

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

ANTHROPOLOGICAL APOLOGETICS:

A PROPOSAL OF AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL COMPENDIUM AS  
EVIDENCE FOR THE *IMAGO DEI*

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By

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LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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## ABSTRACT

ANTHROPOLOGICAL APOLOGETICS: A PROPOSAL OF AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL  
COMPENDIUM AS EVIDENCE FOR THE *IMAGO DEI*

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Evangelical scholarship has shown great admiration for the work of Gary Habermas and others in their contribution to Christian apologetics by validating the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus Christ with a list of minimal facts generally agreed to by historical and biblical scholars. This thesis will explore the methodology of the minimal facts approach and appropriate it as a tool to explore the data within the field of anthropology which offers evidence for the biblical concept of the *Imago Dei*. This study will focus on Wolfhart Pannenberg in his critically acclaimed work demonstrating the importance of the theological perspective in scientific anthropological studies. Here, it will be shown that data, as generally interpreted by scholars within the field of anthropology, exists to offer significant support to the biblical concept of the image of God.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION ..... 7

**Statement of the Problem.** ..... 7

**Statement of the Purpose.** .....9

**Statement of Importance.** .....9

**Statement of Position.** .....10

CHAPTER 2: AN EVALUATION THE MINIMAL FACTS APPROACH FOR THE  
RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST ..... 11

**Philosophical Components.** ..... 11

**Practical Components.** .....15

**Conclusion.** ..... 18

CHAPTER 3: A PROPOSAL OF AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL MINIMAL FACTS .....19

**Introduction.** ..... 19

**Revelation, Process, and Eschaton.** .....20

**The Considerations of the Proposal.** .....23

*Openness.* .....24

*Exocentricity.* ..... 28

*Tension.* .....32

*Identity.* .....35

*Community.* .....39

*Sacred Play.* .....45

**Conclusion.** .....49

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSAL AND ITS LEGITIMACY .....50

**Introduction.** ..... 50

**Comparison: How the Minimal Facts and Anthropological Compendium Resemble Each Other.** ..... 50

**Contrast: How the Minimal Facts and Anthropological Compendium Differ.** . . . . 52

**Analysis.** ..... 55

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION. .... 57

BIBLIOGRAPHY. .... 59

VITA. .... 65

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### **Statement of the Problem**

In recent decades, some conservative apologists have begun to infiltrate historically secular fields of study in order to develop arguments in support of religious or theological ideas. This relatively new development in the science of theology improves upon an already formidable weapon of debate, adding to its usefulness in current arguments surrounding important Christian beliefs and doctrines. One example of this effective method of argument is found in the minimal facts approach and its affirmation of the Christian claim of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. Individuals like Gary Habermas and William Lane Craig are just two examples of those who use secular historical evidence to justify the historicity of this event. Their approach to the historical resurrection, with the use of empirical evidence, delivers a factual bullet straight into the skeptic's analytical argument against the Christian faith in this particular area. Given their expertise in history and philosophy, it is no wonder that their approach is built in this way. However, it may be asked whether other fields of study can be mined for their apologetic value in order to improve Christian defenses.

While Habermas and Craig have already compiled a powerful compendium of data in their apologetic work, other fields of study should be examined for evidence important to Christian propositions.<sup>1</sup> Apologists implementing something like the minimal facts approach

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to the evidence for the *imago dei* in the area of anthropological studies, explored in this argument, one thinks of the biblical creation account and a young earth (bolstered by an ever-growing interest in intelligent design that is currently permeating much of the secular world) see Sahotra Sarkar, "The Science Question in Intelligent Design," *Synthese* 178 No. 2 (January, 2011): 291-305, the flood of Noah (shown possible with a look into what popular geologists are saying) see David R. Montgomery, *The Rocks Don't Lie: A Geologist Investigates Noah's Flood* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2012), the parting of the Red Sea (supported by the work of modern Egyptian archaeologists) see Michael Fillon, "Science Solves the Ancient Mysteries of the Bible," *Popular*

should be open to other data that can be used in opposition to liberal skepticism. Although historical data has already been shown to provide compelling evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, this study will show that anthropological studies may also be used to support concepts vital to a Christian worldview. There is significant data to validate the Christian claim that humankind is created in the image of God.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, human ontology is another tool in the arsenal of apologetics that proves effective in the battle for Christian beliefs.

Drawing attention to the meaning of personhood as suggested by generally accepted data within the field of anthropology can be effective in offering competing understandings to those of liberal scholars regarding the essence of human nature as reflecting the image of God. To quote Pannenberg,

In a moment of sober reflection we (perhaps) agree with the law of God but are inclined either to regard his directives as not applying to our situation or even to doubt that such laws can have God's authority behind them...The image of God, conceived as the destiny of human beings, is to be understood as providing direction for the process of self-integration in the living of human life, while sin, being the failure to achieve this destiny, destroys human identity.<sup>3</sup>

This "sober reflection" that Pannenberg speaks of is a state that many skeptics unfortunately never reach. However, successfully ascribing a uniquely anthropological argument for the image of God in humanity will better equip Christian thinkers as they lead individuals to reflect upon themselves as well as questions of history (as seen in the minimal facts approach).

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*Mechanics* 173 (December, 1996): 39-43, etc. All of these examples demonstrate that the popular, liberal, and secular scientific community is doing work that inevitably results in validation of many biblical claims.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. 1:26.

<sup>3</sup> Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985), 142.

### Statement of the Purpose

With a close reading of Pannenberg's work in anthropology,<sup>4</sup> it is possible to show that there is empirical data within the scientific disciplines to support the Christian claims regarding the nature of human kind as having been created in the image of God. These in turn can be organized in a way that is congruent with the minimal facts approach of Habermas. After describing the design of Habermas' approach, this thesis will work to demonstrate that there is enough recognized data within the anthropological community (that is held in common by scientific scholars and affirmed by the Christian theologian), to validate this argument.

### Statement of Importance

Ultimately, epistemological concerns have severe implications in the apologetic world. As Christians stand and speak before the prevalent post-modern context today, it is absolutely essential that they be equipped not only with historical data (which often means very little to the popular relativist), but also with an understanding of who humans are and how they resemble God,<sup>5</sup> thereby answering the yearning and sense of destiny placed within them. In this way, the apologetic system which takes into account both the historical and anthropological cues will appeal to both the mind and the present yet distorted image of God that dwells within the skeptic.

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<sup>4</sup> "Theologians will be able to defend the truth precisely of their talk about God only if they first respond to the atheistic critique of religion on the terrain of anthropology. Otherwise all their assertions, however impressive, about the primacy of the goodness of God will remain purely subjective assurances without any serious claim to universal validity." This thesis has opted to narrow its focus by limiting the scope of anthropological consideration to that which is elucidated by Wolfhart Pannenberg. Given his expertise in history (see Wolfhart Pannenberg, Rolf Rendtroff, Trutz Rendroff, & Ulrich Wilkens, *Revelation as History: A Proposal for a More open less authoritarian view of an important theological concept*, trans. David Granskou (London, Macmillan: 1968), 123ff), his conviction of the reality of Jesus (see Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus-God and Man*, trans. Lewis L. Wilkins & Duane A. Priebe (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1977), 66ff), and his understanding of theology's place in anthropological study (Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1985), 16), Pannenberg is an excellent candidate with which to analyze this inquiry. Also, Pannenberg is unafraid work within the constraints of secular and scientific scholarship. The breadth of his work alone will be used to investigate whether there is enough there to construct an apologetic system for the image of God in man that is similar to what Habermas has already constructed for his purposes.

<sup>5</sup>That men and women resemble God or "image" Him must be understood as an inherent part of human that behaves involuntarily from the will. It is a passive trait, not an active inclination.

Such an apologetic is necessary as more individuals adopt the tenets of relativism and post-foundational thinking. Pannenberg's analysis of liberal scholarship in the anthropological world will be able to prove what many in that community choose to deny, that one cannot understand themselves fully in separation from theology.<sup>6</sup>

### **Statement of Position**

Although there have been great strides in Christian apologetics,<sup>7</sup> there is still much work to be done. While individuals like Habermas brilliantly use the facts of their liberal and secular opponents to invalidate their arguments, Pannenberg has shown that anthropology can be used to much the same end.

The position of this paper is that anthropological study has significant implications for apologetics. These facts, which are proposed by the secular world and illuminated in the work of Pannenberg, include: humanity's openness to the world around him, their exocentricity, the desire to relieve tension, the search for identity, human existence in community, and participation in sacred play. Not only will these elements be explained, but their connection to the *imago dei* will be illuminated in order to reveal anthropology's usefulness in demonstrating this distinctively Christian belief.

Through analysis of the minimal facts approach (Habermas, et al) in apologetics and an appropriation of the method to anthropological studies as reflected in Pannenberg, this study will demonstrate that an anthropological set of facts can be used in a similar way to prove that mankind is imprinted with the image of God.

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<sup>6</sup> Pannenberg, *Anthropology*, 18-19. "A disregard of the theological question concerning the human person is, then, implicitly, even if more or less unreflectively, at work in most contributions to modern anthropology...the aim is to lay theological claim to the human phenomena described in the anthropological disciplines."

<sup>7</sup> See discussion above concerning the work of Habermas and others who adopt secular affirmations in an effort to prove Christian hypotheses.

## CHAPTER 2:

### AN EVALUATION OF THE MINIMAL FACTS APPROACH TO THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

#### **Philosophical Components**

Several key characteristics of the minimal facts approach must be defined in order to describe this weapon that is already in use on the battlefield of current theological apologetics. First, the evidential component of the minimal facts approach will be delineated. Evidentialism, as far as this argument is willing to define it, is the epistemology that suggests the strength of one's belief ought to be proportional to the strength of one's reasons or evidence.<sup>8</sup> This view, first popularized by such thinkers as Hume<sup>9</sup> and Locke,<sup>10</sup> asserts that there should be reasons for believing something and that those reasons are discovered not only in the evidence that exists, but the quality of that evidence.

Christianity is a worldview that makes claims about reality. Therefore, to know that Christianity is true must mean more than confirming its tenets in some subjective, personalized,

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<sup>8</sup> Jonathan E. Adler, *Belief's Own Ethics* (Cambridge, MS: Bradford, 2002), 24. This definition is based on Locke's conclusion which states:

“For he governs his assent right, and places it as he should, who in any case or matter whatsoever, believes or disbelieves, according as reason directs him. He that does otherwise, transgresses against his own light, and misuses those faculties, which were given him to no other end, but to search and follow the clearer evidence, the greater probability.”

Taken from John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 688.

<sup>9</sup> David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888), 225ff.

<sup>10</sup> John Locke, *Collection I* (London: Routledge, 1997). 126ff.

or secret way.<sup>11</sup> Claims of reality push Christianity's arguments past the subjective which means that they should be justified in an objective system.<sup>12</sup> Evidentialism is such a system that allows Christian claims to be validated or invalidated objectively.

