purposes with the emphasis on "what we do." These would be quantitative reductionist substitutes that redefine the person from the outer in—for example, according to roles and our performance. Even though Eve was created as a person in God's image to complete the relational context and process, she was not immune from reductionism because she was free to redefine her person—the human agency of the will. While making this choice does not change the created qualitative ontology of personness, it shifts that ontology to outer in and thereby reduces how the person functions and constrains what the person experiences, thus effectively constructing a personhood in human perception—an unfortunate consequence often seen in theological anthropology discourse.

It would be a further reduction of Eve's purpose, and thus an inaccurate interpretation, to perceive that women (gender and sexuality) were created primarily for

[2] Walter C. Kaiser Jr., Peter H. Davids, F. F. Bruce and Manfred T. Brauch, eds., *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 93-94.

specific relationships with men. That is to say, underlying Eve's function to work is the purpose God gave her and Adam to "fill the earth" (Gen 1:28). Obviously, this then involved the created function of marriage (2:24) and procreation (3:20). Yet our deeper understanding of marriage and procreation for God's purpose is also contingent on the kind of work emphasized in the creation narrative. If the work focused on is merely about making a living and extending it in raising a family (a dominant view), then our perceptions of marriage and family become reductionist (as previously noted about what we do) and our practice increasingly quantitative (as discussed about how we do relationships). This was not the purpose for Eve's creation.

In God's purpose to "fill the earth" the term for "fill" (Heb. *male*) denotes completion of something that was unfinished. With this in mind we need to understand what God started in creation that Eve and Adam were to work for its completion. Did God just create a man and a woman, male and female, with work to do? Did God merely create the human species to be the dominant conclusion to all of creation? Or did God create whole persons in the very image of God's being (constituted as the qualitative significance of heart) for the purpose of these persons having and building intimate relationships together in the likeness of the relational nature of God as constituted in the communion of the Trinity? The former emphasizes any secondary work engaged by persons in referential terms that fragment persons and relationships. The latter is focused only on persons engaged in the primacy of relational work that embodies the whole of these persons and their relationships together.

Reductionism turns God's purpose to "fill the earth" quite simply into making children and the quantitative work of populating the earth. Likewise, perceptions of "be fruitful and multiply" become based on quantitative notions. If this were God's purpose, the results such work had initially produced would have been partially acceptable, and God would not have started over with Noah and his family (Gen 6:1ff). But God's purpose is qualitative; filling the earth is not about the numbers. What God started in creation was an extension of the triune God's being and nature—not to be confused with pantheism. The person was created with the qualitative significance of God to have intimate reciprocal relationships with other persons, both of whom are undifferentiated (not reduced) by quantitative distinctions (such as gender or sexuality). Gender or sexuality does not distinguish the qualitative significance of human persons and relationships, though the whole person is certainly embodied in them irreducibly. This aspect of creation serves to illuminate in general the intimate relationships for which all persons are created, not to determine the ultimate context in which these intimate relationships can be experienced, that is, male-female relationships and marriage.

When relational work is functionally established as God's primary purpose for all persons, then the ontology and function of person-consciousness will not only emerge to be whole but also unfold to live whole in the human context. Person-consciousness and the primacy of relational work, as theological anthropology must account for, are ongoingly subjected to the prevailing influence of reductionism and its counter-relational work. Emerging from the beginning in the primordial garden, reductionism directed the shift away from person-consciousness and compromised the primacy of relational work. The integral relationship with God that constitutes the relational context and process of human life was fragmented by human will and the choice for self-determination, with the relational consequence "to be apart." Certainly, not only in relation to work but also in

our relationships (especially with God) this condition "to be apart" underlies our reductionist tendencies, the substitutes we make in life and why we settle for less. In the human narrative, essentially every human activity since Adam and Eve's human agency in self-determination has been to diminish, distort or deny the primacy of relationships in the created order. In the divine narrative, everything the Trinity has done is relational and is done to restore relationships to God's original design and purpose. This created design and purpose is what Jesus came to restore us to—both with God and with others. Our theological anthropology and related doctrines need to reflect this coherence (discussed further in chap. 6).

As we reflect on creation and the relational context and process, we have to examine how we also "see" God and thus relate to this God. If we only see God as Creator, there can be a tendency to define God only by what God did—not only in the past but also the present, prompting "what have you done for me lately" (cf. Israel in the wilderness)—and, based on this lens, ignore God's whole being. This is the result when our perceptual-interpretive framework is reductionist, primarily focused on the parts of what God does. To focus on and relate to God's being is not only to engage the sovereign God (who commands) but also to be involved with the triune God (who is intimately relational). On the basis of this whole God, not parts of God, the relational process is constituted. Any other God is a reduction of the God of creation and the God of revelation vulnerably shared with us. Whichever God is perceived and engaged certainly has determining influence for theological anthropology; and this implication intensifies the need for theological anthropology to address reductionism and its counter-relational work.

The counter-relational work of reductionism can be very covert and easy to overlook, ignore or simply dismiss. This is witnessed in the primordial garden, throughout Israel's history (including the history of Paul) and even found in the closest of Jesus' followers, the first disciples (as Jesus exposed, Jn 14:9). This variable ontology and function is demonstrated most notably by Peter.

When Jesus qualified "whoever serves me" by making antecedent the priority "follow me" (Jn 12:26), he established a problematic condition for all of us. This paradigm for serving and imperative for discipleship make our life and practice more difficult. Serving is more difficult now both without the option of reductionist substitutes and with the nonnegotiable priority focused on the function of relationship in the primacy of relational work. Following Jesus is now made more difficult because the terms of discipleship are not only relationship specific with his whole person but also relationally specific only to God's terms.

Once we understand that the ongoing function in relationship together must precede and be the priority over serving, then we have to come to face the face of Jesus. That is, we have to deal directly with God's relational response of grace embodied in Jesus and relationship with him on God's terms. Jesus made his whole person accessible to persons in their human context. This never meant, however, that Jesus functioned in relationship with them in their relational context and by their relational process—in other words, that relationship with Jesus could be on our terms.

"Follow me" is about both relationship and relationship with him on God's terms. "Face to face" with Jesus involves a specific relational process involving specific persons. This means the "me" Jesus makes imperative to follow has to be the whole

person Jesus vulnerably presented in the incarnation. The face of Jesus cannot be our image of him shaped by our own predispositions and biases—especially from a reductionist perceptual-interpretive framework—which certainly involve our interests, desires and needs.

This is the problem Peter had in coming face to face with Jesus. As we revisit some of his interactions with Jesus, we can understand the difficulty he had with the "me" of Jesus' whole person as well as presenting the significance of his own person in face-to-face relationship. Moreover, Peter illustrates what is problematic to the theological task and a common tendency to formulate a hybrid theology. Like many engaged in the theological task, Peter operated within the limits of the human context (notably his tradition, culture and human roots) and thus remained within the limits of what he knew (the probable), which engaged a process of reductionism either intentionally or by default. Epistemologically, hermeneutically, theologically, ontologically and/or relationally, this necessitated dividing the improbable theological trajectory of the Christ embodied in whole ontology into fragments that can be shaped and aggregated down to the limited understanding of his knowledge (cf. Job). In other words, if those of us engaged in the theological task do not receive "face to face" the improbable Subject vulnerably present and relationally involved, we have to turn to a default alternative: an interpretive framework from outer in that is the basis for human shaping and construction in referential terms, which are limited to self-referencing theories and conclusions. This default alternative also provides us with a basis for not being relationally vulnerable to the improbable whole of Jesus and his intrusive relational path defined and determined on his relational terms. The lack of vulnerableness signifies a self-consciousness that includes a decrease in qualitative sensitivity and relational awareness.

Peter clearly illustrates the theological problems we face when we try to reconcile the Jesus embodied in whole to a narrowed epistemic field, that is, within the limits of what we know or can rationalize. Of all the original disciples, Peter had the most opportunity to experience the more dramatic of Jesus' self-disclosures, which should have formed the integral basis for his knowledge and understanding of God, his theology (Lk 5:4-11; Jn 6:67-69; Mt 14:22-33; 16:16-23; 17:1-9; Jn 13:1-17; 21:15-22; Acts 10:9-20, 34-35, 44-48; 11:17). Yet, ironically, relational distance and its consequence for theology are clearly witnessed foremost in Peter among Jesus' first disciples. Peter's theological anthropology consistently interfered with his involvement with Jesus and in his discipleship. Besides jumping into the water with Jesus, his bold confessions of faith and his three-fold denial in the moments leading up to the cross, Peter's actions need to be understood in the prevailing interpretive lens they reflect.

His first experience of Jesus happened when he became a disciple. After working all night without catching any fish, Jesus instructed Peter to fish again, resulting in more fish than they could handle (Lk 5:4-11). Peter's response to Jesus rightly went beyond the situation to recognize the distinguished presence of the qualitative: "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man" (v.8). By falling down at Jesus' knees, Peter demonstrated his humble submission to Jesus' self-disclosure. His response, however, did not necessarily define his functional position in relation *to* the improbable and determine his relational involvement *with* the improbable Jesus embodied in whole. While Peter clearly chose to respond to Jesus' call to "Follow me" with his entire life (cf. Lk 5:10-11; Mk

10:28), the function of his whole person had difficulty responding to the face of Jesus. The default mode of an outer-in interpretive lens and lack of qualitative sensitivity and relational awareness kept Peter at a distance from his heart and in their relationship together—in spite of his bold and relatively honest interactions with Jesus from outer in. Variable ontology and function was an ongoing issue for Peter.

Peter's relational condition with Jesus, and his related theological problem, seemed to first emerge with his response to Jesus' person and their relationship together during their interaction walking on water (Mt 14:22-33). Seeing Jesus in this context challenged Peter to expand his epistemic field to test the improbable. Various dynamics converge in this experiential (and perhaps experimental) moment. Peter initially engages Jesus' whole person ("if it is you…") in Jesus' relational context ("…command me to come to you"). The situation is only the secondary matter to pay attention to here whereas the relational process of their involvement together is primary. Peter is making his whole person vulnerable to Jesus on Jesus' relational terms—though there is some element of "prove it" contingency to Peter's faith, yet not in a passive sense without Peter's full relational involvement. Unfortunately, Peter only pays attention to Jesus' person and the relationship for a brief significant moment. His focus soon shifts to self-consciousness in the situation, which then produces the fear causing a plea to Jesus only in the role to save him *from* his circumstances. The significance of this shift, in contrast to the beginning of this interaction, involves a critical dynamic: Jesus' person is reduced to what he can do and the primacy of relationship is replaced by the secondary matter of the situation and circumstances. That is, as Peter's focus shifted to the secondary, his epistemic field quickly narrowed back to the probable of his perceptual lens that defined the limits of his theology. Obviously, then, 'certainty' became an urgent matter for Peter, yet walking on water was not an issue until the secondary became primary. While the matter of Jesus' self-disclosure on the water becomes obscured here, Peter's theology—shaped by his function and not his earlier confession—can no longer account for the improbable. Based on a theology of the probable, Peter had no business walking on water; and his theology could only include being saved *from* trying to do so, in spite of the reality of Jesus' self-disclosure on the water to signify what Peter is saved *to*: "to come to you"… "Come" in the primacy of relationship together. This reduced their relationship together and attempted to renegotiate it to Peter's terms. And the fragmenting process that Peter engages becomes the basis for his emerging hybrid theology.

Later, when Jesus asked his main disciples if they also wish to stop following him, Peter makes this summary statement: "Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God" (Jn 6:67-69). Peter's confession of faith certainly distinguished him from the would-be followers of Jesus in this context. His theology at this stage appears to have doctrinal certainty, which suggests it is more referential than relational and hence based in the probable terms of what Peter knew from his previous experience with Jesus and of what he could rationalize. This becomes evident as Peter's theology is about to redefine the improbable Jesus embodied in whole by the probable—in contrast and conflict even with his above confession. Along with the first, there is a second confession of faith that characterizes Peter's discipleship. Yet, confession alone in referential terms is insufficient to follow Jesus' whole person in relational terms, who is vulnerably disclosed only for relationship—the relationship together with which Peter clearly starts to struggle and

negotiate on his own terms. This demonstrates a default choice that emerges with a biased interpretive lens to the primacy of relational work.

When Jesus further queried his disciples about their personal opinion of his identity, Peter made this summary confession affirming Jesus' deity: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God," a revelation that Jesus acknowledged Peter had received from "my Father in heaven" (Mt 16:16-17). Yet, though Peter's second (along with the first) confession was theologically correct *about* Jesus, his theology could not translate into function *with* Jesus in relationship together, because this would require going beyond his limits based on the probable in order to engage the improbable Jesus face to Face on Jesus' relational terms—a relational position of vulnerability that Peter still avoided. This was clearly evident soon after his confession when Jesus vulnerably disclosed the painful course "he must" (*dei*, necessary, unavoidable) take to the cross and the resurrection (16:21). Rather than receive the face of Jesus (and God's relational response of grace), however, Peter takes Jesus aside as if to counsel him (maybe partly from the confidence gained due to his confession; recall Job, Job 38:2), not to console Jesus. Peter acts boldly "to rebuke him" (v.22). The word "rebuke" (*epitimao*) means to censure, blame, berate; it is an abrupt and biting charge sharply expressing disapproval, harshly taking someone to task for a fault (cf. Mk 1:25). The word implies that Peter expressed a warning as he confronted Jesus on this absurd disclosure. "God forbid it, Lord!"—the term (*hileos*) functions in such phrases as an invocation for overturning evil (cf. in our vernacular, "Heaven forbid!" or "Absolutely no way!"). We have to appreciate Peter's honesty in sharing his feelings with Jesus. In this sense, Peter made himself vulnerable to Jesus. Yet, despite his honesty, was he really opening his whole person to Jesus? The answer involves why Peter had these feelings.

Jesus' response to him helps us understand. He responds back even more strongly by identifying Peter as the enemy (v.23)—in contrast and conflict with moment's earlier (v.17). Why? Because he was a "stumbling block" to Jesus; the term (*skandalon*) always denotes enticing or trapping its victim in a course of behavior that could ruin the person. Compared to earlier (v.17) when Peter was influenced by the Father's revelation over human rationalizing, Peter shifted from God's whole terms to his reduced function on the basis of the probable terms of his hybrid theology limited to "human things" and "not on divine things." His focus "in mind" (*phroneo*) means to think, have a mindset—that which underlies one's predisposition or bias. This is the activity of one's perceptual-interpretive framework, which also involves the will, affections, conscience, therefore to be mindful and devoted to that perspective—the lens of Peter's predisposition that emerged from his hybrid theology. In other words, his theological framework and lens defines what he pays attention to and what he ignores, thereby determining how he will function as a person and in relationships, most notably with Jesus. These theological and relational consequences are inseparable from Peter's lens defining the person and engaging relationships, that which must be accounted for in any and all theological engagement.

The issue that has fully emerged for Peter in this interaction is not focused on being made whole and having a whole theology but on defining relationship with God and shaping it by his reduced terms on the basis of his hybrid theology. Peter had strong feelings against Jesus' self-disclosure because that was incongruent with his perceived image of God and what God should do; for Peter, the improbable was incompatible with

the probable. This is not merely about his messianic hopes and expectations but exposes a deeper issue. That is, Peter's perceptual-interpretive framework reduced Jesus' whole person and determined the terms of their relationship; this then redefined Jesus to function in Peter's reduced context, not Jesus' whole relational context, consequently to be something less than and some substitute for the One whom Peter professed Jesus to be earlier. In contrast and conflict with the whole of Jesus and Jesus' vulnerable self-disclosure here of his relational work to constitute whole relationship together, Peter remains within the limits of the probable in which he can feel more certain and less vulnerable. By its nature, a hybrid theology invariably becomes a wide-gate-and-road theology. This exposes the relational dynamics engaged in a hybrid theology and its predisposition for a dismissive functional position to and a distant relational involvement with the improbable embodied in whole who intrudes his innermost.

These constraints on Peter's function shaping his hybrid theology keep emerging, as further evident in the next extraordinary self-disclosure of the whole of God. Six days after the above interaction, the face of Jesus is presented the most vulnerably of any other moment during the incarnation. This happens when Jesus is "transfigured" (*metamorphoo*, to transform, to alter fundamentally) before Peter, James and John (Mt 17:1-9)—a privileged experience for them that should be integral in taking Peter beyond his limits.

The transfiguration marks a pivotal point of Jesus' disclosure of God's glory, which these disciples have the unique opportunity to experience further and deeper: the "visible" heart of God's being, as Jesus is transformed to exalted form and substance (cf. Moses' face, Ex 34:29); the intimate relational nature of the whole of God, as the Father, along with his Son, communicates directly with them in relationship (cf. with Moses, Ex 24:15-16; with Elijah, 1 Kg 19:8-18); and the vulnerable presence and involvement of God, as illuminated clearly in this amazing experiential moment. At this reunion of key persons in God's family, the whole of God's thematic relational action coheres from the past (represented by Moses and Elijah) with the present (presented by the Messiah in God's glory embodying God's grace) to the future (by the present constituting reality of God's kingdom/family). In the Father's relational communication (an extension from Jesus' baptism, Mk 1:11) specifically directed to these disciples to build relationship together, two vital messages summarize all that God relationally has disclosed, promised and experienced with his people: (1) the full affirmation of his Son in the trinitarian relational context of family and by the trinitarian relational process of family love, and (2) the clear relational imperative ("Listen to him!") for all his followers to pay attention and respond to him in his relational context and process—imperative because Jesus' relational language communicates the whole of God, not only with his words but from his whole person, for the whole understanding (*synesis*) necessary to have wholeness in theology and practice (cf. Mk 8:17-18).

The whole of God's glory is vulnerably disclosed in the face of Jesus, as Paul later made definitive (2 Cor 4:6). Moses and Elijah responded to God's glory "face to face" on God's terms to build the covenant relationship together. What does Peter do with God's glory; how does he respond to the face of Jesus?

God's glory is not disclosed to observe for information, even to use to construct theology, or merely to behold in awe, but only for relationship—by the necessity of God's qualitative being, relational nature and vulnerable presence. When Peter wanted to

erect three tents (for Jesus, Moses and Elijah) as the opportune purpose for him to be present (Mk 9:5), consider what this does to the whole of God's heart and intimate relational presence vulnerably presented to him. In the tension of this vulnerably improbable moment, Peter resorts to the past, both immediate and distant, which is still present in function for him. His old mindset (perceptual-interpretive framework and lens) exposed by Jesus six days ago, quickly expressed itself further when he tries to constrain God's glory to a place—just like the OT ways of relating to God indirectly in the tabernacle (tent). Once again, Peter reduces Jesus' whole person and relates to the face of Jesus on his reductionist terms, not Jesus' relational context and process as the Father makes imperative for him. Peter's shift to the tents further exposes the relational dynamics in his hybrid theology: the reductionist substitute he uses for the face of Jesus; how reductionism diminished his direct relational involvement with God's glory embodied by Jesus' whole person; and as a result the relational distance he maintains from intimate relationship together with Jesus and the whole of God as family. The relational consequence is that how Peter functions directly prevents their relationship from functioning together in the relational significance of "Follow me."

Peter's function in these relational dynamics is inseparable from his theology, most notably his theological anthropology; and the unavoidable interaction between function and theology was consequential for both his function and theology. By shifting away from the inner out to narrow down his epistemic field to more quantitative terms from outer in, Peter's theology cannot account for the qualitative and relational in God's ontology and function, and consequently cannot account for Peter's whole person created in the qualitative image and relational likeness of God. Once again, Peter's theological anthropology interferes with going further and deeper. Ontology and function have been reduced to fragmentary terms, which become barriers to vulnerable involvement in the primacy of whole relationship together. Peter's person struggled in this relational condition, as he was constrained within the limits of his reduced theological anthropology, the most notable indicator of a hybrid theology.

All of these relational dynamics converged at Jesus' footwashing (Jn 13:1-17), during which Peter's hybrid theology continues to emerge. In this key interaction, it is vital to see Jesus' engagement beyond referential terms of what to do in serving to its depth in relational terms of how to be involved in relationship ("he loved them").—the primacy of relational work over the secondary of serving. The intimate depth of Jesus' relational involvement in footwashing was the most vulnerable self-disclosure of his whole person that emerged in the unique relational context of his table fellowship as family together. This depth of relational involvement unfolds in his relational process of family love to constitute his family in Communion together—that intimate table fellowship of worship indivisible from his footwashing. When Peter refused Jesus' footwashing, he fragmented both Jesus' person and his person to their roles and status, reducing the person to outer in by what one does—or in reference to Jesus, what he should not do. The function of Peter's theology merely extends from his earlier attempt to prevent Jesus from going to the cross (Mt 16:22). Consequently, in the limits of his hybrid theology the probable and secondary continue to prevail, and Peter simply rejected the most vulnerable presence and intimate relational involvement of the whole of God.

Seemingly incongruent with these relational dynamics at this pivotal table fellowship, moments later Peter declared without hesitation "Lord, why can I not follow

you now? I will lay down my life for you" (13:37). Such a statement, however, along with his earlier confessions of faith, are not incongruent when made in referential terms from a hybrid theology that has reduced Peter's person to what he does—or doesn't do in the matter of footwashing. As the evening progresses and the weekend unfolds, even a lack of performance in what he does did not turn Peter from his reductionism and away from his secondary focus. This is indicated in the qualitative and relational significance of Jesus' final words to Peter before his ascension (Jn 21:15-22).

This post-resurrection interaction takes place obviously after Peter's denials of Jesus prior to the crucifixion. Since neither of them addresses the pain of these moments, Peter apparently has been forgiven. Assuming this happened, it would be helpful to connect Jesus' questions about Peter's love less to his denials and more to the ex-prostitute's relational act of love (Lk 7:36-50). The implication of connecting these would shift the focus from Peter's future ministry—demonstrating his love (or even proving it) by fully caring for Jesus' followers—to *how* he needs to engage serving (cf. the issue for Martha, Lk 10:38-42).

The experience of forgiveness (and God's grace) directly correlates to the exercise of love—an experiential truth Jesus established when defining the ex-prostitute's action. Love is never reduced to the quantitative deeds of ministry or even doing things for others but is only a qualitative function of relationship. Like the ex-prostitute, since this love needs to be embodied in a person who has first experienced God's grace, then by its nature any act of love by this person functions from the same relational context and process by which God's grace is experienced. The significance, therefore, of this woman's (and Mary's in contrast to Martha) relational involvement with Jesus is definitive: the relational involvement of intimately engaging Jesus in his relational context of family and by his relational process of family love—that is, to follow Jesus' whole person in face-to-face relationship together. This magnifies the primacy of relational work involved in the response of love.

When Jesus emphatically asks Peter "Do *you love me* more than *any and all love*?" (Jn 21:15-17) Jesus was not asking for love in comparative terms that exceeds all others. The distinguished Face distinguished love in relationship together only on God's relational terms, which the Face communicated with his vulnerable presence and relational involvement both while on the cross (i.e. by his relational words, not referential words) and during his footwashing. In both moments Peter's own face made a turn from the Face and maintained his relational distance—relationally turned from the Face equally as much in his denials at the cross as in his refusal to let Jesus wash his feet, in spite of his earlier referential confessions and declarations of faith (e.g. Jn 6:68-69; Mt 16:16; Mk 14:29,31). Now the distinguished Face challenged Peter's interpretive framework and theological assumptions both of his own anthropology and of Jesus himself, which signified Peter's attempt to determine their relationship together on Peter's terms, not God's. This is the whole relational context and process of Jesus' question. And Jesus reveals by his relational language: The reciprocal nature of God's terms for relationship is the ongoing depth of relational involvement constituted by distinguished love; nothing less and no substitutes distinguished the reciprocal relational involvement in whole relationship Face to face—made definitive from the beginning in the covenant of love, with the summary commandments of love and ultimately by the distinguished Face embodied in human context.

When Jesus redirects Peter to the relationship and the need for deeper involvement together, Peter demonstrates his relational distance by paying attention to John ("what about him?" v.21), and thus in effect ignoring Jesus' person vulnerably pursuing him. This apparently strains Jesus' loving patience. His response to Peter—"what is that to you?" (v.22)—expresses rebuke from Jesus which Peter needed. This is why Jesus, then, emphatically makes it imperative to Peter: "You must follow me"—the only imperative Peter needed to hear and focus on. As the last words (and the first words to begin their relationship, Mk 1:17) Jesus says to Peter, he once again calls Peter to be redefined, transformed and made whole.

Even up to the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus is calling Peter to his whole person for intimate relationship together. The functional implication of this is that the influence of reductionism is still preventing Peter from functioning deeper in the relational involvement of following Jesus' whole person. This is a functional barrier for Peter to go further in the relational progression, in which Jesus takes his followers to relationship with the Father as his very own in God's family together. While Peter often represents the early disciples as a group, his difficulties are of his own choosing and doing. He has had various opportunities to be redeemed, yet his reductionist perceptual-interpretive framework always emerged to resist God's grace. Jesus' question persists for the theological anthropology of all his followers: "Do you love me?" then "*don't focus on the secondary of your service but* 'follow me' *in the primacy of whole relationship together—in the only significance of relational work.*"

Peter's variable ontology and function continued. Peter's ministry was still problematic as long as he engaged in a fragmenting process with his hybrid theology. Despite the successful beginning of his ministry, Peter still functioned from a reduced theological anthropology that fragmented persons with outer-in distinctions. In contrast and conflict, Jesus, in post ascension, corrected Peter's hybrid theology (Acts 10:9-20, 34-35, 44-48; 11:17), which Peter should have processed into his theology earlier if he had listened to Jesus' relational language of the primacy of the qualitative and relational signifying Jesus' theology from inner out (Mt 15:15-20). Yet, even a redefined theology from inner out did not make Peter's function whole from inner out—that is, the redemptive change of *metamorphoo*, not the outer-in change of *metaschematizo*. Peter remained engaged in a fragmenting process and ignored Jesus' warning about functioning in reductionism, which Jesus clearly indicated signifies *hypokrisis* (Lk 12:1). Consequently, he still divided his theology from practice and thereby engaged in the outer-in function of role-playing (*hypokrisis*), that Paul exposed to Peter's face for the sake of the whole gospel (Gal 2:11-14). In contrast and conflict, Peter continued to 'divide Christ' and practiced a gospel that was consequentially in both a dismissive functional position to and a distant relational involvement with the improbable Jesus embodied in whole. His early ministry was characterized by proclaiming the gospel of salvation *from* sin. Yet, his message of repentance did not adequately include the sin of reductionism; therefore his gospel lacked the qualitative and relational depth of what Jesus saved *to*. This lack was initially indicated by a disparity in the early church (Acts 6:1), which Jesus later corrected in Peter's theology and that Paul confronted in Peter's practice. Despite his early boldness to proclaim the good news (e.g. Acts 4:18-20), his soteriology was fragmented and lacked the wholeness of being saved *to*. In this sense, Peter's ministry can also be characterized by—what the writer of Hebrews exposed and

boldly challenged (Heb 5:11-6:2)—a focus on milk ("the basic teaching about Christ") without the substance of meat ("for the mature," cf. 1 Cor 3:1-2).

This lack and disparity in Peter's own theology and function reflect the fragmentation of his person, the extent of which had a reductionist influence on a segment of the early church—including Barnabas, as Paul exposed to Peter's face at Antioch (Gal 2:13-14). Even though Peter advocated for equality at the church council in Jerusalem, his advocacy likely still focused on an incomplete soteriology, with no indication of being saved *to* the primacy of whole relationship together as family (Acts 15:6-11). It is critical to understand, that in Peter's hybrid process (in anyone's hybrid process) there were limits to what could emerge both theologically and functionally.

What we see unfolding in Peter is a pattern of his reshaping God's self-disclosures on God's whole terms, fragmenting the whole of Jesus and redefining his person in a narrowed-down epistemic field for a hybrid theology based on the limits of Peter's reduced terms. Hybrid theology not only divides theology but also separates theology from function, such that its practice can be neither congruent nor even compatible with its theology, thus reducing both to a fragmented condition. (This makes evident that theological anthropology must be lived and not just discoursed.) This fragmented condition goes unrecognized as long as one remains within the limits of understanding from one's knowledge or rationalizing. As Peter demonstrated, this fragmentation of theology may have doctrinal certainty and appear to be united, yet it is not whole. These are the results of epistemological illusion and ontological simulation from reductionism and its counter-relational work, which inevitably can only be in contrast and conflict with the whole of God and the whole ontology and function improbably embodied in Jesus.

Peter's variable ontology and function demonstrated two important issues for theological anthropology to integrate in its discourse:

1. His person lived consistently, if not primarily, in the default mode of self-consciousness and its interpretive lens from outer in, regardless of his good intentions (and referential confessions) to serve Jesus as his disciple, whereby his integral identity was diminished and his person-consciousness and relational work were minimalized.
2. Peter's will (no matter how committed and dedicated) was limited by the constraints of reductionism and, therefore, by itself was unable to constitute the redemptive change necessary to be and continue to live whole in ontology and function, consistently by nothing less than person-consciousness and no substitutes for the primacy of relational work.

Whole ontology and function is always subjected to reductionism and its counter-relational work. To continue to live whole becomes a struggle when qualitative sensitivity to reductionism and relational awareness of its counter-relational work are lacking in the person to expose its influence. Variable ontology and function results when any person's integral identity is diminished and their person-consciousness and relational work are minimalized. Therefore, in the human context what is clearly evident from the beginning for any theological discourse on human persons is to establish a strong view of sin: that is, a definitive view of sin as reductionism—not merely as moral and ethical failure—which provides the understanding needed to expose the reductionism of sin

prevailing in the human context that composes the human relational condition "to be apart" from the whole, God's qualitative relational whole and the whole of God.

A critical part of distinguishing the person in complete context is to address the influence of reductionism in the person's surrounding context. To ignore the presence of reductionism and to not pay attention to its influence in the surrounding context are indicators that theological discourse about persons has already been shaped by this influence. For example, in contexts where honor-shame are more determining for practice than ethical and moral views (with focus on innocence-guilt), honor-shame would expand our view of sin with a more collective-relational emphasis. Yet, such a collective-relational concern would most likely be engaged merely in referential terms and not be involved by God's whole relational terms (as in the beginning, Gen 2:26). On this limited basis, honor-shame becomes a self-concern centered on self-consciousness that still continues in reduced ontology and function. Honor-shame, then, subtly extends sin as reductionism. This is of utmost importance for global South Christians in particular to understand and not be influenced to shape their view of sin.

Anything less than a strong view of sin and any substitutes for sin as reductionism render persons to reduced ontology and function, unable to consistently live whole ontology and function into the human context. Without understanding sin as reductionism, the distinction between self-consciousness and person-consciousness is erased from human consciousness, whereby persons and relationships are always limited to and constrained by an inescapable default condition and mode—the prevailing alternative to the person of self-consciousness.

