

Towards the formulation of a Pentecostal doctrine of election

CFJ Kotzé
24072532

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Promoter: Prof dr FP Möller
Co-promoter: Prof dr SP van der Walt

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DECLARATION

I declare that, "Towards the formulation of a Pentecostal doctrine of election" is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of in text citations and bibliographical references.



Signature

Past. C.F.J Kotzé

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KEY TERMS

ENGLISH

Act-structure
Arminianism
Calvinism
Competency of will
Election
Infralapsarianism
Limbic system
Pentecostal theology
Predestination
Sovereignty of God
Supralapsarianism

AFRIKAANS

Akt struktuur
Arminianisme
Calvinisme
Wilsbevoegdheid
Uitverkiesing
Infralapsarianisme
Limbiese sisteem
Pinkster teologie
Predestinasie
Soewereiniteit van God
Supralapsarianisme

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>BCF</i>	The Belgic Confession of Faith
<i>Cat.</i>	Calvin's Catechisms
<i>CD</i>	Church Dogmatics II/2
<i>COD</i>	The Canons of Dordt
<i>Comm.</i>	Calvin's Commentaries
<i>HC</i>	The Heidelberg Catechism
<i>Inst.</i>	The Institutes of the Christian Religion
<i>WCF</i>	The Westminster Confession of Faith

“There is a need to understand one’s continuing degree of blindness, even while one is rejoicing in the degree to which one has come to see” (Ringenberg, 2005:50).

In systematic theology, we do not simply sit passively, listening to the discussion at the round table. Rather, we bring our questions to the dialogue and listen for the various responses to be uttered. Ultimately, we seek to integrate these responses into a coherent answer (Menzies, 1994:245).

ABSTRACT

The Calvinistic and Arminianistic interpretations of the doctrine of election are researched and evaluated as well-established and tested paradigms in an attempt to formulate a doctrine of election that is unique to Pentecostal theology. Reference is made to the development of Pentecostal theology from the beginning of the twentieth century, and specifically the development of the concept of election in Pentecostal thought. While considering Calvinism and Arminianism, a specific Pentecostal perspective is developed concerning the sovereignty of God and human responsibility from a Christocentric paradigm. Man's competence of will is described in relation to God's sovereignty, Dooyeweerd's act-structure, and its implications with regards to the Pentecostal doctrine of election.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The history of the Christian Church testifies to the controversy on the interpretation of the doctrine of election that lead to its formulation as it is commonly understood in current theology of Calvinism and Arminianism. Both of these perspectives had its origin in the Reformation and both these perspectives were greatly influenced by what these theologians understood from their interpretation of Scripture.

The theological paradigms of Calvinism and Arminianism also both bear the name of its original proponents, but these have over a period of several hundreds of years been developed further by many theologians from different countries and many diverse backgrounds. These theologians contributed to the body of theology through many volumes of books, articles and thesis. Some of these contributions are considered in terms of the development of these doctrines from the time of the Council of Dordt up to the way they are reflected and formulised in current theological thought.

The controversy between these two perspectives had a significant influence on the doctrine of the Church. Since this controversy has intensified rather than abated, it is to be anticipated that the question arises how both of these perspectives that are based on Scripture, can be correct, and if an alternative could be proposed.

There can hardly be an aspect of theology that has been researched and written about as much in terms of scope and depth as the doctrine of election. It is therefore unlikely that Arminianists or Calvinists would accept an alternative, whatever it could be. It is also unlikely that a completely new idea can be found that has not already been written about in more than two thousand years that followed the birth of the New Testament Church.

However, since the inception of what was known as the Pentecostal movement, very little has been written with regards to the doctrine of election that is specific to Pentecostal theology. The ongoing growth that the Pentecostal theology has experienced in the last

hundred years justifies a new look at this aspect of soteriology that is crucial to the understanding of Pentecostals toward their own theological understanding of the Bible.

Yong (2009:xvi) holds that, As latecomers to the theology and science arena, ...Pentecostals have the advantage of learning from the history of the conversation". The research of the doctrine of election, therefore, leads us to the two most common and prominent perspectives on the doctrine of election, which are the ones advocated from the deep and rich traditions of Calvinism¹ and Arminianism². This study explores the tension between the Calvinist and the Arminian schools of interpretation with regards to the doctrine of election. The ultimate goal is to develop a Pentecostal model of election unique and specific to Pentecostal theology.