Because of the empirical nature of evidentialism, questions arise as to whether or not this system can be implemented to answer considerations of faith. Some go so far as to suggest that religion is exempt from evidentialism because there is no evidence for sacred beliefs.<sup>13</sup> However, Allen Wood and others could not disagree more. Instead, they suggest that evidentialism not only agrees with Scripture but that the players in the narratives themselves use evidence to prove past events.<sup>14</sup> Throughout history, evidentialism has been used to support claims concerning Christianity. In fact, some argue that even Christ in Scripture uses evidence to justify who He is, what He did, and why He came. Not only does Christ use the Old Testament to point to Himself and His purpose, but the proofs to which He alludes act as a set of evidences for His entire ministry.<sup>15</sup> Christ also appears to use evidence in His own life and work as He teaches and preaches. Throughout His post-resurrection ministry, Christ also plants evidence of Himself in discreet ways. All four gospels illustrate Christ who, following His resurrection on the third day, showed Himself alive by "many convincing proofs" (cf. Mt. 28:8-10; Mk. 16:14-18; Lk. 24:13-

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<sup>11</sup> Thomas A Howe & Richard G. Howe, "Knowing Christianity is True: The Relationship Between Faith and Reason," taken from Francis J. Beckwith, William Lane Craig & J.P. Moreland, *To Everyone and Answer: A Case for the Christian Worldview* (Downer Grove, IL: IVP, 2004), 25.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Reformed epistemology is one method that tends to disregard the evidence in its pursuit. For more discussion on its conclusions see Kelly James Clark, "Reformed Epistemology Apologetics" in *Five Views on Apologetics*, ed. Steven B. Cowan (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000): 265-312.

<sup>14</sup> Allen Wood, "The Duty to Believe According to the Evidence," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 63 (February 2008), 12. Wood gives creation as an example for how the evidence found in science and history in favor of a biblical perspective far outweighs similar considerations for evolution.

<sup>15</sup> Robert L. Reymond, *Faith's Reasons for Believing* (Ross-shire, Great Britain: Mentor, 2008), 39-48.

35; Acts 1:3).<sup>16</sup> The fact that the Bible testifies to these accounts suggests that a real claim of the God-man is being made following His resurrection. For that very reason, the Bible's claim demands an evidential investigation into Jesus' life and ministry.

Although the tenets of this epistemological framework seem simple enough, its difficulty in dealing with peripheral issues<sup>17</sup> has provoked new questions regarding its veracity. Can evidence answer all questions? Does evidence exist for everything that has happened in the past or every claim that is made? In response to these issues, Plantinga and others consider foundationalist epistemology, commonly associated with evidentialism, defunct in its pursuit.<sup>18</sup> However, regardless of the issues raised, it is clear that while evidentialism may be unable to solve all problems, it is sufficient to prove a huge range of undisputed data.<sup>19</sup> Not only is evidence available for a wide variety of claims, but it is a tool that can successfully join reason to faith, even if its claims fail to command belief.<sup>20</sup>

Though limited in its capabilities, evidence is said to be able to accomplish certain tasks. First, evidence is able to answer honest intellectual questions.<sup>21</sup> This has been true ever since the need for providing an apologetic of Christianity surfaced. Second, evidence is capable of

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>17</sup> Adler, *Belief's*, 3ff. Problems are discovered in those beliefs or principles that are fundamentally basic such as induction. Therefore, they conclude that evidentialism as an epistemology is unable to prove beliefs too basic to be supported by anything more certain or fundamental.

<sup>18</sup> Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 75-85.

<sup>19</sup> Adler, *Belief*, 4.

<sup>20</sup> William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1984), 36. Namely, the most direct and acute influence for the cause of Christ and against the atheistic agenda is the Holy Spirit Himself. Craig describes in his argument that the Holy Spirit is the one who gives us the ultimate assurance of Christianity's truth. While sufficient evidence may exist for certain claims, it does not mean it demands belief in those claims. In other words, the bullets that evidence may fire into an atheistic fortress can only pierce so far. The role that evidence plays might be described as subsidiary to other more potent forms of armament.

<sup>21</sup> Howe & Howe, *Knowing*, 34.

exposing dishonest intellectual questions as spiritual problems.<sup>22</sup> This is experienced when overwhelming evidence confronts stubborn antagonism against what is being argued. Finally, evidence is able to build up the faith of the believer and provide a deeper appreciation for what is believed.<sup>23</sup> However, transitioning from “you should believe” to “you do believe” is not inevitable. As Wood brilliantly concludes, with increased potential for knowledge and critical thinking comes an increased capacity to subvert intellectual integrity.<sup>24</sup> However, as Habermas suggests at the conclusion of *Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*, stubborn withdrawal from a debate after clear examination of undisputed evidence is not equal to an accurate refutation of the evidence that was presented.<sup>25</sup>

Clearly, evidentialism is a key component used by some in proving certain claims of Scripture. Quality internal and external evidence is presented in the minimal facts approach as it works to prove the historicity of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.<sup>26</sup> In fact, it is the evidence of the resurrection itself that forms the foundation upon which this conservative approach to apologetics sits. However, evidentialism interpreted through this framework does not acknowledge that the evidence alone is a reason for belief. While the immediate proclivity when presented with a claim is to look for evidence, the evidence itself cannot and will not require even the most astute scholar to believe that claim; that is a problem of the will.<sup>27</sup> Even

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Wood, “The Duty,” 23.

<sup>25</sup> Gary R. Habermas & Michael R. Licona, *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2004), 218.

<sup>26</sup> See Craig, *Faith*, 254ff & Habermas & Licona, *The Case*, 219ff.

<sup>27</sup> Nish Shah, “A New Argument for Evidentialism,” *The Philosophical Quarterly* 56 no. 225 (October 2006): 481-498.

though there is a definite duty to believe in light of the evidence that exists, there is often great difficulty for some to respond to this duty accordingly.<sup>28</sup>

The minimal facts approach begins with a claim (such as the resurrection of Jesus Christ) which inevitably leads to some sort of hypothesis (i.e. Christ was bodily raised from the dead by the power of God). This is followed by an investigation in order to examine the legitimacy of the hypothesis (an example of this investigation is the approach employed by Habermas and others). In the end, the hypothesis must be validated or invalidated; it cannot be taken *prima facie* as truth. Therefore, evidentialists begin with a hypothesis and establish whether or not this hypothesis is supported by the evidence.

A pursuit of the evidence is quintessential to the approach used by Habermas. Armed with the facts that have been obtained, the minimal facts approach demonstrates the integrity of the hypothesis being made. In the case of the minimal facts approach to the resurrection, the claim is clear—the Bible tells a story of Christ’s resurrection, a story that needs to be proven. From this a hypothesis is formed—Christ was raised from the dead through the power of God. For this reason, evidence is pursued to prove this hypothesis and support its truthfulness in both the intellectual and theological community.

### **Practical Components**

Rather than build an apologetic using subjective bits of private conviction or personal faith that are screwed together with religious dogma and claims concerning the authority of Scripture, individuals like Habermas seek to construct their argument using the “minimal facts”

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<sup>28</sup> Wood, “The Duty,” 23-24.

that are accepted by the current majority of critical scholars.<sup>29</sup> This method of both proving and defending the resurrection is highly emblematic of evidentialism but is not entirely void of personal prejudices that can influence or alter interpretations of the evidence itself.<sup>30</sup> In fact, at least two presuppositions Habermas admits to in his highly objective approach include: there is common ground between the believer and the unbeliever, and the Holy Spirit can use apologetics to bring unbelievers to Christ and bring assurance to those already in the faith.<sup>31</sup>

With this in mind and in an effort to bolster his argument, Habermas takes into consideration those facts that are held by the most conservative bases of theology, the ultraliberal schools of thought, and every group in between. This allows for an examination of facts that are unanimously held by the broadest range of scholars.<sup>32</sup> Throughout his written works, Habermas cites skeptical scholars by the handful including Koester, Ehrman, Holtz, and Ludemann.<sup>33</sup> The wide range of agreement of the minimal facts is what makes his argument so compelling. In fact, the brilliance of compiling such a list is that it provides a level battle-field upon which to wage war for the reality of the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus. Even the most skeptical scholar admits to a minimal core of facts pertaining to Jesus' death and certain events that follow.<sup>34</sup> This core is so incriminating that Habermas and others believe it has the firepower to deny the

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<sup>29</sup> David Baggett, *Did the Resurrection Happen: A Conversation with Gary Habermas and Antony Flew* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009), 108.

<sup>30</sup> Gary R. Habermas, "Evidential Apologetics," taken from *Five Views on Apologetics*, ed. Steven B. Cowan & Stanley N. Gundry (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 94.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> See Gary Habermas, "The Case for Christ's Resurrection," taken from *To Everyone and Answer: A Case for the Christian Worldview*, ed. Francis J. Beckwith, Williams Lane Craig, & J.P. Moreland (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004), 190-191.

<sup>34</sup> For Habermas' comprehensive assessment of these critical scholars and the facts they hold see Gary R. Habermas & J.P. Moreland, *Beyond Death* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1998), 126-36.

naturalistic hypotheses of those that hold a liberal worldview and to defend the resurrection in the best possible way.<sup>35</sup>

Historical evidence for biblical events can be incredibly rewarding.<sup>36</sup> In fact, this approach is not only used to prove individual events in Jesus' life, but similar approaches are used to prove the historicity of Jesus Himself.<sup>37</sup> Although differences occur between each of these approaches, all work in much the same way to prove something that the Bible claims.

Habermas himself has titled his approach the "minimal facts" approach and suggests this concise presentation adequately represents facts that are both well-evidenced and generally admitted by critical scholars.<sup>38</sup> These facts work together to build a case that eventually leads to a well-reasoned proof of the resurrection.

The potential implications of proving this paramount event have been expressed by many scholars from all theological persuasions. Former atheist Anthony Flew said that if the resurrection were proven to have occurred, naturalists would have to be open to the teachings of Jesus concerning Christianity and His own deity.<sup>39</sup> Swinburne states that the miraculous events such as the resurrection can potentially imply numerous claims surrounding Jesus and His

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<sup>35</sup> Habermas, "Evidential Apologetics," 115.

<sup>36</sup> Baggett, *Resurrection*, 110.

<sup>37</sup> For an example of this see R. T. France, *The Evidence for Jesus* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1986). In this work, France separates evidence into the following categories: non-Christian, Christian, New Testament, and Archaeology.

<sup>38</sup> Habermas, "Evidential Apologetics," 100. See also Habermas & Licona, *The Case*, 44.

<sup>39</sup> Habermas & Flew, *Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?* 49-50. At the time of the giving of this source, Flew was still an atheist. The purpose of using him as a reference to the potential of the resurrection is to illustrate the far-reaching implications of the resurrection of Christ. Even an atheist observes this potential.

teachings.<sup>40</sup> Also, Wolfhart Pannenberg contends that the unity between Jesus' resurrection and His declarations would provide subtle confirmation of His mission.<sup>41</sup>

### Conclusion

Given these considerations, it is clear that the minimal facts approach in the hands of skilled apologists such as Habermas can be used effectively to undermine philosophical naturalism and to establish the credibility of biblical claims. In what follows, this study will focus on the work of Pannenberg's *Anthropology in Theological Perspective* in order to demonstrate that a similar line of reasoning may be used to validate the biblical claim that humankind has been created in the image of the Creator God.