There is an irony, and perhaps paradox, to theological anthropology's view of sin. On the one hand, a weak view of sin (not composed as reductionism) signifies for soteriology that a human person is only saved *from* sin in what, at best, is a truncated soteriology. This incomplete salvation does not result in whole ontology and function for the person no matter how much sin the person is saved from. On the other hand, the strong view of sin as reductionism requires of soteriology that a human person is not only saved *from* the sin of reductionism, but by the nature of being redeemed from reduced ontology and function the person is conjointly saved *to* whole ontology and function in a complete soteriology (discussed further in chap. 6). A truncated soteriology is fragmentary, which cannot make a person whole but only saves them from sin. A complete soteriology by definition includes to be made whole; in other words, a person is never saved from being reduced (or "to be apart") until the person is saved to being whole. This is the gospel that unfolded with the embodied whole of Jesus and also emerged with the relational Word from the beginning—the gospel that constitutes the person in theological anthropology to be and live whole ontology and function into the human context.

The Integral Dynamic of Vulnerable and Intimate

The whole of God's improbable theological trajectory and initial relational path emerged in the beginning with the relational Word clearly communicating "It is not good for human persons to be apart from the whole, God's qualitative relational whole, the whole of God." God's vulnerable presence and relational involvement were ongoingly

evident yet clearly illuminated in what signified God's face (the front, presence, *paneh*) to constitute (1) God's definitive blessing as the basis for the gospel (Num 6:24-26) and (2) face-to-face relationship together (as with Moses, Num 12:7-8; Dt 34:10). The glory of God's qualitative being, relational nature and vulnerable presence kept unfolding until it emerged in the intrusive relational path of the embodied Word, whole-ly magnified in the face of Jesus' whole person to fulfill the gospel (2 Cor 4:4,6). With Jesus' person the face of God is most vulnerable and thus most intrusive in relational terms. This complete Christology has major implications for the human person and what ontology and function emerges from theological anthropology.

Theological interpretation correctly focuses on Scripture as communication, which helps put a face on those words in Scripture to hear as distinguished words from the mouth of God (Dt 8:3; Isa 40:5; 55:11; Mt 4:4). Yet it is insufficient to stop at communication because this communication is always in relationship—the relational function that should never be assumed, taken for granted or ignored. Relational messages (discussed previously), for example, are critical to understand since they provide deeper meaning to the content of the words communicated. This deeper meaning helps us interpret God's relational intention for the words communicated, which is necessary to establish their full context for whole understanding. God's communication always declares God's relational nature, and this is enacted only in God's relational context and process. Relationship, therefore, is not merely supplemental or supportive to the communication but primary for the communication. And what 'face' is put on the words of God determines what priority the relationship has. In terms of what 'face', it is critical to distinguish between anthropomorphisms in language *about* God (which result in allegorical interpretation) and the relational language *of* God. What appears as anthropomorphism in 'the face of God' is the relational language of God's relational nature vulnerably present, who created human persons with 'face' in God's likeness only for relationship together face to face (intrinsic to Gen 2:18,25).

The Face in and from the beginning makes definitive both the distinguished relational context and relational process of God's whole ontology and function. The Face is inseparable from God's relational context and process, in which the Face functions integrally to establish the primacy of relationship. Without the vulnerable functional reality of the Face, any relational context of God is ambiguous and thus any relational process with God is elusive. What makes God's blessing definitive from the beginning is the Face (*paneh*, signifying God's whole presence) "turning and shining on you" in this distinguished relational context and relational process (Num 6:24-26). The lack or absence of this vulnerable functional reality renders this blessing merely to the transmission of information without the relational significance either from God or to those receiving the blessing, for example, as a perfunctory benediction.

Furthermore, what 'face' is put on the words of God determines whether we are listening to referential language transmitting information merely *about* God or to relational language for us to deeply *know* God. The former, for example, only hears (sees) the Word as Object to be observed with measured engagement, that is, from a relational distance, perhaps with a certain 'method'. The latter is the relational outcome of listening to the Word as Subject with immeasurable relational involvement 'Face to face' in the relational epistemic process. Face to face (of whole persons from inner out) is the distinguished involvement required to listen to the words from God's mouth within

God's relational context and process. This involvement was distinguished with Moses, with whom "I speak face to face" (idiomatic use of *peh*, lit. "mouth to mouth," Num 12:8, cf. *paneh* in Ex 33:11). This was also the deeper relational outcome of Job's epistemic humility in the relational epistemic process when he listened to God communicate in relationship (Job 42:4).

Therefore, the Face is the primary half completing the relational equation (our face the other half) and is critical to the words of God from the beginning, notably in God's definitive blessing. The Face makes this blessing definitive and composes it in communicative action for relationship together, not in referential language for information. Importantly, the Face is irreducible for the whole of God embodied by the Word unfolding now in the incarnation, yet necessarily even before the cross for the complete Christology. The Face is not only irreducible for embodiment but also embodiment is nonnegotiable for the Face. That is, not only is the Face's embodied ontology irreducible to human shaping and construction, the Face's embodied function is nonnegotiable to human terms, most notably in relationship. What 'face' is put on the Word is the critical challenge *of* face, which defines and determines what unfolds with the Word. Moreover, when the Face is allowed to embody the Word to speak for himself without human shaping or terms, the Face presents the critical challenge *for* face, our face in Face-to-face relationship.

As discussed above, the transfiguration marks a pivotal point of Jesus' disclosure of God's glory. To repeat, God's glory is not disclosed to observe for information, even to use to construct theology, or merely to behold in awe; the only purpose is for relationship, as should be expected by the necessity of God's qualitative being, relational nature and vulnerable presence. Referential terms cannot account for God's glory. Yet, that is exactly what Peter tried to do at the transfiguration when he wanted to erect three tents (Mk 9:5). More importantly, what does Peter do with the whole of God's heart (qualitative being) and intimate relational presence vulnerably presented to him for Face-to-face connection?

It would be understandable if Peter became self-conscious in such a unique experience, not knowing what to do (Mk 9:6). God's glory, however, does not provoke self-consciousness unless self-consciousness is already operating, in which case a response in referential terms would be expected. To the contrary, the glory of God's heart, relational involvement and vulnerable presence touches the innermost of the person and evokes a compatible reciprocal response from person-consciousness. These dynamics are critical to sort out because what emerges with the face of Jesus is necessary to understand for what needs to emerge from the human person for the gospel's relational outcome of face-to-face relationship together.

Jesus' intrusive relational path is intrusive simply because the heart of God is relationally involved and vulnerably present as never before. The face of God is vulnerably intruding both qualitatively from inner out and relationally face to face. And the Face's only purpose for vulnerably intruding to the innermost of the person is to "*bring the change* [*siym*] *for new relationship together in wholeness* [*šhālôm*]" (Num 6:24-26). What Jesus brings to change prevailing relationships ("to be apart") to new relationships together in wholeness is the key for the gospel that opens the door to distinguish theological anthropology in whole ontology and function. This was Paul's relational experience with the Face on the Damascus road, and the relational outcome

transformed from inner out the whole of Paul's person (*metamorphoō*, not *metaschēmatizō*, 2 Cor 3:18, cf. Rom 12:1-2) and constituted the whole in his theology and the gospel of wholeness (Eph 6:15, all discussed in chap. 6).[3]

Face to face is not a concept, idea or ideal, though it becomes those in referential terms. What distinguishes the qualitative face of God embodied by Jesus is the Face's vulnerable presence and intimate relational involvement, which definitively constitutes the primacy of relational work. 'Vulnerable and intimate' not only illuminate the Face's presence and involvement but magnify the Face in the integral dynamic necessary: (1) for face-to-face relationship together, (2) to be whole in face-to-face relationship, and (3) to live whole in face-to-face relationship together. Only the integral dynamic of 'vulnerable and intimate' constitute the Face's presence and involvement. Without being vulnerable and intimate the Face would not be distinguished as the Subject necessary for Face-to-face relationship but just be observable as Object for referential information.

By the nature of God's glory, the whole of God's relational work is integrally vulnerable and intimate. Likely the most vulnerable and intimate of Jesus' involvement is witnessed when he washed the disciples' feet. Title and role did not define the person he presented to them, nor did those secondary distinctions determine how he engaged them in relationship—clearly demonstrating how Jesus addressed the inescapable and unavoidable issues for ontology, function and practice discussed previously. In the vulnerable act of his whole person from inner out and by his intimate relational involvement, Jesus loved these persons he called his friends, not his servants (Jn 15:15). Jesus' function in the integral dynamic of vulnerable and intimate was the underlying threat that provoked Peter's refusal to make a compatible vulnerable and intimate connection with Jesus. As discussed earlier for theological anthropology to distinguish, the following are important to understand for the theological anthropology underlying this interaction for both Jesus and Peter, and what ontology and function unfolds from each of them: the inescapable issues for ontology and function of how persons are defined and on that basis how relationships are engaged in this interaction, plus the unavoidable issues for all practice of the integrity of the persons presented in this interaction and the level of involvement they have in relationship together.

What distinguishes the Face as Subject for relationship must compatibly distinguish the human person as subject in order for reciprocal relationship together face to Face to face. Vulnerable and intimate is the integral dynamic by which the glory of God in the face of Jesus touches the innermost of the person and evokes a compatible vulnerable and intimate reciprocal response from person-consciousness—not provokes an incompatible reaction from self-consciousness. Self-consciousness would not engage the integral dynamic of vulnerable and intimate but rather would move in the opposite relational direction. Like Peter, self-consciousness promotes an outer-in focus and maintains relational distance—focused on secondary matters like building tents or maintaining relational distance behind titles and roles at Jesus' footwashing. "Follow me" requires being vulnerable; "Do you love me?" necessitates being vulnerable and intimate—as an ongoing integral dynamic. There is no other way to make face-to-Face connection with the heart of God's presence and involvement except through this integral dynamic of vulnerable and intimate. This relational equation exposes various practices of

[3] Fully discussed in my study *The Whole of Paul and the Whole in His Theology: Theological Interpretation in Relational Epistemic Process* (2010). Online at http://4X12.org.

spiritual formation not adding up to deep relationship and why connection with God remains elusive for many, even those engaged in theological anthropology discourse.

Those who function as complex subjects (not simple objects) are the only persons whom the Father seeks in relationship together for their most significant reciprocal response to the whole of God's vulnerable presence and intimate involvement: the relational response in compatible vulnerable and intimate depth together experienced in worship. The strategic shift of God's theological trajectory intruded relationally on the person of the Samaritan woman—without the cultural-religious constraints of human distinctions that institute relational distance—to disclose in relational terms the vulnerable presence and intimate involvement of the whole and holy God (Jn 4:7-26). "God is spirit" signifies the qualitative innermost of God, which is distinguished in the human context by the qualitative function of God's heart—the face of God engaged in vulnerable and intimate relational work now embodied by Jesus directly to her. That is to say, the qualitative innermost of "God is heart"; and this God of heart seeks those persons in relationship together whose reciprocal response must (*dei*)—by the qualitative nature of the whole and holy God's intimate relational involvement and not by obligation (*opheilo*)—be compatible according to the qualitative function of their heart ("in spirit") in the whole of who, what and how they are as persons from inner out ("in truth" as constituted by righteousness). The person "in spirit and in truth" reciprocally responds to the vulnerable and intimate heart of God with the intimate involvement of their whole person made vulnerable from inner out by the function of their heart for the primacy of relational work necessary to be whole and live whole in relationship together. This reciprocal response is what God expects from persons and ongoingly seeks.

As Jesus disclosed definitively, only the integral dynamic of vulnerable and intimate constitutes reciprocal relationship together in wholeness, which is the only compatible reciprocal response that has significance to the whole and holy God. Nothing less and no substitutes can compose this primacy of relational work.

Called to Be Whole in Person*ness*

The face of God vulnerably turned to us in relational response of grace and intimately shined his face on the heart of our person in order to bring the change necessary for new relationship together in wholeness to fulfill God's definitive blessing, which initiated the gospel (in Num 6:24-26, cf. Isa 60:1). The primacy of this relational work embodied by Jesus in the integral dynamic of vulnerable and intimate composes the relational outcome of whole ontology and function for persons to be lived into the human context—the qualitative and relational significance of the gospel of wholeness (as Paul experienced, Eph 6:15). What Jesus saves us *to* emerged with his relational work and unfolds with our relational work in reciprocal relationship together. Theological anthropology can only be distinguished in true and whole identity by this person-consciousness and primacy of relational work; otherwise, theological anthropology becomes fragmentary in variable ontology and function with a person struggling in self-consciousness, unable to understand (1) what it means to be the person God created and thus live in whole ontology and function rather than "to be apart", and (2) what God

expects from this whole person while in the human context—the two vital issues theological anthropology needs to distinguish.

Relational language and terms compose the primacy of relationship created in the relational likeness of God. Yet these relationships started in creation were not simply any type of positive relationship, rather only intimate relationships as vulnerably revealed to us in the triunity of God (not tritheism). These intimate relationships then are further distinguished as intimate interdependent relationships signified by the relational work of the Trinity. It was God's purpose from even before creation (Eph 1:4, 5) that these intimate interdependent relationships function to grow *together* persons after the whole of God's likeness—that is, the family of God. This original purpose—started again with Noah (Gen 9:1)—was formalized in the first relational covenant God made with Abram (Gen 17:6), extended through Jacob (Gen 33:5), confirmed as the covenant of love (Dt 7:9) and of wholeness (Isa 54:10), and is fulfilled in the church through the redemptive reconciliation of Christ, and is being completed functionally and experientially by the ongoing relational work of the Spirit (Rom 8:14-16; Eph 1:13,14). God's revelation and our theology cohere in this relational progression of God's created (original and new in Christ) design and purpose, which are functionally whole and whole-ly relational.

Jesus came to restore us to God's design and purpose started in creation. Yet, we often appear not to have this functionally whole understanding of God's vulnerable revelation in the incarnation and the relational work signified by the gospel. When we separate or subordinate the primacy of the relational work in God's purpose to build not just family (in all its forms) but the whole family of God, then, accordingly, marriage and procreation (thus the purpose of Eve's creation) take on a different purpose than God intended. Instead, they become a function of our purpose to make a living, to have a life and to build one's life (characteristics of *bios*, not *zoe*, cf. Jn 10:10). Consequently, what is only secondary to and a means for God's purpose becomes primary for and a means to one's own purpose. The relational consequence is the reshaping of whole relationship together to some form of "to be apart". This reductionist framework for marriage and family certainly has had its consequences on how we build the family of God today. Despite the emphasis on marriage and family (and related values) that has "filled" many churches, we seem to have difficulty growing the intimate interdependent relationships started in God's created design and purpose. Certainly, if we don't have whole understanding what God started, it will remain difficult for us to complete ("fill") this purpose as God designed in the Trinity's likeness, regardless of our best intentions.

Human agency is involved in this process that determines the human consciousness in function and the interpretive lens used. Relational language and terms, in contrast and conflict to referential, have to compose the primacy of relational work in order for relational work not to be redefined or replaced by secondary matter. This also requires paying attention to reductionism and addressing any influence of its counter-relational work. Persons cannot be distinguished in whole ontology and function unless they are free and distinguished from its influence, the pervasive and prevailing influence of which renders persons and relationships "to be apart"; that is, influenced by common function that is easily overlooked under the seemingly reasonable assumption "you will not be reduced."

In referential language, personhood is the term most commonly referenced in discourse on the human person. This language and term historically has occupied the

central focus of theological anthropology. Personhood, however, does not sufficiently compose the meaning of human being and the nature of the person. 'Hood' denotes the state, quality or condition of something. While the person (created or evolved) certainly involves a distinct state, quality or condition, *being* a person is not distinguished by this basically static nature of personhood. Being a person can only be distinguished in its unique function integrated inseparable from its whole ontology—the ontology and function that can only involve the created person and not an evolved human. Person*ness* (not 'hood) is the relational term that composes the being of the person in the image and likeness of God, not merely providing referential information about the person. In composing the person's being, personness is the qualitative and functional dynamic to be integrally vulnerable and intimate for the person's ontology and function in person-consciousness.

Moreover, as a referential term person*hood* has varied in meaning and has been composed in fragmentary terms based on the various parts defining and determining the person. This variable or elusive person may be sufficient for humanistic anthropology but it is inadequate for theological anthropology. Central to theological anthropology is not a concept, idea or ideal of personhood but the dynamic qualitative and relational function of person*ness* that integrally distinguishes the person to be whole and to live whole ontology and function into the human context. Interrelated for theological anthropology is the vital matter of *being* righteous. Being righteous is the relational function of righteous*ness* necessary to compose the integral identity of the person. Most discussion of being righteous takes place in referential language revolved around an ideal and attribute of a referential term more accurately called righteous*hood*, which is insufficient to distinguish the true identity of the whole person (cf. Eph 4:24).

In his righteousness, Jesus' whole person did not engage other persons in and for personhood, either in his language (relational not referential) or for the outcome (relational not referential). His relational purpose is focused on person-consciousness for the relational outcome of personness, which emerges from his call to be whole. Once again, we need the complete Christology to be the key for theological anthropology to distinguish this person in person-consciousness (not self-consciousness) and whole ontology and function (not variable ontology and function) into (not of or merely in) the human context. And this complete Christology is composed just by Jesus' relational language.

When Jesus asked his disciples in relational language "Don't you *know me*, even after I have been *vulnerably present and relationally involved with* you such a long time?" (Jn 14:9, NIV), Jesus exposed the inadequacy of conventional epistemology focused on referential terms from outer in, and he reveals the necessity of the deeper epistemology in relational terms from inner out to expand the epistemic field. "How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" The Father is distinguished only in the qualitative interpretive framework of the whole of God's relational context and process. Any disciple or scholar must by nature have both compatibility with this relational context and congruence in this relational process for the heuristic outcome to *know* the whole of God in relationship Face to face. Any other epistemic context and process is referential merely for the transmission of information, of which these disciples had a large quantity about Jesus without knowing him. The primary issue here is relationship, and epistemology is

only second to it since the deeper epistemology (and expanded epistemic field) can emerge only from the depth of relationship engaged.

The early disciples demonstrated variable ontology and function due to the influence of reductionism and its counter-relational work. Such reductionism of the whole person and reductionism's counter-relational work on whole relationships together are consequential in function, which at best can signify only ontological simulation and epistemological illusion of the whole of God's glory in the face of Jesus (as Paul made clear, 2 Cor 4:4,6). This reductionism was demonstrated by Jesus' first disciples in the above interaction prior to the cross. Their statements, "How can we know the way" and "show us the Father" (Jn 14:5,8), would rarely be interpreted as moral failure or ethical shortcoming. It was their reductionist perception, focused outer in both on Jesus and themselves, that prevented wholeness of ontology and function from being seen and known in Jesus as well as being lived in themselves; as a result, their lack of qualitative sensitivity and relational awareness kept them from experiencing relational connection together with Jesus face to face, even after "all this time" (expressing Jesus' frustration, Jn 14:9). This was consequential of reductionism as the essential function of sin, the sin of reductionism, from which they needed redemptive change to be whole. Any and all reductions, whatever their variation, of God's whole on God's qualitative relational terms down to human shaping on human terms engage the dynamic process of sin, all of which is consequential, accountable and in need of redemptive change (cf. Col 2:8-23; Eph 4:20-24).

Engaging in the primacy of relationships and relational work is a critical dynamic for persons in order to know and understanding each other—an elusive outcome in many relationships beyond mere information about each other. This certainly applies to knowing and understanding God, as Jesus clearly identified in the above interaction, which is the definitive basis for all theology, that is, in relational terms and not referential (Jer 9:24). Yet, this critical dynamic is diminished when the focus shifts to secondary distinctions about persons (as witnessed in Peter) that displace the primacy with the secondary (as contrasted in Jer 9:23). Jesus fully understands this reductionist shift and builds on the primacy of relationship and relational work by redefining his followers from the role/title of servants to the person*ness* of friends—those persons who can know and understand him face to face (Jn 15:15). Human distinctions shift person-consciousness to self-consciousness focused on a comparative process (as further demonstrated by the disciples, Lk 22:24) and thereby diminish, minimalize, fragment or prevent the primacy of relationships and relational work to know and understand each other (as witnessed in the disciples)—whereby ontology and function are not only variable but become reduced. Jesus' relational work transforms persons from inner out to the intimate relational likeness of the whole of God, without the veil of human distinctions (2 Cor 3:16-18; Col 3:10-11; Gal 3:26-28).

In unmistakable relational language but often overlooked relational terms, Jesus calls the persons following him to person*ness* (not to service, Jn 12:26) to be whole and to live whole ontology and function into the human context. His call in relational language was first embodied in new wine fellowship together (Lk 5:33-39) and then composed in his formative family prayer, the terms of which traditionally are seen referentially as his high priestly prayer (Jn 17). What Jesus saves persons *to* was tasted at that new wine fellowship together and is summarized in his relational prayer, which

includes making definitive the relational work necessarily involved to live whole ontology and function into the human context. This relational work necessarily includes integral identity formation that is distinguished, on the one hand, in God's relational context and, on the other hand, from the human context. Identity distinguished from the human context is critical for whole ontology and function because it is not shaped by the limits and constraints of the human context, notably by secondary or false human distinctions. Accordingly, this relational work requires being able to live in the human context by the primacy of God's context—that is, by an indispensable process of reciprocating contextualization, wherein ongoing interaction between the primacy of God's context determines function in the person's primary identity while in the human context.

The taste of new wine relationship together in wholeness was experienced at a pivotal relational connection in new wine fellowship. In God's relational action there are complex theological dynamics that converge in Jesus' theological trajectory and relational path to constitute the whole of God's thematic relational response of grace to the human condition. The roots, growth, outcome and maturing of the new creation were integrally signified in a metaphor used by Jesus about the new wine (Lk 5:33-39). The focus of new wine provides us with a whole understanding of the priority of person-consciousness from inner out and its primacy of relationships together.

The parable of new wine tends to be used incorrectly to emphasize new forms and practices, innovations focused more on the secondary and shaped more from outer in, all of which signify a lens of referential language and terms. Part of misinterpreting or inadequately understanding the new wine involves again Jesus' relational language. Jesus was not focused on situations and circumstances in life and, for example, being innovative in what we do in those situations and circumstances to maximize them. The seeds of the new wine are planted in the innermost of human life, not in secondary matter. Jesus' primary concern is not about *what* we do but for *who* we are and *how* we live. Therefore, in relational terms Jesus engages the ontology and function of those present (even his critics) and unfolds the whole ontology and function of the new creation—in contrast and conflict with reduced ontology and function. This contrast in ontology and function was demonstrated in this context by Levi's transformation for the relational outcome of the new wine table fellowship together as family (Lk 5:27-32), further constituted later with Zacchaeus (Lk 19:1-10). The new wine emerges only from the inner out of ontology and function made whole in the innermost. When the new wine emerges from redefined and transformed persons, then its relational outcome is unmistakable in the family relationships together with no veil.

In this new wine table fellowship, Jesus addresses the juxtaposition of "eat and drink" (the new) and "fast and pray" (the old). The shift from the old to the new is more than a paradigm shift but the transformation that emerges from Jesus' anticipated sacrifice behind the curtain for the relational outcome of new relationship together in wholeness with the veil removed. Their new wine table fellowship anticipated their new covenant relationship without the veil such that they could enjoy the vulnerable presence and intimate involvement of Jesus without the constraints of the old. The veil can be understood as follows: the gap between the universe and that which is beyond, the barrier between human limits and the transcendent God, the qualitative distance between the human heart and the heart of God, and the relational distance between the human person

and the whole of God. The absence of the veil, therefore, is critical for new covenant relationship together; and the new wine table fellowship is solely a function of this new creation. This understanding means that we cannot claim Jesus' relational work on the cross without embracing the change of tearing down the holy partition, in order to remove the veil for new covenant relationship together. The cross is incomplete and his relational work is not finished if this change to the new is not our primary relational reality.

The taste of new wine, however, turns sour, or new wine escapes, within the context of old wineskin. Old wineskins are implied in the alternatives of anything less and any substitutes discussed above. Certainly then, old wineskins both constrain the flow of the new wine and reduce it of its qualitative and relational significance. The nature of old wineskins emerges with any reduction of our ontology and function, thus from an ambiguous or shallow personal-collective identity with relationships still having the veil—for example, who we are without *what* and/or *whose* we are in the primacy of God's context—in contrasting and conflicting function with Jesus' new wine table fellowship.

Jesus disclosed the new wine when the issue of fasting was raised to him. His response is inseparable from his major discourse for his followers in the Sermon on the Mount. Focused on efforts of self-determination, Jesus exposed trying to get closer to God through fasting from outer in (Mt 6:16-18). This effort to establish one's own righteousness (*dikaiosyne*, 6:1) assumes a reduced ontology and function that constrains the person in an outer-in discipline having no qualitative significance from inner out, and consequently has no relational significance to God. For Jesus, this fasting is an old wineskin that cannot contain the new wine. In Jesus' relational language, reduced ontology and function are both incompatible and incongruent with whole ontology and function; and the nature of old wineskins is reduced ontology and function, defining the person from outer in and determining relationships still with the veil—unable to be vulnerably involved heart to heart with God face to Face in the nature of the new wine, the new covenant, and with persons together in the new creation family.

Old wineskins are the relational consequence of becoming embedded in an ontological lie from reductionism that imposes an identity deficit, in which a person (or together as church) struggles to erase any deficit by efforts of self-determination in what one can do (e.g. fasting). The more control one can exercise over this process, the more certain the results of one's efforts can be expected. The pursuit of certainty, however, requires a reduction epistemologically, ontologically and relationally in order for the control needed to succeed in self-determination—notably narrowing the epistemic field to the probable and minimizing vulnerability in relationships. This is how God's terms for covenant relationship outlined in the *torah* have been reduced to a behavioral code, how persons seek to become justified by what they do, how Jesus' teachings become disembodied to mere principles to follow, how the new wine gets put into an old wineskin. The nature of old wineskins, therefore, is the nature of the human condition *in* its reduced ontology and function, seeking self-determination and self-justification *by* its reduced ontology and function in order to overcome the deficit *for* its reduced ontology and function—a vicious cycle enslaving human persons. And, accordingly, old wineskins emerge from an ambiguous or shallow identity necessitating the veil in relationships, because it fails to engage the integral identity formation outlined by Jesus in the

beatitudes (Mt 5:3-10) and pursues a reduced righteousness from outer in rather than whole righteousness from inner out (contrary to Mt 5:20 in Jesus' major discourse for his followers).

Old wineskins first emerged in the primordial garden in the form of the fruit for self-determination and then with their loincloths for self-justification, and most significantly in their relational distance (Gen 3:6-10). The ontological lie from reductionism imposed an identity deficit to create an illusion of climbing the ontological ladder to a higher status: "you will not be *reduced*…you will become like God" (3:4-5). Constructing the tower of Babel was another old wineskin of reduced ontology and function seeking to climb the human contextual ladder for self-determination and justification (Gen 11:1-4). These examples demonstrate that old wineskins can have the appearance of something new (the fruit), innovative (loincloths) and a new venture (the tower); yet their reality is merely an illusion for reduced ontology and function.

The influence from human contextualization for innovation and new ventures has accelerated in the modern world of science and technology. At the same time, these efforts have also required a reduction epistemologically, ontologically and relationally in order to produce results. For example, the illusions of new skins developed by the recent changes in media technology are consequential for diminished involvement in relationships and minimalizing the quality of life, even though they have greatly increased our information, productivity and other quantities in life. As noted previously, such innovation stemming from modern technology has only reduced the primacy of the qualitative and the relational. These results, however, witness to the limits of what can emerge from reduced ontology and function. The new wine does not emerge and flow from the changes of innovation but only with transformation from inner out of whole ontology and function.

Shifting from innovation and its ambiguity of function and usefulness, we turn to a more practical approach. Pragmatism is another old wineskin constraining the new wine that needs more attention if the concern is for the flow of new wine. While a pragmatist may have significance by not separating theology from its practical function—in this sense Paul can be considered a pragmatist—pragmatism has a purpose and concern of less depth. Contextually, pragmatism should not be confused with pragmatics in linguistics that concerns understanding the meaning of messages in the relational context of the speaker—an ongoing necessity for Jesus' relational language and messages. In a more limited concern, even with good intentions, pragmatism involves the effort in discipleship that focuses primarily on situations and circumstances, and concerns what is most practical in those contexts. With this narrowed-down focus and concern, pragmatism essentially reduces the relational involvement of the whole person with God by shifting this primacy to the situations and circumstances. Often unknowingly, this limits the relational process of discipleship to outer-in engagement by redefining one's person from inner out to outer in, thereby renegotiating relationship with God on our terms (cf. Mk 14:3-9). By reordering the primacy of relationship, pragmatism unintentionally promotes the counter-relational work of reductionism and reduces the whole ontology and function constituting both the new wine and its discipleship, therefore disregarding Jesus' relational imperative for his followers.

In my opinion, the most significant contribution from postmodernism is its critique of underlying assumptions (mainly of modernism) that challenges any templates

(most notably a grand blueprint or metanarrative) imposing a narrowed view of the world to which human life necessarily conforms. The postmodern hermeneutic of suspicion helped expose such templates that were based on bad or false assumptions. We need to learn from this process and initiate our own hermeneutic of suspicion, yet for a different outcome than postmodernism. It is not the presence of a metanarrative—that is, the metanarrative from beyond the universe distinguished from a grand blueprint from within the universe—that is the issue but rather the notion of a template imposing a narrow view epistemologically, hermeneutically and theologically, and on this basis constraining what and how we are ontologically and functionally. Such a template can exist in the Christian religious community in the form of its tradition or in a less formal pattern of its status quo. The presence and promotion of either need our hermeneutic of suspicion.

As the hermeneutical key to the 'new', Jesus initiated this needed hermeneutic of suspicion to expose a template of tradition while introducing the new wine table fellowship (Lk 5:33-39, cf. Mt 15:1-20), and also to jolt the religious community from its status quo in a pivotal interaction with Nicodemus (Jn 3:1-16, cf. 5:39-40). In each interaction, the 'old' was maintained at the expense of the 'new', therefore tradition and the status quo needed redemptive change for the 'new' to be born, raised up in the new and lived whole in relationship together without any template signified by the veil.

The ongoing tension and conflict between the new and the old clearly rises when the new's presence is constrained, shaped or conformed to the limits of the old. Of course, this increased level assumes the presence of the new, which is distinguished by the dynamic of nothing less and no substitutes in our person and relationships, that is, from inner out in the primacy of relationships together. The seeds of new wine that Jesus planted at his defining table fellowship are cultivated in the innermost of human life, not in secondary matter prevailing in human contexts. With relational language serving as a hermeneutic of suspicion, Jesus addressed their religious tradition by engaging the ontology and function of those present (both his critics and disciples), thereby challenging the assumptions of their theological anthropology. In his concern for who they were and how they lived, Jesus addressed their identity. Since Jesus did not separate theology from function, he defined the inseparable interaction between their theological assumptions and identity formation. That is, who we are emerges from our theology, and the identity formed determines how we will live. This underscores the three inescapable issues emphasized earlier: (1) how we define ourselves, which then determines (2) how we function in relationships, both of which further determine (3) how relationships together notably as church are practiced. By interposing the new wine into the process, Jesus discloses the theological dynamic that redefines who we are and transforms what we are and how we live. Therefore, both our identity and its relational outcome are contingent on the theological dynamic we assume with Jesus.