Chapter one deals with the aim and objectives of this thesis, the problem statement, the research question, and the research methodology. It also offers a brief historical overview and background to the development of the five points of Arminianism and the opposing five points of Calvinism. The historical background and development of these two main schools of thought are important factors towards understanding the context of these doctrines which are described in the next chapter.

1.2 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

In an attempt to identify and describe a doctrine of election that is unique and specific to Pentecostal theology, an ecumenical-Pentecostal hermeneutic is employed, taking into account what can be learned from Calvinism and Arminianism as well established and tested paradigms for the doctrine of election. Oliverio (2012:251) describes this approach in saying that,

While the tendency to articulate the faith with an eye toward Christian unity has deep roots in the classical Pentecostal tradition, this emerging hermeneutic adds tradition itself as well as other Christian traditions and their theologies as resources for Pentecostal theology. These Pentecostal theologians have hence sought to interpret God, themselves and their world in relation to other theologies coming from the wider Christian *oikumene*, yet still as Pentecostals...and to theologically contribute a Pentecostal voice to the broader world of Christian theology.

¹ The soteriological system of believe that revolves around a strong view of God's sovereignty, divine determinism, specifically subscribes to *all five* points of Calvinism (TULIP), as propagated by theologians such as Packer, Palmer, Piper, and Sproul.

² Olson (2006:16,17) describes Arminianism as, "A form of protestant theology that rejects unconditional election, reprobation, limited atonement, and irresistible grace. It affirms the character of God as compassionate, having universal love for the whole world...and extending grace-restored free will to accept or resist the grace of God, which leads to either eternal life or spiritual destruction". He asserts that, this is "the Arminianism of Arminius, Wesley and their evangelical heirs".

While both the Calvinist and Arminian schools of thought hold the Bible as their ultimate authority, it is expected that elements of truth are found in both. This study is not to attempt to reconcile these two diverse schools of thought, nor to propose a “middle way” between the two. It is rather the intention of the author to learn from both traditions, and in evaluating these schools of thought, not to proclaim a judgement on either, or to criticize any traditional view in a destructive manner. The aim of this study is rather to look at both models from a new perspective, and specifically, the perspective of Pentecostal theology.

The purpose of the initial aspects of this study is, therefore, to research and evaluate these diverse schools of thought as a backdrop for establishing a doctrine of election from a Pentecostal perspective that is unique and specific to Pentecostal theology. The sovereignty of God and human responsibility, which are two of the main themes of the doctrine of election, are researched in terms of the conditions for salvation and its relation to man's act structure³ as the seat of his will.

The main aim of this study is to develop a Pentecostal doctrine of election.

The secondary objectives are:

- To study and evaluate the Calvinist doctrine of election from a Pentecostal perspective with regards to how the sovereignty of God and human responsibility affect salvation.
- To study and evaluate the Arminian doctrine of election from a Pentecostal perspective with regards to how the sovereignty of God and human responsibility affect salvation.
- To describe the doctrine of election from a Pentecostal perspective and to evaluate this doctrine with regards to how the sovereignty of God and human responsibility affect salvation with specific reference to the act structure of man.

³ The act structure is a concept that originated with Dooyeweerd. It is one of four structures intertwined in the unity of man (Venter, 1972:32). The act structure consists of three aspects namely the knowing, the volitional and the imagination (Taljaard, 1976:181). The act structure can also be defined as the intentionality of the heart of man. It does not necessarily imply an action, but it lays the foundation for every act or deed and it is manifested in reality by a human action (Mulder, 1986:13).

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The doctrine of election leads us to ask two very important questions:

- Why are some people saved?
- Why are some people damned?

The main consideration, when we attempt to answer these questions from the perspective of the doctrine of election, is to determine to what extent the sovereignty of God and the individual's *free*⁴ choice affect salvation.