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<sup>40</sup> Swinburne, *The Existence of God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 222, 225-26.

<sup>41</sup> Wolfhart Pannenberg, "The Historicity of the Resurrection: The Identity of Christ," *The Intellectuals Speak Out about God*, ed. Roy Abraham Varghese (Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1984), 263-64. Pannenberg and Swinburne are necessary references because they represent the opinion of the non-evangelical methodological evidentialist community. This might suggest a point of convergence between how the evangelical and non-evangelical approach apologetics. At the very least, their comments reveal that Habermas' task (as an evangelical) satisfies those from other theological proclivities.

CHAPTER 3:  
A PROPOSAL OF AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL MINIMAL FACTS

**Introduction**

More scholars are determining for themselves that a proper understanding of God is incomplete without a robust theology of man.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, others are discovering that understanding man very much involves a comprehensive delineation of the divine.<sup>43</sup> These convictions naturally lead theologians to a healthy preoccupation with the *Imago Dei* or, the Christian proposition that humans are made in the image of God. The image of God in human beings is the Christian belief which suggests that all humans are created by God in such a way that they resemble His glory and are therefore suitable for relating to Him.<sup>44</sup> Although much scholarship has been devoted to describing the nature and presence of the image of God in humanity, little attention is given to how data from the secular world can be used to prove that the *Imago Dei* is present in all people. However, some, such as Wolfhart Pannenberg, have

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<sup>42</sup>Cf. Donald G. Dawe, "The Turn to the Human," *Interpretation* 41 no. 3 (July 1987): 303-305. Stephen J. Wellum, "Editorial: The Urgent Need for a Theological Anthropology Today," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 13 (Summer 2009), 2. James R. Beck & Bruce Demarest, *The Human Person in Theology and Psychology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2005), 14. "The Biblical perspective on the nature of humans should be of interest to those outside the discipline of theology."

<sup>43</sup> This conviction has existed since the time of Calvin. He states, "without knowledge of self, there is no knowledge of God... without knowledge of God, there is no knowledge of self..." John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, LCC (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1960), 35-39.

<sup>44</sup> Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998), 517ff. In his discussion, Erickson suggests that this involves resembling God's relationality (as humans are relational beings), dominion (as humans were given dominion over the earth), eternity (as humans are eternal beings), etc. Among other things, Erickson concludes from Scripture that all men possess the image of God and that without it, they would cease to be human. See also Anthony Hoekema, *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 11ff. Hoekema concludes in his discussion that (1) The image of God as such is a fundamental characteristic of man, a part of his essence and existence, something that man cannot lose without ceasing to be man. (2) The image of God, must also be understood as that likeness to God which was perverted when man fell into sin, and is being restored and renewed in the process of sanctification.

devoted much of their theological career to investigating both anthropology and its theological implications. After describing the methodology of his argument and introducing Pannenberg's position on revelation, an investigation into His work will be presented in order to prove that many of the anthropological considerations purported by the secular world can be used to validate the Christian hypothesis that man images God in discreet ways (much as the minimal facts approach of Habermas and others has accomplished for the resurrection of Jesus Christ).<sup>45</sup>

### **Revelation, Process, and Eschaton**

In his monumental work, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*, Pannenberg successfully lays theological claim to secular anthropological discussions by means of confronting the scientific and philosophical disciplines involved in understanding man and making appropriate correlations to religion.<sup>46</sup> In his approach, Pannenberg confronts copious issues and institutions that many conservatives neglect. Throughout this work, he busies himself with deciphering the shortcomings of these disciplines and exposing their natural inclination toward the religious thematic, an inclination that is often unaddressed and yet desperately necessary to their arguments.<sup>47</sup> The journey through the disciplines within this particular work will guide the present investigation to demonstrate how these disciplines may be used to prove that humans image their Creator. However, before one can draw the connections between Pannenberg's anthropology and the *Imago Dei*, it is necessary to discuss his views concerning

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<sup>45</sup>This Christian hypothesis is derivative of the biblical claim that is found in Genesis 1:26 "The God said, 'Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;...'"

<sup>46</sup> Pannenberg, *Anthropology*, 19.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 21. "This anthropology does not argue from dogmatic data and presuppositions. Rather, it turns its attention directly to the phenomena of human existence as investigated in human biology, psychology, cultural anthropology, or sociology, and examines the findings of these disciplines with an eye to implications that may be relevant to religion and theology."

the nature of revelation, man in process, and the universe's alignment toward the eschaton. This discussion will provide a better understanding of how Pannenberg thinks and how his work can be used apologetically.

First, Pannenberg confirms that “history is the most comprehensive horizon of Christian theology” and that it is within this framework that all questions are answered and pursuits satisfied.<sup>48</sup> Although some might try to limit historical revelation to that which is manifested in the biblical accounts, Pannenberg extends revelation to include all events that make up the universe's experience.<sup>49</sup> He also affirms that because each historical process is reciprocally connected to events in its environment, theological considerations of sacred themes cannot for any reason be isolated from the events of the world.<sup>50</sup>

Building on this foundation, Pannenberg communicates several premises that are important to the current discussion: that revelation is always the self-revelation of God, that revelation is not comprehended fully until the end of revelatory history, that it is universal in character, and that the Word relates to revelation in foretelling, forth-telling, and report.<sup>51</sup> These considerations are important in understanding exactly how each of Pannenberg's conclusions fits into secular anthropology and relates to the image of God.

First, because all revelation is said to be the “self-revelation” of God, all truth is considered, in Pannenberg's mind, to be God's truth. In this way, history demonstrates the

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<sup>48</sup>Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology*, trans. George H. Kehm (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1970), 15.

<sup>49</sup> Pannenberg, Rendtorff, Rendtorff, Wilkens, *Revelation*, 18-19.

<sup>50</sup> Pannenberg, *Basic*, 40.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 3-21. Don H. Olive, *Wolfhart Pannenberg: Makers of the Modern Theological Mind*, ed. Rob E. Patterson (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1973), 47-49.

awesome deity of God through the totality of all events as they unfold.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, this implies that God Himself is not only the God of Israel, or even the church, but over all humanity.

Because humans exist within the historical spectrum, they too are a member of God's revelatory work. For this reason, Pannenberg asserts that the best approach to understanding human reality should involve the historical sciences.<sup>53</sup>

History as a series of events is understood as a process moving from the past, through the present, and toward the future. In fact, because history is incomplete, it is currently in process.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, inasmuch as events are still occurring and there is a future yet to be experienced, revelation is in process. Therefore, as humans exist in history, they too are in process as characters in the unveiling revelation of God.

As Pannenberg reveals, history is incomplete and the revelation of God is unfinished. Since an understanding of the deity of God is based on the totality of all events, it is only at the end of history that God's complete revelation is discerned.<sup>55</sup> This framework leads Pannenberg in many of his works to align his understanding of mankind toward the eschaton which ultimately looks ahead to the end of time when man is perfectly restored and everything is complete.<sup>56</sup> Once the end is realized, history, revelation, and the human journey will be absolute. However, for the time being, men and women, whether they realize it or not, anticipate the

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<sup>52</sup> Pannenberg, *Revelation*, 133.

<sup>53</sup> Pannenberg, *Anthropology*, 22. "The closest approach to concrete human reality is to be found in historical science, since this deals with the concrete lives of individuals and the way in which they interact in the process that is their history...The history of humankind thus comes at the end of anthropological reflection, precisely because it alone thematizes the concrete reality of the human being."

<sup>54</sup> Pannenberg, *Revelation*, 17.

<sup>55</sup> Olive, *Wolfhart Pannenberg*, 49.

<sup>56</sup> Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology: Collected Essays* Vol. 1, trans. George H. Kehm (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1967), 15ff. see also Pannenberg, *Revelation*, 141ff.

revelation of all things when God's eternal and omnipotent deity will be clearly revealed at the consummation of history.<sup>57</sup>

Pannenberg's views concerning revelation are in keeping with what conservative Christians call general revelation, or, revelation which is available to all humanity, and does not include the category of special revelation, or, revelation that God reveals personally through His Word.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, his contributions, understood within the category of God's general revelation, successfully point the individual faced with these observations to God, not directly toward salvation.<sup>59</sup>

### **The Considerations of the Proposal**

These more general ideas must be considered as this argument works to prove that man is made in the image of God. Just as Habermas took his hypothesis (that Christ was raised bodily from the dead as found in Scripture) and set out to prove its truthfulness (by means of what even liberal scholars affirm of history), the following proposal affirms the Christian claim that humans are created in the image of God and will explore the secular claims of anthropology elucidated in the work of Pannenberg to demonstrate how these claims may be appropriated by the Christian apologist to support the Christian doctrine of the *Imago Dei*.

With this in mind, what follows is a survey into some of the anthropological considerations Pannenberg discusses which have bearing on the connections between secular

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<sup>57</sup> Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology Vol. I*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 207ff.

<sup>58</sup> Erickson, *Christian*, 178. "General Revelation is God's communication of himself to all persons at all times and in all places. Special revelation involves God's particular communications and manifestations of himself to particular persons at particular times, communications and manifestations that are available now only by consultation of certain sacred writings."

<sup>59</sup> Although Pannenberg's considerations do not result in an immediate encounter with the Gospel itself, his contributions prove that what is discovered in God's general revelation can be used to validate Christian claims. See also Psalm 19.

anthropology and the image of God in humanity. In other words, the following represents the “minimal facts” of anthropological assertions that are held by secularists, confirmed by Pannenberg, and useful in discussing the how men and women resemble God.

### *Openness*

According to Pannenberg, one of the many distinguishing features of humanity that separates the human race from the animal kingdom is its openness to the world and beyond.<sup>60</sup> In fact, historians and anthropologists alike deal with the issues of openness or “otherness” throughout their work. One field studies “otherness” in space, the other in time.<sup>61</sup> In his brief overview of historical perceptions of man’s uniqueness, Pannenberg suggests that ever since Greek scholarship decided to answer the question of man in terms of the cosmos, the world itself was always demonstrated as inadequate to give a definitive answer for man’s yearning concerning what he is supposed to be.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, humanity has maintained an insatiable desire to reach beyond every horizon that opens to it. This openness permeates secular discussions as a unique characteristic found exclusively in mankind.

For instance, many in the scientific community recognize this future-oriented, “other”-associated openness within the human constitution. One example is William Sims Brainbridge in his compelling essay on converging technologies. There, he provides an optimistic look toward a future when human beings, upon reaching a higher level of understanding, will leave planet earth

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<sup>60</sup> Wolfhart Pannenberg, *What is Man?: A Contemporary Anthropology in Theological Perspective*, trans. Duane A. Priebe (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1977), 3. See also Hoekema, *Created*, 18.

<sup>61</sup> Bernard S. Cohn, “History and Anthropology: The State of Play,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22 (1980), 198.