Theological anthropology and Christology converge at table fellowship with Jesus, as Peter experienced in Jesus' footwashing. The clarity and depth of the identity emerging from this theological interaction is contingent on the completeness of Christology and its integral influence on theological anthropology. This completeness and integral influence are inseparable from Jesus' own identity—signified as "the bridegroom" at the new wine table fellowship (Lk 5:34). Yet, Jesus' own ontology and function are identified further and deeper than this.

While the embodied Jesus was distinctly Jewish, and his predominant surrounding context was Jewish Galilee and Judea, the person Jesus presented (who and what) and how he interacted at the various levels of social discourse were a function of a *minority identity*, not the dominant Jewish identity. That is to say, Jesus functioned in a qualitatively different way than prevailing Judaism, yet he was fully compatible with OT faith and the teaching of Scripture—not as a religious code but as a relational process with God. What emerged from Jesus was the presence of the new clearly distinguished from their tradition and from the prevailing assumptions defining their ontology and determining their function.

One advantage of his minority identity was to clearly distinguish his significance from the prevailing majority—including from the broader context pervaded with Greco-Roman influence. A major disadvantage, however, was to be marginalized (i.e. considered less, or even ignored when not intrusive) by the majority or dominant sector. This disadvantage is problematic at best for his followers and can precipitate an identity crisis, that is, if his followers are not experiencing the whole and true identity of who, what and how they are. Yet, the experiential truth of his followers' identity is a relational outcome of embracing Jesus in his identity, the clarity and depth of which become a christological contingency. In other words, the specific identity of who Jesus is (or perceived to be), determines the nature of their involvement together, and will be definitive for who his followers are or become. This further challenges our assumptions of discipleship in a conventional servant model and even our view of the cross with a conventional lens of sacrifice.

The key, and thus the contingency, is who Jesus is. If who Jesus is defines the basis for our identity as his followers, then Jesus by necessity is both the hermeneutical key and the functional key for identity formation. This, of course, makes our life and practice in discipleship contingent on our working Christology—specifically, whether or not it involves the embodied whole of Jesus.

When Jesus said in his formative family prayer "I sanctify myself" (Jn 17:19), this was not about sanctifying his ontology but about sanctifying his identity to function clearly in the human context to distinguish the whole of his ontology. Since Jesus' ontology was always holy (*hagios*), this sanctifying process was mainly in order that his followers' ontology and identity may be sanctified (*hagiazo*) in the experiential truth of his full identity (as Jesus prayed). Moreover, since Jesus' embodied identity did not function in a social vacuum with relational separation, it is vital to understand his sanctified identity for the experiential truth of our identity to be in his likeness and our ontology to be in the image of the whole of God (as Jesus further prayed).

What is Jesus' sanctified identity? As the embodiment of the holy God, Jesus' identity functioned in congruence with the origin or source of his ontology. Earlier in his formative family prayer, he indicated the source of his ontology as "I myself am not of the world" (vv.14,16, NIV). "Of" (*ek*) means (here in the negative) out of which his identity is derived and to which he belongs. Yet, this only points to Jesus' full identity. In his prayer he also defined his function as "in the world" (v.13, cf. Jn 13:1). "In" (*en*) means to remain in place, or in the surrounding context, while "out of" the context to which he belongs, thereby pointing to his minority identity. It is the dynamic interaction of Jesus' full identity with his minority identity that is necessary for the significance of his sanctified identity. They are integrated, and if separated our understanding of who,

what and how Jesus is is diminished. This fragmentation signifies an incomplete Christology that is consequential for the clarity and depth of identity to emerge.

We need to understand further the sanctified identity Jesus embodied in sanctified life and practice. The *functional posture* "in the world" of his minority identity is beyond mere ethics and is more than merely mission. This functional posture emerges from the *relational posture* "not of the world" of his full identity enacted "as you sent me into the world" (v.18). "Into" (*eis*) denotes motion into the common's context as a conjoint function of the *ek-eis* dynamic ("out of"-"into" motion), which both signifies the primary relational context of Jesus' identity with the Father and constitutes the primacy of the relational process between him and his Father. This integrated function composes Jesus' call to persons: to be whole and true in their identity, which only emerges from the primacy of God's context (*ek*) to live whole ontology and function into (*eis*) the human context.

This relational posture of Jesus defined what, who and how he was. Just as his followers in the common human context would, Jesus experienced the ongoing tension to conform to a religious and sociocultural identity, which then would define and shape him. For example, he encountered strong pressure to meet messianic expectations, to practice a reduced variation of Judaism (since the rebuilding of the temple, Second Temple Judaism), to adhere to the existing social structures and norms, all of which would have limited or reduced what, who, and how he was. While part of Jesus' full identity involved being Messiah, Savior and King, he was not defined by a title, a role or by what he did. What constituted his identity was the function of relationship as the whole of God—in the Gospel narratives, notably with the Father.[4] The ongoing relational function of reciprocating contextualization (the integral function of the *ek-eis* dynamic) is the only means to live distinguished while *in* the human context without becoming the shape *of* its influence.

In relational terms and not referential, Christian identity must by its nature be qualitatively rooted in and ongoingly relationally based on Jesus' identity. On this irreducible and nonnegotiable basis, complete Christology is basic to our identity; and any reduction of our Christology renders our identity to a lack of clarity (as "light") and depth (as "salt"), consequently precipitating an identity crisis ("no longer good for anything," Mt 5:13). Therefore, questions like those by the disciples ("Who is this?" Mk 4:41) and Paul on the Damascus road ("Who are you?" Acts 9:5: cf. Jn 8:25) need to be answered in complete (*pleroo*) theological determination for the answer to be definitive of the qualitative and relational significance of both the incarnation and the gospel. The disciples struggled with this relational epistemic process, while Paul received the epistemic clarification and hermeneutic correction to engage the whole of Jesus for relationship together without the veil—the relational outcome of the new wine redefining who Paul was and transforming what he was and how he lived.

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[4] The narratives of Jesus' relationship with the Father give us predominately a binitarian view of God. This is understandable in the context of the whole of God's thematic action because the Spirit's presence and function have yet to be fully identified. Yet, the Spirit was never absent nor rendered temporarily "out of service" (see Lk 4:1,14,18). The ontology of the whole of God is irreducibly trinitarian. And though his main involvement appeared notably with the Father, Jesus' ontology and identity are always trinitarian and functioned in the trinitarian relational context and process.

Directly related to the above questions are questions such as "Where are you?" (Gen 3:9) and "What are you doing here?" (1 Kg 19:9,13). These are questions from God involving our theological anthropology, and related theological assumptions of Christology, that are critical for identity formation. Both sets of questions need to be answered to define the depth of our theology (as signified in "Do you also wish to go away?" Jn 6:67), and to determine the depth of our reciprocal relational response (as signified in "do you love me?" Jn 21:15-16). Our response emerges from the primary identity of who we are, and the identity we form emerges from our theology, that is, the interaction between our theological anthropology and Christology. The ontology and function that result are contingent on this theological process.

The issue about being whole is that it always involves reductionism, whether it is reductionism of our theology or our function. What Jesus made definitive in his formative family prayer (Jn 17:13-23) is crucial for our whole understanding (*synesis*) of this issue. What prevails in (*en*) any context of the world is reductionism. Jesus calls his followers relationally out of (*ek*) these contexts in order to be whole together as his family, then also relationally sends them back into (*eis*) those surrounding contexts to live whole together as his family and to make whole the human condition. Without the reciprocating dynamic of this *ek-eis* relational involvement, church ontology and function become defined and shaped based on the narrowed-down terms *en* (in) the surrounding context. This relational condition is problematic because of the relational barriers or distance it creates for the ongoing relational involvement necessary with the whole of God on God's relational terms to constitute the whole of who we are in relationships together as church and whose we are as God's family—whole persons in whole relationship together in the qualitative image and relational likeness of the Trinity, just as Jesus composed in his formative family prayer. Without this reciprocating contextualization, our identity in the world becomes fragmentary and, therefore, is rendered ambiguous (as the light) and/or shallow (as the salt, Mt 5:13-16). This is not the embodied whole of his family and the gospel that Jesus prayed for the world to see, receive and respond to, and therefore also be made whole and no longer "to be apart".

The wholeness Jesus gives in relationship together as family in likeness of the Trinity is the experiential truth 'already' that "I will not leave you orphaned" (Jn 14:18), and that determines our whole ontology and function both as church family and in the world: "so that they may be one, as we are one…that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" (Jn 17:22-23). This is the integral basis for the theological anthropology of whole ontology and function in critical contrast and conflict to reduced ontology and function. The roots of this ontology and function go back to creation, and its theological trajectory and relational path emerged in covenant relationship with Abraham when God directly communicated the clear relational imperative to him: "walk *with* me and be *tamiym*, *not merely blameless but be whole*" (Gen 17:1). If our theological anthropology does not have this theological trajectory and follow this relational path, then the ontology and function of the person and persons together as church family will not be *tamiym*. The relational consequence is that persons essentially become relational orphans and their gatherings become more like orphanages, in contrast and even conflict to the wholeness Jesus gives them in relationship together (cf. Jn 16:33).

During their pivotal table fellowship together—integrally involving his footwashing and Lord's Supper—Jesus made conclusive the whole theology that his theological trajectory and relational path vulnerably embodied and relationally disclosed (Jn 13-17):

1. The whole of who, what and how God is; the whole of Jesus by nature is unable to be divided ("you still do not know me?") nor can the whole of God be separated ("seen me has seen the Father," "we are one"); Jesus embodied and disclosed only God's whole ontology and function, nothing less and no substitutes.
2. The whole of who, what and how the human person is; our ontology and function are whole in his qualitative image ("not *of* the world just as I am not") and relational likeness ("one as we are one"); and we are whole together as God's very family ("make our home with them," "*the Father's* love…in them, as I am in them," "they become completely one"); this is the definitive identity of both who we are and whose we are.
3. The whole of God's relational response of grace to the human condition to make persons whole in relationship together as God's family ("*the Father* sent me into the world," "I am the way…to the Father," "to give eternal life…that they may know *the whole of God*," "I will not leave you orphaned," "we will come to them and make our home with them," "I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me"); nothing less and no substitutes constitute the gospel.

Grace and peace—that is, the whole of God's relational response of grace and the relational outcome of wholeness—are relational dynamics integrated in Jesus' theological trajectory that are integrally enacted and fulfilled along his relational path in the primacy of whole relationship together in God's family. Wholeness in relationship together involves the primacy of whole persons (from inner out, cf. "in spirit and truth") in intimate involvement to *know* the whole of the other person, as signified by Jesus' footwashing and as constituted by participating in Jesus' sacrifice (his body and blood) behind the curtain in the temple in the intimate presence of God to have the veil removed (Heb 10:19-22). In Jesus' theological trajectory and relational path, grace and peace emerge without the veil in the primacy of intimate relationship together with the whole of God and the whole of each person as family—the primacy of wholeness with the veil removed that Paul clarified theologically and functionally (Eph 2:14-22; 2 Cor 3:16-18). Therefore, whole theology—whether of God, the person or the gospel—involves the vulnerable involvement and relational intimacy in the primacy of whole relationship together with no veil. Both this integral identity and integral dynamic of vulnerable and intimate unfolding in the primacy of relationship are irreducible and nonnegotiable in Jesus' theological trajectory and relational path.

The reduction or renegotiation of this primacy was the critical issue for two notable churches that Jesus exposed in his post-ascension relational discourse. The church in Ephesus was exemplary in maintaining its church identity and doctrinal purity in the surrounding context (Rev 2:1-3,6). Their church ontology and function, however,

had become a substitute for the primacy of relationship together: "But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first *in the primacy of relationship and renegotiated what's primary*" (v.4). The church in Sardis was a successful church with a prominent reputation in the surrounding context (Rev 3:1). Yet, their ontology and function was a mere simulation of the primacy of wholeness, so Jesus jolted them in their illusion because "I have not found your works *pleroo*" (v.2), that is, complete, whole "in the sight of my God's *perceptual-interpretive lens*" (*enopion*, before, in the presence of, cf. Abraham before God, Gen 17:1). In spite of their high level of church performance, both churches were on a different theological trajectory and relational path than Jesus.

In his relational messages to the churches in Ephesus and Sardis, Jesus teaches us a critical lesson that delineates a simple reality of life about the human person and the surrounding social context—matters we either pay attention to or ignore depending on our assumptions of theological anthropology and the human condition (e.g. the church in Thyatira also critiqued, Rev 2:18-23). His lesson is integrated with his formative family prayer (Jn 17:9-19) and addresses the issue of contextualization defining us. Since we do not live in a vacuum, our ontology and function (both individual and corporate) are either shaped by the surrounding context we are *en* (v.11, thus "*of* the world," v.14) or constituted by what we enter *eis* (dynamic movement "*into*") that context with. In the latter constituting process, for the dynamic of *eis* to define and determine our ontology and function in congruence with Jesus (v.18) necessitates the *ek* ("of" indicating source) relational involvement to negate any defining influence on us from a surrounding context ("not of the world") in order to determine us by our primary source in the whole of God's relational context and process, therefore constituting the whole ontology and function in the primacy of relationship together for the *eis* relational movement back into the human context (vv.16-18). Human contextualization, though neither disregarded nor necessarily unimportant, is clearly secondary to God's in this process that integrally distinguishes our primary identity of who we are and whose we are (v.9). This reciprocating relational process (*ek-eis* relational dynamic, as in reciprocating contextualization discussed above) signifies the relational demands of grace for reciprocal relationship conjointly compatible with the theological trajectory of Jesus' coming *eis* the world and congruent with his relational path of wholeness for all of life with which he engaged the world. Nothing less and no substitutes can distinguish the whole ontology and function of Jesus and of those in likeness who indeed follow him in the primacy of whole relationship together without the veil.

The clearest indicator of whether or not we have shifted from Jesus' theological trajectory and veered from his relational path is our theological anthropology. Our ontology and function reveal if we have, on the one hand, reduced and renegotiated the primacy of relationship and, on the other, kept the veil—both of which have the same relational consequence "to be apart". The ontology and function in *shalom* and *tamiym* emerge only in the primacy of relationship and confirm that we are compatible with Jesus' theological trajectory and congruent with his relational path, as the ancient poet anticipated (Ps 37:37) and Paul's life illuminates for us. *Tamiym* was critical for Paul's life. Paul was on a different theological trajectory when he entered the Damascus road. Then the whole of Jesus intruded on his ontology and function and jolted his theological anthropology, causing a retrospective for Paul in which he received *tamiym*'s epistemological clarification and hermeneutic correction. The relational outcome was that

the distinguished Face shined on him to bring change for new relationship together in wholeness—without the veil of human distinctions prevailing in the human context that engages a comparative process composing a deficit model to keep persons and relationships "to be apart" from the whole. On this relational basis, Paul was transformed to whole ontology and function in the qualitative image and relational likeness of God, without human distinctions. Therefore, based on living this theological anthropology, he made imperative for "the wholeness of Christ to *be the only determinant of persons from inner out*," and imperative according to "*the relational language and terms* of Christ to live *whole ontology and function in relationship together as God's family*" (Col 3:10-16, cf. Gal 5:6; 6:15).

This is the wholeness that Jesus vulnerably and intimately embodied (Jn 14:27), extended from God's definitive blessing (Num 6:24-26, cf. Isa 60:1) and calls his family to be and live in relationship together into the human context, as well as to make whole the human relational condition "to be apart". This is the relational basis for the Father to make it a relational imperative for persons: "Listen to *the relational language of* my Son" (Mt 17:5), which Peter eventually did in relational terms. And for Jesus to make imperative: "Pay attention to how you listen" (Lk 8:18)—in relational terms or referential terms? Contrary to referential parts, whole Christology is composed conclusively in relational language and its relational terms are the only definitive basis for theological anthropology to be distinguished in this whole ontology and function, as vulnerably embodied by the whole of God's improbable theological trajectory and intrusive relational path in face-to-face relationship. Nothing less and no substitutes will be sufficient for theological anthropology, which means that for theological anthropology to be distinguished (*pala*) it must by its distinguished nature also be distinguished clearly from reductionism and its counter-relational work—in other words, from the beginning be distinguished beyond "to be apart".

As Jesus communicated decisively for human consciousness and its interpretive lens, "the measure you *use* will be the *person* you get" (Mk 4:24). Therefore, "walk vulnerable and intimate with the whole of God and be whole in reciprocal relationship together as family."

Chapter 6 The Pivotal Position and Vital Function of Theological Anthropology

He gave *whole persons* to equip *the persons of God's family*
…to maturity *according* to the measure of the whole of Christ.
Ephesians 4:11-13

The whole of theological anthropology is distinguished when the person is integrally constituted in complete context: (1) to be whole together in the primacy of God's relational context, and (2) to live whole ontology and function into the human context based ongoingly in the primacy of God's relational process. As introduced in chapter three, theological anthropology occupies the pivotal position and provides the vital function for this relational outcome, which by necessity contrasts and even conflicts with a mere referential outcome. Theological anthropology is also pivotal for providing the underlying basis for the relational progression of this whole-ly distinguished outcome. This is further magnified as we integrate the whole of Jesus into Paul.

This light intensifies as it illuminates the implications of Paul's (and our) initial anthropology and subsequent theological anthropology. This subsequent theological anthropology becomes the initial and/or ongoing basis for our interpretive framework and lens, which then either shapes and constructs, or whole-ly composes the following:

1. How we see God, or don't pay attention, and thereby shape God accordingly.
2. The mirror for the human person in the image and likeness of God.
3. The nature of the human condition and the strength of our view of sin.
4. The content of the gospel and the face of the incarnation.

Including the theology and practice of the following:

5. What salvation is and what the new creation means.
6. The significance of discipleship, the church's ontology and function, and the purpose of mission.
7. The integrating function of pneumatology and the integrating direction of eschatology.

Illuminating the Implications of Theological Anthropology

The referentialization of the Word, from the beginning, has been problematic—from "Did God really say that?" to "What God really meant by that." Referentialization reduces the face of God to an Object to observe for information, and it reduces the whole of Jesus from the primacy of his face-to-face relational work for the sole purpose of the primacy of whole relationship together. This referentialized Object and Jesus are neither the Face nor the person who relationally intruded on Paul's way on the Damascus road.

As noted toward the end of the last chapter, it bears repeating that the clearest indicator of not having shifted from Jesus' theological trajectory and veered from his relational path is our theological anthropology. Clearly, our ontology and function reveal if we have reduced and renegotiated the primacy of relationship and, or have kept the veil—both of which have the same relational consequence. The whole ontology and function that emerge only in the primacy of relationship are what confirm that we are compatible with Jesus' theological trajectory and congruent with his relational path. *Tamiym*, as noted, was critical for Paul's life. Since he was on a different theological trajectory when he entered the Damascus road, the whole of Jesus intruded on his ontology and function and deconstructed his theological anthropology. As Paul might have expected just from God's blessing, the relational outcome was that the distinguished Face shined on him to bring change for new relationship together in wholeness—without the veil.

When the Face that shone on Paul said to his face "why do you persecute *me*?" the Face was distinguished in deeper significance than a Christophany. The integral person and distinguished presence of Jesus further emerges on the Damascus road in the significance of his presentation as an extension of the incarnation. Yet, the integrity of his presentation is not limited to the embodied Face distinguished further in post-ascension but is integrally the distinguished Face both from the beginning who antedates Paul's religious roots and in the beginning who antecedes the created image intrinsic to and thus innermost of Paul's person.

Paul's persecution of the Way was focused on and "against the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:4-5,9). This was problematic for Paul in two critical ways directly associated with his faith-tradition: (1) to ignore the name of the Christ from his own Scripture (Isa 9:6), and (2) to not pay attention to the significance of the person who constitutes the name. Though in many human contexts a name is commonly just an identity marker, for Jews the name *is* the person, notably for God who disclosed his name to Moses as the distinguished "I AM WHO I AM" (*Yhwh*, Ex 3:13-15; 6:2-3; cf. Isa 42:8). Yet, even Yhwh, the LORD, easily is diminished of the whole significance of his *person* when used in referential language.

The relational dynamics converging and unfolding in this interaction are insufficient to understand as a mere Christophanic event or as merely a traditional call and even conversion of Paul. Consider what integrally converges with Jesus and Paul in the following: epistemologically, "who are you-I am Jesus"; ontologically, "me-I am"; relationally, "you persecute me-whom you are persecuting." These are critical relational dynamics to understand for the whole of Jesus presented and for the whole of Paul both entering and emerging from the Damascus road. The whole of Paul entering the Damascus road was not a whole but reduced person, thus signifying the underlying convergence of wholeness and reductionism. What happens in this convergence is a more dramatic extension of Jesus' person presented to Levi (discussed previously). The circumstances are different but the relational dynamic is the same: the distinguished Face engaged them Face to face with the good news to be redefined back to 'inner out', transformed from their reductionism, and made whole in the primacy of relationship together.

The Paul who emerged from the Damascus road did not engage on what may appear as a reshaped variable theological trajectory parallel to Jesus'—though his

congruence with Jesus has been questioned in Pauline studies. Rather his theological trajectory was now integrally compatible and whole-ly congruent with Jesus' theological trajectory and relational path. Paul was vulnerably involved in ongoing reciprocal relationship with the whole of God (the Son and the Spirit, together with the Father), who composed the whole of Paul and his witness, as well as the whole in Paul and his theology. The relational dynamics that unfold are the relational work of Jesus' theological trajectory extended *into* Paul and exceeded by him with the Spirit—just as Jesus promised for those relationally involved with him (Jn 14:12-13) and defined for Paul (Acts 26:16). And the experiential truth of this relational outcome unfolds in Paul's theological anthropology and its related implications.

What Paul saw in the face of Jesus was the glory of the whole of God (2 Cor 4:6; Col 1:19; 2:9). What the face of Christ magnified was God's glory jointly in qualitative being, revealing the heart of God from inner out, which included also the nature of God's glory, revealing the relational nature of the whole of God in vulnerable involvement. God's glory in the face of Christ was not a static condition or attribute by which God is referenced. Jesus vulnerably embodied the relational nature of the *pleroma* (complete, whole) of God, whose relational involvement vulnerably constituted the function of God's heart. Thus, knowing the glory of God in qualitative being and relational nature is to receive the relational function of God's heart vulnerably presented Face to face. The functional significance of God's qualitative being and relational nature were what Paul experienced in the face of Christ—from inner out, initially on the Damascus road and ongoingly in vulnerable relationship together without the veil to be transformed into the image and likeness of God's glory embodied by Christ (as Paul made definitive, 2 Cor 3:18). This experiential truth was the conclusive basis for the irreducible, inseparable and integrated connection between ontology and function in Paul's theological anthropology.

Perception of the human person is contingent epistemologically on the extent and depth of knowledge of the whole of God, not on the quantity of information about parts of God. Interpretation of human function involves a hermeneutic dependence on how God is perceived and God's function is interpreted. These epistemic and hermeneutic interactions need to be integrally accounted for in the perception and interpretation of human life, whether on the macro level (e.g. in physics) or on the micro level (e.g. in neuroscience), and most notably in theological anthropology. This all converges in the systemic framework of Paul's whole theology, thus his theological systemic framework is critically necessary for whole knowledge and understanding of anthropology.

Paul made the above connections to provide the basic perception of the human person and the hermeneutic key to human function: In Creator-God "we have our being" (human ontology) and "we live and move" (human function, Acts 17:28). Yet, human ontology and function more than originate from God; they are also "in God," that is, in God's image and likeness as "God's offspring" (*genos*, kind, family, 17:29). Paul used a metaphor in this text likely taken from the Athenians' ancient mythology ("your own poets," 17:28), but not merely to illustrate a point. Being and function as God's offspring are the integral roots conjointly defining who/what the human person is and determining how the person functions, which are contingent on how God and God's function are perceived. This emerges from the whole of God's systemic framework, within which the cosmos and the human person are integrated with God's whole (cf. Rom 8:19; Col 1:16-17).

Human roots were the creative work of the whole of the Creator, the unknown face of whom is constituted by Christ as Creator (Col 1:16), by Christ as God (Col 1:19; 2 Cor 4:6) and by Christ as Son (Rom 1:4, cf. Jn 1:18). The whole of the Creator is vital to human roots on the following basis: (1) the human person was created in the qualitative image of the whole Creator, that is, *whole* from inner out, neither fragmenting the quantitative from the qualitative nor minimalizing the quantitative; and (2) human function was created in the likeness signified by the relational ontology of the whole of God (defined in the creation narrative, Gen 1:26-27); that is, in the relationships together necessary to be God's whole—as Jesus vulnerably revealed of his relationship with the Father (Jn 5:19-20; 14:9-11), and for which he intimately prayed to the Father (Jn 17:21-23). Therefore, *imago Dei* was at the heart of Paul's theological anthropology, which he illuminated in its original condition, its renegotiated condition to human terms, and its restored condition in Christ. Yet, for Paul, *imago Dei* was not a theological concept or construction but, by its nature, only the experiential truth of the whole of God's ontology and function in its full relational significance, without renegotiation and reduction.

Paul expands his discourse to make more definitive these integral roots for the human person, function and relationships necessary to be God's whole. In later theological reflection on the redemptive dynamics of the human person from reductionism (Col 3:1-10), Paul defined the ongoing functional tension between the outer-in person in reduced ontology of "the old self" (3:9), and the inner-out person in whole ontology of "the new self" (3:10). This new person is being restored to one's original condition (*anakainoo*) of ontology and function—defined into (*eis*) the specific knowledge (*epignosis*) of and determined by (*kata*) the image of one's Creator (3:10). The human person's ontology and function in the image of the Creator interacts directly with Paul's cosmology revealing that Christ the Creator "is the image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15). This connection within Paul's theological systemic framework makes definitive two vital matters:

1. It sets in motion Paul's complete Christology of the embodied "*pleroma* of God" (Col 1:19) "who is the image of God" vulnerably revealing the whole of God "in the face of Jesus Christ" for relationship together (2 Cor 4:4b-6; Col 1:20).

2. The face of Christ embodying the image of God also vulnerably demonstrates in his whole person throughout the incarnation the qualitative and relational significance of human ontology and function necessary to be God's whole family—which Paul clarified theologically (Rom 8:29) and also prayed for (Eph 3:14-19), both congruent with Jesus' prayer (Jn 17:16-26).

Paul learned from his earlier life in Judaism that when a person(s) shifts to being defined by outer in, then the practice of faith also shifts to outer in. This outer-in definition is also imposed on God by a quantitative interpretive lens that perceives God and God's function from outer in. This dynamic from reductionism invariably is set in motion by a deficient theological anthropology, as demonstrated in the primordial garden. In his functional fight for wholeness and against reductionism, Paul illuminates for his readers the theological anthropology necessary to make definitive the heart of human ontology and its function in relational significance.

There is a direct correlation from human ontology to human function in what Paul considered a causal connection (cf. 2 Cor 5:5a; Rom 1:28). Yet there is also a reflexive dynamic between them that is influential, which Paul also noted (cf. Col 3:9-10; Rom 1:21)—and which also neuroscience research indicates in its association between relational connection, brain activity and inherent human need (noted previously). What defines the human person unmistakably determines human function, though how a person functions can have some secondary influence or further reinforcement on defining the person. In whichever direction human ontology and human function are seen, Paul addressed their irreducible and inseparable relationship, notably challenging assumptions that renegotiate human function.

In Paul's theological anthropology there is the ongoing juxtaposition of the whole person's ontology and function with the reduced person's ontology and function. This is not a dualistic construct for his anthropology but simply the only two experiential alternatives available for human life; and these alternatives can vacillate in variable ontology and function. Moreover, while whole ontology is irreducible and whole function is nonnegotiable, neither of them is interchangeable with reduced ontology or function. That is, whole ontology is incompatible with reduced function, and whole function cannot emerge from reduced ontology—distinctions which Paul made definitive (Col 3:9-11; 2 Cor 5:16-17). Reduced ontology may give the appearance of whole function but only from the outer in ("disguises," *metaschematizo*) to construct just ontological simulation or epistemological illusion of wholeness (as Paul exposed, 2 Cor 11:13-15). The reality for the human person is either the experiential truth of wholeness or some form of reductionism.

Experiencing the functional significance of God's glory in the face of Christ involved only relationship between the hearts of persons in qualitative involvement together to be whole (Col 1:20; 2:9-10). This is the function of God's heart in relationship together with the function of the human heart. Whole function for God and for human persons, therefore, is both qualitative and relational, which can be constituted only from inner out by whole ontology. Reduced function in the human person, then, is anything less than qualitative and relational—the function of which always signifies the shift to outer in by reduced ontology, as witnessed in the primordial garden and in Paul's life prior to the Damascus road. The consequence of this shift in function is a lack (or even loss) of qualitative sensitivity and relational awareness (cf. 2 Cor 3:14; Eph 4:18-19).

Wholeness and reductionism are by their nature mutually exclusive, yet in function the tension and conflict between them are ongoing. This process will continue unabated in human function to the extent that the false assumption is in practice that human function is negotiable to human terms (as in "you will not be reduced"). Paul confronted this issue notably in Galatians, in which he made definitive the functional clarity for the truth of the whole gospel. In this letter, he quickly distinguished the whole gospel from reductionist substitutes based on human terms (Gal 1:6-12). Then he recounted his confrontation of the latitude Peter exercised to renegotiate the functional significance of the gospel to biased human terms (2:11-14). He continued in Galatians to clarify qualitative whole function and the relationships necessary together to be whole and live whole. In the process he also confronts the Galatians for reducing their ontology by shifting to outer in and renegotiating their function to human terms (1:6; 3:1-5; 4:8-

11). Two summary statements by Paul make definitive the qualitative and relational significance of human function that emerges from the whole of the gospel:

1. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working through love" (5:6, cf. 1 Cor 8:1b). "Counts" (*ischyo*) means to be effective, valid, have significance and thus to be whole. Nothing outer in has *ischyo* and means anything. Only the qualitative involvement in relationships together from inner out, the relational function of the qualitative human heart, is *ischyo*.

2. "For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything" (6:15, cf. 2 Cor 5:16-17). That is, nothing outer in is ontologically whole but exists in its only alternative, reductionism. The only whole ontology is the new creation—the human heart restored to wholeness 'in Christ' which is integrated with human function to constitute the person's function to be whole and live whole in loving involvement together as God's whole family. Nothing less and no substitutes *ischyo*.