Arminianism and Calvinism give us two very well developed but opposing views, which are both strongly contested from Scripture. Pentecostal theologians, on the other hand, have largely avoided writing on this aspect of theology (F.P. Möller, Personal communication, February 19, 2014). Is it only a matter of interpreting the Scripture? What should a Pentecostal view of election then entail, and what role does the sovereignty of God and human responsibility play with regards to salvation in the context of Pentecostal theology?

The anthropological model of body, soul and spirit is inadequate to describe the relationship and balance between the sovereignty of God and human freedom. How can we incorporate Dooyeweerd's concept of the act structure to develop and enhance our understanding of human responsibility and free will in terms of regeneration and the application of salvation?

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

What should a Pentecostal view on the doctrine of election enunciate in comparison with the view of the doctrine of election promoted by Calvinism and Arminianism, and how does the sovereignty of God and human responsibility relate to salvation, regeneration, and Dooyeweerd's model of the act structure?

⁴ The term "free choice" needs to be qualified. I agree with Reichenbach, in Basinger and Basinger (1986:103) where he rightly qualifies the libertarian "freedom to make choices" as follows:

Freedom is not the absence of influences, either external or internal...Rather, to be free means that the causal influences do not determine my choice or action. Freedom, as actually found in our experience, is a relative notion: There are degrees of freedom. But where we are free, we could have done other than we did, even though it might have been very difficult to do so.

In order to establish a Pentecostal doctrine of election, we need to ask the following sub questions:

- How should one evaluate the Calvinist doctrine of election from a Pentecostal perspective, with regards to the effect of the sovereignty of God and human responsibility on salvation?
- How should one evaluate the Arminian doctrine of election from a Pentecostal perspective, with regards to the effect of the sovereignty of God and human responsibility on salvation?
- If an election theory can be described from a Pentecostal perspective, how would the sovereignty of God and human responsibility influence salvation, and how would it relate to Dooyeweerd's model of the act structure?

1.5 HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis to this study sets the expectation that;

A Pentecostal doctrine of election can be developed by evaluating the Arminian and Calvinistic interpretations form a Christocentric paradigm. A Christocentric paradigm, as being characteristic of Pentecostal doctrine, has the possibility to establish reconciliation between the sovereignty of God and human responsibility, and also appreciate elements of truth in both the Arminian and Calvinistic interpretations of election.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

A literature analysis is conducted and expository research is employed to evaluate the Calvinistic and Arminian doctrines of election as points of reference for establishing a Pentecostal doctrine of election.

Goddard and Melville (2001:10) give a definition of expository research that is employed throughout this study. They contend that, "By reading widely on a field, and then comparing, contrasting, analysing, and synthesising all points of view on a particular subject, a researcher can often develop important new insights".

Apart from the historical review, criticism will be provided on the traditional doctrine of predestination and election as it is held by both Calvinists and Arminians. This study will also focus on the *Five Points of Calvinism*, seeing that it is representative of this doctrine. The theories of various theologians from the Calvinistic, Arminian and specifically Pentecostal traditions are systematically evaluated and critically analysed from a Christocentric perspective.

Goldsworthy (2002:72) holds that “All facts in the universe, including the facts of the Bible, must be interpreted in the light of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ.” As Christ is the Living Word (John 1:14), He is central to the message and meaning of Scripture. Conner and Malmin assert that: “The entire written Word revolves around Him who is the living Word. His person and work is the theme of God’s written revelation. In the wheel of divine revelation, He is the hub, and all truth are as spokes relating to Him Who is The Truth” (1983:115).

The Socratic model of intellectual investigation is employed to some unspoken forms of dogmatism, paradigms and theories that may have become incorrigible, and petrified. The Socratic model of intellectual investigation implies introspection, self-examination and critically questioning oneself. (Unisa, 2006:7).

Theoretical creative research is conducted in the conclusion and culmination of this study in order to evaluate and summarize the findings of this research. This kind of research is much less structured as experimental research and cannot always be pre-planned. This research method is conducive to the development or creation of new models and theories (Goddard & Melville, 2001:8-9).