<sup>62</sup>Pannenberg, *What is Man?*, 7.

entirely in order to reach a higher potential or evolutionary step.<sup>63</sup> Interestingly, he believes that the coalescence of technology and the human enterprise promise to grant humanity unprecedented power to change themselves and the world around them. While some in the scientific community hope that caution is practiced as humans advance in this way, Brainbridge suggests that caution would stifle the program of progress. Uninhibited, man should be released to “boldly go where no man has gone before,” and according to Brainbridge, advance so far that humanity as a label will be considered obsolete.<sup>64</sup> Instead of finding satisfaction in the currently inhabited world, those sympathetic to Brainbridge believe that men and women’s unquenchable openness to possibilities will inevitably lead them to other literal worlds by means of technological advances.

The tendencies that psychologists and social scientists recognize in humans, such as constantly reinventing oneself and reaching beyond oneself, have also consistently maintained association with belief in the afterlife. Some even postulate that a very real social component to believing in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is intimately connected to man’s capacity to see past himself and beyond his earthly destiny. Pieter Craffert states that for subjects in Israelite culture, religious and cultural experiences could very well have served as a basis for a firm belief that

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<sup>63</sup> William Sims Brainbridge, “Converging Technologies and Human Destiny,” *Journal of Medicine & Philosophy* 32 No. 3 (May/June, 2007): 197-98.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 212. “We can agree that the planet Earth should remain a refuge for traditional humanity, living in a variety of low-tech societies in what technophiles would call a perpetual Dark Age. Those who wish to transform themselves into a very different kind of intelligent entity will need to leave the Earth, fulfilling what Alfred Bester (1956) ironically called arrival of the fittest. The original Star Trek motto — to boldly go where no man has gone before — has been criticized for splitting an infinitive and employing sexist language, and I now criticize it for implying that space travelers will be humans in the antique sense of the term. Another motto from the science-fiction subculture is better, leaving open the nature of spacefarers and playing nicely off an old religious motto: The meek will inherit the Earth, but the bold will go elsewhere.”

Jesus was bodily raised from the dead.<sup>65</sup> It is no coincidence that ever since the idea of bodily resurrection was introduced (in Israelite religious documents, cf. Daniel 12), two components of the Jewish cultural system (otherness and the nature of humanity) worked in alliance to produce and maintain the idea.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, from a social-scientific perspective, it is suggested that afterlife beliefs connected to cultural notions about the human body came together in certain experiences and resulted in the origin of belief in Jesus' resurrection. In other words, the religious ideas expressed in the sacred writings affirmed presuppositions the Jewish people had because of their humanity and provided for them a firm foundation for believing in the bodily resurrection of Jesus as fact after it occurred.<sup>67</sup>

The uniquely human ability to look ahead or move beyond implies the idea of destiny. In fact, Pannenberg suggests that if destiny does not press man beyond the world, then man would not constantly search further (as they are shown to do even when concrete incentives are absent).<sup>68</sup> Because the world will not satisfy humanity, no matter how free or open they are to change it, no one finds final satisfaction in the temporal. This presupposes that their destiny exceeds their present environment; that is every presently existing environment and that which is

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<sup>65</sup> Pieter F. Craffert, "Jesus' Resurrection in a Social-Scientific Perspective: Is there Anything New to be Said?" *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 7 No. 2 (2009): 126-151.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. Craffert also states, "People in that world did not need historical or scientific evidence that Jesus could have been resurrected, because visionary experiences coupled with the potentialities of the human body were sufficient."

<sup>67</sup> Inasmuch as the Jewish people are were human, their openness to the world around provided them with precedent to believe that a destination beyond death was possible, as demonstrated in the resurrection prophecies and accounts.

<sup>68</sup> Pannenberg, *What is Man?*, 8.

yet to exist.<sup>69</sup> With this in mind, it is no wonder that even in pagan societies man appoints deity, seeks answers in some infinite energy, or develops a governing philosophy.

The Bible claims that there is a desire for that which is eternal stemming from the suggestion of eternity that is instilled in every man (Eccl. 3:11). The ideas and implications surrounding Ecclesiastes 3:11 imply that there is at least some awareness within men and women that points to something greater than their temporary world. Michael Eaton suggests that although there are several other interpretations of the word “eternity” found in this verse, this word fits best with regards to both the context and commonness of the Hebrew expression used here.<sup>70</sup> Arguably, that which is eternal is separate from the temporal realm of human existence. Continuing his discussion of the verse, Eaton asserts that the eternity seen in God’s relationship with mankind corresponds to humanity’s capacity for eternal things as well as their understanding of something that transcends their immediate condition.<sup>71</sup>

Tremper Longman agrees with Walter Kaiser’s view concerning the same text. Kaiser states that “eternity” speaks to a “deep-seated desire, a compulsive drive . . . to know the character, composition, and meaning of the world. . . (as well as) to discern its purpose and destiny.”<sup>72</sup> This expands the scope of the word “eternity” to a general and unlearned understanding of purpose and otherness. In fact, this yearning for eternal life is connected in

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>70</sup> Michael Eaton, *Ecclesiastes: Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1983), 94.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>72</sup> Tremper Longman III, *The Book of Ecclesiastes: The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 121.

some ways to human knowing.<sup>73</sup> Also, yearning for something greater is often shown to stimulate the mind toward other pursuits of knowledge. Longman suggests that this present state of man is temporary and there will come a time in which this inward compulsion is satisfied.<sup>74</sup>

Likewise, Pannenberg concludes that the Christian belief of salvation means little more than the fulfillment of the ultimate and intended destiny toward which humanity is aimed and for which they seek in their behavior.<sup>75</sup> This alignment is sympathetic to Pannenberg's view of revelation and man's place within the process of God's revealing work. As far as revelation is perpetually headed towards the eschaton and as much as humans are included in this process, they exist in a perpetual state of openness to the future.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, this openness toward and fascination with eternity that seems to be affirmed by both the theological community and the secular anthropological community lends itself to the idea that man, in some way, resembles the eternal God who is in some ways separated from the human experience in another realm.<sup>77</sup>

### *Exocentricity*

Another distinguishing attribute of humankind involves what Pannenberg and others refer to as exocentricity. Secular anthropologists suggest that man's exocentricity involves the

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<sup>73</sup> LeRon Shults, *Reforming Theological Anthropology: After the Philosophical Turn to Relationality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003) 186.

<sup>74</sup> Longman, *The Book of*, 121.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 192. In this same way, Pannenberg concludes that salvation is the wholeness of man's life for which he longs but never finally achieves in the course of his earthly existence.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 8. "Modern Anthropology differs in its delineation for "openness to the world." Some suggest that openness to the world must mean that man is completely directed into the open. He is always open further, beyond every experience and beyond every given situation."

<sup>77</sup> This Christian view of God's eternality is demonstrated by how the Bible simply assumes God's existence from before the beginning of time. "In the Beginning God..." (Gen. 1:1). "In the Beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word Was God..." (John 1:1ff). The God is eternal and therefore separate from all temporal things is a common Christian belief. See Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998), 298ff.

tendency within the individual to anchor one's own central being in something that lies beyond this world.<sup>78</sup> This proclivity results in the phenomena of imagination, invention, and cognitive enterprise.

Inasmuch as imagination is man's proposition of the non-real or non-present, it is an exocentric characteristic of humanity. According to Arnold Gehlen, imagination constitutes the principle creative feature in human behavior.<sup>79</sup> Gehlen emphasizes that imagination is required for even simple acts of human movement and perception.<sup>80</sup> For instance, a small child, whose present reality involves crawling, must first imagine his/her ability to walk before any steps are taken. Similarly, an infant is unable to speak until he/she imagines the possibility and awards that thought with attempts at forming words. However, on a more impressive scale, invention as well as philosophical speculation, is another natural result of an individual's desire to achieve beyond his or her present reality.<sup>81</sup>

Two examples of this are worth mentioning. First, Descartes's method of seeing the universe as a mathematical and logical structure came specifically by doubting everything and forging the empirical method of observation and logical method of formal reasoning. In his distrust of the imagination, Descartes imagined the universe away until he came to the most base and fundamental of assertions. Upon this foundation he constructed an entire philosophical framework. Interestingly, seeing little contention between this and his religious beliefs, he remained a devout Catholic all of his life. In a similar way, Newton's method of combining

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<sup>78</sup> Scheler, *On the Eternal in Man*, trans. B. Noble (New York: Harper, 1960), 250ff.

<sup>79</sup> Arnold Gehlen, *Der Mensch* 6th Ed. (Bonn: Athenaum-Verlag, 1958), 144.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Pannenberg, *What is Man?*, 25. Pannenberg highlights the significance of invention and its connection with imagination as too well known to ignore. Pannenberg also asserts that the same connection is true of the conceptions man forms of his infinite destiny.

mathematics and experimentation came neither from observation nor deduction alone. Instead, as evaluated by Barbour, his discovery of the law of gravity required creative imagination alongside his belief in God.<sup>82</sup>

Some recognize this tendency for exocentricity as rooted in the biological processes of the brain itself.<sup>83</sup> Ashbrook explains that belief is a transformation of biological experience to conceptual explanation and that these beliefs give conceptual focus to the person's sense of destiny.<sup>84</sup> The idea of destiny, as far as it is future-oriented and not presently realized, is an exocentric feature within mankind. This capacity to believe in a proposed reality other than that which already exists and the desire to reach that reality help contribute to the idea of destiny within each and every individual. Historically, whether expressed in institutions like the state (as proposed by Plato), German idealism, the American dream, or heaven itself, the individual's exocentric tendency is heavily connected to his or her imagination, sense of potential, and permanence.

As demonstrated by Pannenberg and others like Ashbrook, theological consideration is required to explain this exocentricity and understand mankind completely. Others like LeRon Shults even speculate that the longing for eternal life and imagining its reality (common in nearly all cultures in all times) is intimately connected to the idea of being human.<sup>85</sup> Therefore,

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<sup>82</sup>Barbour, 1966, 34-55. He and the other English scientists of the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century directed their investigations "to the glory of God and the benefit of the human race." Barbour continues, "Whether God was the Divine Clockmaker who wound up the world like a clock, the Cosmic Plumber who mended Leaks in the System, the Ultimate Conservative who maintained the status quo, or the Cosmic Architect who built the universe, religion was more a matter of "intellectual demonstration" than of "living experience."

<sup>83</sup>James B. Ashbrook, "The Human Brain and Human Destiny: A Pattern for Old Brain Empathy with the Emergence of Mind," *Zygon* 24 No. 3 (Spring 1989), 335.

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*, 343.

<sup>85</sup>LeRon, Shults, *Reforming Theological*, 186.

exocentricity, imagination, invention, and cognitive enterprise inevitably instigate curiosity about the divine and a desire to mimic what is imagined either consciously or subconsciously. The most developed expression of this desire is to become the sum of all things, or the god of one's own life.