Since whole function is both qualitative and relational in Paul's theological anthropology, he defines it neither as a doctrinal truth nor as a propositional truth but only as experiential truth. This experiential truth is the relational outcome of the whole gospel relationally embodied by the whole of Jesus for qualitative involvement in relationship together to be God's whole family. By confronting the critical assumptions that reduce human persons to outer in and negotiate human function only by quantitative outer-in terms, Paul also exposed the relational consequences from the counter-relational work intrinsic to reductionism and implicit in its workings: less significant persons in less significant relationships, fragmented persons in fragmented relationships, stereotyped persons in stratified relationships, constrained/enslaved persons in broken/oppressed relationships. His functional exposition of reductionism is put face to face with the functional clarity of the whole of the gospel. The good news for this human relational condition is the relational function of God's heart in qualitative involvement to restore the human heart in the image and likeness of God for relational function together as family (Gal 4:4-7). The relational outcome of God's whole function is not a doctrine or a proposition, but only the experiential truth of qualitative and relational function: "For in *the relational function of the qualitative whole of* Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith—*that is, your response from the qualitative and relational function of your heart*. As many of you as were *relationally involved deeply* into Christ have *defined* yourselves *from inner out* with Christ, *the wholeness of God*. There is no longer Jew or Greek *to separate you*, there is no longer slave or free *to stratify you*, there is no longer male and female *to fragment you*; for all of you *from inner out* are *whole together* in Christ Jesus" (3:26-29, cf. Col 3:10-11).

The implications of theological anthropology continue to be illuminated. Paul gave theological clarity to the basis of human ontology and function for the qualitative image and relational likeness necessary for wholeness in theological anthropology and its practice with God, within the church and into the world. By the nature of his conjoint fight for the whole gospel and against reductionism, Paul's theological discourse

characteristically illuminates the whole in tension or conflict with reductionism. He put into juxtaposition "the earthly tent we live in" with "a building from God" (2 Cor 5:1-4). Paul used this imagery and metaphor to describe the human person and function in whole or reductionist terms; and this has direct implications for the prevailing human condition and the good news to meet this human need. The interrelated dynamics are important to understand for human roots.

"The tent" (*skenon*, or shelter, dwelling) the human person "lives in" is just the outer structure built from bottom up (*oikia*, a house without its contents, 5:1); this signifies a quantitative definition of the person reduced to outer in (without one's innermost significance), who functions essentially self-determined in the quantitative course of life (*bios*, quantitative duration, means and manner of life subject to observation). In contrast is "a building from God, not a house made with hands" (i.e. human hands from bottom up, *acheiropoietos*, 5:1), for a full qualitative dwelling from top down ("eternal in the heavens," 5:1). While Paul's imagery has an eschatological sense of 'not yet', this 'already' signifies the qualitative definition of the person from inner out, that is, "from God" constituting the whole person "from out of" (*ek*) the image and likeness of God, and thus who functions immersed (*katapino*, "swallowed up") in the qualitative significance of life (*zoe*, the qualitative innermost constituting living beings, 5:4). The tension between quantitative *bios* and qualitative *zoe* frames the conflict of the reduced human person of outer in versus the whole person of inner out. When Paul applied his theological anthropology to the present context of his own life, he was unmistakably clear that this conflict is between the quantity of human ontology from outer in ("those who boast in outward appearance," 5:12) and the quality of human ontology from inner out ("in the heart"). Whole human ontology and function cannot be limited to *bios* but are integrally composed in the primacy of *zoe*—the primary for which "we groan" (5:4).

The distinction in dynamics is crucial to understand. The relational consequence, on the one hand, of outer-in *bios* is the human relational condition "to be apart", and thus to be further reduced, fragmented—"to be found naked…to be unclothed" (5:3,4, cf. Gen 3:7) as persons without qualitative meaning and relational significance. On the other hand, the relational outcome of inner-out *zoe* is the relational connection together to be whole ("clothed with our heavenly dwelling," 5:4) in human ontology "from out of" the qualitative image of the whole Creator and in human function "from out of" the relational likeness of the whole of God (cf. 2 Cor 3:18; Col 3:10). For Paul's life 'already' in the present, this involved the ongoing function in the qualitative significance of relationship ("we walk by faith," 5:7) as opposed to a reductionist function with a quantitative lens ("not by sight"). Moreover, the transition from *bios* to *zoe* is conclusive after physical death in the not yet (5:4). The human body (*soma*, not *sarx*) is not separated from the person's innermost (*pneuma*, not soul) to cease to exist, thereby fragmenting the whole person, whom the Spirit constitutes integrating *soma* and *pneuma* (5:5). Rather, at the end of *bios* the whole person (including *soma*) totally transitions into *zoe*, and *soma* is distinguished in the qualitative difference (*heteros soma*) of *zoe* to fulfill the relational conclusion to wholeness (1 Cor 15:35-40). There is no separation between *soma* and *pneuma* after *bios*, and thus there is no gap in the person's existence that needs to be filled namely by a soul. This makes the fragmentation of dualism not only unnecessary but contrary to the whole of God's image and likeness.

Longing for wholeness and fulfillment of the prevailing human relational need are ontological-functional givens for Paul and intuitive for human persons in his theological anthropology. His basis was that the whole of Creator-God has made (*katergazomai*, to bring about) human persons for this very wholeness in *zoe* together, which includes the Spirit's involvement (2 Cor 5:5). This points to the good news for all human persons and for restoration of human ontology and function to their created condition in the qualitative image and relational likeness of the whole of God, as Paul made definitive earlier (2 Cor 3:15-18). This whole gospel was the experiential truth 'already' for Paul, whose person and function were no longer defined in quantitative terms from outer in nor determined by what he did and had: "From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view *according to the flesh, reduced to outer in*; even though we once *perceived* Christ from a human point of view *in quantitative terms only from outer in*, we know him no longer in that way" (5:16, cf. 10:7, 10). Why, how? Because 'in Christ', who is the image of the whole Creator (2 Cor 4:4b; Col 1:15) and the *pleroma* of God (Col 1:19), the original condition of human ontology and function has been recreated from reductionism and restored to wholeness (Col 2:9-10). Thus "in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old in *reductionism has been redemptively changed and made whole*; see, everything has become new" (2 Cor 5:17, cf. Col 3:10).

This qualitative new person from inner out, however, still has functional issues in the relational process to wholeness 'in Christ', as Paul clarified in his theological anthropology (Col 3:1-11, cf. Eph 4:20-24). While the redemptive change to whole ontology and function has begun unequivocally, the ongoing presence of reductionism and its counter-relational work also remain a competing substitute for the human person and function. What Paul clarifies for human ontology and function 'in Christ' is that this is not a static condition but rather a dynamic relational condition necessitating reciprocal relational involvement together in the relational context and process of the whole of God: "seek *from inner out, not outer in*, the things that are above—*the qualitative of God's relational context and process*, where Christ is *present for relational involvement together*…. Set your minds, *the lens of your new mindset* [*phroneo*], on things *qualitative from inner out*…for *your reduced person* has died, and the *zoe* of you *as a whole person* is hidden [*krypto*, i.e., intimately involved] with Christ *in relationship together participating* in *the zoe of the whole of* God" (3:1-3).

These functions of wholeness necessitate further relational actions to confront the substitutes from reductionism that diminish and minimalize the whole person and function necessary in the relationships together to be whole, God's whole family. Moreover, the functions to be whole cannot be reduced to the mere practice of Christian ethics, as Paul's readers tend to do with his interpretation of human function. In clarifying these human roots, Paul was not advocating a dualistic ontology to function either in a moral spirituality and otherworldliness, or in the worldliness of the flesh (a misreading of Rom 8:1-15). Paul was only focused on the reciprocal process of redemptive change for human persons (both old and even new needing further change) to be restored to whole ontology and function—nothing less and no substitutes from reductionism (cf. Rom 12:1-2). The tension and conflict with reductionism are ongoing; and reductionism's influence and counter-relational work prevail in the human roots unfolded in the cosmos—continuing its influence on defining human ontology and determining human function in one way or another (cf. 2 Cor 11:13-15), unless counteracted by God's whole, "so that

what is *reduced* (mortal, *thnetos*) may be swallowed up by *zoe*" (2 Cor 5:4). Without qualitative relational action on these functional issues, which Paul made unmistakable in his theological anthropology, restoring human persons and function to God's whole is frustrated and an ongoing struggle with reductionism. This ongoing issue made theological anthropology critical in Paul's theology, the basis of which Paul never assumed for his readers and thus always addressed with them. Furthermore, Paul ongoingly challenged their assumptions on theological anthropology in order for human ontology and function to be whole.

Paul made this further definitive for the church to be whole in its own ontology and function as God's family—composing ecclesiology of the whole (Eph 4:11-16). As he described various functions in the church, Paul clearly defined them as a relational outcome from Christ ("he gave," 4:11). These functions, then, by their whole nature 'in Christ' must not be used to define those persons by what they have ("gifts") and do (perform in roles as "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers," etc.). If they defined themselves in those ways, they would enact two critical reductionist practices: (1) reduce their person to outer in, and (2) renegotiate to their terms the relational function and the whole purpose Christ gave them. These reductionist practices essentially render these persons less than whole—to the parts of the above distinctions—and thus they would be incapable of fulfilling their primary function as whole persons for the church to be whole together as the whole of God's family embodied by Christ ("the measure of the whole of Christ," 4:13, cf. 1:23)—no matter how gifted they were or how dedicated they performed their roles. What is that function and purpose?

Paul condensed their function and purpose in the phrase "to equip the saints" (4:12), the significance of which has been redefined by Paul's readers and renegotiated by church leaders ever since. The term for "equip" (*katartismos* from *katartizo*) is used only here and can mean either to restore to former condition, to put in order by making complete, or simply to equip, train, prepare. The latter has only secondary meaning, which to Paul had no significance without the former meaning. For Paul, *katartismos* was only a function of *anakainos* (being restored to the human person's original condition, Col 3:9); and it is only this new whole person who can fulfill Christ's purpose to help restore the persons of God's family to be whole and to live whole "for building up the body of Christ, until all of us *function in the relationships together to be teleios* (complete, whole to the full extent) of the *pleroma* of Christ, *the whole of God, as God's whole family*" (4:12-13, as determined in 1:22-23).

Nothing less and no substitutes of the whole ontology and function of both church leadership and church membership can be sufficient for his church to "grow up" (*auxano*, in Greek subjunctive mood to indicate contingency and merely potential, 4:15). This ontology and function are irreducible and nonnegotiable for any church to be whole, regardless of its situations and circumstances; and Paul challenged any other assumptions about the person and church. Therefore, only whole persons defined from inner out in the qualitative image of God, whose relational function in relationships together is in relational likeness of the whole of God, can meet this contingency and realize this potential: to "grow up in every way into him who is the head, into *the whole of* Christ, from whom the whole body *as church family is relationally involved and bonded* together by every *person made whole from inner out*, that is, as each whole *person functions whole in the relationships necessary together for the church family's* growth in building

itself up in love" (4:15-16). This is the only function and purpose that the whole of Christ gave for his family to be whole. Anything less and any substitutes in the church are ontological simulations and epistemological illusions of wholeness from reductionism; and reductionism of the church starts with and ongoingly is based on a reduced theological anthropology.

These are the necessary roots of the ecclesiology of the whole of God's family, relationally embodied only by persons of whole ontology (in the image of God embodied by Christ) who are vulnerably involved in the qualitative function of relationships together; that is to say, nonnegotiable function only in likeness of the relational ontology of the whole of God. This is what and who Christ relationally embodied for his church to live whole together and to make whole in the world—as composed in Jesus' formative family prayer (Jn 17:21-23), which Paul echoed for the church to be whole (Eph 3:14-19).

Therefore, Paul's theological anthropology is definitive discourse entirely on the experiential truth of whole ontology and function, in which Paul's own person first functioned for the whole of his witness and the whole in his theology. This whole extends to its completion.

Paul's only concern, both theologically and functionally, is for the irreducible embodiment of the *pleroma* of God to be further relationally embodied and extended in nonnegotiable ontology and function in order for the inherent human need to be fulfilled and the human problem to be resolved. This further embodying is the whole ontology and function of those who relationally belong to Christ. In the experiential truth of Paul's theology, how does the relational progression of God's relational dynamic of grace and *agape* involvement become embodied from the *pleroma* of God to the *pleroma* of Christ (the church, Eph 1:23) and continue in its eschatological trajectory for the relational conclusion of the gospel of wholeness? And according to the experiential truth of the whole of Paul's person and the whole in his theology, how do persons belonging to Christ—by necessity both as person and as persons together in God's family—engage in this relational progression *with* God and thus participate *in* the whole of God's life to the relational completion of whole relationship together?

A prevailing presence in the systemic framework of Paul's theology that pervades his theological forest is *pneuma* (spirit). The presence of *pneuma* is in both ontology and function, both in God's ontology and function (1 Cor 2:10-11; 3:16; 2 Cor 3:6,17; Rom 8:11; 1 Tim 3:16) and for human ontology and function (1 Cor 6:11; 12:13; 2 Cor 1:22; 3:6,18; 7:1; Rom 8:11; Eph 2:18,22). What is *pneuma* for God and what is *pneuma* for human person?

In terms of God's ontology and function, *pneuma* is not *what* but *who*, though Paul does not specifically call the Spirit a person. Yet Paul implies personness for the Spirit by identifying the Spirit as having a will to decide and using it (*boulomai*, 1 Cor 12:11), who also can be "grieved" (*lypeo*, afflicted with sorrow, distressed, mournful, Eph 4:30; cf. Heb 10:29), and, moreover, who bears witness to us of our family status (Rom 8:16). The Spirit's grief, for example, is over not being engaged in reciprocal relationship together (cf. Eph 2:22), which is not an anthropomorphism but signifies the whole of God's being and relational nature who is vulnerably present. This identity is the *who* of a person, the person of the Spirit, who is also vulnerably present and relationally

involved. This does not imply, however, that Paul was a trinitarian in the later sense, though his theology certainly provides definitive basis for trinitarian theology.

Since Paul was no trinitarian, his purpose and responsibility to *pleroo* (make complete, whole) the word of God was not to theologically clarify the Trinity or to develop theological concepts like *homoousios*, *hypostasis* and *perichoresis*. His purpose was more functional and distinctly relational in order to make definitive the gospel as whole without any reductionism. Within his purpose, Paul instead epistemologically clarified the whole of God and hermeneutically corrected human shaping and construction of theological cognition, challenging theological assumptions that were either limiting or reductionist. Thus, Paul indeed took Judaism's monotheism beyond its limited knowledge and understanding, and he extended the Jesus tradition into the depths of the whole of God. In making relationally functional the *pleroma* of God, Paul focused also in making relationally definitive the whole of God in the relational presence and relational work of the Spirit.

In *pleroma* Christology of Paul's theological forest, salvation was constituted by Christ and completed in Christ for the relational outcome of *pleroma* soteriology (complete by saved both *from* and *to*). *Pleroma* soteriology is the relational act solely by Christ and the relational outcome is the function of just relationship with Christ (Rom 6:5-11); and both of these are constituted in reciprocal relational involvement with the Spirit (Rom 8:11; 1 Cor 6:11; 12:13; 2 Cor 1:22; 3:6,17; Eph 1:13; 2:18,22; 1 Tim 3:16; cf. Jn 1:32-33; Lk 4:1). In the whole of God's ontology and function, *pneuma* is person, the Holy Spirit, and not to be reduced to a power, also noted by Paul (1 Cor 2:4; Rom 15:13,19). There is a dynamic interaction for Paul between the embodied *pleroma* of God and the person of the Spirit—that is, the Spirit as the functional cohort of Jesus who shares in, even constitutes, and now completes the relational work of the Son, whose embodiment (prior to and after the cross) fulfills the relational response of grace from the Father (Gal 4:4-6; Rom 8:9b-11). This is the dynamic interaction between *pneuma* and *soma* (body) of the *pleroma* of God, which is vital for understanding the whole of God's ontology and function in its innermost, as Paul claimed for the Spirit (1 Cor 2:10-11) and Jesus promised about the Spirit (Jn 16:12-15). Paul understood that *soma* without *pneuma* can be confused with or reduced to *sarx* ("flesh," cf. Paul's polemic about the resurrection, 1 Cor 15:35-44). In this sense, *pneuma* is also a *what*—distinguished from *who*—which signifies the qualitative innermost of God's ontology that is irreducible for God to be God (cf. Phil 3:3 and Jn 4:23-24).

Moreover, the dynamic interaction between *pneuma* and *soma* is critical for fully understanding the whole of God's function, as well as understanding God's ontology, in the dynamic of nothing less and no substitutes. *Pneuma* will not allow for the embodied *pleroma* of God to be reduced or renegotiated to anything less than and any substitutes for whole ontology and function. There is indeed mystery involved in this interaction, but for Paul *pneuma* is unequivocally the person of the Spirit. Even though Paul had whole knowledge and understanding (*synesis*) from the Spirit, he did not claim to totally understand this dynamic (1 Tim 3:16).

This dynamic interaction with the Spirit likewise points to the embodying of the *pleroma* of Christ (Eph 1:23). *Pneuma* is the person who constitutes also those who belong to Christ (Rom 8:9). In cooperative reciprocal relationship as well with these human persons, the Spirit—who functions as the relational replacement of the Son, as

Jesus promised (Jn 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; cf. Eph 1:13)—constitutes persons (both individually and together) in whole ontology and function, that is, the qualitative ontology and relational function from inner out in likeness of the *pneuma* of God's whole ontology and function (2 Cor 3:17-18; Rom 8:11, 14-17). For Paul, in other words, the Spirit is not a mere Object of theological discourse but the experiential truth of Subject-person, who is present in us and relationally involved with us for relationship together as God's whole family ("dwells," *oikeo* from *oikos* and its cognates in reference to family, Rom 8:11, 14-16; 1 Cor 3:16; Eph 2:22). Paul goes beyond merely the Spirit's agency (e.g., power, instrumentality) to make definitive the depth of the Spirit as Subject's *agape* relational involvement as the whole of God (Rom 5:5). Importantly, Paul understands that the person of the Spirit is Jesus' relational replacement for the continued involvement necessary to complete the relational work Jesus constituted. When Paul speaks specifically of "the Spirit of Christ" (Rom 8:9; Gal 4:6; Phil 1:19; cf. Acts 16:7), this is Paul's shorthand-relational language implying the Spirit as relational replacement and extension of Jesus, whose further involvement is indispensable for extending the qualitative process of embodying of the *pleroma* of Christ and making functional its relational process of participation in the whole of God's life and family together (cf. 1 Cor 6:14-15a; Rom 8:11; Eph 1:23).

What emerges from this reciprocal relational involvement together with the Spirit? Paul first addresses what does not emerge when relationship with the Spirit becomes incompatible. The issue of incompatibility, incongruity or discontinuity with the Spirit (as with Jesus and with the whole of God) hinges on theological anthropology and our assumptions about the human person. This specifically involves defining the person by what one does/has and, on this basis, engaging in relationships with both God and each other, individually and together as church. Paul exposed such reductionist assumptions of theological anthropology in the church at Corinth (1 Cor 3:1-4; 4:6-7). This reductionism directly fragments the person from the dynamic interaction between *pneuma* and *soma*, thus leaving *soma* without the quality of *pneuma* to then be confused with or reduced to *sarx*: "I could not speak to you as *pneuma* people but rather as people of *sarx*, as infants in Christ *without identity formation as whole persons*" (1 Cor 3:1). *Sarx* (and its cognates *sarkikos* and *sarkinos*) signifies reduced human ontology and function in Paul's discourse, whereas *pneuma* is inseparable from *soma* in the whole ontology and function of the person.

This reduction of *soma* to *sarx* is the issue in Paul's polemic when he made the ambiguous claim: "Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself" (1 Cor 6:18). Paul's focus goes beyond sexual immorality and is not implying that all other sins are inconsequential for human ontology and function. He is focused on the sin of reductionism that fragments *soma* from *pneuma* to reduce a human person's ontology and function to that signified by *sarx* (6:16-17). The consequence is reductionist embodiment diminishing the whole person, which further includes the relational consequence of fragmenting the embodying of whole relationship together (6:14-15, 19-20). Essentially, Paul argues rather that every sin a person commits is the sin of reductionism, thus against the embodying of wholeness. Whole human ontology and function is the inseparable embodiment of both *soma* and *pneuma* by the Spirit, which is irreducibly and nonnegotiably embodied together by and with the Spirit in God's whole family (1 Cor 12:13).

This integration of *soma* and *pneuma* for the whole person is critical in theological anthropology in order to distinguish the person in whole ontology and function. For example, dualism (soul and body) does not account for the whole person since it is unable to adequately integrate its soul with *soma*. Nonreductive physicalism (with its supervenience) does not integrate the whole person because it does not adequately account for *pneuma*.

In Paul's theological systemic framework and theological forest, the Spirit functions to bridge the quantitative of *bios* (including all creation) with the qualitative of *zoe*. Even more than bridge, the Spirit integrates the quantitative into the qualitative to embody irreducible wholeness and the nonnegotiable embodiment of God's whole (2 Cor 3:18; Col 1:20; 2:9-10; 3:10-11,15; Rom 8:18-23). This is why cosmology and theological anthropology converge in Paul's theological systemic framework, and how they are integrated in the theological dynamic of wholeness. Therefore, the Spirit's person is inseparable from both the whole of God and God's whole, and the Spirit's involvement is indispensable for the embodying of wholeness. Anything less and any substitutes for this whole, either of the Spirit or of human persons, are reductionism for Paul, the sin of reductionism that must always be exposed and its counter-relational work confronted—whatever its form, conditions or assumptions.

What does Paul also make definitive as the outcome of reciprocal relational involvement together with the Spirit?

What clearly emerges from ongoing relationship together with the Spirit is the functional wholeness that is incompatible, incongruent and discontinuous with reductionism pervading human contextualization, as Paul clarified functionally and theologically (Gal 6:14-16; Rom 8:6). When Paul boasts of the cross of Christ through whom he has been crucified to human contextualization ("to the world," Gal 6:14), the *soma* of the *pleroma* of God and the *pneuma* of the whole of God are conjoined and resurrected for the embodying of the new creation. That is, this is the embodiment in qualitative *zoe* (not quantitative *bios*) and wholeness ("life and peace," Rom 8:6), in which the *Pneuma* also inseparably dwells in the limits of *soma* for whole relationship together as God's family (Rom 8:11, 14-16; cf. Eph 2:22). The theological dynamics Paul illuminates have only functional significance for this relationship together (Eph 2:18). Apart from the function of relationship and its relational embodiment, Paul's theological clarity has no significance, both to God and to human persons for the fulfillment of the inherent human relational need and the resolution of its relational problem (Eph 2:14-16). The Spirit is present and relationally involved for the whole ontology and function necessary for the ongoing relationship together to be God's whole—the embodying as the *pleroma* of Christ 'already' in relational progression to its completion in the relational conclusion 'not yet' (1 Cor 12:13; cf. Jn 7:37-39).

The Spirit's relational involvement notably emerges in the resurrection, in which the Spirit's dynamic interaction also involves us whole-ly (*soma* and *pneuma*) to be embodied in the new creation (new person, new life, new covenant, Rom 8:11). Involvement together in this relational process is also defined by Paul as being baptized in the Spirit (1 Cor 12:13; cf. Mt 3:11; Acts 1:5; 11:16). The theological dynamic of baptism is complex and mysterious but the relational process involved is uncomplicated yet rigorous: death to the old and raising of the new (Rom 6:3-8). Being baptized with the Spirit makes functional the redemptive change from reduced ontology and function

(consequential of the sin of reductionism) necessary for the emergence of whole ontology and function (cf. Tit 3:5). The relational outcome of this relational process is the redemptive reconciliation of whole persons embodied in relationship together as the new creation family of God (Col 1:19-22; Eph 2:14-22)—"baptized into one body" without false human distinctions from reductionism (1 Cor 12:13). This *zoe*, the embodying of the new creation, emerges specifically from the relational work of the Spirit (Rom 8:11; 2 Cor 3:6; cf. Jn 6:63; Rom 8:6)—"we were all made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor 12:13; cf. Jn 7:38-39). On this basis, Paul declares unequivocally: "Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.… For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God" (Rom 8:9,14); furthermore, "no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3). Therefore, the experiential truth of the theological dynamics of wholeness, relational belonging and ontological identity functionally emerge from reciprocal relational involvement with the Spirit—ongoing vulnerable and intimate relationship together.

The dynamic interaction of the Spirit and the *pleroma* of God always constitutes ontology and function in the dynamic of nothing less and no substitutes. Thus, the reciprocal relational involvement by the Spirit is neither with only the human *pneuma* nor with just the human *soma*. Such involvement would create a duality that fragments the person. Human *soma* without *pneuma* is a critical condition because it is a reductionism focused on the outer in that the person cannot distinguish unequivocally from *sarx*, consequently is rendered to the sin of reductionism notably in ontological simulation (as in Paul's polemic beyond the situation to the underlying reductionism in 1 Cor 6:12-20). Likewise, human *pneuma* apart from involvement of *soma* becomes disembodied, which is also a reductionism focused on a subjective part of a person, not the whole person qualitatively integrated from inner out. The focus of such a person cannot be distinguished from subjectivism, esoteric individualism or self-centered separatism—as often found in spiritualism, mysticism and asceticism—thus is rendered to the sin of reductionism notably in epistemological illusion (cf. Paul's polemic about reductionism in spiritual practice disembodied from the church in 1 Cor 14). The Spirit is relationally involved only with the whole person (*soma* and *pneuma* inseparably) from inner out signified by the function of the heart and embodied in the primacy of relationship together (2 Cor 1:22; Gal 4:6; Rom 5:5; 8:16; Eph 1:17-18; 3:16-19). Additionally, the Spirit's relational involvement with the whole person from inner out includes both the person's mindset (*phroneo*, Rom 8:5) and its basis from the person's perceptual-interpretive framework (*phronema*, 8:6). In this involvement, the Spirit also transforms quantitative *phroneo* and reduced *phronema* and constitutes the qualitative *phroneo* (interpretive lens) in its whole *phronema* (interpretive framework). Both of these changes are necessary for persons to be embodied in qualitative *zoe* and wholeness together, and to function ongoingly in this new embodiment (1 Thes 5:19,23; 2 Thes 2:13; Rom 15:16).

Paul is clear about the experiential truth of the Spirit's relational involvement. Yet, it is important for his readers to understand that the Spirit is involved in reciprocal relationship, not unilateral relationship. By God's relational nature, the Spirit's involvement is reciprocal relational involvement, implying a necessary compatible reciprocal relational response to and involvement with the Spirit—not as contingency limiting God's relational nature but as the condition/terms for relationships together according to God's relational nature (cf. Paul's conditional sense in Phil 2:1; 2 Cor

13:13). Therefore, in relation to the Spirit, Paul always assumes the presence of the Spirit (e.g., 1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 1:21-22; Gal 5:5), but he does not assume the Spirit's relational involvement and work, as he implies in his ongoing relational imperative (not moral imperative) "Do not quench the Spirit" (1 Thes 5:19). Certainly, the Spirit can and does act unilaterally; yet his primary concern and function is in reciprocal relational involvement with persons to extend and complete the whole relationship together constituted by the embodied *pleroma* of God—all of whom the Spirit also raised up together in order to functionally embody the *pleroma* of Christ as Jesus' relational replacement (Eph 1:22-23).

This is the depth and breadth of the Spirit's relational involvement with persons belonging to Christ, and the likeness of involvement necessary from those persons to be compatible, congruent and continuous in reciprocal relationship together with the Spirit. The dynamic of nothing less and no substitutes constitutes the ontology and function of the Spirit and can constitute the ontology and function of those in whom the Spirit dwells. In Paul's theological forest, anything less and any substitutes of the Spirit's ontology and function are an immature pneumatology still undeveloped (and constrained in development) and needing to be whole; anything less and any substitutes of human ontology and function are a deficient theological anthropology, the assumptions of which for Paul always need to be challenged in order to be made whole. This wholeness, however, is made functional solely by the relational dynamic of *pleroma* pneumatology. The Spirit as Subject-person integrates the implications of theological anthropology for it to occupy the pivotal position and to provide the vital function for this whole.

What this reciprocal involvement with the Spirit constitutes is the ontological identity and embodiment of God's new creation (Gal 5:6; 6:15; 1 Cor 12:13; Col 3:10-11; cf. 2 Cor 3:17-18). Just as *pneuma* and *soma* are inseparable for the whole ontology and function emerging from the Spirit's involvement, ontological identity and embodiment of the new creation are also inseparably conjoined for the wholeness made functional by the Spirit (examine Paul's relational connections: 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:26-28; 4:6-7; Rom 8:14; 12:5; Col 3:15; Eph 2:14,18,22). And this ontological identity and embodiment of the new creation are integrally based on the functional reality of relational belonging to God's family as definitive daughters and sons, the experiential truth of which only emerges from the reciprocal relational involvement of the Spirit (Eph 1:13-14; 2 Cor 1:21-22; Rom 8:14-16; Gal 4:6-7). Without the Spirit's reciprocal involvement and relational work, this identity and new creation are rendered, at best, to only ontological simulation and epistemological illusion of wholeness—simulation of whole relationship together with illusions of the whole of God (Rom 12:3-5; 1 Cor 3:21-22, cf. Gal 6:16; Col 3:15).

This relational dynamic of belonging or not belonging is either the relational outcome with the Spirit or the relational consequence without the Spirit, which Jesus made unmistakable in his promise "I will not leave you orphaned" (Jn 14:18). The term for "leave" (*aphiemi*) means to let go from oneself, essentially abandon to a condition deprived of their parents and family, which in the ancient Mediterranean world was an unprotected, helpless position. What Jesus defines, however, is only that the significance of orphans is relational, not situational, which directly involves the condition of wholeness in relationship together constituted by the Spirit—the what and who, respectively, that Jesus *did* leave them (Jn 14:27; 16:33). Paul further illuminates the

relational belonging emerging with the Spirit and its embodying by the Spirit, which includes the counter-relational issue of orphans.

In Paul's theological forest, along with God's relational dynamic of grace, the Spirit's reciprocal relational involvement is indispensable, sine qua non as with grace, for the experiential truth of the theological dynamics of wholeness, relational belonging and ontological identity. Clearly for Paul, those who are relationally involved with the Spirit in reciprocal relationship together—"who are led by the Spirit of God"—are the daughters and sons of God (Rom 8:14). Paul is not using family language merely for emphasis in a kinship-oriented context, perhaps as a hyperbole, for example, to evoke obligation in response to the Spirit. Rather Paul is illuminating the depth of the theological dynamics involved in the gospel and clearly identifies the person who is necessary for its fulfillment and completion. In dynamic interaction with the embodied *pleroma* of God, the Spirit of the whole of God relationally extends *pleroma* Christology to make functional *pleroma* soteriology by the embodying of God's new creation family. In other words, the Spirit makes functional the experiential truth of the whole gospel in its relational outcome 'already' in whole relationship together, just as the Son prayed for the formation of God's family (Jn 17:20-26).