1.7 BACKGROUND

1.7.1 John Calvin and the Arminian - Calvinist debate

The controversy between Calvinists and Arminians regarding the doctrine of election did not originate with Calvin or Arminius since they were not contemporaries. Calvin was born on the 10th of July 1509 as Jean Cauvin in Noyon, situated in the French province of Picardy (Dreyer, 2010:3), and Arminius was still very young when Calvin died on the 27th of May 1564.

Graafland (1987:24), lends some insight to the theology of Calvin in his answer to two age old questions, firstly, "...of de belijnenis van de rechtvaardiging van de goddelose door het geloof in Christus alleen niet voldoende was om de genade volkomen tot haar recht te doen komen? The Reformed doctrine of justification teaches that salvation is appropriated, not by works, but by grace alone. It does, however, not successfully answer the second question, "...hoe het komt, dat de ene zondaar wel en de andere niet tot heil komt, doordat hy wel of niet gelooft in Christus?" Alternatively, the question can be rephrased as, "why is it that God's grace is extended to some and not to others?", when the Bible teaches that God is not a respecter of persons, and that God loves the whole world.

The doctrine of justification, which is the heart of Reformed theology (Van Wyk, 2011: [2]), cannot answer this question, since it is the sinner who is justified on the grounds of Christ's merit and not on his own merit. This means that if one sinner must be justified, so must the other. Bavinck (1908:420) adds,

...de verkiezing van menchen is wel ene daad van barmhartigheid, maar toch niet alleen uit de barmhartigheid te verklaren. Want dan had God allen barmhartig moeten zijn, wijl allen ellendig waren. En zoo is de verwerping wel ene daad van gerechtigheid geweest maar niet uit de gerechtigheid alleen te verklaren, want dan waren allen verworpen geworden.

Graafland (1987:24) holds that it is for this reason that Calvin gave prominence to the Doctrine of predestination, and endeavoured to answer this question from this perspective. The doctrine of predestination can answer both questions, since the doctrine of justification is qualified by the doctrine of predestination but not visa-versa. Graafland (1987:24) then conclude,

Het is dan ook te begrijpen, dat Calvijn om het genadekarakter van het heil te funderen, uiteindelijk niet by de rechtvaardigingsleer bleef staan, maar doorstote naar de predestinasieleer. De verkiezing is dus de grond en de bron, waaruit de rechtvaardiging van de zondaar door genade alleen opkomt.

1.7.2 How it all began - Pelagius and Augustine:

To understand the context of the issues that were debated, and the doctrines that were formulated during one hundred and thirty six sittings at the international synod of Dordt, that was held from 13 November 1618, we need to go back to Augustine's writings in response to the teachings of Pelagius (Warburton, 1955:59). This can be viewed as the Arminian - Calvinistic controversy in its embryonic form since Augustine contrasted his monergistic

doctrine of the sovereignty of God and man's inability to cooperate with God's grace, with the synergistic doctrines of Pelagius regarding the free will of man and man's natural ability to do good.

1.7.3 Pelagius

Pelagius was an Irish monk that lived in Rome in approximately the year 400 (D'Assonville, 1980:22). He proposed the idea of the free will of man as the main theme of his theology and taught that:

- The sin of Adam had an effect upon himself only and was not imputed to his posterity.
- Every child born into the world was born in the same state and position in which Adam stood before the Fall.
- The human race does not die due to the death or transgression of Adam and that the human race will not rise again from the dead on account of Christ's resurrection.
- Man can be saved by the law or the gospel.
- There were men who lived without sin before Christ.
- The grace of God is not necessary for man to be holy.
- God gives grace to man in proportion to merit.
- Man has a free will and a capacity to do good without supernatural grace.

(Warburton, 1955:21).

1.7.4 Augustine

Augustine, who lived between 354 – 430 AC, developed the idea of a sovereign God who saves those whom He elected by means of Irresistible Grace (Cairns, 1981:149). Van Genderen and Velema (2008:219) hold that he “can be considered to be the father of the doctrine of election”. He countered the teachings of Pelagius by teaching that:

- Adam's sin affected the whole of his posterity.
- Every child is born into this world with a nature estranged from God.
- The freedom of the human will was lost entirely.
- Man is incapable of doing any good, apart from the effects of the gift of divine grace.
- Preceding grace brings man to conviction of his sinful state, and with this grace, man receives the gift of faith, the knowledge of salvation and the capacity to do good.
- Man needs co-operating grace for every good act and can still not do anything apart from God's grace.
- God's grace is irresistible. It is a sovereign act of God to give grace to man, with no human involvement or choice.
- God only elects those whom He predestined to be saved by giving them the gift of grace, accompanied with all the means to secure their salvation. Others are reprobated.
- Christ died only for the elect.