In a very real sense, this exocentricity is satisfied either inadequately through the many channels of wickedness and idolatry abundant in the world, or adequately in the person of Christ (which is made possible by His resurrection from the dead). Pannenberg's discussion on the uniqueness of man suggests that man's desire to be like God is only fulfilled by God Himself through the operation of His providence.<sup>86</sup> The Bible in 1 Thessalonians seems to suggest that one day, following a resurrection similar to Christ's, the believer will be "like God" and thus satisfy the insatiable human desire to center his/herself, in the most appropriate way (1 Thess. 5:14ff).

That all agree, even in the secular community, there is creativity within the human race (as a result of prevalent exocentricity) helps affirm that man resembles the Creator who was creative enough to create His own creation (Gen. 1:1ff). That most recognize human enterprise toward higher ideals and greater achievements (in response to centering themselves in something greater than or beyond themselves) suggests that humanity resembles the highest Being, who because He exists outside of time and space is elevated above human existence (Ex. 15:11). That there is a desire (either consciously or subconsciously) for the divine (because the present world as it is seems unsatisfactory) suggests that man knows something of the divine and images the divine in discreet ways (Gen. 1:27).

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<sup>86</sup> Cf. Pannenberg, *Anthropology*, 53, 234. Interestingly, both the fall of man, a result of man's desire to become like God, and the destiny of man indicate that being "like God" is central to the anthropological question (1 Thess. 5:14ff).

### *Tension*

Another theme throughout Pannenberg's evaluation of the secular sciences involves the tension that exists within individuals and within societies. He reveals that the tension within man (which may be explained by observing humanity as presently existing and yet eschatologically oriented) is said by many to be an indicator of man's spiritual struggle.<sup>87</sup> The cause of this tension is discovered in the juxtaposition between openness to the world (described above) and self-centeredness, i.e. when exocentricity meets egocentricity. According to Pannenberg, although men naturally pursue an answer to what lies beyond themselves, namely God through openness and exocentricity, they interrupt this pursuit in order to establish who they are.<sup>88</sup> In so doing, they temporarily forget their question for God and preoccupy themselves with self-interests. Therefore, men and women's egocentricity does not stand in harmony with their openness to the world nor does it satisfy their imagination. Instead, there is an inherent tendency in the ego to adhere to one's own purposes, conceptions, and customs as they exist.

Because humans exist in this tension, they attempt to satisfy the conflict between their ego and their exocentric reality.<sup>89</sup> This lifelong search for relief has proven to be the creative agent behind cultural institutions, political organizations, and artistic journeys. Each of these has been established in order to deal with the negative implications that arise from this inner conflict. Throughout the world, humans placate their tension by constantly searching for new and creative

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 106, 136. Pannenberg quotes Helmuth Plessner, *Die Stufen des Organischen und der Mensch: Einleitung in die philosophische Anthropologie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), 289ff. He is quoted in saying, "Being positioned exocentrically, human beings stand where they stand and at the same time do not stand where they stand." This unveils the tension Pannenberg and others refer to in speaking of man's struggle between egocentricity and exocentricity.

<sup>88</sup> Pannenberg, *What is Man?*, 55.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 60. "Nevertheless, for man the harmony between the ego and reality remains an assignment he must strive to fulfill in his life."

solutions to this problem by means of global domination, intellectual constructs, aesthetic beauty, and much more. Some even suggest that man's tense environment is the reason for the development of technology.<sup>90</sup>

Secular anthropologists recognize that one way many attempt to stifle this natural struggle between the self-realized and the self-desired is to pursue the supernatural.<sup>91</sup> In fact, a coping mechanism for this tension that has been supported by many in the scientific community is religion. In order to satisfy the need for relief in the constant struggle between the ego and the exocentric, rituals and belief systems have been propagated to assure proper self-awareness. Many propose that part of religion's draw and permanence in all kinds of cultures is that it provides satisfaction in the midst of man's unrelenting war within this tension.<sup>92</sup>

Although religion, in part, has been effective in temporarily relieving man's problem and drawing attention away from this battle, ultimately what is required to permanently annihilate tension is freedom from the struggle altogether.<sup>93</sup> According to Muller and other modern theologians, freedom, in the biblical sense of the word, is congruent with the true nature of the human being.<sup>94</sup> Inasmuch as man is in bondage while under tension, freedom describes the liberation from the struggle that humans continuously face as they deal with their openness to the

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<sup>90</sup> Ralph Wendell Burhoe, "What does Determine Human Destiny: Science Applied to Interpret Religion," *Zygon* 12 No. 4 (1977): 352.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 351.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, "I concur...the 'proper mission of religion: it is to help man find meaning and motivation for his participation in an evolution over which he has no certain guidance or final control.'"

<sup>93</sup> Pannenberg, *Anthropology*, 111.

<sup>94</sup> J. Muller, *Die Christliche Lehre von der Sunde Vol. II* (Charleston, SC: Nabu Press, 2012), 12ff. Muller describes it as the "highest possible selfhood."

world and their unrelenting ego. The ideal of freedom in the context of religion is one way that tension works to prove that human beings resemble a free God.

The unlovely results of this tension also provide proof of God's imprint upon unregenerate beings. In response to the Ecclesiastes 3:11, Duane Garrett explains that it is the sense of eternity that creates tension in man which cannot be satisfied in this world.<sup>95</sup> This leaves man in a state of dissatisfaction that ultimately manifests itself pursuing relief, often leading to idolatry. D. A. Carson concludes that idolatry, the heart of all sin, is the "de-godding of God."<sup>96</sup> Just as the presence of idolatry and sin is only correctly explained against the backdrop of absolute goodness, mankind's failures (which are a direct result of this ever-present tension) reveal that men possess a superficial understanding of how the universe should operate. LeRon Shultz goes so far as to say that the actions of sin "must be understood in the context of its relation to the general human longing for goodness."<sup>97</sup> The presence of this longing is evidence that God's image still exists in human beings. Therefore, God's image in humanity is necessary in order to understand the nature of this tension and its result (sin).

The Bible claims that the original sin of Adam, as well as the sin of Satan before him, came out of a desire to usurp God's authority. The incredible hubris Adam demonstrated successfully maligned the *Imago Dei*. As Adam demonstrated in Genesis 3, human beings, because of their broken image, are bent to manipulate their rightful place in the proper organization of authority. Therefore, one might argue that the root cause of sin itself proves that humans have a superficial or a subconscious understanding of how the universe ought to be run.

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<sup>95</sup> Duane Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs: The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1993), 299.

<sup>96</sup> D. A. Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 46.

<sup>97</sup> Shultz, *Reforming*, 190.

As Pannenberg concludes after some reflection, men and women might agree with the law of God that is written upon their hearts; however because of sin, they are inclined to disregard His directives entirely as not applying to their situation or even doubt that laws like them could possibly contain divine authority.<sup>98</sup>

Pannenberg recognizes that many in the secular community believe that egoism in the heart of humans suggests that there is some underline knowledge of that which is central or superior.<sup>99</sup> While the “something” that is “central” or “superior” may not be recognized as God (which is certainly the case for those void of any personal relationship with Him), understanding of what is greater or beyond oneself proves that the image of God in humanity is present within each and every individual. The tension that manifests in man when they are not able to latch onto what is central or eternal results in despair which, as Kierkegaard explains, exists because the spirit longs to achieve by its own power the synthesis between the finite body and the infinite soul.<sup>100</sup>

That there is some limited understanding of the infinite that cannot be presently satisfied suggests that mankind images an infinite being while in a finite world. That there is tension between the man’s ego and his exocentric disposition suggests that man, while imaging an infinite being, does so imperfectly or incompletely.

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>99</sup> Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), 107.

<sup>100</sup> Soren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death*, ed. & trans. Alastair Hannay (New York: Penguin Group, 2004), 107-166.

### *Identity*

The problem of this tension has also created much unrest in man's journey to understand his true identity. Pannenberg recognizes that a pursuit of one's identity results in all kinds of feelings, moods, and passions that are temporarily satisfied in a variety of insufficient behaviors.<sup>101</sup> Often, this insufficiency is manifested in alienation and the phenomenon of sin.<sup>102</sup> In fact, Pannenberg concludes that the concept of alienation (that is a lack of proper identity) must be connected to the very idea of identity.<sup>103</sup> Therefore, humanity's identity is to be understood as an ideal that has yet to be reached, is presently being pursued, and in most cases, results in alienation.

This prevalent alienation and pursuit of identity might be illustrated most succinctly by a brief look into the many psychological proposals concerning man's selfhood that have been argued throughout modern history. Behavioral schools observe the human being as similar to animals in the areas of learning, responding to reinforcements, trainability, and absence of true freedom or dignity outside of mythical inventions.<sup>104</sup> Cognitive schools assert that the human is an intelligent thinker whose thoughts produce the phenomena that are often referred to as emotions and values.<sup>105</sup> Psychoanalytic schools view the human as a person in turmoil

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<sup>101</sup>Pannenberg, *Anthropology*, 244ff. Here, Pannenberg cites Plato and in his evaluation concludes that understanding the identity and behavior of a human being involves the link between the "at hand" and the "possible, between lack and whole." It is in this tension, as described above, that the battle for identity is waged.

<sup>102</sup>*Ibid.*, 267ff. See also Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology II* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 45ff. Here, Tillich goes into great detail concerning what he calls "estrangement" (i.e. alienation) and inevitably concludes that humans are essentially good and yet presently estranged. This "essentially good" aspect of humanity is evidence that Tillich gives for the image of God in man. However, as he concludes, this essentially good quality exists in a present state of alienation.

<sup>103</sup>*Ibid.*, 278.

<sup>104</sup>B.F. Skinner, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (Toronto: Bantam Vintage, 1971).

<sup>105</sup>Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, *The Person in Psychology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 175.

characterized by powerful internal conflicts (Freud), undifferentiated incompleteness (Jung), or misdirected strivings (Adler).<sup>106</sup> Humanistic schools see the human as a vast reservoir of potential that will eventually find appropriate expression if and when the environment or circumstances are conducive.<sup>107</sup> Postmodernists in psychology view the individual as possessing numerous selves that are socially constructed.<sup>108</sup> Given this variety of opinions regarding man's selfhood or identity, it is clear that humans cannot achieve a firm understanding of who they are by means of scientific inquiry alone.

For this reason, scholars like Rick Hoyle summarize these copious views in an overarching definition of self which reads, "self is a dynamic psychological system, a tapestry of thought, feelings, and motives, that define, direct—even destroy us."<sup>109</sup> Similarly, those of the evangelical persuasion have concluded that the human identity is not the sole product of the human reproductive forces nor is it a result of divine actions alone. Instead, the origin of the human is a creative convergence of nature, nurture, and interactive forces that are operative within both the human and divine, visible and invisible realms.<sup>110</sup> Therefore, given this broad range of scholarship and the tendency toward more holistic definitions of identity, it appears as though instead of dividing man apart into different pieces (as proposed by classical dualism and

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<sup>106</sup>James R. Beck & Bruce Demarest, *The Human Person in Theology and Psychology: Biblical Anthropology for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2005), 180.

<sup>107</sup> Abraham Maslow, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature* (New York: Viking Press, 1971).

<sup>108</sup> L. E. Cahoon, "Limits of the Social and Relational Self," in *Selves, People, and Persons: What Does it Mean to Be a Self?* ed. L. Rouner (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992).