What is the significance of distinguishing this relational outcome 'already' by the Spirit? As Jesus' relational replacement, the Spirit both fulfills this relational outcome 'already' and completes what is necessary for its relational conclusion 'not yet' (2 Cor 1:21-22; 5:4-5; 1 Thes 5:19-23; Rom 8:23; Gal 5:5 Eph 1:13-14; Phil 3:21). In Paul's theological forest, pneumatology is conjoined with eschatology to integrate the theological trajectory necessary for this relational progression. Paul adds theological and functional clarity to the relational outcome already of the embodiment of God's new creation family by engaging his family further and deeper into the big picture of God's eschatological plan framing the trajectory of God's thematic response to the human condition (Rom 8:18-23). Just as the Spirit is the functional bridge for the quantitative of *bios* with the qualitative of *zoe*, the Spirit functionally connects the whole embodying of God's family with all of creation, with the cosmos and those in it in order to be involved as well with the world for the redemptive reconciliation necessary to be restored to God's whole—as Paul also made definitive in other letters (2 Cor 5:17-19; Col 1:20), and as Jesus constituted in prayer for the already (Jn 17:21-23).

The big picture Paul paints goes back to creation and the emergence of the human condition (cf. Gen 3:17-19 with Rom 8:20). Not only human persons were enslaved in the condition "to be apart" from God's whole but the rest of creation was also (Rom 8:20-22; cf. Gen 5:29). God's whole also encompasses all of creation; and God's relational response of grace to the human condition is the redemptive key for the rest of creation to "be set free from its bondage to decay" (8:21) and restored to God's whole ("obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God," v.21). Therefore, all of creation is dependent on the relational outcome and conclusion of the Spirit's relational involvement to raise up and embody God's whole new creation family: "For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God" (8:19). The timing of this revealing is ambiguous in this text but the contingency is clearly eschatological. If our eschatology involves both 'already' and 'not yet', as Paul's did, then that new creation family 'already' is revealed by the Spirit's relational involvement in those who belong to Christ (8:9), in those whom the Spirit has whole-ly embodied along with Christ and

already dwells now (8:11), and thus in those "led by the Spirit" (8:14) and the Spirit relationally constitutes already and ongoingly as the whole daughters and sons of God's family (8:15-16).

Paul further illuminates this already/not-yet eschatological picture to provide deeper clarity for God's family. As all of creation waits eagerly for the embodiment of God's children together, "we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies" (Rom 8:23). Paul is not suggesting that the theological dynamics of redemption and adoption have not taken place, only that their functional significance is in the relational process and progression of being completed by the Spirit—who has already constituted the relational outcome for those belonging to Christ as God's daughters and sons, and who continues to embody them for the relational conclusion 'not yet' in this eschatological process. Paul clarifies that the Spirit has not yet completed this relational progression, and the basis for this expectation ("hope") is conclusive in the experiential truth already of having been both saved *from* and *to* (*sozo*, delivered and made whole in Gk aorist tense, 8:24). This hope for full completion "now" is always present and ongoing along with the already ("wait for it with patience," v.25); yet this unequivocal hope should not be confused with 'already' ("hope…we do not see"), nor should it be perceived with a reductionist interpretive lens ("hope that is seen," v.24).

As Paul clarifies the line between the already and the not yet, he understands that God's children vacillate between them, even unintentionally or unknowingly. This happens notably when situations and circumstances are difficult. These tend to create various scenarios, drama and anxiety that can define and determine who we are and whose we are, thus rattling our sense of belonging and straining our relational response of trust, just as Paul summarized (8:28-39). In such moments, God's presence may seem distant and perhaps too transcendent to make relational connection with. Paul addresses the equivocation of relational connection and the ambiguity of relational involvement in those moments. With more than just his own empathy, Paul makes definitive God's deep understanding and intimate involvement with us through the relational involvement of the Spirit (8:26-27). Especially in our deepest moments of weakness when "we do not know how to *be relationally involved* as is necessary" (Paul uses *dei* not *opheilo*, v. 26), the Spirit helps us be involved in God's relational context and process—"that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words; and God who searches the heart, *intimately* knows what is the *phronema* of the Spirit because the Spirit *is reciprocally relationally involved* with and for the saints according to *the whole ontology and function of* God." Thus, the Spirit ongoingly helps God's children in the relational connection and involvement with God necessary for engagement in the process of reciprocating contextualization (dynamic interaction between God's context and human context) in order not to be defined and determined by human contextualization, whether in difficult moments or not.

The already-now embodying of God's new creation family, ongoingly functioning in reciprocal whole relationship together, unequivocally in relational progression to 'not yet', is the integrated relational dynamic at the heart of Paul's pneumatology. The presence of the person of the Spirit as Jesus' relational replacement and the Spirit's reciprocal relational involvement must be accounted for both theologically and functionally. Therefore, Paul's pneumatology is a theological dynamic always in conjoint

function with an eschatology that is not either-or but both-and, both already and not yet. The significance of Paul's eschatological picture above is to further deepen theologically the experiential truth of the whole gospel for the definitive wholeness in both the theology and function of the church as God's new creation family. Paul's primary concern always focused on the present from which the future will emerge.

In the complex theological dynamics of Paul's theological forest, the dynamic presence and involvement of the whole person of the Spirit functions while inseparably on an eschatological trajectory. The whole of God's theological trajectory and the embodied Word's relational path are on this eschatological direction toward this eschatological relational conclusion—just as Paul defines his own relational path (Phil 3:12, cf. 1 Cor 13:9-10,12). Yet for Paul, this does not and must not take away from the primary focus on the Spirit's presence and involvement for the present, just as Paul addressed the Thessalonians' eschatological anxiety with the relational imperative not to quench the Spirit's present relational involvement (1 Thes 5:19). The Spirit's present concern and function is relational involvement for constituting whole ontology and function, for making functional wholeness together, and for the embodying of the whole of God's new creation family in whole relationship together as the church, the *pleroma* of Christ—which is why the person of the Spirit is deeply affected, grieving over any reductionism in reciprocal relational involvement together (Eph 4:30).

Illuminating the *pleroma* (full, complete, whole) of God was the relational function of Paul's integral witness (Acts 26:16), and making *pleroo* the word of God was his relational responsibility in God's family (*oikonomia*, Col 1:25). These functions were at the heart of his theological discourse integrating the theological dynamics of wholeness, of belonging and of ontological identity for all life and function (as in Col 2:9-10).

Jesus' theological trajectory extended into Paul to continue its progression on Jesus' relational path in relational response to the human condition to make it whole. Jesus' focused concern for the human relational condition is also the focal point in Paul's theological lens—and should be the core and sustaining function for all theological discourse—because this is what concerns the whole of God and involves God's whole disclosures as Subject to constitute the theological trajectory vulnerably embodied by Jesus. Paul embodied this whole theology in likeness of God's whole disclosure as Subject who confronted the historical Paul on the Damascus road, and because God's relational concern for Paul's and the human relational condition is what the relational Paul experienced in whole relationship together with God without the veil to integrally constitute the theological Paul. The relational path of function, inseparable from Jesus' theological trajectory, was always antecedent to Paul's theology. Therefore, the hermeneutic key to whole theology, and to the whole in Paul's theology, is the integral interaction of the human relational condition "to be apart" from God's relational whole with God's thematic relational response of grace to this human condition. The sum total of God's actions revealed post-creation were initiated and enacted to fulfill God's concern to restore human persons to be whole in relationship together—the good news for the human need and problem. This is what Paul clearly proclaimed as the gospel, not of his shaping but only directly revealed from Jesus (Gal 1:11-12). No other theological discourse speaks of God and thus can distinguish the whole of God, nor speaks whole-ly

for God's vulnerable presence and intimate involvement. This discourse distinguishes the whole of theological anthropology.

Discourse focused on the theology of wholeness was constituted "in the beginning" for Paul, just as Paul revealed the theological unknown and thus the mysteries of the cosmos and of human life and function to the Athenians (Acts 17:24-31). The theology of wholeness involves the relational dynamic of God's creative and communicative action, which constitutes the whole knowledge and understanding necessary for the cosmos and the human person. In this theological discourse from above is revealed the systemic framework to all creation that defines and determines its wholeness (Col 1:15-17). Within this systemic framework both the cosmos and human life are integrated to define wholeness for each, therefore also establishing their need for this systemic framework in order to determine the function of their wholeness (Col 1:17, *synistemi*, to consist together). Without this systemic framework there is nothing other than speculation to integrate the parts of creation—leaving the cosmos and human life fragmentary and as a result limited only to their fragmented knowledge and understanding, unable to be whole. Left fragmentary and essentially on their own (as were the Athenians), cosmology and physics as well as anthropology and neuroscience can only speculate or, by its own misplaced faith, only hope for what its wholeness is.[1] Moreover, they are confined within this limitation to determine their function just on the basis of human terms, fragmentary as they are.

In other words, definitive wholeness is constituted entirely within the whole of God's systemic framework. Paul's theological discourse on wholeness was unequivocal: Apart from God's whole, there is only some form of reductionism, which for the human person constitutes the human condition ("to be apart")—the prevailing human need and problem correctly identified by neuroscience research (cf. the "groan" in 2 Cor 5:2,4; Rom 8:19-22). In this human condition there is undeniable (yet misplaced) longing for wholeness and motivated (yet misguided) pursuit for fulfillment of this relational need—both of which are ontological-functional givens for Paul and intuitive for human persons in his theological anthropology. Furthermore, Paul can be definitive about the whole and decisive about reductionism because the dynamic of wholeness in his theology was exclusively from above, initiated by God only on God's terms (cf. Col 2:9-10) and thus not subject to human terms (Col 2:8), even Paul's or Peter's. Human terms can only, at best, redefine wholeness by epistemological illusion and reconstitute wholeness with ontological simulation from reductionism—which is evidenced in the modern digital world,[2] not to mention in the globalization of human economy today.

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[1] Consider the following statement on the current state of human knowledge in physics by physicist Steve Giddings: "Despite all we have learned in physics—from properties of faraway galaxies to the deep internal structure of the protons and neutrons that make up an atomic nucleus—we still face vexing mysteries…. We know, for example, that all the types of matter we see, that constitute our ordinary existence, are a mere fraction—20%—of the matter in the universe. The remaining 80% apparently is mysterious "dark matter"; though it is all around us, its existence is inferred only via its gravitational pull on visible matter." Taken from "The physics we don't know," op-ed, *Los Angeles Times*, Jan 5, 2010.

[2] Consider this critique of the digital world by Jaren Lanier, a computer scientist known as the father of virtual reality technology: "Something like missionary reductionism has happened to the internet with the rise of web 2.0. [Uniqueness of persons] is being leached away by the mush-making process [of fragmentation]. Individual web pages as they first appeared in the early 1990s had the flavor of personhood. MySpace preserved some of that flavor, though a process of regularized formatting [i.e., a

Paul's theological anthropology is definitive of the relational outcome 'already' of whole ontology and function and its relational conclusion 'not yet'. This is signified in Paul's standard greeting in his letters, "grace and peace," his shorthand for the relational dynamics of God's relational response of grace and its relational outcome in the primacy of whole relationship together as family with the veil removed. In the theology of wholeness, Paul purposefully stressed the necessary epistemological clarification and hermeneutic correction by which his own person was confronted to be whole (*tamiym*), and by which he confronted Peter to be whole. This epistemological clarification and hermeneutic correction were critically signified with the simple address in the beginning of each of his letters: "grace and peace" (both of Timothy's letters add "mercy"). He also closed most of his letters with a greeting containing these terms. The simplicity and frequency of this greeting should not define its significance as formulaic and thereby ignore his distinguishing purpose (*semeion*, 2 Thes 3:17). These terms are critical to Paul's thought and theology and basic to his gospel—aspects his closing greeting further emphasized.

"Grace and peace" were not combined by Paul as referential theological concepts but as a relational theological paradigm. They integrally compose part of his shorthand theological discourse for the functional convergence of the interdependent relational action and relational outcome directly from God the Father and Christ—whom Paul identified as "the God of peace" and "the Lord of peace" (1 Thes 5:23; 2 Thes 3:16; 2 Cor 13:11; Rom 15:33; Phil 4:9). The relational dynamics involved between relational action and outcome was an interaction Paul never separated nor assumed to be in operation.

This unfolding relational dynamic of "grace and peace" establishes the integral flow that outlines Paul's theological framework to wholeness:

1. The *relational context* of the whole of God and God's family, only from top down.
2. The *relational process* of the whole of God and God's grace (family love), only from inner out.
3. The *relational progression* to the whole of God as God's whole family, only on God's qualitative-relational terms.

Paul's theology of wholeness makes functional the qualitative and relational significance of this relational outcome.

Interrelated with "grace and peace" in Paul's letters is "blameless and holy," or a variation (1 Thes 3:13; 5:23; 1 Cor 1:8; Col 1:22: Eph 1:4; 5:27; Phil 2:15; 1 Tim 6:14). This composes his further shorthand discourse for a functional paradigm to supplement

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template] had begun. Facebook went further, organizing people into multiple-choice identities, while Wikipedia seeks to erase point of view entirely.

If a church or government were doing these things [to impose conformity], it would feel authoritarian, but when technologists are the culprits, we seem hip, fresh, and inventive. People will accept ideas presented in technological form that would be abhorrent in any other form. It is utterly strange to hear my many friends in the world of digital culture claim to be the true sons of the Renaissance without realizing that using computers to reduce individual expression is a primitive, retrograde activity, no matter how sophisticated your tools are." *You Are Not a Gadget: A Manifesto* (New York: Alfred A, Knopf, 2010), 48.

his theological paradigm above. Paul did not emphasize "blameless and holy," for example, to the church at Thessalonica's eschatological concerns, merely for the sake of purity when Christ returns. It is critical to pay attention to his shorthand language in order to have whole understanding of his relational message. Paul builds on "blameless" (*amemptos*, *amomos*, *anenkletos*) only from *tamiym* (to be whole) and deepens it: (1) what it means for the person to be whole qualitatively from inner out ("holy," *hagios*, uncommon function), and (2) what it means for whole persons to live in relationship with the holy (uncommon) God together to be whole, the relational whole of God's family only on God's relational terms. Therefore, "holy and blameless" signify function only "uncommon and whole"—distinguished from the common and fragmentary of the human context.

To summarize what unfolds in Paul's thought and theology: the functional paradigm of "holy and blameless" converges with the theological paradigm of "grace and peace" to signify being whole in relationship together (peace and blameless) only on the ongoing basis of the whole of God's relational response and terms for the relationship (grace and holy). This integrally summarizes the irreducible gospel of peace for which Paul so lovingly fought, while necessarily fighting against reductionism so uncompromisingly (Col 2:8-10). Despite the reality that longing for wholeness was a given and was intuitive for the human person in Paul's theology, the function of wholeness was never merely assumed by Paul and, more important, never left to interpretation from human terms. The relational outcome 'already' necessitated by its nature for Paul to be distinguished in the whole of his person and the whole in his theology. The same responsibility is theological anthropology's pivotal position and vital function to distinguish persons in whole theology and practice.

Whole Theology and Practice Required

The theological anthropology integral to Paul's *pleroma* (complete, whole) theology makes definitive: theological anthropology must be composed by whole theology and practice, and therefore composes and requires whole theology and practice for persons to be distinguished both as person and persons together as the new creation family.

Paul made definitive this wholeness 'in Christ' (both 'already' and 'not yet') as the integrated function of two inseparable and nonnegotiable aspects of life:

1. "Let the wholeness of Christ rule *to be the only determinant* in your hearts" (Col 3:15a). The first aspect of wholeness involves by necessity the whole person from inner out constituted by the qualitative function of the heart restored to the qualitative image of God (Col 3:10; 2 Cor 3:18). This whole person is the qualitative function of the new creation (2 Cor 5:17; Eph 4:24), which Jesus made whole from above (Jn 3:3-7). Consequently anything less and any substitutes defining the person and determining one's function are reductionism (Gal 6:15). Wholeness 'in Christ', however, is neither the whole person in isolation nor the whole person merely associated with other persons.

2. "…to which *wholeness* indeed you [pl.] were called in the one body" (Col 3:15b). The second inseparable aspect of wholeness is the integrated function of whole persons from inner out vulnerably involved in the relationships together necessary to be whole. By its very nature, this relational dynamic necessitates the qualitative function of the restored heart opening to one another ("Do not lie to each other…" Col 3:9) and coming together in transformed relationship as one ("In that renewal *according to the image of its Creator there* is no longer Greek and Jew…" Col 3:11, cf. Gal 3:26-29), thereby constituting the integrated function of equalized persons from inner out in intimate relationships of "love which binds everything together [*syndeo*], *the inseparable and nonnegotiable relational bonds* in perfect harmony" (*teleitos*, completeness, Col 3:14) for definitive wholeness. This integrated function of whole persons in whole relationships together constitutes the qualitative-relational significance of new covenant relationship together, which Paul made further definitive for the ecclesiology necessary for the whole (2 Cor 5:18; 13:11; Eph 2:14-15; Col 2:10; Rom 8:6) in relational likeness to the relational ontology of the whole of God (just as Jesus prayed for his family, Jn 17:20-26).

Paul's integrated paradigm, inseparably theological ("grace and peace") and functional ("holy and blameless"), makes definitive the wholeness and its function for human life in the cosmos (Col 1:19-20). In his systemic framework composed by God's creative and communicative action, this theology of wholeness conclusively integrates all knowledge and understanding into the wisdom and experiential truth of the whole, that is, the dynamic of nothing less and no substitutes of God's qualitative-relational whole embodied by the undivided Jesus—the experiential truth of the whole gospel for the inherent human need and problem. This relational epistemic process and theological discourse do not stop here, however. While Paul's theological systemic framework always involves an eschatological trajectory, there is much more 'already' to unfold further and deeper on this adventure as sojourners together in relational progression to 'not yet'—as Paul shared intimately of his own journey (Phil 3:10-16, cf. Jn 17:3) and kept praying for the church (Eph 1:17-18; 3:14-19). In the context of Ephesians' whole ecclesiology, his latter prayer echoes and extends in the church Jesus' formative family prayer (Jn 17:20-26). As Paul whole-ly understood in relational language, this prayer can only be fulfilled in the whole ontology and function of the church as God's family, which requires of person and persons together to be vulnerable and intimate in their practice. In other words, whole theology and practice is not optional but required for all persons 'in Christ'.

Yet, as the whole of Paul and the whole in his theology understood in experiential truth, whole theology and practice are subject to being redefined ongoingly by referential language in referential terms. In the age of reductionism, theology and practice will emerge from theological anthropology and its related theologies as either a referential outcome in various forms of referential terms or a relational outcome solely in God's relational terms.[3] These results unfold in a process of time, not a singular moment, and

[3] An expanded discussion of theology in the age of reductionism, and its implications for the church and academy, takes place in my study *"Did God Really Say That?" Theology in the Age of Reductionism* (Theology Study, 2013). Online at http://4X12.org.

are not always neatly either-or, sometimes going back and forth in formative interaction (e.g. as in Peter) or a dialectic process (e.g. as in Paul). Yet, these two outcomes are clearly in competition and their determining processes counter each other in any aspect of theological engagement.

In relational terms, Scripture is not only God's revelation but more importantly God's communication in relational action that is initiated by God's relational response of grace. Yet, God's response cannot be reduced to a purpose of transmitting information about God, however useful the information could be. God communicates for the sole purpose of having whole relationship together. Scripture cannot be approached in a narrow epistemic field and be expected to reveal God's relational purpose. This epistemic limit of referentialization creates a barrier (veil) to obscure God's purpose, and, consequently, it cannot distinguish the relational outcome of whole relationship together contingent on having the veil removed. In contrast to narrowing down Scripture to incomplete doctrines for faith, Scripture in relational language opens up the whole of God's relational response of grace to the human condition. The relational outcome unfolds beyond mere doctrines of faith to nothing less and no substitutes of being whole, living whole and making whole—God's whole in ontology and function.

This relational outcome 'already' of whole theology and practice is composed just by relational language only in relational terms. What is required, indeed demanded, challenges human consciousness and its perceptual-interpretive framework and lens, along with its human agency of the will. Jesus calls persons to person*ness*—in the righteousness composing the true identity of the whole person he can count on in relationship together to be vulnerable and intimate. The nature of both his call in relational language and the outcome in relational terms involves nothing less and no substitutes of whole theology and practice—the nature of which challenged Peter and transformed Paul. Theological anthropology engages the pivotal position and provides the vital function to distinguish the person in person-consciousness with an inner-out lens from self-consciousness with an outer-in lens, and integrally accounts for and holds accountable the person's will in this qualitative relational process.

In Paul's relational imperative "let the wholeness of Christ rule in your hearts," he is unequivocal that our ontology and function cannot be defined and determined from outer in without fragmenting the whole person to reduced ontology and function. In addition, persons together are involved in reciprocal relationships that are transformed to be both equalized and intimate. Whole persons in transformed relationships constitute the new relationship together in wholeness, which is the relational outcome of the gospel (as initiated in God's definitive blessing and fulfilled by Christ). This whole theology and practice are never optional and cannot be negotiated by any other terms.

From Paul's own experience, if the wholeness of Christ is the only determinant ("rule," *brabeuo*) in our hearts, then the relational outcome will be the integral function of whole persons in whole relationships together. This integral function is a nonnegotiable for the gospel; otherwise its outcome is reduced. This relational outcome is conclusive of the qualitative and relational significance of the new creation 'already', which composes the new covenant relationship together of God's whole church family (Gal 4:28-31; Rom 8:6,15-17; 2 Cor 5:18; Eph 2:14-22). As Paul made definitive the ecclesiology for the wholeness of the church, he theologically and functionally bridged this new creation with the original creation, this new covenant relationship with the

covenant relationship distinguished with Abraham—who was given God's terms for relationship together in only relational language (Gen 17:1-2), not unlike Paul. God's relational terms are always 'be whole' (*tamiym*) as we are involved ongoingly with God in undivided reciprocal relationship together, which the who, what and how of Abraham enacted to warrant the relational function of righteousness—not what he did in referential terms in order to be considered righteous. Paul clearly knew the difference in this critical distinction (Gal 3:6-14; Rom 4) because he once credited himself in reduced righteousness while he labored in a covenant in referential terms (Phil 3:4-6).

Therefore, vital to the issue of righteousness in the whole gospel is our theological anthropology. Abraham and the new Paul were not credited with righteousness for what they *did* (various forms of works, including serving) or even what they *had* in referential terms (faith); that would be a referential outcome of defining persons in reduced ontology and function, which is merely a gospel in referential terms. Abraham was credited with righteousness for who, what and how he was in reciprocal covenant relationship with God. This is the necessary hermeneutical lens for righteousness that constituted both the whole of God's presence and involvement and also the whole person God seeks in compatible reciprocal relationship together—"the new self created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness" (Eph 4:24). This is the relational outcome that unfolded in the gospel of wholeness, which can emerge only from complete, whole (*tamiym, pleroma*) theological anthropology.

Moreover, God's relational term for reciprocal relationship in the relational function of *tamiym* ("be whole," not the referential condition often ascribed to "blameless") is inseparable from *shalom*. By their nature in relational terms, *tamiym* and *shalom* unfold in God's relational dynamic of the gospel from the beginning, and thus they must be integrated for the gospel to be distinguished—yet not in the incomplete narrow terms of being irenic and without blame. The good news is incomplete unless the 'wholeness' of *shalom* composes God's relational response and its relational outcome. Inseparably, the relational outcome of the gospel is incomplete until 'to be and live whole' of *tamiym* composes our reciprocal relational response to and experience of God's relational response of grace to our human condition. And this wholeness and being whole emerge only from the relational response and outcome of the definitive blessing that the Face initiated from the beginning, vulnerably embodied and ongoingly enacts: "…make his face shine on you and *relationally respond* in grace to you…and *bring the change necessary for the new relationship* (*siym*) *together in wholeness*" (Num 6:24-26). The integral relational function of *tamiym* and *shalom* makes definitive the reciprocal relational nature of the whole of God's ontology and function, and thereby conclusively discredits any notions of unilateral relationship in God's blessing, salvific action and the gospel. Our reciprocal relational response is compatible only in whole theology and practice.

Eliminating unilateral relationship from God's blessing, salvific action and the gospel does not imply in any way that God's actions are dependent on human actions. The inescapable implication of reciprocal relationship, however, is that God's whole ontology and function is present not as Object in referential terms but entirely involved as Subject in the relational terms of God's nature for the sole purpose of relationship together in likeness of God's relational ontology. On the basis of God's relational ontology and function, God's relational actions seek persons in the ontology and function

that will be compatible for relationship, that is, nothing less and no substitutes for our whole ontology and function in the vulnerable involvement of reciprocal relationship together without the veil. God's whole gospel has no relational significance, and therefore no relational outcome, if it involves a theological anthropology of reduced ontology and function that fragments persons into the parts of what they do and have—even if what they have is faith as an identity marker, and what they do is serve (cf. Jn 15:15; Jas 2:23-24). To paraphrase Jesus: "the theological anthropology you use will be the gospel and outcome you get" (Mk 4:24). The relational imperative for Paul is that "the whole of Christ be the only determinant for the person from inner out and their relationships together."

In the gospel of wholeness, Paul illuminated unmistakably the relational outcome of whole ontology and function (both God's and ours, Col 2:9-10; Eph 1:22-23), and further extends its intrusion (with Jesus *into* Paul by the Spirit) on the referential outcome of reduced ontology and function to make it whole, and thereby bridging the 'old' with the 'new' (Col 3:9-11; Eph 4:20-24). Paul's illumination is conclusive because this also was the relational outcome of his direct engagement with the Spirit in the relational epistemic process (2 Cor 4:4,6; Eph 3:2-6). His epistemic conclusion should not be confused with mysticism or reduced to the esoteric knowledge of early gnosticism. This was simply the relational outcome of Paul's ontology and function vulnerably in face-to-Face, heart-to-heart involvement with God's ontology and function relationally initiated to him for reciprocal relationship together in wholeness. God's ontology and function was nothing less and no substitutes in relational response, therefore Paul's ontology and function could be neither anything less nor any substitute in compatible reciprocal response. This is *who* and *what* God seeks, to compose indeed the good news for our condition.

Yet, this distinguished relational outcome is persistently reduced to a referential outcome, such that the gospel is consistently perceived merely in referential language and terms—much to Jesus' frustration (Jn 6:26; 14:9) and Paul's astonishment (Gal 1:6; cf. 2 Cor 11:4). The persistence reflects the influence of sin as reductionism that is still unaccounted for. The consistency exposes the presence of fragmentary ontology and function that still need to be made whole. To what extent does this presence and influence exist or even prevail today? Understanding the answer necessitates returning to the new wine table fellowship with the veil taken away. Most important, resolving the answer fully requires vulnerably involving ourselves in Jesus' intrusive relational path. The gospel of wholeness relationally embodying nothing less and no substitutes of God's ontology and function demands by its qualitative relational nature our compatible reciprocal relational response, not an obligatory response in conventional referential terms.

As Jesus made paradigmatic, "the terms you use will be the outcome you get." Whole theology and practice are neither interchangeable in terms nor optional, and thus are irreducible and nonnegotiable. This is further evident as Jesus continued to call persons to wholeness who were constrained by an identity deficit based on the ontological lie for human ontology and function signifying reductionism and its counter-relational work. If we do not pay attention to this influence from human contextualization and address its consequences on our own ontology and function, then unlike Levi (and others Jesus redefined) we remain subject to this ontological lie and continue to construct

our identity from a deficit model, which shapes our relationships accordingly. With the lack or absence of a theological anthropology that is whole-ly compatible with Jesus' ontology and function in reciprocal relationship together, our ontology and function cannot be distinguished from our human context and thus are subject to wide interpretation or determination. Such results would be compatible with postmodernism and its hermeneutic of suspicion but incompatible to address a template imposing its narrow view epistemologically, hermeneutically, and theologically that constrains ontology and function. This would be insufficient for the hermeneutic of suspicion Jesus initiated to challenge our assumptions of theological anthropology. He continues to confront this condition in its need for redemptive change and also jolts the religious community in likely its most implicit condition limiting or precluding this change: the status quo and its underlying epistemological illusion of confidence or certainty and its interrelated ontological simulation of stability and permanence.

Nicodemus represented his religious tradition and the effects of being embedded in the status quo of his religious community. Yet, Nicodemus apparently was dissatisfied with his knowledge and perhaps unsettled in his messianic expectations, such that he ventured out of this status quo to explore expanding his epistemic field to query Jesus (Jn 3:1-15). This epistemic process is critical to understand in this familiar encounter because it demonstrates the template imposed by the status quo to constrain any change beyond its conformity. No doubt Nicodemus knew that Jesus was a dissonant voice to the status quo, nevertheless he encountered much more than his lens limited by the status quo could understand epistemologically, hermeneutically and theologically. This implicit condition creates a hermeneutic impasse that makes it difficult to recognize the new much less embrace it.

Apparently stimulated by Jesus' actions and perhaps stirred by the presence of "a teacher who has come from God" (v.2), Nicodemus approached Jesus respectfully, if not with some humility. Yet, he very likely engaged Jesus with the framework and lens that Jesus critiqued elsewhere of "the wise and the intelligent" (Lk 10:21). This would be crucial for Nicodemus. Though his position represented the educated elite of Israel, his own posture was about to be humbled and changed.

Jesus understood Nicodemus' query and anticipated his questions that certainly related to God's promises for Israel's deliverance (salvation), the Messiah and God's kingship in the Mediterranean world. Therefore, Jesus immediately focused on "the kingdom of God" (v.3), the OT eschatological hope, about which Nicodemus was probably more concerned for the present than the future. Yet, the whole of God's kingship and sovereign rule is integral to the OT, and thus a primary focus of Nicodemus' query, however provincial. And he was concerned about it strongly enough (and perhaps inwardly conflicted) to make himself vulnerable to initiate this interaction with Jesus; his query appeared genuine and for more than referential information or didactic reasons. He received, however, much more than he could have imagined or reasoned.

The notion of membership and participation in the kingdom of God being contingent on a concept "born again" was taken incredulously by this "wise and learned" leader, whose sophisticated reason was unable to process and explain in referential terms from a narrowed epistemic field. "How can" (*dynamai*, v.4) signifies the limits of the probable. Then to be told "you [pl] must *by its nature*" (*dei*, v.7, not *opheilo*'s obligation or compulsion), as if to address all Jews, was beyond the grasp of his reason. *Dei* points

to the nature of the improbable. Even after Jesus made definitive ("I tell you the truth") *gennao anothen* as "born from above," that is "born of the Spirit" (*ek*, indicating the primary, direct source, vv.5,8), Nicodemus was still unable to process the words of Jesus; the status quo continues to prevail ("How can," v.9). Why? This brings us back to the interpretive framework and perceptual lens of "the wise and the intelligent." He was unable to understand Jesus' language because the words were heard with an insufficient interpretive framework limited to the prevailing assumptions of his knowledge and an inadequate perceptual lens constrained in focus only on the secondary in referential terms—in spite of his sincere query and good intentions.