(Warburton, 1955:38).

Augustine's writings were not a true reflection of the doctrines held by, and defended by the early Christian church. Medieval scholasticism influenced Augustine's interpretation of Scripture, his hermeneutics, and the formulation of his theology. Cairns (1981:149) asserts that, Augustine was responsible for bringing certain errors into Christian theology and that he, "helped to develop the doctrine of purgatory with all its attendant evils. He also emphasized the value of the two sacraments that the doctrine of baptismal regeneration and sacramental grace were logical outcomes of his views". Augustine was responsible for probably the most problematic characteristic of Calvinistic theology, namely the concept of determinism⁵, which was developed from an Aristotelian premise.⁶

Packer (1993:82) admits that, "*Original sin*, meaning sin derived from our origin is not a Biblical phrase, (Augustine coined it)" and that it (original sin) in the context of Calvinism, implies total inability, which in turn means, "the state of not having it in oneself to respond to God and his Word in a sincere and wholehearted way". Boettner (1969:365) contends that Augustine developed the idea of "unconditional election of grace and restricted the purposes of redemption to the definite circle of the elect". Augustine also developed the idea that,

the whole race [of mankind] fell in Adam, that all men by nature are depraved and spiritually dead, that the will is free to sin but not free to do good toward God, that Christ suffered vicariously for His people, that God elects whom He will, irrespective of their merits, and that saving grace is effectually applied to the elect by the Holy Spirit (Boettner, 1969:366).

It is clear from the above that the system of TULIP, that some theologians identify as Calvinism and that was formulated by the synod of Dordrecht, is really based on the theology

⁵ Determinism, and the consequence of this teaching, is described in the Westminster Confession (1646), "God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin; nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established" (III.1). If everything that happens does so because God has ordained it, then it follows that not only has God ordained the eternal suffering of most of those he created, but in the present world God has, through the mechanics of second causes, choreographed down to the smallest detail every murder, every rape, every genocide, every act of child abuse, every famine, every serial killing, every instance of child prostitution, every terrorist atrocity, every expression of racism, every addiction, and every sin.

⁶ Van der Walt (2012:181) holds that

Die Bybel ken nie 'n starre, onbeweeglike God (*deus immutabilis*) nie (Van Eck 1997). Hy is 'n God wat in sy skepping teenwoordig is; iemand wat in die geskiedenis betrokke is; iemand wat hom oor sondears ontfem; iemand wat selfs berou kan hê (vgl. Jona 3:10). Die Skrif openbaar God ook as die getroue, standvastige, maar nie as 'n onbeweeglike beweging ('n kontradiksie in sigself) nie. Terselfdertyd leer die Woord van die Here ook nie van 'n gedetermineerde mens nie, maar as iemand wat opgeroep word om (volgens God se liefdeswet) tussen goed en kwaad te kies en om verantwoordelikheid te aanvaar vir wat hy kies. Aristoteles het egter nie God se liefdeswet geken nie, maar slegs 'n oorsaaklike verhouding tussen sy god en die mens.

of Augustine rather than that of Calvin. From the above we recognise the doctrine of total depravity (T), unconditional election (U), and limited atonement (L). Boettner (1967:367) also reminds us that, “The Reformation was essentially a revival of Augustinianism”.

Augustine’s theology was strongly influenced by the philosophy of Plato, Augustine and others, which was evident in his the underlying assumptions of determinism and Stoicism. Shellrude, (2011: 80) contends that,

Augustine would have been familiar with determinism from both Manichaeism and Stoicism. However, it appears that his determinism is rooted in the Platonic and Neoplatonic concept that an absolutely perfect being (God) must be ‘impassible or immutable,’ (i.e. could not experience any inward changes).