<sup>109</sup> Rick H. Hoyle, Michael H. Kernis, Mark R. Leary, & Mark W. Baldwin, *Selfhood: Identity, Esteem, Regulation* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999).

<sup>110</sup>Stephen P. Greggo, "Souls Origins: How Do the Creationist and Traducianist Perspectives Hold-up to Current Trends in Developmental Psychology?" (Presentation at the Evangelical Theological Society annual meeting, 2001, Colorado Springs, CO).

others), man should be understood as a radical unity. To be human is to possess mind, body, soul, etc. To separate one of these out would leave something less than human.

Introducing theology into the discussion of defining humanity is one of the purposes behind Pannenberg's monumental work, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*. In it, Pannenberg asserts that theology, as well as the other sciences, is necessary in order to arrive at a complete view of the human person and therefore for a human person to arrive at his or her identity.<sup>111</sup> Pannenberg's evaluation of identity incorporates theological considerations in order to build a comprehensive understanding of the human race and provides more proof of the Christian belief that man is made in the image of God.

In his discussion, Pannenberg suggests that maturing individuals through the stages of development are able to arrive at successful self-identification through the experience of trust and openness to the future (see discussions above). H. Kung affirms that because of its lack of limitation, this ability to trust within the human race is a very religious phenomenon.<sup>112</sup> Trust finds a natural correlation to Christianity in that its belief system provides an appropriate channel of trust to the individual and a refined openness to a most glorious future. Although trust can be misplaced in a myriad of persons or propositions, the resurrection of Christ is the event which the Bible itself and history (see Habermas' minimal facts) work to prove trustworthy, the event

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<sup>111</sup> Pannenberg, *Anthropology*, 15-16. "Christian theology in the modern age must provide itself with a foundation in general anthropological studies...Theologians will be able to defend the truth precisely of their talk about God only if they first respond to the atheistic critique of religion on the terrain of anthropology...A disregard of the theological question concerning the human person is, then, implicitly, even if more or less unreflectively, at work in most "contributions to modern anthropology."

<sup>112</sup> H. Kung, *Does God Exist? An Answer for Today*, trans. E. Quinn (Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, 1980), 474.

which successfully demonstrates the culmination of mankind's destiny, and the event which projects the re-emergence of man's perfect identity that was lost in the fall.<sup>113</sup>

This reliable event, which looks ahead to man's ultimate destiny, satisfies man's proclivity to direct himself toward the future and therefore to God.<sup>114</sup> It is the closing off of oneself to this destiny (i.e. choosing to trust in something else) that results in alienation and estrangement (i.e. a lack of identity) both within a community and within oneself.<sup>115</sup> Inasmuch as the resurrection of Jesus Christ, according to the Christian faith, predicts a resurrection for all believers and a time when they will be made complete, or "like Him," this event satisfies mankind's identity crisis and once again works to prove that man is made in the image of God, an image that was lost, but will one day be restored. That men and women even search for an understanding of their identity in the first place suggests that they image the self-existing, self-identified One.<sup>116</sup>

### *Community*

Another result of pervasive tension in the world is the degradation of culture and community.<sup>117</sup> When Pannenberg assesses the present world community, he recognizes a wide variation of cultures that at their core share an underlining foundation. Ultimately, he concludes

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<sup>113</sup> Gary R. Habermas, *The Resurrection of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1980), 11.

<sup>114</sup> Pannenberg, *Anthropology*, 242.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 273. "...if the being of humans is connected with their as yet unfulfilled destiny, then alienation will consist in the fact that they close themselves against the future to which they are destined, and not in their being estranged from themselves in the medium of a thing which they already have or which they produce."

<sup>116</sup> God is recognized as the self-existing, self-identified one throughout Christians theology. See Erickson, *Christian*, 300; Henry Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 23ff; Ex. 3:13-16; 6:2.

<sup>117</sup> Pannenberg, *Anthropology*, 315. "The World that human beings share has never been a natural world. It is nature as they have interpreted and shaped it and subjected it to their own service, but also as it limits and, in many instances, frustrates their efforts."

that it is not possible to fully understand cultural community by means of myth and religion alone. Instead, the tension between the claims of religious tradition on the one side and the changing life experience of individuals and community on the other provides the field in which these phenomena are informed.<sup>118</sup> Tension within the human race (i.e. identity crises) has subsequently led to tension in the world community.

With that said, psychoanalysts and psychologists are able to map the process by which individuals naturally associate themselves with others around them. Starting in infancy, babies begin by interacting with caregivers and their surrounding environment in what some refer to as “normal autism”<sup>119</sup> or, a state of primitive hallucinatory disorientation.<sup>120</sup> Naturally, as they grow, young children begin developing an internal psychology and a symbiotic relationship with their caregiver.<sup>121</sup> Psychologists and psychoanalysts believe that these beginning stages in human development reveal that community and interpersonal relationships play a significant role in human development.

Relationships in community are also widely observed in the educational process. In fact, the school experience is arguably a proving ground for many adolescents as they grow in their ability to maintain appropriate peer relationships (social interactions with others), self-management (self-control and willingness to follow rules), academics (social interactions that facilitate learning), compliance (cooperative abilities with other individuals) and assertion

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<sup>118</sup>Ibid., 321.

<sup>119</sup>Beck & Demarest, *The Human*, 355. “To various degrees the child is unable to make satisfactory contact with other people and seems somehow locked in a private internal world.”

<sup>120</sup> Margaret S. Mahler, Fred Pine, & Anni Bergman, *The Psychological Birth of the Human Infant* (New York Basic Books, 1975), 42.

<sup>121</sup>H. E. Fitzgerald & L. R. Barton, “Infant Mental Health: Origins and Emergence of an Interdisciplinary Field,” *WAIMH Handbook of Infant and Mental Health*, ed. J. D. Osofsky & H. E. Fitzgerald (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2000), 13.

(initiating relationships and activating social exchanges).<sup>122</sup> Success or failure in any one or all of these areas reveals a severe deficiency in the individual's ability to practice community properly and therefore assimilate appropriately in society. In fact, many educators are well aware that the child who participates in healthy friendships with other children has the best chance of succeeding academically. Some even go so far as to suggest that maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships is the single most salient indicator of a youth's successful development.<sup>123</sup> From infancy through adolescence, the idea of the human person in community is pervasive. However, as the individual continues to develop, these relational characteristics within humans grow even more acute.

Most social behavior occurs in some kind of a group or cultural setting. Tindale poignantly observes that "we live in families, travel in car pools, shop with friends, work as teams, worship in congregations, are entertained as audiences, learn in classes, and decide as juries."<sup>124</sup> In fact, man's proclivity to place himself in group settings can be seen in any number of institutions and professional fields. Churches lead with pastoral teams, school districts operate by means of administrative alliances, corporations have boards, and democracies are run by the people. Therefore, from infancy through later stages of development and eventually to advanced adulthood and beyond, mankind seems to naturally pursue community with others and develop more completely by means of relationships.

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<sup>122</sup>Kenneth W. Merrell, *Behavioral, Social, and Emotional Assessment of Children and Adolescents* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Assocs., 2003), 316.

<sup>123</sup> Fred Frankel and Robert Myatt, *Children's Friendship Training* (New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2003), 3. The maintenance of friendships demands that the individual be able to focus on others, not just self; to treat others as equals; and to deal with conflict appropriately. Similar skills in adults often determine whether or not the individual will be able to function well in a marriage relationship.

<sup>124</sup> R. S. Tindale et al., eds., *Theory and Research on Small Groups* (New York: Plenum Press, 1998), ix.

According to Pannenberg, the social development of man, similar to man's search of personal identity and longing for relief of the tension within him, is another example of man's pursuit of attaining wholeness, a wholeness that is not possible apart from community with others.<sup>125</sup> However, this wholeness is not attainable in the world as it presently exists. Although Aristotle celebrated man as a political animal and saw his completion in the state, Pannenberg understands man's completion in a different type of community and in a different life altogether. He suggests that instead of removing theological understanding from the realm of understanding humans as communal creatures, it is theology itself that is responsible for the full development of the relationship between individuals, society, and religion.<sup>126</sup> He is not alone in inserting theology into the discussion of man's ability to form and maintain relationships. Arnold Gehlen, in his interpretation of the organization of society suggests that religion plays an important role in human socialization.<sup>127</sup> Similarly, James Beck notes that it is only through the inclusion of theology that psychologists are able to properly and most fully infer that relationality is indeed an inherent feature of human personhood.<sup>128</sup>

If this assertion is true, and theological consideration is required to understand man's tendency to form relationships, then it is important to discover how this universal desire for community and relationship is ultimately satisfied and where it comes from in the first place. In order to elucidate how community relates to the image of God, it is fitting to begin with one of

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<sup>125</sup> Pannenberg, *What is Man?*, 110.

<sup>126</sup> Pannenberg, *Anthropology*, 146ff. see also, 435. "The religious basis for institutions of family and clan has remained normative despite all the historical changes that not only the structures of family and marriage, but also religion itself have undergone, and despite the more or less marked secularization of these institutions as a result of a greater differentiation within the social system."

<sup>127</sup> Arnold Gehlen, *Urmensch und Spätkultur: philosophische Ergebnisse und Aussagen* (Bonn: Athenaüm-Verlag, 1956), 199ff.

<sup>128</sup> Beck & Demarest, *The Human*, 355.

the more advanced and diversified manifestations of man's relational capacity, the state and its politics. First, Pannenberg proposes that the political nature of human beings foreshadows a part of human destiny which, like creation as a whole, will be fulfilled in the future and will only then be definitively known.<sup>129</sup> Man's desire to maintain order in community and establish appropriate rule over jurisdictions, (a desire that permeates the histories of nearly all people in every location), looks ahead toward a time in which that desire will be satisfied in the most appropriate way. Man's desire also discreetly resembles the desires of God and history's movement toward that which is presented in the Bible. This manifestation of perfect political order and community is what the Bible and Christian theology refers to as the Kingdom of God (Matt. 5-7; 24:14).<sup>130</sup> Therefore, one role of the political order, a natural result of man in community, is to point ahead to the kingdom of God as a distinct and expected reality.<sup>131</sup> Pannenberg suggests that man's restless demand to find peace in fellowship with God and with others will one day be answered in this kingdom.<sup>132</sup> In that kingdom, communion with God and communion with others will be made complete.

Only the Christian concept of the kingdom of God provides a satisfactory fulfillment of man's desire for perfect community (both with God and with others) and only the image of God in man provides a satisfactory answer for why this desire exists in the first place. That there is an underlining desire for peace across the globe suggests that peace is recognized as superior to

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<sup>129</sup> Pannenberg, *Anthropology*, 449. This fits nicely with Pannenberg's understanding of man's alignment towards the eschaton and view of revelation.

<sup>130</sup> A. J. Visser describes this kingdom as taking place in the realm of great abundance, fertility, and renewal that the world would experience upon Jesus' second coming as He returns to rule. A. J. Visser, "A Bird's-Eye View of Ancient Christian Eschatology," *Numen* 14 (1967): 10-11.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 450.