The prevailing perceptual-interpretive framework that Nicodemus represented made some critical assumptions about the kingdom besides the quantitative situations and circumstances probable for the covenant. The two most critical assumptions were relational barriers to understanding Jesus' relational language:

1. Membership in the kingdom was based on generational descent and natural birth in quantitative referential terms; to understand the qualitative functional significance of Jesus' relational language, his relational message (v.7) must be integrated with the incarnation's fulfillment of God's thematic action in relational terms of the covenant relationship of love (as summarized by the evangelist in Jn 1:10-13; cf. his discourse on those redeemed in Jn 8:31-36,42).

2. In addition, participation in the kingdom was based on what one did from outer in, and, accordingly, adherence to a purification code of behavior was imperative, especially for national identity maintenance; to understand the whole relational context and process of Jesus' relational language, his message (v.6) needs to be embodied in the vulnerable relational context and process of his whole person from inner out intimately disclosing the whole of God in the innermost (made evident in his further disclosure of the improbable, Jn 6:54,63).

In this latter relational disclosure, would-be followers came to a similar conclusion as Nicodemus: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (Jn 6:52) and "This *improbable* is difficult; who can accept it?" (6:60), compared with Nicodemus' "How can *this improbable* be?" (3:9)—all of which reflected these assumptions in quantitative referential terms from outer in that limited both their knowledge to the probable and their learning of the improbable. This is the implicit condition of the status quo, which also imposed a template to limit their practice to fragmentary parts.

What Nicodemus and the others were predisposed to by their perceptual-interpretive framework, and were embedded in as their practice and expectation within the limits of the status quo, was essentially a *salvation of the old*—a quantitative outcome of reductionism. What Jesus vulnerably engaged them in and with went beyond the status quo to the *salvation of the new*—the qualitative relational outcome of the whole of God's relational response to not only Israel but to the human condition. God's thematic relational work of grace embodied in Jesus for covenant relationship of love constituted the new covenant from inner out, the relationship of which was now directly and intimately involved together with the Trinity in the innermost to be the whole of God's family (kingdom of those born of the Spirit, of the Father, of the Son). This is the whole

gospel vulnerably disclosed by Jesus in relational language, which jolted the status quo of *the old* represented in Nicodemus that night.

Jesus made it imperative for Nicodemus and the status quo that the redemptive change to be born from above was the only recourse available to be freed from the constraints imposed by any templates from tradition, the status quo and the 'old' prevailing in human contextualization—that which constrains, shapes or conforms the new's presence to the limits of the old, as Peter did (Acts 10:13-15, cf. Jn 15:18-20). This is where epistemological clarification and hermeneutical correction are needed, both for Nicodemus as well as for us today. Jesus was not pointing to a new belief system requiring Nicodemus' conversion. Nicodemus could not grasp the meaning of Jesus' words because his quantitative lens (*phroneo*) focused on the person from outer in ("How can anyone be born after…?"), and because his reductionist interpretive framework (*phronema*) was unable to piece together (*synesis*) his own Scripture (e.g. "The Lord your God will circumcise your heart," Dt 30:6). This evidenced that Nicodemus was too embedded in the status quo influenced by reductionism to understand—"How can these things be?"—even after Jesus said, "Do not be astonished…", which implied that a teacher of God's Word would comprehend God's whole if not fragmented by reductionism. Now the embodied Word from God (whom Nicodemus initially came to engage) made conclusive the epistemological clarification and hermeneutical correction essential for Nicodemus, Peter, Paul, Jews or Gentiles, for all persons: *be made whole from above or continue in reductionism*.

The sprouting of new wine necessitates addressing without exception all templates that constrain function ontologically and relationally. Such templates ("old wineskins") are signified in the veil not being removed, thus preventing the new wine table fellowship from inner out in the primacy of relationships together, and thereby rendering all theology and practice to the old condition in front of the temple curtain—as if Jesus never went to the cross on God's relational terms. We need to exercise a hermeneutic of suspicion on our own theology and practice to expose and challenge any assumptions that essentially have constrained, shaped or conformed the new to the limits of the old.

As long as our perceptual-interpretive framework is reductionist—most notably with a fragmentary theological anthropology—our lens' view of the qualitative, the ontological and the relational will not discern the extent of the surrounding influences reducing the whole of our personal and church practice. The underlying issue critical for our understanding is the ontology and function of both the person and persons together as church; and the challenging question remains: Is it reduced ontology and function or whole ontology and function? The relational demands of grace, however, clarify for our and church ontology and function that nothing less and no substitutes than to be whole is the only practice that has any significance to God (as Jesus made definitive about worship, Jn 4:23-24). Additionally, the lens of repentance in conjoint function with a strong view of sin makes no assumptions to diminish addressing sin as reductionism, first and foremost within church practice and then in the surrounding contexts—in other words, being accountable for nothing less and no substitutes. This is the ontology and function that composes 'the narrow gate and road' leading to whole life (*zoe*). And Jesus wants "all the churches" to clearly "know that I am the one who searches minds and hearts" (Rev 2:23, as he did with Peter); that is, he examines the qualitative significance

of persons from inner out, whom he holds accountable to be whole in the relationships that hold together in the innermost as the whole of God's family (2:25; 3:11). In their effort to be relevant and possibly pragmatic in the surrounding pluralistic context, by engaging in a hybrid process the Thyatira church overlooked (knowingly or unknowingly) in their many admirable church practices what was necessary to be whole and to make whole (cf. a similar error by the church in Pergamum in a reductionist context, Rev 2:12-15).

It is insufficient for churches to be a mere presence, or even merely to function, *en* the world; their only significance is to function *eis* (relational movement into) the world both to be relationally involved with others as God's whole and, by the nature of this function, also to confront all sin as reductionism of the whole. Jesus teaches us about ecclesiology in his relational discourse (Rev 2-3), and the lesson we need to learn from the hybrid process of the Thyatira church is indispensable: to let pass, indifferently permit or inadvertently allow—"tolerate," which other churches also did more subtly—the influence of reductionism in any form from the surrounding context proportionately diminishes the wholeness of church theology and practice and minimalizes their relational involvement with God, with each other in the church and with others in the world, consequently rendering its relational condition to a level no longer distinguished for, and perhaps from, the human relational condition. For churches to get beyond practice merely *en* the world, they need a different dynamic to define and determine their practice.

By searching hearts Jesus communicates the relational message to us that church ontology and function are about being whole in the innermost, not merely doing correct ecclesial practices. And the *eis* relational engagement of church function has to be conjoined with the *ek* (movement out of) relational involvement with the whole of God as its defining antecedent in the *ek-eis* dynamic (the reciprocating contextualization discussed previously), or else church ontology and function remain susceptible to engagement in a fragmenting process. This reciprocating relational process negates the continuous counter-relational work of Satan and its reductionist influence (Rev 2:24) by ongoingly engaging, embracing, experiencing and extending God's whole, that is, the irreducible whole in the qualitative significance of the integrated ontology of both personness and the church constituted in and by the Trinity, the whole of God. The relational outcome is whole theology and practice, the only alternative integrally in contrast and conflict with a hybrid theology.

This interpretive framework and hermeneutic lens are integral to the vital function that the whole of theological anthropology necessarily provides in order to be distinguished in its pivotal position to compose the whole theology and practice required for the person and persons together to be distinguished as the new creation family.

The Challenge of Theological Anthropology

In his imperative for his followers, Jesus makes it clearly definitive: our perceptual-interpretive framework and lens will define our reality and determine how we function in our life ("the measure you give"); on this basis alone, we should not expect to experience anything more or less ("the measure you get"), notably as a person and in

relationship together. Implied further in his words, Jesus defined the outcome of a qualitative perceptual-interpretive framework and the consequence of a quantitative perceptual-interpretive framework, both of which are directly correlated to the epistemic process: "For to those who have *a qualitative framework and lens*, more will be given; from those who have nothing, *that is, no qualitative framework and lens*, even what they have *from a quantitative framework* will be taken away *or rendered insignificant*" (Mk 4:25). Yet, the measure we use has more than epistemological consequences.

A quantitative framework shapes our theological anthropology to define the human person from outer in, based notably on the parts of what the person does and/or has. On the basis of this self-definition, this is how that person defines others, which then determines how relationships are engaged, both with God and others. The consequence of this human-shaping dynamic is far-reaching to define the human condition and determine the human problem. This quantitative framework and lens, as discussed at various points, creates a process of measurement in social context with others in comparison and competition with them for one's self-determination (see Mt 6:1-8, 16-18) and self-justification (see Mt 7:1-5). Self-determination is never an individual action (or an individual group action) done in isolation from others (or other groups). Self-determination is a social phenomenon requiring a process of comparison to others to establish the standards of measuring success or failure in self-determination. Invariably, these comparative (and competitive) differences lead to "better" or "less" social position (historically, even ontological nature, as seen in racism), consequently the operation of stratified relationships together (formalized in systems of inequality).

When relationships become separated, partitioned or fragmented, there is a basis of justification needed either to access a "better" position or to embed/maintain others in a "less" position. The pursuit of this basis is the effort for self-justification by individual or group. That is to say, the effort for self-determination inevitably becomes the function in social context for self-justification; and the results of this effort invariably come at the expense of others, even unknowingly or inadvertently. Jesus challenged these dynamics of reductionism, its counter-relational work and the functional workings of the sin of reductionism countering the whole of God's desires—the human condition. Paul builds on Jesus' words (1 Cor 4:6-7; 2 Cor 10:12) and extends them in the dynamics of the ecclesiology to be whole, which counters this reductionism (e.g. Eph 2:14-22; Gal 3:26-29). Therefore, our theological anthropology is critical for the theological process we engage and epistemic process we are involved in, and for their relational outcome of whole theology and practice.

The relational outcome of whole theology and practice is a unique experience (not common but *uncommon*) in the age of reductionism, both within the church and the theological academy. In spite of their good intentions in these interdependent contexts, this relational outcome continues to strain to emerge, struggles to unfold and has difficulty to mature. On the one hand, this is not unexpected with the ongoing presence and pervasive influence of reductionism and its counter-relational work. It should, on the other hand, be surprising given the gospel of God's whole presence and involvement. The issue involves what happens to the new wine, as Paul contends (Eph 4:14, 20-24).

For the whole of Paul and the whole in his theology, there is no other relational outcome from the gospel of wholeness; "the new creation is everything" (Gal 6:15), that is, for those who follow the whole of Jesus' theological trajectory and relational path in

the new wine relationships together with the veil removed (Eph 2:14-22). The seeds of new wine have been planted in our innermost and have sprouted 'already', yet the good news of its flow has not been accurately reported. There is just something missing to announce. The gospel has lost its significance without this relational outcome, reduced to what Paul defines as "no gospel at all." What does remain prominent, if not prevailing, in this condition is both a weak view of sin not dealing with reductionism—and thus inadequately understanding the human condition—and a fragmentary theological anthropology reducing the ontology and function of the person and the church and for the academy. Consequently, various templates have formed in theology and practice that have constrained the outcome of the gospel to their limits—the function of old wineskins that Jesus confronted at the initial new wine table fellowship (Mk 2:22).

Jesus' conflict with the reductionist segments of Judaism involved their pragmatism in contrast to their needed relational function in the covenant relationship together, the covenant of love (Dt 7:9) and of wholeness (Isa 54:10). Pragmatism also emerged at another new wine table fellowship to try to constrain the new wine (Mt 26:6-13; Jn 12:1-8). The new wine flowed from Mary with her vulnerable involvement in relational response to Jesus. The expensive perfume was secondary to the primacy of relationship together but the disciples made it an issue of discipleship in primary response to the situation of the poor. By rebuking Mary harshly (par. Mk14:5), they demonstrated the limited concern of their pragmatism, therewith exposing their continued reduced ontology and function that still had not tasted the new wine but indeed tried to constrain it. In contrast and conflict, Jesus fully experienced the primacy of Mary's involvement and the depth of her discipleship—celebrating the new wine of whole persons in new relationship together and anticipating her flow of the new wine to give clarity and depth to "wherever this gospel *of wholeness* is proclaimed in the whole world" (Mt 26:13). Mary will be discussed further in the next chapter.

In Jesus' imperatives to pay attention to how we listen (Lk 8:18) and the words we hear (Mk 4:24), it is not only relationally indispensable but epistemologically, ontologically and relationally determining: "the theological anthropology you use will be the persons you get."

The imperative in Mark 4:24 needs to be integrated with Luke 10:21. The difference in the perceptual-interpretive framework between the child-person and the wise and learned (of Lk 10:21) is the difference between the qualitative and the quantitative, the relational and the referential. This difference is critical for defining which epistemic process we engage (relational or referential) and critical for determining how we engage in that epistemic process (vulnerably or measured, distant, detached). In relation to God's self-disclosures, this difference means the epistemological, ontological and relational gap between the relational outcome of knowing God more deeply and the relational consequence of merely having fragments of information about God, that is, of not truly knowing God. The former is whole knowledge and understanding (*syniemi*, as Jesus highlighted, Mk 8:17-18) while the affirmation, assertion and dogmatism of the information in the latter can only be some form of reductionism, even when aggregated and generalized in a systematic or biblical theology.

The "measure" (*metron*) we give and get that Jesus refers to involves our perceptual-interpretive framework that we use, which determines (measures, limits) the level of participation in the epistemic process for God's self-disclosures. The above

difference in frameworks signified by the child-person and the wise and learned is clearly made definitive by Jesus for "the level of relational involvement you give will be the extent of reciprocal relationship you get, both in the relational epistemic process and in relationship together"—for either a relational outcome or relational consequence (Mk 4:24-25). Therefore, the relational context and process—that Jesus embodied for our participation in the relational epistemic process to the whole of God, God's whole and our wholeness—cannot be diminished or minimalized by human shaping and construction without the loss of whole knowledge and understanding, as well as what it means to be whole. Nothing less and no substitutes are the irreducible and nonnegotiable terms the whole of God embodied, and which need to compose theological anthropology.

Jesus' defining statement "the measure you use will be the measure you get" (Mk 4:24) was not expressed as a propositional truth, though it should be paid attention to with that significance. More importantly, his relational language communicated this relational statement that is directly connected to his relational imperative "Pay attention to *the words* you hear *from me*"; this extends the Father's relational imperative "listen to him" (Mt 17:5)—the embodied Word from God. Later, while everyone was amazed at what Jesus did, he qualified these relational imperatives to listen to the Word with the use of *tithemi* (to set, put one's person, Lk 9:44, cf. "lay down one's life," Jn 15:13). In referential language *tithemi* would be about putting Jesus' words "into your ears" (NRSV) to complete the transmission of information. Yet, in this context his disciples did not understand his words (i.e. have a frame of reference, *aisthanomai*, 9:45, cf. Heb 5:14) even though Jesus said *tithemi*. Why? Because Jesus' words are in relational language that cannot be recognized, perceived, understood (*aisthanomai*) to distinguish his relational words without the interpretive framework of his relational language (cf. Jn 8:43). The disciples only heard referential words to put in their ears, which had no significance to them. They did not put their whole persons into the relational involvement necessary for the relational epistemic process to have the hermeneutic to understand Jesus' relational language; and their relational distance evidenced their lack of vulnerable involvement in *tithemi* with the Word ("they were afraid to ask him").

This demonstrated critical interrelated issues for those who "hear" the Word, most importantly in theological anthropology:

> "The language you use will be the Word you get," and "the interpretive framework, lens and hermeneutic you use will be the knowledge and understanding of the Word you get"; thus, "the epistemic process you engage will be the theology and practice you get"; and all of this qualified by the interaction of "the context and process you use will be the theological anthropology you get" and "the theological anthropology you use will determine the outcome you get"—nothing less and nothing more.

The Word's defining statement is decisively the determining process for theological anthropology and conclusively the constituting process for persons.

Whether the person is distinguished in whole ontology and function is directly contingent on whether the whole of theological anthropology is distinguished. For theological anthropology to be distinguished whole-ly, it must occupy its pivotal position on the whole of God's theological trajectory and must engage its vital function in the whole of Jesus' relational path. Therefore, the pressing challenge for theological

anthropology is to take up the responsibility of its pivotal position and vital function by conjointly (1) composing its theological trajectory to be compatible with the whole of God and (2) living its relational path to be congruent with the whole of Jesus. Anything less and any substitute for theological anthropology is on a different theological trajectory and relational path. Thus, theological anthropology must assume its responsibility only in God's relational language and terms in order to integrally constitute persons in complete context: (1) to be whole together in the primacy of God's relational context, and (2) to live whole ontology and function into the human context based ongoingly in the primacy of God's relational process—as Paul made definitive for the church to be whole (Eph 4:11-13).

Jesus calls the person of theological anthropology to personness and wholeness, and the response in relational terms can only be vulnerable and intimate for the relational outcome 'already' in whole theology and practice. Together with the presence and reciprocal relational work of the Spirit (the Son's relational replacement), Jesus' transformed followers are theologically and functionally reconciled together to be the new creation whole of God's family in likeness of the Trinity, ongoingly in the trinitarian relational process of family love. At this integral new wine table fellowship *with* the whole of God, his church can celebrate God's whole only as church family together without relational distance, not as relational and emotional orphans functioning as orphanage (as Paul illuminated, 1 Cor 11:17-34). Without this relational celebration of God's whole, our Christology, soteriology, ecclesiology, pneumatology and eschatological hope become merely narrowed-down referential doctrine essentially disembodied and de-relationalized with nothing qualitatively distinguished to practice and nothing relationally significant to experience both with God and with each other together. The only alternative left to practice and experience in this relational condition is "old wine," about which some say "The old is good *or enough*, *even better*" (Lk 5:39).

Jesus raised up Paul to extend and exceed his relational work of the new wine fellowship (Acts 26:16; Jn 14:12). Vulnerably involved with the whole of Jesus and in reciprocal relationship with the Spirit, Paul became the hermeneutical key for the theological and functional clarity of the church as God's family in whole ontology and function. Therefore, even traditional, conventional and prevailing distinctions such as circumcision and uncircumcision became old wineskins for the new wine fellowship in his perceptual-interpretive framework—"neither…is anything" (Gal 6:15). For Paul, himself as a reduced person made whole, the new covenant and new creation were indispensable for the gospel, irreplaceable for its relational outcome, and irreducible for its emerging ontology and nonnegotiable for its ongoing function in relationship together—"the new creation is everything." Nothing less and no substitutes either defined Paul or determined his theology and function. The flow of the new wine in the new covenant and creation constitutes the relational dynamic of Jesus *into* Paul, and the who, what and how of Paul embodying the theology and hermeneutic of the whole gospel for practice to be, live and make God's relational whole. Their theological anthropology now extends to us, seeking to constitute this relational dynamic *into* our whole persons.

As Jesus called persons and God has called us to "walk with the whole of God's vulnerable presence and intimate involvement and be whole," this renews the challenge of God's questions for the persons of theological anthropology: "Where are you?"—

"What are you doing here?"—"Why are you…me?" When theological anthropology responds whole-ly in relational terms, it fulfills the responsibility of its pivotal position and vital function. The relational outcome is the whole of theological anthropology distinguished, nothing less and no substitutes.

Chapter 7 Celebrating the Whole of Theological Anthropology

I tell you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed…
how this whole person has acted **will be told as a reminder**
of her *whole ontology and function*.

Mark 14:9

In my personal narrative, the Spirit changed my interpretive framework (*phronema*) and lens (*phroneo*, Rom 8:5-6) to understand that to be 'white' (and any other prevailing models) was not who I am as a human person. In addition, the Spirit's whole understanding made definitive for me that to be an Asian American (and any other human distinction) did not distinguish my whole person. This only defined me by a distinct identity from outer in that was determined by a comparative process of human distinctions, where any differences from the dominant model were "less"—in other words, a distinctly deficit identity. My whole person did not emerge until my assumptions from my initial anthropology and subsequent theological anthropology were challenged and changed accordingly.

The global church is located in a pluralistic-multicultural human context that is constrained by human differences rendering persons to fragmentary ontology and function "to be apart"—"naked with differences from outer in and covering up." The global church living within this human condition is challenged to live whole ontology and function into the human context—"naked from inner out without distinctions and without shame." Therefore, the global church urgently is also challenged in their assumptions of theological anthropology that define their identity and determine their function. Human distinctions cannot be the primary source that defines who and what they are and determines how they function. Such a source by its nature operates in a comparative process of "better" or "less" that fragments the person and persons together to those parts of distinction, thereby composing their ontology and function "to be apart" in ontological deficit and deficit identity. This further challenges by necessity clearly understanding sin as reductionism and addressing any reductions of whole ontology and function.

When theological anthropology is distinguished whole, then its pivotal position and vital function serve as the integrating basis to distinguish the global church to be whole and to live whole ontology and function into this fragmenting human context—live, that is, without secondary or false distinctions. When the person and persons together as church are distinguished in complete context, then the whole person, God's whole family and the whole of God can celebrate.

Before we can truly celebrate this whole, the persons of theological anthropology must be clearly distinguished in complete context. This clarity is further gained by understanding what we should not celebrate.

What not to Celebrate

Distinctions about a person and between persons are a reality of life in the human context. What significance those distinctions have and what primacy they are given to define and determine persons are the critical issues that theological anthropology needs to address for persons to be distinguished in complete context. These issues are the most important for persons together as church.

The distinguished Face—of God's definitive blessing initiating the gospel (Num 6:24-26) fulfilled by the face of Christ—continued to turn to his family not only to bless but necessarily to challenge for the new relationship together in wholeness (*siym-shalôm*), which is the relational outcome of the gospel that irrefutably distinguishes his family as church. What the embodied face of God constituted as the gospel and fulfilled as its relational outcome, in relational terms and not referential, also nonnegotiably composed the ecclesiology of his family to be whole. This vulnerable and intimate relational work of Jesus did not stop with the end of his formal earthly ministry; that was only the prelude. He had other defining interactions specific to his church, which can be considered his post-ascension discourse for the ecclesiology definitive for his church to be whole.

After the Spirit came to his church for its development and completion, the face of Jesus shined on Paul to engage him in relationship for his transformation and called him to be whole to clearly distinguish the church's wholeness for the experiential truth of the gospel (Acts 9:1-16, Gal 2:11,14). Then Jesus challenged Peter's perceptual-interpretive framework for making distinctions about persons/peoples, in order to redeem his bias in relationships that created barriers in Christ's church preventing all persons from coming together in transformed relationships as God's family without the veil (Acts 10:9-36; 15:7-9). In family love Jesus clarified the full significance of his relational work of equalization to establish the function of his church also as equalizer, and thereby the ecclesiology of the whole was being made definitive (as Paul composed, Eph 2:13-22).

Ironically, the counter-relational process of distinction making and discrimination by Jews to Christian Jews became the same counter-relational process used by various Jewish Christians to make distinctions of Gentile Christians to discriminate against them in the early church. This was Peter's perceptual-interpretive framework and essentially his contradictory practice in the church until Jesus' post-ascension discourse with him directly. Then Peter led the discussion in reordering the stratified early church to be the equalizer, though Paul would be the one to make it functional and to compose the ecclesiology of the whole. After Jesus redeemed his bias and reformed his ecclesiology, Peter declared at the Jerusalem church council that God "has made no distinction between them and us" (Acts 15:9). The term *diakrino* denotes to make a distinction, discriminate, and treat differently, which God does not practice in his family. This term and God's family action help us understand that such distinctions are not neutral without repercussions but rather are integrated in a counter-relational process, which uses those distinctions to discriminate toward those persons by treating them differently, namely as being *less* by the deficit model, and thereby imposing an identity or ontological deficit on

them. Peter learned that those distinctions are human constructs, not made by God (cf. Acts 10:14-15).

In this pivotal action for ecclesiology, the early church shifted to emerge as the equalizer. Its defining function for church practice became distinguished: dissolving false human distinctions of human construction and absorbing legitimate human differences from God in order to be and live the whole of God's family in the new relational order of transformed relationships together integrally equalized and intimate. As Jesus embodied in his equalizing, church function as equalizer by its nature necessitates being both whole and holy, therefore to be qualitatively distinguished from the function of *the common*—specifically in the human shaping from the prevailing function of the surrounding context's relational order.

The significance of the church being holy involves a functional aspect and a relational aspect, for which church practice is accountable not only in distinguished identity but also in sanctified (uncommon) life and practice. Since Jesus redeemed and thus equalized persons in extending to them the whole relationship of his Father as family together, what distinguishes his followers (his family, his church) is to *live equalized*, and, in full congruence with his relational work, *to equalize* by extending this whole family relationship of family love. Jesus made unmistakably evident throughout his sanctified life and practice that his equalization perspective and a reductionist perceptual-interpretive framework are irreconcilable, thus incompatible as a working basis for church practice. Therefore, the functional aspect of being holy involves being freed from the influence of reductionism that explicitly or implicitly defines and/or determines church practice. The related relational aspect of being holy involves the integral practice of church relationships together in likeness of the Trinity, which is distinguished from any and all aspects of the relational condition "to be apart" from the whole, for example, shaped in likeness of orphans in an orphanage. This functional and relational significance of the church being holy interact to compose the process of church qualitative development and growth in relational terms, in contrast and conflict with quantitative church growth and development in referential terms that commonly prevails today. Underlying this process is the theological anthropology of these persons together—and inseparable from their theological anthropology is their view of sin as reductionism—which is basic for what to and not to celebrate.

James emerged from the Jerusalem church council with a new interpretive framework theologically about human distinctions that he practiced with a new interpretive lens (Jas 2:9). For Peter, however, what was formed (and reformed) theologically was not simply made functional in his practice as a foremost church leader. This contradiction emerged later as the basis for Paul needing to chasten Peter in family love in order for Peter to practice the relationships together necessary to be whole as God's church family—the only relational outcome congruent to the truth of the whole gospel (Gal 2:11-14). This interaction was not an isolated incident that provides us merely with historical information. What unfolds in the first-century church should not be ignored by the global church today, because it illuminates both the basic ecclesiology necessary to be whole and the critical influence of human distinctions to fragment church ontology and function. We need to pay attention to what unfolds from Jesus into Paul, so that what they composed whole also unfolds into the church today.

What was Paul's role and function to develop this new faith in Christ that emerged in a pluralistic world? Did he serve to develop Christianity beyond its roots in Judaism and transform it from a Jewish messianic renewal movement into essentially a new religion that influenced the Greco-Roman world and beyond? Did Paul engage in effect in the reification (human authorship and enterprise seen as objectified fact) of Christianity and the church, thus promoting a belief system and institution of his own construction; or was he in fact responding in many of his letters to the reification of Christianity and the church by false or reductionist practices of many associated with the church, in order for him to clearly distinguish their human constructs from the whole of God's thematic relational action and creative involvement making whole from above?

From Paul's relational involvement with "the face of Christ," Paul's gospel emerged directly from the gospel vulnerably embodied by Jesus in relational terms (2 Cor 4:4,6). From his previous practice in Judaism and *tamiym*'s epistemological clarification and hermeneutical correction, Paul understood that anything less than and any substitutes for this gospel of peace (wholeness, Eph 6:15) are incompatible and in conflict with the truth of the whole gospel relationally embodied by Jesus. In other words, Paul clearly understood that reductionism is always positioned against wholeness 'in Christ', seeking to formulate alternatives ("a different gospel," Gal 1:6-9) by human terms, shaping and construction; and he fought intensely against reductionism to expose its counter-relational work.

Human terms, shaping or construction occur when the gospel is contextualized within the primary influence of human contexts. Jesus takes his followers further and deeper than this, as he did Paul. Paul declared unequivocally that the origin of his gospel cannot be explained by human contextualization and the influence of surrounding contexts (Gal 1:11-12), which also includes by Paul's own shaping or construction. To the contrary, his gospel was contextualized only in Jesus' whole relational context and thus can be understood only by Jesus' whole relational process. For Paul, this was not about information in referential terms, rather in relational terms this was first his direct experience with Jesus to be transformed and made whole in the experiential truth of the whole gospel relationally embodied by Jesus. As a person vitally concerned about this whole gospel, Paul turned first to the gospel of peace he experienced directly from the Lord of peace to make definitive the theological basis for his gospel. Paul did not engage in reification, that is, essentially construct his own gospel and belief system to support an institutional order of his shaping, in which he lived as if this were the nature of God's truth and the reality of peace 'in Christ'.[1] He did, however, expose those who did.

Therefore, though Paul's letters delineate specific human contexts, he was always contextualizing the gospel further and deeper in the whole of God's relational context and process embodied by Christ. Paul never spoke in a vacuum but always spoke *in* human contexts and *to* those contexts, yet he never spoke *from* human contexts, including of his own shaping and construction (except to illustrate reductionism in comparative relations, e.g. 2 Cor 11:16-12:13). Paul's readers then should not look for a unity in Paul's thought and theology in his corpus until they understand where he is speaking from.

Given the deeper context defining and determining the whole of Paul and the wholeness 'in Christ' integrating his thought throughout his corpus, there emerged two

[1] For a helpful discussion of the dynamic of reification and its implications in human life, see David K. Naugle, *Worldview: the History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 177-20.

distinct depths in Paul's development. On the one hand, there was his compassionate, sensitive and loving relational involvement with God's family for the purpose of being God's whole and living whole on God's terms, thus making unmistakable the functional and relational significance of the gospel. On the other hand, there was his passionate, rigorous and uncompromising response to anything less and any substitutes among those related to God's family for the purpose of exposing and confronting reductionism to make them whole, thereby making irreducible and nonnegotiable the experiential truth of the whole gospel. In these ongoing depths of action, Paul made his own person vulnerable to any relational outcomes or consequences resulting from those he addressed. It would be inaccurate to perceive Paul's passion as a mere expression of his personality transferred from his previous passion to persecute the church (cf. Acts 26:11). His previous passion came from an outer-in ontology and his new passion emerged from the depths of an inner-out ontology made whole. This process of transformation to wholeness was the gospel of peace Paul deeply felt so strongly about. And the only alternative to this whole gospel was one reduced by human terms, shaping or construction. And such alternative for Paul, experientially, epistemologically and ontologically, had no basis and qualitative-relational significance beyond human design to be defined as a gospel (Gal 1:6-7).

What this delineates about Paul was his strength of position on the ongoing issue of the gospel. The issue is ongoing because reductionism is always positioned against the whole of the gospel, and the gospel of wholeness, always seeking to redefine it with something less or some substitute. The strength of Paul's position was clearly expressed in his polemic about the issue, which is always twofold: It is an inseparable fight *for* the truth of the whole gospel, on the one hand, and *against* reductionism, on the other. This unrelenting fight unfolds in his letters, where Paul addressed various situations and conditions involving tension, distress, fragmented relationships and a lack of harmony in the church. In these contexts, Paul intensified his conjoint fight for the gospel's experiential truth and against any and all reductionism of it and its relational outcome 'already'. Most notably in his fight, Paul magnified the issue of wholeness fragmented by human distinctions, thus making definitive that human differences are insignificant or only secondary and cannot define the gospel and determine its relational outcome.