Sanders (2007:148) highlights aspects in Augustine’s theology that is evidence of his philosophical assumptions and premises from which he developed his theology when he asserts that, “Augustine applied divine immutability pervasively in his theology, and this made any responsiveness by God problematic”. This refers to Stoicism. Some of the consequences of the Stoic assumptions are that, “if God’s predestination for salvation depend on his foreknowledge of who would come to Christ, then God’s will would be dependent on humanity and that would be a violation of the divine immutability and impassibility” (Sanders 2007:148).

The underlying Stoic assumptions in Augustine’s theology resulted in certain conundrums for which there is no logical escape. Augustine contends that all things are determined by God, and Sanders (2007:149) describes the result of this assumption in asserting that for Augustine,

God cannot be thought to actually desire the salvation of each and every sinner because it would mean that God willed something that did not come about. It would imply a risk and failure on God’s part, for God would not get everything he wanted. Augustine reasoned as follows: (1) God’s will is never thwarted in the least detail for it is an omnipotent and immutable will. (2) Scripture asserts that not all will be saved. (3) Therefore, God must not want each and every sinner to be saved. If God wanted them saved, then they would be saved. Hence, the biblical passages that seem to assert that God wants them saved must only appear to teach this while not really asserting it.

Calvin’s theology was largely based on the theology of Augustine (Walls and Dongell, 2004:8, 9) and Calvin’s theology, somewhat augmented by Beza, was the springboard for Arminian theology. Peterson and Williams (2004:36) assert that,

In comparison to Augustine’s monergistic doctrine of grace, the teachings of the church fathers tended toward a synergistic view of redemption. For them, salvation is the result of working

together of divine grace and human agency...The synergism in pre-Augustinian thought held that divine grace is necessary for salvation but that our salvation is as much a product of the exercise of human free will and obedience to the law of God as of grace.

Berkhof (1953:109), in agreement with Peterson and Williams, holds that the earlier Church Fathers regarded predestination as “the prescience of God with regards to human deeds, on the basis of which He determines their future destiny”. Boettner (1969:365) concurs by asserting that Augustine had moved far beyond what the early church fathers taught, which was “a synergism in which there was a cooperation between grace and free will” and that “man had [according to the early church fathers] the full power to accept or reject the gospel”. Lane (2009:67) holds that Calvin criticized the “church fathers and medievals for their idea of ‘cooperation with grace’. Only Augustine meets his approval”. Calvin’s criticism of the church fathers is fascinating, since the church fathers were normally deemed to have been a relatively pure source of doctrine (Van der Walt, 2010b:110).

While many books have been written on Calvin and his theology, it will be absurd to even attempt to define his theology in one single paragraph or even a few pages. Even an elaborate and well written thesis may not truly and fully do justice to the genius of the achievement of his life’s work. However, it may suffice, when isolating a specific aspect of his work, to refer to renowned “Calvin theologians” (Those whom have studied his works in depth) to lead us to a clearer understanding. It is no secret that Calvin’s theology has a Christ-centeredness as one of its main characteristics, but there is also a pneumatological aspect to consider. With regards to the Christological and pneumatological perspective of Calvin’s theology, Velema (1993:474, 475) gives a valuable, description in asserting that,

Ik sluit me hierin graag positief aan bij Graafland, die erop wijst dat het christologische gehalte van de verkiezingsleer bij Calvijn een zwaar accent krijgt (Graafland, 1987:35). Wij kunnen de verkiezing alleen leren kennen in Christus, die immers "een zeer heldere spiegel der genadige verkiezing" wordt genoemd (Calvijn, *Insluiting*, III, 24, 17, O.S. 4, 380). De Heilige Geest wordt de realisator en operator van de verkiezing genoemd doordat Hij de zondaar roept en doet delen in de rechtvaardiging. Roeping en rechtvaardiging - we zagen het hierboven al - zijn tekenen van de verkiezing (Calvijn, 111, 21, 7). De Geest laat ons immers in Christus en Zijn weldaden delen (Calvijn, 111, 1, 1). Dit noem ik de *pneumatologische setting van Calvijns christologisch gestructureerde verkiezingsleer*.