<sup>132</sup> Pannenberg, *Systematic III*, 580. "Only in common praise of the Creator does the free fellowship of human beings with one another find a basis."

discord. That there is a desire for order, justice, and proper rule suggests that these elements are universal principles, which although applied differently in various settings, suggest that all resemble a God who will one day restore order, justice, and proper rule in a perfect kingdom. The kingdom of God properly satisfies man's desire for community—corporately in that it will consist of a perfect society ruled perfectly by a perfect God (a desire that man reveals through the exercise of groups and politics), and personally in that each citizen will have a perfect relationship with their perfect caregiver (a fundamental characteristic in human beings that exists from infancy).<sup>133</sup>

Christianity's message of redemption and the subsequent hope of the resurrection successfully assign eternal significance and importance to each individual, making them viable participants in society. Through Christ's resurrection, the potential hope of each individual involves communion with God and immortal existence that supersedes life within the state or any other presently existing community.<sup>134</sup> Because Christ's resurrection provides the opportunity for relationship between God and man, those who embrace the resurrection will not only enjoy communion with God throughout their present life, they will also enjoy eternal community with God and others one day in His Kingdom. That humans image a God who is working toward a perfect community explains the prevalence of community and ultimately foreshadows the kingdom that will be enjoyed in the future. Therefore, as much as it involves human relationships, groups, families, clans, and government, community and relationship is another example of God's imprint on the human person. Humans as relational beings in

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<sup>133</sup>Ibid., 229ff.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 447.

community reflect their Creator who is a relational being<sup>135</sup> and about the community-building business.

### *Sacred Play*

As has already been revealed in Pannenberg's work, man is directed toward the future and yet stuck in the present. Although relief may be found in community, another way man has found relief is through what Pannenberg refers to as sacred play. "Play" at its root is a means of imitating some activity or ideal.<sup>136</sup> Therefore, "sacred play" is a term used to describe religious rituals in which members of a community imitate what was demonstrated in the past and look ahead to the future when this imitation becomes participation in the activity itself. R. Guardini and H. Rahner uncover how Christian liturgy is one manifestation of sacred play.<sup>137</sup> They show how different ordinances and traditions like the Lord's Supper look ahead to the eschatological destiny that the believer will share with Jesus Christ (made possible by His death and resurrection).<sup>138</sup>

Many psychologists and secular anthropologists recognize the crucial role religion plays in humanity. Gordon Allport states that all religions (or systems of sacred play), supply a world-conception that has logical simplicity and serene majesty.<sup>139</sup> Freud concluded that religion began

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<sup>135</sup> God as a relational being is a fundamental tenant of the Christian faith. Orthodox Christianity proclaims that God exists in relationship to Himself as the Triune God. The doctrine of the trinity might be summarized as follows: There is only one God (Deut. 4:35; 6:4-5; John 5:44), The Father, Son (Jesus), and the Spirit are equally declared throughout Scripture to be God (John 6:27; John 1:1-4; Acts 5:3-4); and though one God, The Father, Son, and Spirit are distinct persons (1 Cor. 1:3; John 14:16). Understanding God's triune nature underscores his relationality. Therefore, it is natural for human beings, made in the image of God, to be relational creatures.

<sup>136</sup> Jean Piaget, *Play, Dreams, and Imitation in Childhood*, trans. C. Gattengo & F. M. Hodgson (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), 121.

<sup>137</sup> R. Guardini, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, trans. A. Lane (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1930), 85ff. as well as H. Rahner's remarks on the context of this theme in the patristic vision of the "playing of the church," in his *Man at Play*, trans. B. Battershaw & E. Quinn (New York: Herder & Herder, 1965), 46ff.

<sup>138</sup> Pannenberg, *Anthropology*, 337.

with human's fear of nature and therefore pervades humanity as a real influence.<sup>140</sup> Neo-Freudians suggest that every person has a religious need for an orienting frame and for something to revere.<sup>141</sup> Even some evolutionists suggest that religion should not be abandoned. They conclude that if religion is part of the brain's system that has evolved over the centuries, people live best when they live in harmony with that internal reality.<sup>142</sup>

No one can deny religion's incredible presence throughout the world's history. Sacred play appears to be a valid part of human societies of all kinds in all places. Similarly, the vigor of faith is shown to have persisted even in hostile environments such as the state-supported atheism of the Soviet Union or the skeptical scientism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the west.<sup>143</sup> Also, the amount of resources and energy allocated to religion indicates that sacred play is important and even central to the human experience (whether in organized church settings or disorganized atheism). Given this survey of popular secular opinions, it is clear that religion is pervasive in anthropological thought and deserves special attention in understanding the constitution of humanity.

On an equally broad scale, the use of symbols and foreshadowing rituals has permeated anthropological discussions throughout the centuries. In many cases, sacred play combines the elements of permanent images, such as Christ, or the Holy Spirit, and the repeated symbols of

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<sup>139</sup>Gordon W. Allport, *The Individual and His Religions: A Psychological Interpretation* (New York, MacMillan, 1950), 19.

<sup>140</sup>Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1964): ix-x.

<sup>141</sup>Erich Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion* (New York: Bantam, 1950), 25.

<sup>142</sup>Bjorn Grinde, "The Biology of Religion: A Darwinian Gospel," *Journal of Social and Evolutionary Systems* 21 (1998): 20. Interestingly, this evolutionist even recommends later on in this book that one should choose which God they will serve carefully. Although in conservative circles religion is not explained as a result of evolutionary development, this conclusion is striking because it suggests that religion is a natural or internal component in mankind's being.

<sup>143</sup>Beck & Demarest, *The Human*, 202.

what is represented (crosses, doves, flames, etc.). Pannenberg suggests that the Christian justification of images and repeated symbols in worship stems from its belief that God appealed to this tendency by imaging Himself through Jesus Christ.<sup>144</sup> However, in order to understand why any religious symbol or tradition pervades the church today, one must appreciate mankind's natural inclination to imitate and participate in the divine (a result of how men and women resemble the Divine).<sup>145</sup>

One example of sacred play, the Lord's Supper, has severe eschatological implications and also satisfies the tendency for humans to participate in the sacred. In fact, in Luke 24, one observes the resurrected Christ "playing" along with two disciples in the sharing of communion. In this way, Jesus linked His bodily presence with the sharing of a meal of bread and wine and connected it with the performance of an action.<sup>146</sup> This suggests that the activity of the Lord's Supper sums up the ministry and destiny of Jesus and connects the created reality of human beings and their social life with their eschatological destiny in which they will share of this meal with Christ literally.<sup>147</sup>

Baptism is very similar. In Paul's instructions to the church in Rome, he communicates the following: "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). This didactic remark teaches that baptism symbolizes a past act

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<sup>144</sup> Pannenberg, *Anthropology*, 328. See also, H. von. Campenhausen, "The Theological Problem of Images in the Early Church," in *Tradition and Life in the Church: Essays and Lectures on Church History*, trans. A. V. Littledale (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1968), 199.

<sup>145</sup> See discussions above on openness and exocentricity.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 329.

<sup>147</sup> Matt. 26:29—"But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

(being buried with Christ) and also looks ahead to a future hope (being raised like Christ). Both of these references hinge on the resurrection of Jesus and allow the individual to imitate what has happened and what is yet to occur by means of this form of sacred play. Because the Lord's Supper and baptism involve an element of anticipation for a future event, it is fitting to interpret its place in anthropological discussion.<sup>148</sup> Because their execution symbolizes a spiritual reality, these are correctly interpreted as examples of sacred play.

However, the phenomenon of sacred play is not limited to the Christian religion. Jewish festivals, Ramadan, Buddhist meditation, and Hindu rituals also attempt to participate in the divine by means of their own set of practices. In looking across the world, secular anthropologists and theologians alike cannot ignore that men and women, in many ways, attempt to participate in the divine by means of copious traditions, rites, and rituals. That humans involve themselves in these episodes of sacred play suggests that in some imperfect way, they resemble the sacred. That they attempt to participate in the divine suggests that they are made in the divine's image.

### **Conclusion**

These six considerations satisfy the compendium of anthropological ideas that collectively work to prove that humans resemble their Creator in some discreet way or are made in God's image.

1. Openness to the World
2. Exocentricity
3. Tension and the pursuit of satisfaction
4. Identity and the search thereof

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<sup>148</sup> Pannenberg, *Systematic*, 275-293.

## 5. Community and capability of pursuing relationship

## 6. Sacred play

An individual's openness to the world around him or her, exocentricity, tension, search for identity, fascination with community, and participation in sacred play are anthropological considerations that provide a more complete analysis of how human beings are put together. Similarly, mankind is most fully understood when one considers humanity on both a theological as well as a scientific level. As one considers each of these considerations theologically, one cannot help but make the clear connections between humanity and divinity. Pannenberg asserts that humanity cannot be understood without an investigation into theology because it alone provides an eschatological preview of the time in which man's many inclinations and anticipations will be satisfied.<sup>149</sup> Therefore because theology is required to understand anthropology, the two disciplines are inextricably connected. Both, at their core, are derivative of the same subject, God Himself—theology because God is the subject, and anthropology because humans image God.

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 532.

CHAPTER 4:  
ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSAL AND ITS LEGITIMACY

**Introduction**

Now that a compendium of anthropological considerations has been proposed along with appropriate connections to the image of God, it is important to discuss how this list compares with the minimal facts approach of Habermas in order to discern whether or not it works the same way, is equally effective, and can be used in apologetic discussions. What follows is a comparison and contrast between the minimal facts approach and the proposed anthropological compendium.

**Comparison: How the Minimal Facts and Anthropological Compendium Resemble each Other**

The first obvious similarity between the two sets of data is that they both represent a concise list of facts in their respective fields. What the minimal facts approach for Habermas accomplishes in the historical community is what the proposed compendium accomplishes in the anthropological community. Both look in a relatively narrow field (history and anthropology) and focus on those convictions that can be related to or answered using that which applies best in their field of study (i.e. the resurrection of Jesus Christ in a historical arena and the image of God in humanity in the anthropological arena). Neither compendium attempts to exhaust the scholarship nor does either attempt to answer more than one theological quandary.<sup>150</sup> Therefore,

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<sup>150</sup> Habermas' lists of minimal facts do not exhaust all of the data available to the apologists when trying to prove or defend the resurrection. Similarly, the six anthropological considerations do not formalize a complete survey of all of the anthropological data that could be used to validate the image of God in humanity. Instead, they are those facts and considerations that Habermas and the author of this argument feel are the best at proving their respective inquiries.

they are congruent in their commitment to be concise with the facts used and appropriate in the way they focus on one particular issue.