In one of his earliest letters, Paul raised the underlying basic question integral to his fight against human distinctions for the gospel embodied in whole and its relational outcome embodying the church: "Has Christ been divided?" (1 Cor 1:13) The specific situation and circumstances Paul faced at Corinth provide the stimulus for his polemic and thought. This context and Paul's response also help his readers understand his theological discourse (explicit and implicit) on the human person and the relationships necessary to function as the church. The existing condition in that church was fragmented relationships created by the misguided competition of each person's claim to be either of Paul or of Apollos or of Peter or of Christ (1 Cor 1:12). The underlying dynamic of these divisive relationships (3:3,21) reduced the persons involved to being defined from outer in (1:13) based on fragmentary knowledge (3:1-5). Defining persons by the teachings (or their style) each had engaged them in a comparative process of "who's better" and "who's less", which then became the intentional or unintentional cause of relationships fragmenting the church.

What Paul addressed in the church at Corinth—and continues needing to be addressed in the church today—exposed the human shaping of the gospel and the human construction of theological cognition from human contextualization (e.g. as has shaped belief systems and denominations). Both this human shaping and construction went "beyond what is written"—that is, beyond the definitive source of Subject-face in God's communicative action (1:19,31; 3:19-23). Paul only used what was previously written (e.g. Isa 29:14; Jer 9:24; Job 5:13; Ps 94:11) to illuminate the communicative action of God's revelation on God's relational terms—which Paul himself continued to receive further and deeper—as well as to expose anything less and any substitutes (1 Cor 2:10; 2 Cor 4:2,6; Eph 3:2-6). This is the defining significance of Paul urgently needed for the global church today—whose relevance may be ignored or dismissed but not reduced or renegotiated.

Paul's conjoint fight continues, on the one hand, to highlight the fragmentation by human distinctions while, on the other, to magnify whole ontology and function both for the person and persons together as church. This emerges further in a crucial letter (Gal) in which Paul establishes unequivocally the functional clarity of the truth and whole of the gospel from any alternatives of reductionism, and thus to be distinguished from any alternative gospels. This ongoing tension and conflict exists throughout Paul's letters, pointing to Galatians as the lens by which to read Paul's writings (e.g. Rom provides the theological clarity necessary to be integrated with Gal's functional clarity to constitute the experiential truth of the whole gospel). Paul's letters are not random statements, notably in response to various situations affecting the church. He was not dispensing moral prescriptions to cure a bad situation or ethical advice to fix a broken situation. In fulfillment of his relational responsibility for God's family (*oikonomia*, Col 1:25; Eph 3:2), Paul's letters compose the integral aspects crucial to the whole of God's revelation (theological trajectory and relational path) in thematic relational response to the human condition. Accordingly, the global church needs to pay attention to his letters as directed to the persons together as church today, which includes addressing the assumptions of our theological anthropology and related view of sin that Paul challenges. As Paul himself experienced first, we could likely be in need of epistemological clarification and hermeneutic correction to be made whole. Paul's statements also are not making suggestions but are compelling relational messages to respond to, or be found perhaps on a different theological trajectory and relational path than Jesus with an alternative gospel.

When Paul provided the functional clarity for the gospel in Galatians, part of his clarity involved the relational outcome of adoption (Gal 3:26; 4:4-7). The function of God's children emerged in the transformed relationships from baptism in Christ, that is, dying to the old and rising in the new (3:27; 5:6; 6:15; cf. Rom 6:4). Paul functionally clarified their transformed relationships together in what is commonly perceived in referential terms as a baptismal formula (Gal 3:28). More significantly this is Paul's relational language for the necessary function of the transformed relationships together that is conclusive of the relational outcome from adoption into God's family, and therefore that is inclusive of any and all who "belong to Christ" (3:29). This notably includes those in the pairings highlighted (Jew-Gentile, slave-free, male-female), which go beyond merely pairs of opposites for Paul.[2]

[2] J. Louis Martyn perceives these as pairs of opposites in the same way as the elements of the cosmos are pairs of opposites. *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (London: T & T Clark, 1997), 138-40.

These pairings are a summary account (not exhaustive) of reduced human ontology and function, which construct false human distinctions to stereotype persons for stratified human relations; Paul later stated a variation of this summary in Colossians 3:11 (though such differences are used to dispute his authorship). Whatever human distinctions are highlighted, the relational consequence is fragmented relationships, not whole relationships together. This was clearly exposed by Paul in Corinthians (e.g. 1 Cor 3:21-22; 4:6-7). Therefore, for Paul anything less and any substitutes for the integral function of equalized and intimate relationships would not be congruent with the transformed relationships together necessary to constitute relational belonging in God's family, and would render baptism to a mere sacramental practice without its relational significance. Nor would human terms and shaping of relationships be compatible to wholeness together in likeness of the whole of God—to which Paul illuminated being restored in his variation of this summary (*anakainoo*, "being renewed *to the original condition of* the image of its creator," Col 3:10-11).

In the whole of Paul's practice and the whole in his theology, relational belonging is irreducible for any persons (regardless of human distinction) and is nonnegotiable to the prevailing aspects or surrounding influences of human contextualization. The false human distinctions are a product of human constructs that have displaced God's created design and purpose for human ontology and function (cf. 1 Cor 4:6-7; 2 Cor 5:5,16; Eph 2:10; Gen 2:18,25). These human constructs, terms and shaping are the dynamics involved in reductionism of the gospel. In Paul's fight against reductionism and for the whole gospel, his polemic includes his personal experience of being redeemed from his own reductionism and transformed in Christ to be made whole (*sozo*) for *pleroma* soteriology. It is this whole of Paul and his witness that is basic to his polemic (e.g. Gal 6:14). Thus, in Galatians, when his testimony prefaces his second summary statement both for the whole gospel and against reductionism (the first is Gal 5:6)—"For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything" (6:15)—this is not only theological discourse for Paul but equally important his experiential truth. In changing from reduced ontology and function to whole ontology and function, Paul's whole person grasped from inner out that relational belonging in God's family is neither partial to persons nor amenable to human contextualization. Thus, any form of reductionism cannot constitute God's relational whole for Paul; nor can it signify the whole gospel or represent the wholeness of Christ as his church family (cf. Eph 1:22-23; 2:14-22).

Any other human distinction could have been inserted in his summary statements. By the very nature of God's relational whole, reductionism simply cannot define and determine relational belonging in God's family; and by the nature of reductionism's counter-relational work, it is always in conflict with whole relationship together. Therefore, Paul deeply understood in human relations that women most notably, followed by slaves, were most vulnerable to be subject to reduced ontology and function in subordinate relational positions. In the new creation, the whole of Paul could be in face-to-face relationship together with women and slaves, among other distinctions, only on the basis of transformed relationships both equalized and intimate. What defined and determined Paul's ontology and function also unequivocally defined and determined their ontology and function in the dynamic of nothing less and no substitutes, regardless of their situations and circumstances in the surrounding context. While the latter conditions

may still exist for them, Paul is emphatic that these do not and should not be the determinants for their ontology and function. As he would make imperative later, "let the wholeness of Christ be the only determinant of your persons from inner out, since as members of one body you were called to wholeness" (Col 3:15).

At the church in Corinth, Paul highlighted other distinctions based on education ("knowledge puffs up," 1 Cor 8:1) that fragmented the person and relationships together in the church (8:2,10-12); and he even highlighted distinctions based on spiritual gifts (12:1-11; 14:1ff) that further fragmented persons and church. Paul is decisive in his fight for wholeness and against reductionism, and he illuminates the comparative process engaged by human distinctions that results in deficit identity and ontology (1 Cor 4:6-7; 2 Cor 10:12). Paul also made conclusive for the church: any and all distinctions in a comparative process redefine the ontology and function of the body of Christ and renegotiate its function in stratified relationships that engage a deficit model to define its members as "better" or "less"—knowingly or unknowingly (1 Cor 12:12-13:1, cf. Eph 4:11-16). As Paul functionally clarified definitively, this theology and practice neither composes the whole of the gospel nor constitutes its relational outcome of new relationships together in wholeness for the church (past or present).

For Paul, human distinctions include not only false distinctions of human construction but also already existing secondary differences (e.g. physical, mental, including age) used as the primary source for defining persons. We need to examine the implications of what Paul highlights to determine what should not be celebrated in the global church.

Directly implied in Paul's basic question "Has Christ been divided?" is the global church's shaping of its basic beliefs into various belief systems and thereby the formation of a multitude of denominations, thus fragmenting the church's basic beliefs of whole theology and practice embodied by Jesus *into* Paul. Any casual observer today would answer Paul's question "Obviously, yes!" Yet, denominations are celebrated in the global church, which for Paul would be at the expense of the truth of the whole gospel and its relational outcome constituting the ontology and function of the church solely in new relationships together both equalized and intimate, without the distinctions fragmenting the whole. The issue was not a matter of pragmatics for Paul, nor the reality of human differences. The whole person in the qualitative image of God and persons together in wholeness in the relational likeness of the triune God are at stake for Paul, because anything less and any substitutes are not the relational outcome of the gospel fulfilled by Jesus and initiated by God's definitive blessing. Therefore, for the global church to celebrate denominations is to be on a different theological trajectory and relational path that celebrates a fragmented church of reduced ontology and function, whose theology and practice are unable to be whole, live whole in the human context and make whole the human condition. Simply stated: denominations fragment the global church and reduce the significance of the gospel and its relational outcome 'already'; and the defining issue is a theological anthropology diminishing the person and minimalizing relationships.

Directly related are further implications of the human distinctions Paul highlighted in Galatians 3:28. The ethnic/race distinction is a fact of human life that correctly reflects human contextualization. Yet, is it correct for this distinction also to reflect the church in its contextualization? Consider these related questions that, as a person of color, I've raised to clarify the matter: "What color will you be in heaven?"

Given my previous narrative, early in my Christian life I would have answered "white". Assuming now that my resurrected body will remain essentially the same (except totally whole), my answer is some shade of yellow. Whether you agree or not, consider further: "OK, if that's your color, what race or ethnicity will you be in heaven?" This is where the fact of human distinctions is critical.

Skin color is an already existing secondary human difference that emerged from evolutionary adaptation or directly from God's creative action. However this existing difference emerged, color is only secondary and should not be the primary basis for defining and determining persons. It really is insignificant to God what color I am 'already' or 'not yet' because that's not how God defines me or wants me to define my person—though I don't think I want olive green as my color in heaven. For God, however, I cannot be in heaven a particular race/ethnicity, or any other, since race and ethnicity are human distinctions from human construction alone. God did not create race or ethnicity and does not affirm their construction by human self-autonomy, self-determination and self-justification. The significance of race and ethnicity emerges and always functions in a comparative process of interracial/ethnic relations that stratify persons and relationships, which when formalized become systems of inequality (cf. the temple system of exclusion, Mk 11:15-17). Thus, our answer to my second question must be an emphatic "Absolutely none."

As a Jew in a pluralistic Mediterranean world, Paul understood the dynamics involved in ethnicity and race and, more importantly, the theological anthropology involved. He highlights this pervasive human distinction to challenge us of its influence and to expose its fragmenting consequences on the three inescapable issues: (1) how persons define themselves and others from outer in, and (2) on this fragmented and stratified basis engage in relationships with others, and (3) thereby reduce church ontology and function by forming homogeneous gatherings as church. Paul does not and cannot celebrate these gatherings constructed from ethnic-race distinctions, because these distinctions are false distinctions that substitute for and are contrary to the whole gospel and its relational outcome of the church's whole ontology and function.

The global church must account for its theological anthropology that promotes homogeneous racial-ethnic churches. Language is certainly a prerequisite for communication in relationships, which would necessitate having such churches. Once mutual communication is established, however, there is no longer a theological basis for their existence. On the contrary, Paul makes definitive the theological and functional basis not to celebrate racial-ethnic churches, whatever their length of tradition, standing in the community and service to God—"neither *ethnicity* nor *race* has any *determining* value" (*ischyo*, Gal 5:6, NIV) because "neither *ethnicity* nor *race* means anything significant" (Gal 6:15, NIV). These are hard words for many of us to listen to, much less respond accordingly. In spite of any of their history or background, racial-ethnic churches, along with denominations, reflect, reinforce and even sustain a reduced theology and practice "*to be apart*" from God's whole—that is, "naked from outer in *with differences*," contrary to "naked from inner out *without distinctions*" in God's whole family only on God's relational terms.

Moreover, how we practice church based on how we engage in relationships, both on the basis of how we define persons according to human distinctions (the three inescapable issues mentioned above), all emerge despite any likely affirmation of Paul's

metaphor of the body of Christ and its related theology about spiritual gifts and the function of the body (1 Cor 12). These three inescapable issues for ontology and practice cannot emerge in whole theology and practice when our theological anthropology is reduced to persons defined by the distinctions of the spiritual gifts they have and the related roles they perform in the church. We cannot be defined by our spiritual gifts (and any related roles and titles) and not get into a comparative process with other church members (intentionally or not), which then inevitably stratifies the interdependent equalized relationships composing the body. In other words, we cannot maintain the integrity of the body of Christ and expect it to function whole and not fragmentary, while we use spiritual gifts to both define each other and engage relationships in the church. At best, this use of spiritual gifts can only substitute for and simulate the body, but this does not bring the relational outcome of the church's whole ontology and function in new relationships together to embody ecclesiology of the whole. The challenge from Paul directly addresses the ongoing practice of celebrating these common distinctions (namely of church leadership) at the expense of overlooking the functional significance of all members of the body, at the expense of promoting relational distance in relationships together (transformed to be equalized and intimate) due to stratification, and at the expense of fragmenting the persons (including leaders) involved and their relationships as church to reduced ontology and function. To continue this celebration is to compose a different gospel and outcome, and to renegotiate a different ecclesiology.

Returning to Paul's other summary distinctions (again, not exhaustive) in Galatians 3:28, their implications involve sociocultural issues that commonly shape the church. That is, this shaping exists unless the redemptive change signified in baptism (the old dying and the new rising, Gal 3:27) transforms relationship together to be both equalized and intimate, therefore constituting the gospel's relational outcome of new relationships together in wholeness (just as Paul composed the ecclesiology of the whole without distinctions, Eph 2:13-22). The reality of this relational outcome experientially transforms any ontological deficit and relationally equalizes any deficit identity that result from distinctions in a comparative process using a deficit model. This is the outcome that Paul fights for that requires fighting against these distinctions. The most dominant human distinction prevailing in the human context—pervasive in ethnicity, race, class, age, culture and religion—is gender. We need to understand Paul's definitive view of gender for the global church to have clarification, if not correction, of what to celebrate and not to celebrate.

From an unbiased view as a male, I think it is fair to say: women signify the most consistent and widespread presence of reduced human ontology and function in the history of human contextualization, and this condition is unavoidable for all persons to address for our wholeness as persons and persons together. Theological discourse and pronouncements have not significantly changed the embodiment of this human condition, perhaps due to ignoring its enslavement (the interaction between Paul's summary distinctions). Paul has been placed at the center of this human divide that fragments the church and renders God's family "to be apart" from being whole in likeness of the relational whole of God—a condition existing knowingly or unknowingly, intentionally or unintentionally. As long as this condition of reduced human ontology and function continues, the relational outcome 'already' of the gospel will not be our experiential truth until 'not yet'.

Paul would dispute how his relational discourse on women has been interpreted; he would expose and confront the reduced theological anthropology underlying such interpretation and application for the reduced ontology and function of women—for example, by both complementarians and egalitarians. Yet, his apparent prescriptions and directives for women will have to be clarified in order for Paul to be vindicated, his theological anthropology affirmed and his *pleroma* ecclesiology in transformed relationships together (equalized without distinctions) to be the experiential truth 'already'.

The issue of Christian freedom is distinctly prominent in Paul's discourse—for example, in the lives of slaves and also among those claiming no constraints—which he always frames, defines and determines by the dynamic of redemption and baptism into Christ. Just as Paul defined for slaves, the importance of women having freedom is never about self-autonomy and self-determination or justification, nor about being yoked to reduced ontology and function, but only to be whole in ontology and function (Gal 5:1). This also applies to men, and any other classification of persons. The issues of freedom and of wholeness are critically interrelated for Paul; and having freedom is no guarantee of whole ontology and function, even for slaves. The dynamic of redemption and baptism into Christ is the functional bridge between freedom and wholeness. Paul makes this link definitive in what needs to be understood as the integral process of *redemptive reconciliation*.

From the interpretive lens of his theological framework, Paul's definitive view of women is that "there is no longer male and female" (Gal 3:28). His perception could be taken as contrary to the reality of creation, yet Paul is not implying that there are no physical and biological differences between the genders, and thus that no existing differences should be seen. Paul's view is the definitive declaration: In the dynamic of baptism into Christ, the redemptive outcome is the human ontology freed from being defined and the human function freed from being determined by the gender differences of any kind shaped or constructed by human terms, whether in the surrounding context or even within churches. Existing human differences—even those later ascribed as gender tendencies—are used to create distinctions that reduce the whole human ontology and function of those baptized into Christ's death and raised with him by the Spirit in the whole image and likeness of creator God (cf. Col 3:10-11; 2 Cor 3:18; Eph 4:22-24).

As Paul makes definitive, the person emerging from baptism is a new creation, whose ontology and function from inner out cannot be defined and determined by any differences and distinctions from outer in (Gal 6:15), not even by one's gifts or role in the church (as noted earlier). This transformation from inner out in the redemptive change to whole human ontology and function also involves reconciliation to the whole of God in God's family, which is constituted in the process of redemptive reconciliation to the transformed relationships together both intimate and equalized (Eph 2:14-22). As with slaves, Paul's concern for women is their whole ontology and function and the relational outcome of whole relationship together, of which women are an integral part and for whose function women are the key. Yet, it has been difficult for Paul's readers (both women and men) to reconcile his definitive view of women with his prescriptions and directives for them.

In his relational discourse, Paul continues to integrate Christian freedom with redemption, which is inseparably conjoined with reconciliation. Also in his theological

dialogue, Paul integrates the redemptive-reconciliation dynamic with the creation narrative for the redemptive outcome in the image and likeness of God. His integration is made deeply in his main directives for women, and this integration must be accounted for to understand where Paul is coming from in his relational discourse. As discussed previously about hermeneutic factors in interpreting Paul's relational language, though he speaks *in* a human context involving women and speaks *to* their human context, Paul is not speaking *from* a human context. His apparent prescriptions and directives for women are contextualized beyond those human contexts to his involvement directly in God's relational context and process. These directives emerged *in* human contexts, along with his letters, but were constituted *from* the further and deeper context of the whole of God. This is the significance of Paul's integration that is critical to understand for the person in theological anthropology.

There are two main directives representative of Paul's relational discourse with women and his theological dialogue for all persons: 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15.

1 Corinthians 11:3-16

This section of Paul's letter must be read in the full context of his letter. From the beginning Paul was dealing with the reduced theology and practice fragmenting this church (1:10-15). While confronting these persons in family love throughout the letter, in fairness to them and for their encouragement Paul puts their context into a larger picture of God's people (10:1-11) and their practices into the deeper process of the dynamic of redemption and baptism into Christ (10:16-17). This exposed the sin of reductionism common not only in Israel's history but the history of humankind ("common to everyone," 10:13). Despite its normative character and structural nature, human contextualization and its common practices are incompatible with God's (10:21); therefore, Christian freedom must function on God's relational terms, not human terms (10:23-24, 31-33).

On this basis, Paul's further relational discourse with women continues, with its integration with the creation narrative. Earlier in his letter, Paul had made definitive for this fragmented church: "'Nothing beyond what is written,' so that none of you will be puffed up in favor of one against another" (4:6). The comparative dynamic Paul illuminates here is the natural relational consequence of reduced human ontology and function defined from outer in and determined by human terms, that is, beyond God's relational terms revealed in God's communicative word written in Scripture. In this section on women, Paul restores the focus to what is written in the creation narrative (11:3) in order to magnify the relational outcome from the dynamic of redemption and baptism into Christ (1 Cor 10:16-17; 12:13). If the creation narrative is not integrated with this dynamic in the intended focus of Paul's interpretive lens, then the relational outcome will be different for Paul's readers, and neither compatible with his relational discourse nor congruent with his theological dialogue.

Paul's focus can be misleading due to the explicit aspects he highlights in the creation narrative, namely, chronological or functional order and quantitative significance. Yet, Paul's focus remained on God's communicative action in the relational words written, without de-relationalizing those words in the narrative, which would be essentially to go beyond what is written in relational terms.

In chronological and functional order, Christ participated in the creation of all things and its whole, as Paul later made definitive in the cosmology of his theological systemic framework (Col 1:16-17). Thus, "Christ is the head (*kephale*, principal or first) of every *created* man" (1 Cor 11:3). The embodied Christ also became the *kephale* "over all things for the church" (Eph 1:22) and the first to complete the dynamic of redemptive reconciliation as its functional key (Col 1:18). Whether Paul combines the embodied Christ with creator Christ as the *kephale* of man is not clear in 1 Cor 11:3. The creator Christ certainly has the qualitative significance of the embodied Christ, conversely, yet highlighting the chronological-functional order has a different emphasis in this context. This quantitative difference is confirmed by "the head of Christ" is God. Since the Creator (the Father and the Son with the Spirit) precedes the creation, creator Christ is obviously first in order before Adam. It follows that Adam came first in the creation narrative before Eve, thus this husband (or man, *aner*) was created before his wife (or woman, *gyne*). This difference in order has only a quantitative significance in what Paul is highlighting. If Christ later became God, then there would be a qualitative significance to "God is the head of Christ." Christ as the embodied God was neither less than God nor subordinate to God, yet in functional order the Son followed and fulfilled what the Father initiated (e.g. Jn 6:38-39; Acts 13:32-33).

The quantitative significance of this chronological-functional order has been misinterpreted by a different lens than Paul's and misused apart from his intended purpose by concerns for the sake of self-autonomy and self-determination, even self-justification efforts—all of which have reduced human ontology and function and fragment relationships together. Paul expands on the quantitative significance with application to prayer and whether the head should have a covering or not (11:4-7). The quantitative significance of head coverings during prayer is connected by Paul to the chronological-functional order in creation. While such practice is actually secondary (11:16), Paul uses it to illustrate an underlying issue. Apparently, for a man to cover his head was to void or deny that Christ is the head, who created man in the image and glory of God (11:7). For a woman to be uncovered implies her independence from the creative order, implying her self-determination, which in Paul's view she needed to be purified of (11:6; cf. Lev 14:8) because she was created from the qualitative substance of the first human person in the same image and glory of God (11:7). Her glory cannot be reduced to being "the glory of man" but nothing less and no substitutes of the man's glory, that is, in the same image and glory of God. Conversely, a man's glory cannot be defined in a comparative process with the woman; this reduces both of them "to be apart" from the determinant of the image and glory of God. This distinction of glory is critical for understanding the basis used for defining gender ontology and, more likely, for determining gender function in reductionism or wholeness. Yet, it would also be helpful for women to have for themselves a clear basis (*exousia*) for distinguishing their whole ontology and function to fully understand their position and purpose in the created order (as angels needed, 11:10).

A further distinction is also critical to Paul's relational discourse. The glory of God had a more quantitative focus in Hebrew Scripture and quantitative significance for Israel. The focus and significance of God's glory deepened to its full qualitative and relational depth in the relationally revealed face of Christ (2 Cor 4:6). This qualitative and relational depth is the glory Paul experienced from Christ and the full significance of

glory he alludes to. It is this glory in Paul's *pleroma* theology that is basic to whole ontology and function, both of God and of human persons.

When Paul restates this chronological order (11:8) and its functional order (11:9; cf. Gen 2:18), he is shifting from its outer-in quantitative significance to point to the inner-out qualitative significance of creation: the primacy of whole relationship together (in contrast, "to be apart" as in creation narrative above) constituted by the whole human ontology and function created in the image and likeness of God (11:11-12; cf. Gen 1:26-27; 2:25). In this shift, Paul also engages the dynamic of redemptive reconciliation to integrate with the creation narrative. The other quantitative matters are secondary, even if they appear the natural condition (*physis*, 11:14-15); therefore, they should not define and determine human ontology and function, both for women and men (11:16). To use secondary matters as the basis is to reduce all persons' ontology and function, and thus to go beyond what is written by substituting outer-in practices of ontological simulation and epistemological illusion from reductionism—that is, ontology and function shaped from outer in by human terms, not God's relational terms from inner out. The relational consequence is to diminish the primacy of relationships, minimalize their function, and fragment relationships together, which can only be restored in the process of redemptive reconciliation to the transformed relationships together of the new creation (cf. 2 Cor 5:16-18).

This is the ontological and functional condition Paul addressed and the purpose of his relational discourse with the church at Corinth to fight conjointly against their reductionism and for God's relational whole—which Paul makes definitive in the remainder of his letter (11:17ff), notably with the summary declaration: "for God is a God not of *fragmentation* but of *wholeness*" (14:33). When Paul adds to this declaration further relational discourse for women, somewhat parenthetically, his only concern is for this wholeness of human and church ontology and function (14:34-35). Paul is not seeking the conformity of women to a behavioral code of silence but rather their congruity to the whole ontology and function in the image and glory of God. Thus, what Paul does not give permission to for women in the church is for them to define their persons by what they do ("to speak") and have (knowledge, position or status) because this would reduce their ontology and function. Certainly, this applies to men equally, whom Paul has been addressing throughout this letter.

How persons define themselves is the central issue basic to how persons engage in relationships, and on this basis how these persons in these relationships then compose church. The implications of distinctions penetrate these issues with immeasurable consequences. The whole of Paul and the whole in his theology, therefore, challenge the assumptions and theological basis persons have in these three inescapable issues for ontology and function. In his family communication with Timothy, Paul extends his relational discourse for women to provide further clarity to this process to wholeness.

1 Timothy 2:8-15

The letters to Timothy and Titus have been perceived to depict a less intense, more domesticated Paul, with a more generalized focus of faith and an emphasis on the virtue of "godliness" (1 Tim 2:2; 3:16; 4:7,8; 6:3,5,6,11; 2 Tim 3:5; Ti 1:1; cf. 1 Tim 5:4). This milder image and emphasis not found in his undisputed letters are part of the basis for disputing Paul's authorship of these letters. His relational discourse for women,

I affirm, helps "restore" the intensity of Paul in his fight, not for having a mere faith and mere virtue, but for wholeness and against reductionism.

In his loving encouragement of Timothy to engage in this fight (1 Tim 1:18), he reminds Timothy that the primary purpose and outcome (*telos*) of his proclamation (*parangelia*) for the church is not purity of doctrine and conformity of belief but is only relational: persons in whole ontology from inner out and in whole function *agape*-relationally involved by the vulnerable relational response of trust (1:3-5). Paul's intensity of meaning should not be confused with quantitative density, which would not understand the quality of Paul's intensity in the absence of any quantitative density in his words.[3] The faith and love noted above by Paul (v.5) were first Paul's experiential truth of vulnerable relationship face to face with Christ (1:12-14). Paul's intensity of meaning is critical for his readers to understand in order to know where Paul is coming from. On the basis of his "*relational* faith and *experiential* truth" (2:7), Paul's whole function establishes the context of his communication with Timothy and his relational discourse for women.

Paul begins this section with the practice of worship, with the focus first on men (2:8). Based on where Paul is coming from, his deep desire is for men to move beyond any negativity they have from situations and circumstances—not letting that define and determine them—and to openly participate in worship, not merely observing or being detached (cf. *abad*, work from the creation narrative, also rendered as worship). Yet, participation was not about being more demonstrative by lifting up their hands outwardly. "Holy hands" signified an inner-out action of personal involvement, not as an end in itself but lifted up in relational response to God. This personal relational involvement with God was Paul's deep desire for men to engage further and experience deeper, because the only alternative is a reduced practice from outer in even if the hands were lifted. Paul's focus for men is the focus by which his similar desires for women need to be seen. This focus is on person-consciousness in contrast to self-consciousness.

Paul's concern for women's practice in worship may initially appear to be a reverse emphasis than for men, less visible and more in the background as observers (2:9-10). Paul's focus, however, went deeper than outward appearance and further than the common church practice of "good works." This involved the vital issue in all practice about the integrity of the person presented to others (the first unavoidable issue for all practice), which is directly integrated with how that person defines herself (the first inescapable issue for ontology and function). In other words, Paul's concern is about women who focus on the outer in to define themselves by what they have and do, thereby reducing their whole person to those parts. Defined on this basis, women depend on drawing attention to their appearance and other outer-in aspects of themselves in self-consciousness.

The issue for Paul was not about dressing modestly and decently, with appropriateness. Again, Paul was not seeking the conformity of women to a behavioral code. While modesty is not the issue, highlighting one's self to draw attention to what one has and does is only part of the issue. When Paul added "suitable" (NRSV) or "propriety" (NIV) to this matter and later added "modesty" (NRSV), "propriety" (NIV)

[3] For added discussion on 'intensity of meaning', see Daniel W. Hardy, "Reason, Wisdom and the Interpretation of Scripture" in David F. Ford and Graham Stanton, eds., *Reading Texts, Seeking Wisdom* (London: SCM Press, 2003), 72-76.

to another matter (2:15), the same term, *sophrosyne*, is more clearly rendered "sound mindset." That is, Paul was qualifying these matters by pointing to the necessary interpretive lens (*phroneo*) to distinguish reductionist practice from wholeness—the new interpretive framework (*phronema*) and lens (*phroneo*) from the dynamic of redemption and baptism into Christ (Rom 8:5-6). The underlying issue for Paul, therefore, is whole human ontology and function, or the only alternative of reduced human ontology and function. Paul's initial focus on men clearly indicates that this issue equally applies to men.

How a person defines one's self interacts with the presentation of self, which further extends in interaction with how the person engages relationships. The person's interpretive framework with its lens is critical to this process. Paul's alternative to outer-in function for women is "good works" (2:10), yet this can be perceived still as being defined by what a woman does. With Paul's lens, however, good works must always be defined by and determined from the primary relational work of relational involvement with God from inner out—the ongoing vulnerable relational response of trust in relationship together; for Paul, the primacy of relational work composes "good works." This person-consciousness is also the lens and focus of the process of learning for women. Yet, Paul appears to constrain and conform women to keeping quiet (*hesychia*) as objects in the learning process. Rather, *hesychia* signifies ceasing from one's human effort in self-consciousness—specifically engaged in defining one's self and notably to fill oneself with more knowledge to further define one's self with what one has (as in "puffs *self* up," 1 Cor 8:1)—and, with Paul's lens, to submit one's person from inner out for vulnerable involvement in the relational epistemic process with God (2:11, further qualifying 1 Cor 14:35). Certainly, this learning process in person-consciousness over self-consciousness equally applies to men (cf. 1 Cor 2:13; Gal 1:11-12).