This evaluation of Velema gives us an indication of how Calvin positioned his theology in terms of the Christological and pneumatological perspectives.

1.7.5 The influence of Augustine and other theologians on the theology of Calvin

Calvin researchers such as Kayayan (Personal communication, August 16, 2012) admonish us to always evaluate the theology and work of Calvin in the context of the times in which he lived and worked. This means that we must take Calvin's background into account, as well as the challenges and political conditions that Calvin faced during his lifetime.

Calvin and his work have been, and are still being researched from every possible perspective to determine to what extent other theologians, philosophers and the *geist* of his time influenced him. We must accept that as with any other theologian, thoughts and trends of the time affected his theology and his understanding of the Scriptures.

Bebelotzky, who, in 1977, researched the various schools of thought that may have influenced Calvin's theology, holds that, "Platonic ideas run through the thought of the reformer of Geneva like a golden thread" (Van der Walt, 2010b:112).

Augustine had a profound influence on the theology of Calvin, especially in the areas of sin and grace (Van Wyk, 2010:49) and specifically on the idea of cooperating with grace (Lane, 2009:67). Calvin referred to Augustine 1175 times in his institutes of 1559, and 4119 references when all Calvin's work is taken into account (Van der Walt, 2010b:111). Calvin used Augustine's writings as one of his main sources of inspiration in constructing his theology (Vorster, 2010:72). Van der Walt (2010b:111) holds that Calvin did not only see Augustine as a theologian or a church leader, but as "a guide to the Word of God, and his writings, means by which the living Source could once more be reached".

Apart from Augustine, Calvin was also influenced by Luther, D'Etaples, Bude, Erasmus and Bulinger. Calvin's writings reflect currents ranging from ⁷*Platonism* to late medieval ⁸*Scotism* (Van der Walt 2010a:25). Bucer also had a substantial influence on Calvin that is observable in both the writing of the second edition his Institutes, as well as in his on the book of Romans, which he wrote at more or less the same time (Velema, 1993:465). Calvin was an

⁷ *Platonism* can be defined as the contrast between the physical world and the world of ideas. The material world is only a shadow of the real word (of ideas). The body belongs to the temporal, material world, while the soul belongs to the eternal world of ideas (Deist, 1987:130).

⁸ *Scotism* stems from the teachings of Duns Scotus, who advocated "the priority of the will over reason and by defining God as the highest Will rather than the highest Reason" (Deist, 1987:152).

admirer of Erasmus and humanism. He wrote a commentary on the Roman philosopher, Seneca's Clemency in 1532, which was a work of humanist scholarship (Lane, 2009:11).

Calvin employed both an ⁹existential and sapiential approach in this theology, and he was, as a practitioner of the sapiential approach, "not only a critic, but also an "inheritor of medieval theology" (Wyatt, 1996: vii). It resulted in a remarkable internal tension throughout his theology noted "often enough by interpreters, either explicitly through critical comment or implicitly through the considerable effort required to sustain exposition of Calvin's theology as a consistent whole" (Wyatt, 1996: vii).

Wyatt (1996: ix) contends that, "Calvin's use and evaluation of the classical philosophers is instructive not only as an illustration of his Christian humanism but as an important part of his theology", and that, while Calvin criticized the unreformed church for its dependence on scholasticism, he could not avoid the "preceding intellectual ethos". Slaatte (1979:63) holds that as much as Calvin,

steered clear of any rationally established metaphysics, he did not escape a hard and fast logic inherited from the Greeks. This is reflected in his move from the basic premise of divine sovereignty into the divisions and ramifications of Christian doctrine. To this extent, Calvin was closer to a humanistic confidence in reason than he perhaps realized, for hardly any theologian of history was more cold and calculating in his rational deducements.

Van der Walt (2010b:108) asserts that Calvin's worldview was influenced by extra biblical sources, and that he "went to the Scriptures to find textual support for ideas accepted in advance, while being unaware of the fact that his philosophical preconceptions were not Scriptural". Other critics such as Wendel, goes so far as to say that Calvin, sometimes, "out of attachment to pre-established dogmatic positions...did violence to biblical texts", and, "that despite all his fidelity to the Bible, he seems to have been searching the Scriptures more frequently for texts to support a doctrine accepted in advance than to derive doctrine from the Scriptures" (Van der Walt, 2010b:107-108).