Second, attention has been given in both approaches to demonstrate that what is presented finds agreement in the liberal communities of their respective fields in order to prove uniquely Christian hypotheses. Habermas makes this absolutely clear in his many published works as he proves the resurrection.<sup>151</sup> Similarly, Pannenberg is unapologetic in his use of evolutionists, secularists, and liberal scholars in the psychoanalytic and psychological community as he lays theological claim to anthropology.<sup>152</sup> Both approaches draw attention to useable data, even when it comes from or is alluded to in an extra-biblical context or non-conservative circle. This allows their approaches to carry weight in both a believing community and a non-believing community. Because Habermas and Pannenberg are fearless in confronting and even implementing what liberals are saying about history and anthropology, they are effective in speaking to those outside of the church and bringing the truth of the resurrection and the *Imago Dei* into the secular world.

As the minimal facts approach was shown to be characteristic of evidentialism (proving an argument by presenting good evidence), the anthropological compendium involves the same epistemological framework. In the same way the minimal facts observe historical data that help provide good reasons for believing in the resurrection, the anthropological considerations provide reasons to believe that humans were created in God's image by delineating the observable tendencies in men and women. The minimal facts help prove the historical claim of Christ's resurrection by drawing attention to data that secular historians assert in the same way

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<sup>151</sup>See Beckwith, Craig & Moreland, *To Everyone*, 190-191 and Habermas & Moreland, *Beyond Death*, 126-36.

<sup>152</sup>Pannenberg, *Anthropology*, 13. "...development in theology can be understood only as an expression of the overall intellectual situation in the modern era."

the proposed compendium works to defend the *Imago Dei* by drawing attention to the anthropological observations of secular scientists and psychologists.

Both the minimal facts and the anthropological compendium are concise and focused, sensitive to the liberal/secular community, and evidential in their approach to defending the claims of Christianity. Now that a discussion of their similarities has been presented, it is important to analyze how these two approaches differ.

### **Contrast: How the Minimal Facts and Anthropological Compendium Differ**

The first major difference between the two apologetic systems described above is that one formally exists while the other has been pieced together. Habermas, Craig, and others have already assembled a set of concise data that works to prove the resurrection historically. Pannenberg has not done the same in order to prove that mankind images God. Instead, the purpose of this work was to discover whether or not it was possible to construct an anthropological compendium of facts using the work of Pannenberg as evidence for the *Imago Dei*. While Habermas' purpose was to construct an apologetic tool, Pannenberg's purpose involved establishing theology's legitimacy in the academy; that is to say, if we are to do scientific anthropology we must also include theology in the discussion. To ignore this aspect of humanity is to ignore a feature that is vital to human experience and identity. However, after analyzing the copious considerations found throughout his works and the way in which they deal with the secular community, this thesis has been successful in carefully constructing an apologetic compendium using anthropology in order to help prove the *Imago Dei*. Therefore, the first major difference between the two approaches is that the minimal facts have already been established while the anthropological considerations are formulated from the works of Pannenberg for this specific argument.

The second major difference between these two sets of data is that the minimal facts are more rigid and timeless than anthropological considerations promulgated by this thesis. For example, the empty tomb is able to stand alone as one singular piece of evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ that will not change in its meaning because of new advances in science or language. Similarly, the appearances experienced by the disciples of the risen Christ, is another piece of evidence that, as a historical observation, is not subject to degradation as the world continues to progress. Although these two might be stated in slightly different ways, their confirmation as facts will not evolve upon further technological, sociological, or scientific development. This is different in the proposed anthropological compendium. In that set of data, the terms used are not consistent over time or space. For instance, with regards to the fourth item (identity), Pannenberg labels the disruption of identity alienation<sup>153</sup> while Tillich refers to this as estrangement.<sup>154</sup> Similarly, in the final item of the compendium, Pannenberg is shown to label religious activity as “sacred play”<sup>155</sup> while others use “ritual,” or “tradition.” These differences in the language require that attention be given in order to demonstrate that each consideration is indeed speaking of the same thing. Anthropology, as a discipline, by its very nature is subject to modification, evolution, and clarification in ways that historical facts are not. Therefore, in this way, the two systems diverge.

Although both laden with their own set of emphases, each list of facts brings a different perspective to the table. For instance, because historical facts are used in Habermas’ minimal facts approach, the major conclusions pertaining to this system are set in the past. It is obvious that Habermas and others believe that the Bible gives an account of a historic event that is worth

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<sup>153</sup> Pannenberg, *Anthropology*, 244ff.

<sup>154</sup> Tillich, *Systematic*, 45ff.

<sup>155</sup> Pannenebrg, *Anthropology*, 322ff.

investigating and important enough to prove. However, Pannenberg's anthropological perspectives involve implications of mankind that align themselves with the future.<sup>156</sup> For example, as was mentioned earlier, the satisfaction of mankind's tension, need for identity, and desire for perfect community in Pannenberg's mind will not be realized until a future time of completion (i.e. when man participates in a resurrection of his own). Therefore, although the minimal facts approach of Habermas tends to focus on the completed act of the resurrection in the past, the proposed compendium anticipates a future time when the humanity will reach its most completed form and when its desires and yearnings will be satisfied.

One other difference between these two approaches is their relationship to other Christian propositions. As mentioned earlier, the minimal facts approach of Habermas takes a singular proposition—that Jesus Christ was raised bodily from the grave—and seeks to prove its validity. This singular proposition depends very little on other uniquely Christian propositions in order to be validated. In contrast, the proposed compendium of anthropological facts is related to other Christian propositions in significant ways. The proposal takes the proposition that humans resemble their Creator and seeks to prove it by means of anthropological data. However, along the way, the reader is required to accept other propositions. For instance, the fourth item in the compendium suggests that identity and the search thereof is one way that humans resemble a God who is the self-existent, self-identified one. That God is self-existent and self-identified is an additional proposition that must be adopted if this specific argument is able to work properly. Similarly, that the presence of community reveals that humans image their God depends on the additional proposition that God is working toward a perfect community and exists in communion

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<sup>156</sup> Pannenberg, *Revelation*, 131. Here Pannenberg concludes in his second thesis that “revelation is comprehended completely in the beginning, but at the end of the revealing history.”

with Himself. Therefore, the proposed compendium must be understood in relationship with a broader range of theological consideration and cannot be divorced from them, lest the entire construction be significantly weakened. However, this does not diminish the success of what this thesis has accomplished by way of using secular data to point to a Christian concept of human nature and therefore a biblical frame of reference.

### **Analysis**

Having discussed the significant points of correlation and discreet differences between these two approaches it is appropriate to analyze the legitimacy of this thesis' proposal. Inasmuch as this thesis investigated the possibility of constructing a concise set of anthropological considerations that could be used to help prove that humans are created in the image of God, this thesis has succeeded. However, it is important to understand that the anthropological compendium presented from the work of Pannenberg exists for more broad reasons than does the minimal facts approach of Habermas. With that said, although Habermas is building an apologetic to support Christianity on the basis of the historical resurrection, Pannenberg's attempt to lay theological claim to anthropological study has opened the door to the possibility of constructing an apologetic. Theology informs science, but at the same time, Pannenberg has demonstrated that science can inform theology by offering empirical evidence to substantiate its claims.

While the minimal facts approach directly relates each individual piece to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the anthropological compendium must be understood in relation to other theological conclusions in order to work most effectively. Connecting any or all of the liberal community's assumptions of anthropology listed in the proposed compendium requires that the

reader be conversant with a broader range of theological understanding. It is one thing to either confirm or deny a historic event. It is another entirely to agree with a theological construct.

Also, it is appropriate to acknowledge that comparing documented historical data to anthropological analysis might be an example of comparing apples and oranges. Historical data is logged in copious records, is not subject to change, and in many cases it exists in shades of black and white. Anthropological data is often differentiated, evolving, and inconsistent in the labels it uses. Therefore, one may not be able to entirely judge whether or not one approach is more effective than the other, whether or not one should precede the other, or whether or not one is easier to use. Ultimately, they are two different approaches that share very little beyond their design.

CHAPTER 5:  
CONCLUSION

Whether it is man's openness to the world around him, the insatiable desire to center himself, the ever-present tension and subsequent pursuit of satisfaction, the search for identity, the phenomenon of community, or the prevalence of sacred play, these anthropological considerations are most fully understood when one considers them on a theological as well as a scientific level. As one considers each of these theologically, he or she can make the clear connections these tendencies have with the Christian idea of the image of God in the human race. Pannenberg concludes that insofar as theology is required to understand humanity in a comprehensive way, it reveals that the subject of its study (mankind) is related in some way to the subject of the system (theology) necessary to illuminate it appropriately (God).<sup>157</sup> Those who disregard the theological implications of the human race in their anthropological investigations will not arrive at a robust understanding of mankind and fail to appreciate that humans are made in the image of God.

The gleanings from Pannenberg's interactions with the secular sciences that have been delineated in this argument reveal that anthropology and apologetics are not mutually exclusive, specifically regarding an understanding of the man's unique constitution. Not only does the *Imago Dei* provide answers to many questions in the anthropological community, but the scientific data and observable tendencies that this community studies provide more proof of God Himself and something of His purpose. These conclusions should widen the playing field of apologetics, a field primarily concerned with history and revelation, in order to include

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 532.

anthropology in theological perspective. Failure to accommodate this addition would be comparable to settling for a less-sophisticated playbook in the competition for the truth.

If the conservative theological scholars are going to assert that the resurrection is central and paramount to Christian teaching,<sup>158</sup> then it is incumbent upon those scholars to defend the resurrection on every level and to demonstrate the implications the resurrection using appropriate data. Similarly, if conservative Christians are going to claim that humans are human because they are made in God's image, then it is incumbent upon them to confront the anthropological community and leave no stone unturned in an effort to support the legitimacy of that claim. That being said, this thesis does not completely satisfy all inquiries pertaining to humanity nor does it give an answer for all of the nuances of the human being. Instead, it only opens the door to further study by means of a modest approach to proving the *Imago Dei*. Professionals in physics, biology, art, etc. should also be encouraged to investigate their disciplines in order to reveal any and all connections they will inevitably have with the tenets of the Christian faith.

This argument has revealed that it is possible to construct a concise compendium of data for apologetic purposes outside of historical discussions. Although those fascinated with history have popularized this method up until this point, this thesis has demonstrated that one can organize data in other fields to help defend not only specific events, but theological propositions.

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<sup>158</sup> See William L. Burton, "The Significance of Resurrection in the New Testament Rooted in Judaism," *Bible Today* 49 No. 5 (October 2011): 285-290. Here, Burton demonstrates the resurrection's significant impact on all of the New Testament. See also Kenneth O Gangel, "Preaching the Resurrection Then and Now," *Grace Journal* 10 No. 1 (Winter 1969): 18-25. Gangel concludes that the resurrection has severe implications for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. See also George R. Beasley-Murray, "Resurrection and Parousia of the Son of Man," *Tyndale Bulletin* 42 No. 2 (1991): 296-309 & Stephen J. Wellum, "Christ's Resurrection and Ours (1 Corinthians 15)," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*, 6 No. 3 (Fall 2002): 76-89. Both of these articles describe how the resurrection is central to things that have yet to transpire in the life of believers and in history in general. See also Henry G. Weston, "The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus the Central Fact in Christianity," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 57 No. 228 (October 1900): 696-708. In this article, Weston states, "of all things it [the resurrection] is preeminently personal and objective..." 708.

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