Paul's deep desire and concern for persons are for their whole ontology and function and for their whole relationships together. This relational outcome of the gospel can only emerge when these persons are transformed from inner out, thus redeemed from life and practice (both for the person and persons together as church) that are defined and determined from outer in. He pursues them intensely with family love for their reconciliation to this wholeness. Yet, his further communication to Timothy about women appears incongruent with God's relational whole created in relational likeness to the whole of God: "no women to teach or to have authority" (1 Tim 2:12). The lens and focus of the relational epistemic process continued to apply in Paul's directive for women. Information and knowledge about God gained from a conventional epistemic process from outer in is referential and does not have the depth of significance to teach in the church, that is, teach the significance of God's relational whole on the basis of God's relational terms. Such information and knowledge in referential terms may have functional significance to define those human persons by what they have but have no relational significance to God and qualitative significance for God's family. The term for authority (*authenteo*) denotes one acting by her own authority or power, which in this context is based on the effort of self-determination to define one's self further by the possession of more information and knowledge, even if about God. Such self-determination emerges from self-consciousness, operating under the assumption "you will not be reduced" (as witnessed in the primordial garden). Therefore, Paul will not allow such women of reduced ontology and function to assume leadership in God's

family. Moreover, he would not advocate for Christian freedom for women to be the means for their self-autonomy and self-determination, because the consequence, at best, would be some form of ontological simulation and epistemological illusion, that is, only reduced ontology and function. He turns to the creation narrative to support this position (11:13-14).

By repeating the chronological order of creation, Paul was not ascribing functional significance to man to establish male priority in the created order. Paul was affirming the whole significance of the human person created in the image and glory of God, just as he affirmed in his previous directive to women (1 Cor 11:7). Yet, Paul appears to define their function differently by blaming Eve for the dysfunction in the primordial garden, as if Adam did not engage in it also and was an innocent bystander. What Paul highlights was not Eve's person but the effort of Eve's self-autonomy to gain more knowledge for self-determination, perhaps even self-justification—human effort based on outer-in terms in reduced ontology and function—which she certainly engaged first, followed by the willful engagement of Adam (cf. Gen 3:2-7). Paul uses the chronological order in the creation narrative to magnify, on the one hand, the qualitative and relational significance of the human person's ontology and function and, on the other, the functional and relational consequences of engagement in the sin of reductionism with the self-consciousness of reduced ontology and function.

At this point Paul integrates the creation narrative with the dynamic of redemptive reconciliation and synthesizes them into the relational outcome of baptism into Christ (11:15). In Paul's *pleroma* soteriology, *sozo* (to save, make whole) means conjointly deliverance and being made whole. Curiously, Paul declares that women "will be saved through childbearing," which appears to be a human effort at self-determination and justification, limited to certain women. With Paul's lens, he highlights an aspect from the creation narrative— whose quantitative significance is not the primary determinant for persons but only a secondary function in God's whole plan (cf. Gen 1:28)—in order to magnify the qualitative significance of the primary function of whole relationship together, both with God and with persons in the image and likeness of God (cf. 2:18)—which childbearing certainly supports in function but does not displace as the primary function. Yet, this distinction has been used as a primary source to define women. Therefore, with Paul's integration and in his *pleroma* theology, women will be saved *from* any reduced ontology and function and saved *to* wholeness and whole relationship together. That is, women are *sozo* (made whole) while they engage in secondary functions—as identified initially in the creative narrative by childbearing, but not limited solely to this secondary function—based not on the extent of their secondary functions but entirely on ongoing involvement in the relational contingency ("if they continue in," Gk active voice, subjunctive mood) of what is primary: the vulnerable relational response of trust ("faith") and the vulnerable relational involvement with others in family love ("*agape*") only on God's relational terms from inner out ("holiness") with a sound mindset ("*sophrosyne*"), the new *phronema*-framework and *phroneo*-lens from the dynamic of baptism into Christ and redemptive reconciliation. Women's ontology and function pivot on this contingency.

The faith in Paul's relational contingency is not the generalized faith (in all its variations) of what the church has and proclaims but the specific qualitative function only of relationship. The vulnerable relational response of trust signifies the ongoing

primary relational work that constitutes the "good works" of Paul's alternative to outer-in function for women, and from which all secondary functions need to emerge to be whole from inner out. Moreover, the *agape* (not about sacrifice) in Paul's relational contingency is also reflexively contingent on faith. To be *agape*-relationally involved with others must be integrated with and emerge from the vulnerable relational response of trust; without this, *agape* becomes a more self-oriented effort at sacrifice, focused on what is done in self-consciousness—for example, about others' needs, situations or circumstances—without the relational significance of vulnerably opening one's person to other persons and focusing on involvement with them in relationship. Paul was definitive that any works without the primacy of relational work are not the outworking of the whole person created in "the image and glory of God" (1 Cor 11:7).

Of course, everything that Paul has directed to women is also necessarily directed to men in Paul's *pleroma* theology, except perhaps for childbearing. Paul sees both of them beyond their situations and circumstances and defines them as persons from inner out; and the implication of this theological anthropology directly addresses church leadership. Yet, I wonder if an 'unexpected difference' has emerged in the church, which no one has, or perhaps wants to, seriously address. Whole ontology and function for persons of both genders are defined and determined only as transformed persons from inner out relationally involved in transformed relationships together, by necessity both intimate and equalized—the relational outcome 'already' in Paul's *pleroma* ecclesiology. In his ecclesiology of the whole, only whole persons can serve as leaders in order to help grow persons and persons together to be the whole of Christ's body (Eph 4:11-13). This relational outcome of the experiential truth of the gospel has been problematic in church history as far back as Peter (cf. the churches in Rev 2:2-4; 3:1-2, 15-17), which continues to grieve the Spirit (cf. Eph 4:30). While the situations and circumstances in the church have certainly varied, the underlying issue of reductionism in church ontology and function has remained the common problem—which may be pointing to an emerging solution needing our attention.

Since Paul was occupied with fragmentation in churches, I doubt if he had any initial awareness of this 'unexpected difference' in his early experience with churches. But if the difference between Jesus' relationships with women compared with men during his earthly life has any further significance for the church, it supports what I suggest without apology: Women who are emerging in whole ontology and function are the relational key for the whole function of this relational outcome and the persons most likely to be vulnerable from inner out in order to lead other persons in this process to wholeness in church ontology and function.

The Creator made no inner out distinction between male and female, as Adam and Eve experienced in whole relationship together (Gen 2:25), in contrast to their experience in reduced ontology and function (Gen 3:7). The extent of a person's engagement in reductionism is the key, and this is directly related to the whole of theological anthropology and understanding sin as reductionism. In Paul's *pleroma* theology, the righteous are not those who simply possess faith—a common theological notion. The righteous are those in ongoing congruence with their whole ontology and function in relationship with God, whom God can count on to be those persons in their vulnerable relational response of trust. Whom God can count on to be vulnerable in relationship with their whole person is the question at issue; which persons will step

forward to be accountable with God and to act from inner out on the challenge in transformed relationships together, conjointly intimate and equalized, to compose the church as God's new creation family, this is the question before us all. No human distinctions in Paul's lens have any qualitative significance for persons baptized into Christ (Gal 3:27-29), only the primary relational work of trust making persons vulnerable to be *agape*-relationally involved with others in and for God's new creation family 'already' (Gal 5:6; 6:15)—nothing less and no substitutes.

If gender distinction, or any distinction, continues to be celebrated in the global church, then the influence of human contextualization on the church remains defining. This engagement is contrary to the *ek-eis* dynamic (as in reciprocating contextualization) that Jesus made imperative to constitute the identity and function of persons in his family (Jn 17:15-19). The relational consequence, whatever the distinction, is that persons and persons together as church are not able to be distinguished (*pala*) in complete context, unable to get beyond human contextualization and the constraints of a comparative process that render them to ontological deficit and deficit identity. Along with assuming "we will not be reduced" and not understanding sin as reductionism, such reductionism in persons and persons together is difficult to recognize without the presence of the whole. Jesus embodied 'the presence of the whole' and Paul composed the functional and theological clarity of the whole in order to expose reductionism in persons and persons together as church. Paul made imperative for a fragmentary church and gospel: "let the wholeness of Christ be the only determinant from inner out for the church to be distinguished in its calling as one body without distinctions" (Col 3:15).

The global church lives within the human condition that constrains persons to human distinctions and renders them to fragmentary ontology and function "to be apart" from being whole, "naked with differences from outer in." Until the global church meets the challenge of 'Jesus *into* Paul' and addresses the assumptions of the church's underlying theological anthropology (and its view of sin) that define church identity and determine church function, the global church cannot meet the challenge, Jesus' call and God's expectation to live whole ontology and function into the human context. The pervasive consequence for those claiming and proclaiming a fragmentary gospel is that persons and persons together as church will continue to celebrate what not to celebrate.

Jesus and Paul made it unmistakable: "the distinctions you use will be the persons and persons together as church you get"; therefore, "pay close attention to these words you hear" (Mk 4:24) and "do not go beyond the relational language and terms of the Word" (1 Cor 4:6) but "let the word of Christ ongoingly interact with you whole-ly" (Col 3:16).

The Keys to Celebrating the Whole

The whole of theological anthropology cannot be distinguished and thus celebrated under the compelling assumption "You will not be reduced" by a theological anthropology of anything less. Persons cannot celebrate person*ness* in person-consciousness as long as they reflect, reinforce or sustain the human relational condition "to be apart" from the whole—a condition constrained to self-consciousness. The

underlying issue with celebrating this whole—the whole person, God's whole family and the whole of God—emerged at another table fellowship with Jesus (Jn 12:1-8; Mk 14:1-9). The significance of this interaction has not been understood, and if understood then not embraced, with the relational consequence of preventing the celebration of this whole. Understanding and embracing its significance provide the hermeneutical, ontological and functional keys to the relational context and process necessary to celebrate:

1. The whole person from inner out—without outer-in distinctions.
2. New relationship together in wholeness without the veil, thus transformed relationships jointly equalized and intimate to vulnerably compose God's family as church.
3. The whole and holy God, in reciprocal relationship Face to face to Face.

This three-fold composition of celebrating the whole is interrelated, engaged in a reflexive dynamic between them, and therefore indivisible to constitute persons in reciprocal relationship together as composed by the experiential truth of the whole gospel.

The interaction unfolding between Jesus and Mary initiates the relational outcome of the gospel, which is why their involvement is critical for us to understand and embrace in claiming, celebrating and proclaiming the experiential truth of the whole gospel. On his way to the cross, Jesus stopped for this table fellowship together. As you recall, Peter previously had difficulty affirming Jesus' whole person from inner out without distinctions (Mt 16:21-22). All the disciples had difficulty responding to Jesus' person in the primacy of relationship together at this table fellowship—that is, all the disciples except for Mary. Her discipleship had clearly emerged at an earlier table fellowship, in which she decisively broke through the constraints of human distinctions in a deficit identity and redefined her person in relational connection with Jesus (Lk 10:38-42). The relational progression of her discipleship took her deeper into the relational path of Jesus to "Follow *me*" and be with his person in the primacy of relationship together, rather than making the primary focus serving (just as Jesus made imperative, Jn 12:26). Primacy given to serving over relationship is a contrary relational path to Jesus that the other disciples often engaged, as demonstrated by their focus in this fellowship. The primacy, however, of Mary's relational involvement with Jesus deepened from disciple (in servant discipleship like the other disciples) to friend (as Jesus distinguished, Jn 15:15); and this constituted her ontology and function in wholeness to be vulnerable and intimate in new relationship together with Jesus face to face as never before. Her vulnerable and intimate relational work would be extended later by Jesus to the other disciples at his footwashing, also for the primacy of relationship together and not for serving (Jn 13:1-17).

As Martha apparently served in the role of her distinction (Jn 12:2), Mary cleaned Jesus' feet in an act somewhat parallel to the former prostitute (Lk 7:36-38). Mary's action might be considered customary for guests to have their feet washed at table fellowship; if this all it were, Jesus would not have magnified it (Mk 14:9). Mary's whole person from inner out, in person-consciousness with its lens of qualitative sensitivity and relational awareness, perceives Jesus' whole person without distinctions of "Teacher and Lord" (cf. Jn 13:13), and thereby responds to his innermost (cf. Jn 12:27; Mt 26:37-38).

In this relational context and process with Jesus, the whole of Mary's person from inner out, without the human distinction of gender and the secondary distinction of disciple, steps forth. Yet, her whole person could not be celebrated until she broke through the constraints of this dominant distinction and went beyond the limits of this secondary distinction in order to shift from self-consciousness to person-consciousness. Once again, her person further acts contrary to prevailing cultural form and practice to literally let her hair down to intimately connect with Jesus—inappropriate conduct for both of them.

It was critical for Mary to engage person-consciousness and its lens of inner out to affirm personness and celebrate whole ontology and function. Equally important, this was necessary for her own person to live whole and thus be able to perceive and respond to Jesus' whole person without distinctions. If Mary doesn't embrace personness and celebrate her whole person, she doesn't embrace the innermost of Jesus and celebrate his whole person defined beyond those parts of what he does (even on the cross) and he has (even as God). In other words, without Mary's person-consciousness this interaction cannot unfold with the significance of the relational outcome distinguishing the gospel.

As Mary celebrates the whole person (both hers and Jesus') without outer-in distinctions, she involved her person with Jesus' in what truly signifies being "naked and without shame," that is, vulnerable and intimate without the relational distance and barriers signifying the self-consciousness of "naked and covering up." Mary celebrates being "naked and without shame" in the relationship together constituted in the beginning, fragmented from the beginning and now being reconstituted to wholeness. This celebration is not just a further taste of the new wine fellowship but the celebration of its flow shared vulnerably and intimately as family together, the new creation family 'already'. Therefore, the significance of her involvement and Jesus' response must be paid attention to because it initiates this relational outcome of new relationship together in wholeness without the veil—the veil that Jesus is soon to remove to constitute God's new creation family from inner out without distinctions (2 Cor 3:16-18; Eph 2:14-22; Col 3:10-11).

In spite of the experiential truth of the gospel unfolding, the other disciples object to such involvement together since they are focused on the outer in of self-consciousness, which gives priority to the secondary of servant discipleship over the primacy of relationship together (Mk 14:4-5). There is no celebration for them, only the obligation of duty (serving the poor, cf. "fast and pray" at the first new wine table fellowship, Lk 5:33-39). Even the taste of new wine is only a memory for them, as Jesus' whole person is overlooked (notably at this critical point) and rendered secondary to serving (Mk 14:7, cf. Lk 5:34). Jesus' rebuttal in relational language is revealing and magnifying.

Jesus stops his other disciples from harassing her and defines clearly for them that Mary is engaged in "a beautiful thing to me" (Mk 14:6, NIV). It is misleading, if not inaccurate, to render Jesus' words "performed a good service for me" (NRSV). Jesus is not speaking in referential language focused on the secondary of servant discipleship. "Beautiful" (*kalos*, quality) and "thing" (*ergon*, work of vocation or calling) signify the quality of Mary's work. Yet, what is this work that Jesus deeply received and the other disciples rejected? First, Mary was not focused on the quantitative from outer in and thus not self-consciousness about breaking cultural form or the expense of the perfume. Nor was she concerned about performing a good service. Her person-consciousness was focused on the qualitative from inner out, thereby focused on the whole person and the

primacy of relationships. Her "beautiful thing" involved the quality of her relational work, which she engaged vulnerably and intimately not *for* Jesus or even *to* him but directly *with* the whole of Jesus in reciprocal relationship Face to face to Face. Mary's significance unfolds as she (1) celebrated Jesus calling her to personness, and (2) celebrated the relational work of her primary vocation with the qualitative depth of her whole person without distinctions, in reciprocal response to Jesus' whole person for the primacy of relationship together in wholeness without the veil, in order to (3) be vulnerable and intimately involved with the whole and holy God to celebrate life together in God's whole family.

The dynamics of the quality of Mary's relational work converge to compose the above three-fold celebration. Her relational work provides the hermeneutical, ontological and functional keys to celebrating the whole that emerges solely from the relational outcome of the whole gospel. At this stage, the other disciples are still on a different relational path from Jesus, engaged in a fragmentary gospel while (pre)occupied in a renegotiated calling of self-conscious secondary work. Their lack of qualitative sensitivity and relational awareness, with related relational distance, has an unmistakable relational consequence (Jn 14:9), contrary to the whole of God's vulnerable presence and intimate involvement embodied by Jesus (Jn 17:2-3) and what Jesus prayed to compose his whole family (Jn 17:20-26). Mary's relational work is integral to constitute persons in reciprocal relationship together as composed by the experiential truth of the whole gospel. On this qualitative relational basis, Jesus magnifies Mary's person as a key to the significance of the gospel's relational outcome of new relationship together in wholeness, necessarily in the qualitative image and relational likeness of the Trinity (as Jesus embodied and prayed): "Wherever the *whole* gospel is proclaimed, *claimed and celebrated* in the whole world, *her whole person's vulnerable and intimate relational work* will be told as a reminder *to illuminate the whole ontology and function that necessarily unfolds from the relational outcome of the gospel*" (Mk14:9).

The significance of Mary is not her gender, yet it does prompt the question: Where is this person in the gospel proclaimed by the church and why is she not highlighted by the church and celebrated in the church? I suspect gender has a role in this lack; and even though gender is not Mary's significance it does point to a likely key for leading the church to wholeness that I raised earlier. Nevertheless, we should not be distracted from the primary reality: Mary's significance is distinguished in her whole theology and practice. It is not the name of Mary that Jesus magnifies but her person-consciousness integrally vulnerable and intimate in whole theology and practice. Mary is not mentioned in Paul's letters, but the significance of her whole person engaged in whole theology and practice as the relational outcome of the gospel that composes the church in new relationship together in wholeness, this whole significance of her person is indeed magnified in functional clarity and theological clarity by Paul. With her whole person assuming the lead, she initiated the relational outcome of the gospel that became the experiential truth of the whole of Paul and the whole in his theology and practice. Jesus *into* Paul is inseparable from Jesus *into* Mary.

Mary's whole theology and practice illuminate the keys for celebrating the whole. Her qualitative hermeneutic lens, her heart in the innermost of ontology, and her function from inner out were the keys to engage the relational context and to be involved in the relational process necessary to celebrate the whole person without distinctions, new

relationship without the veil to be whole together, and the whole and holy God in vulnerable and intimate reciprocal relationship Face to face to Face—all with nothing less and no substitutes. Her person-consciousness with qualitative sensitivity and relational awareness in the primacy of relationship together was distinguished from the other disciples' self-consciousness engaged in secondary matter over the primary. The contrast between Mary and the others illuminates the conflict between the whole gospel and its reduction, which is the significance of Mary that Jesus magnifies and that Paul fights both for and against. Yet, this significance has not been sufficiently embraced and this fight has not been adequately engaged by the church to celebrate the whole. The church's theological anthropology and view of sin as reductionism are the central issues involved. For example, the church in Ephesus celebrated its extensive ecclesial work that many churches strive for, yet Jesus exposed their secondary work engaged over the primacy of relational work: "You have forsaken, *ignored or have relational distance with* your first love" (Rev 2:2-4). Or the church in Sardis celebrated its well-earned reputation esteemed by others that most churches would be proud to have, yet Jesus exposed their fragmentary theology and practice: "Wake up…I have not found your works *pleroo*, to be complete and whole, according to the lens of God's *qualitative relational terms*" (Rev 3:1-2). The Roman Catholic Church has celebrated a Mary in its theology and practice but it's the wrong Mary—failing to understand both the significance of this Mary's whole person and the absence of gender distinction that challenge its theological anthropology and view of sin, and thus the relational outcome of its gospel.

The global church continues to be challenged—if not by a "Wake up" call—in its theological anthropology and view of sin. Indeed, all of theological anthropology discourse is challenged in its view of sin. For Paul, a strong view of sin as reductionism is defining for the experiential truth of the whole gospel (and its complete salvation), which integrally composed his fight for the integrity of the gospel against any and all forms of reductionism that emerge most notably in its counter-relational work. The fragmenting of persons and persons together as church does not continue when the whole of theological anthropology is distinguished by confronting sin as reductionism in all theology and practice for the person and relationships.

Sin as reductionism composes the human condition that the whole of God relationally responds to, initiating by relational grace the improbable theological trajectory and intrusive relational path from the beginning of God's definitive blessing and fulfilled by the embodied whole of Jesus. Understanding sin as reductionism is an irreplaceable key for these theological dynamics to unfold to its relational outcome 'already': the *pleroma* (full, complete, whole) Christology, and the *pleroma* soteriology of what the whole of God indivisibly saves *from* (sin as reductionism) and saves *to* (*sozo*, to make whole), by necessity with the *pleroma* pneumatology (the reciprocal relational work of the Spirit) for the whole of God's ongoing vulnerable presence and intimate involvement to compose *pleroma* ecclesiology of God's new creation family—the relational outcome 'already' of new relationship together in wholeness on an eschatological trajectory and relational path to the relational conclusion 'not yet'.

Central to these theological dynamics and critical to the fight against their reduction is the whole of theological anthropology. Rejecting the misleading assumption "You will not be reduced," theological anthropology distinguishes the whole person in whole relationships together with the whole of God to complete the relational context and

process that composes the whole of theological anthropology. The whole of theological anthropology is distinguished when the person is integrally constituted in complete context: (1) to be whole together in the primacy of God's relational context, and (2) to live whole ontology and function into the human context on the ongoing basis in the primacy of God's relational process—the definitive *ek-eis* dynamic (in ongoing reciprocating contextualization) that Jesus composed in his formative family prayer (Jn 17:15-26). Distinguished on the basis of nothing less and no substitutes, the whole of theological anthropology is celebrated according to the significant whole theology and practice of Mary and the functional clarity of the whole of Paul and the theological clarity of the whole in his theology. Only this whole has significance to God, which is who God seeks to celebrate "in spirit and in truth" (Jn 4:23-24).

Worshipping the whole and holy God in compatible reciprocal relationship together is the relational context and process in which the whole of theological anthropology converges. The taste of the formative new wine fellowship (Lk 5:33-39) flowed into the defining new wine fellowship with Mary and was consummated at the constituting new wine fellowship in relationship together around the communion table—sharing intimately together the new wine of the new relational covenant in wholeness together. If Jesus' sacrifice behind the temple curtain does not remove the veil, the whole person does not emerge face to Face with the vulnerable presence and intimate involvement of the whole of God (Heb 10:19-22). If the veil is not removed, relationships do not come together in wholeness and the communion table does not signify being saved *to* the whole (2 Cor 3:16-18; Eph 2:14-22). If participation in communion does not involve our whole person in whole relationship together with the whole of God, the celebration of the Eucharist is not 'whole-ly communion' in relational terms but merely Holy Communion in referential terms.[4]

As new wine table fellowships demonstrated, the importance of making choices—that is, in person-consciousness, and not in self-consciousness, for the primary over the secondary, the relational over the referential, and thereby celebrating God's whole—are integral both to enjoy the breadth of being whole and to experience the depth of living whole. This breadth and depth of the whole is the *makarios* ("blessed," meaning to be "fully satisfied") from the beatitudes and from the relational outcome of the Face's definitive blessing, vulnerably constituted by the whole of God's *agape* relational involvement (Jn 15:9-11). Making the choice and celebrating God's whole converge most definitively for his church family in relationship together when they function in Eucharistic worship. Celebrating in Eucharistic worship is the most integral opportunity of God's new creation family to grow intimate communion together, signified most notably in Mary's new wine communion with Jesus. Yet, this distinguished opportunity is not a mere spiritual tradition and practice of faith merely engaged *before* God; such practice may signify still being in front of the curtain. Tradition easily becomes a substitute for deeper involvement in relationships without the veil, and hereby serves as an old wineskin. Thus, *what* we participate in and *how* we participate are vital; that means even the logistics are important to help us grow God's relational whole that holds us together in our innermost, not a mere referential unity of faith and church. This communion is a qualitative function only of relationship, intimate relationship together

[4] My wife and I celebrated the incarnation this year by composing the worship song "Whole-ly Communion," accessible online at http://4X12.org.

with the whole of God, therefore relationship not embedded in the past or simply anticipating the future but relationship vulnerably functioning in the present. By removing the veil with his sacrifice, Jesus constituted the new creation family 'already' (Lk 22:20; Jn 17:21-23; Eph 2:14-22). In Eucharistic worship, when his church functions in vulnerable relationship to build intimate communion together, his church family in whole ontology and function experiences the height of relational involvement with the whole of God, and hereby the breadth of being whole together. This relational outcome emerges indeed from the experiential truth and functional significance of the gospel, the celebration of which is their experience of even greater depth of living whole.

Celebration in the human context comes in various shapes and sizes. Celebrating the whole, however, has significance in only complete context, the keys of which Mary provides with her whole theology and practice in vulnerable and intimate relational work. Persons and persons together as church remain in waiting to respond to the call and challenge of Mary's lead to celebrate the whole.[5]

The Call and Challenge to Celebrate

The two main and vital issues theological anthropology must answer (introduced in chap. 4 and further defined in chap. 5) involve what are inseparable:

1. What does it mean to be the human person God created and to live as the persons created in God's image and likeness?
2. What does God expect from these persons while in the human context in order to distinguish the person from "to be apart"?

Worship is the primary relational context and process that defines what God expects from persons. Answering what it means to be and live as these persons determines the reciprocal response engaged in worship and its relational outcome in relationship together. When Jesus vulnerably disclosed the innermost of God to the Samaritan woman, he redefined worship in nonnegotiable relational terms—as persons whose reciprocal response must (*dei*, necessary by nature, not the obligation of *opheilo*) be compatible to the vulnerable presence and relational involvement of God's response, that is, must reciprocally respond "in spirit and in truth" (Jn 4:23-24). Jesus' call to worship is his call to personness. In other words, the whole person from inner out without distinctions (as the Samaritan woman experienced) is now accountable to engage the whole and holy God in reciprocal relationship together Face to face to Face without the veil. This is the only person who has significance to God, whom God expects and seeks to celebrate whole together as family.

This is the person, the only person, whom theological anthropology must distinguish whole. As Jesus further distinguished, anything less and any substitute of the person's response to his call to worship and personness emerges from reduced theology

[5] In the framework of whole theology and practice, the following two studies expand on worship and worship language: Kary A. Kambara, *A Theology of Worship: 'Singing' a New Song to the Lord* (2011), and *Hermeneutic of Worship Language: Understanding* Communion *with the Whole of God* (2013). Online at http://4X12.org.

and practice composed by fragmentary ontology and function (cf. Mt 15:8-9), rendering the person and persons together as church "to be apart" from the whole—even as they gather to celebrate Holy Communion and serve to proclaim the gospel.

The new wine distinguishing God's whole on God's terms always involves making choices, most significantly in person-consciousness rather than in self-consciousness. Choosing what we will pay attention to and what we will ignore. Choosing what is a greater priority, what is primary or what is secondary. Choosing what will define our person and what we will not let define us. Choosing how we will define others and how we will not define others. Choosing how we will be involved in relationships and how we will not do relationships. Choosing the uncommon (holy) over the common. Choosing *zoe* over *bios*, the qualitative over the quantitative. Choosing to live more by the opportunities of *kairos* than by the constraints of *chronos* (linear time). That is to say, choosing to be whole, to live whole and to make whole. Yet, these choices are not about human agency merely in individual terms but about involvement in reciprocal relationship together in response to God's relational grace, the basis and ongoing base for relationship together to be whole.

Making these choices signifies celebrating the whole, signified in the new wine table fellowships. With each choice, we celebrate God's whole and being whole in communion together, that is, in intimate relational involvement and not in mutual referential association. Making this vulnerable choice may be difficult but what also emerges in making it is the relational outcome of celebrating the whole of God's new creation family together. This is the family responsibility that we humbly submit to and thankfully account for in the relational process of family love, because we are "not left as orphans" but have been adopted into God's family—belonging with the only distinction as daughters and sons. Therefore, we celebrate our redemption to be free to make these choices without the constraints of human distinctions. We celebrate our transformation to make these choices in family love. We celebrate our reconciliation to make these choices for relationship integrally equalized and intimate together in God's new family. And we celebrate making these choices in relationship together without the fragmenting presence of the veil, which keeps us at a relational distance in self-consciousness "naked with outer-in differences and covering up." In other words, the following relational process is engaged by making these choices: we celebrate being made whole in God's irreducible relational purpose to be whole, so that our ontology and function vulnerably unfolds in God's nonnegotiable relational outcome in order to live whole and to make whole, God's relational whole on God's relational terms.

Integrated with the constituting new wine relationship together of whole-ly communion is Jesus' footwashing. The significance of Mary's footwashing, composed by her whole person from inner out without distinctions, flows to the footwashing of Jesus' whole person from inner out without distinctions ("Teacher and Lord")—without even any vestments to serve communion—being poured out to his disciples in the vulnerable and intimate relational work of love (Jn 13:1-5), not for the purpose of serving them but for the sole purpose of new relationship together in wholeness without the veil (Jn 13:12-17). This action of Jesus' person-consciousness (in contrast and conflict with Peter's self-consciousness, 13:8) whole-ly embodies his call to personness and constitutes whole-ly his call to worship in reciprocal relationship together. Jesus makes his footwashing nonnegotiable in his call to personness because person-consciousness by its nature (1)

requires the whole person from inner out within the primacy of relationship together and (2) involves the primacy of vulnerable and intimate relational work.

Therefore, by being distinguished integrally from inner out, the significance of Mary's and Jesus' footwashings celebrates: (1a) the whole person from inner out without distinctions, (1b) new relationship together in wholeness without the veil to compose God's family as church, and (1c) the whole and holy God in reciprocal relationship Face to face to Face. As noted earlier, this three-fold composition of celebrating is interrelated, engaged in a reflexive dynamic between them, and therefore indivisible to constitute persons and persons together as church in the relational outcome of the experiential truth of the whole gospel. Anything less and any substitute of who and what they embodied from inner out are reductionism, which theological anthropology is the key to fight against. If theological anthropology does not or cannot fight reductionism, it is reduced of its theological nature and merely reflects, reinforces or becomes humanistic anthropology.

In the beginning, the person and persons together were created whole by Subject-Creator's creative action in irreducible relational terms. From the beginning, Subject-God's communicative action has pursued the person and persons together to be whole and ongoingly engages them in nonnegotiable relational terms. The whole embodying of Jesus *into* Mary and Jesus *into* Paul challenge our theological anthropology to be whole, and equally challenge our view of sin to perceive sin as reductionism. When we fulfill this challenge with whole theology and practice, the whole of theological anthropology distinguishes persons in complete context—celebrating their ontology and function in the qualitative image and relational likeness of not parts of God but the whole of God, therefore living whole ontology and function into the human context and making whole the human relational condition "to be apart".

As witnessed from the beginning, any and all reductionism is incompatible with the whole, and its counter-relational work shapes an incompatible response that is unable to be distinguished whole—even though such response assumes "you will not be reduced." The whole embodying of 'Jesus *into* whom?' is an open question for the person and persons together today, which has yet to be responded to adequately, and that theological anthropology is still responsible to fulfill whole-ly. As heard from the beginning and will be heard until 'not yet', the relational words from God need to be listened to today without self-conscious bias and responded to with person-conscious vulnerability in order for the existential reality of the whole 'already': "Where are you?"

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