Graafland (1987:19,20) concurs with Wendel, and holds that, "Het is te begrijpen dat aan het adres van Calvijn het verwijt is gemaakt, dat de betekenis van de Schrift in feite niet anders is as een achteraf bevestigen, wat reeds in de ervaring is geconstateerd." He (1987:20)

⁹ Existentialism is a philosophical school of thought that denies the existence of an objective world, and that the only real world is that which is subjectively experienced (Deist, 1987:58).

specifically refers to Int. III, 22 where the Scriptural confirmation of the predestination follows the definition of predestination, already given in the previous chapter (21).

Some of Calvin's ideas, which he found support for in the writings of Augustine were, therefore, contrary to what the Early Church fathers taught. Seeberg (1961:394) holds that Calvin's theology consisted only of a very clever assimilation from the theologies of existing theologians, rather than a result of searching the Scriptures, and asserts that Calvin,

received his ideas and program of action by tradition and in an essentially complete form. It was his task, in the church as in theology, to complete and organize, and for this his special talents also fitted him. Calvin was not a genius like Luther, nor did he possess the happy balance of endowment, which distinguished Zwingli. Neither was he a scholar unskilled in the ways of the world, like Melancthon. He possessed the wonderful talent of comprehending any given body of ideas in its most delicate refinements and giving appropriate expression to the results of his investigations.

Velema (1993:464) holds that, Calvijn mag wat de praedestinatatie betereft een leerling van Luther heten: hij heeft diens gedachten vooral de bemiddeling van Bucer leren kennen. Graafland (1987:21), however, asserts that there was a tension with regards to what Calvin wrote about the doctrine of predestination, and his preaching. It was not that he contradicted himself, but that the doctrine of predestination was much more prominent in his writings than in his preaching. Graafland (1987:21) writes,

Kennelijk worden in de theologische discussie almaar meer zaken aan de orde gesteld, die de gemeente beter niet kan weten. Dit is een knelpunt, dat later steeds meer zich doet voelen, en dat ertoe leidt, dat er een vervreemding optreedt tussen een orthodoxe theologiebeoefening en de praktijk der verkondiging.

Calvin was thus unavoidably influenced by theologians such as Augustine and the philosophies that were prevalent in his day. He did, however, contribute greatly to the Reformation and specifically the doctrine of salvation as carefully formulated in his Institutes. His work, although slightly adapted, is summarized in the five points of Calvinism by the Council of Dordt.

1.7.6 The influence of Theodore Beza on Reformed Theology and on the theology of Arminius

The idea of a sovereign God who saves those whom He elected by means of irresistible grace, was embodied in Calvin's doctrine of election. Beza, under whom Arminius studied when he registered as a student in Geneva, on January 1, 1582 (Bangs, 1985:66), further developed it. Until the death of

Beza in 1605, Reformed pastors and theologians defined sound Reformed doctrine as the doctrine of Calvin and Beza, and not simply the doctrine of Calvin (Clarke, 1982:26).

The theology of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands developed in synergy with the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and a series of national and provincial synods (Muller, 2008:46). Reformed theology, therefore, did not only depend on the writings of Beza or other prominent theologians of the time. Bangs (1985:68) holds that Beza gave the doctrine of predestination a prominence it did not have for Calvin. Beza developed a strict and rigid interpretation of these doctrines while Calvin's theology had a slightly more free and creative character.

There was a certain aversion by the Reformation against Aristotelian scholasticism, yet theologians such as Beza who employed Aristotelian logic in his practice of theology, lead the Reformation into a regression of scholasticism within the first fifty years of its conception (Koekemoer, 1994:90).

Bangs (1985:68) contends that, "It is characteristic of Beza to take a position of Calvin's, fasten on a difficult facet of it, and throw it into stark, isolated prominence where it can be only accepted or rejected, but not softened". Calvin treated the doctrine of election simply as an aspect of the grace of God, while Beza developed this doctrine into a central theme of his theology (Koekemoer, 1994:90). Peterson and Williams (2004:94) hold that it is under Beza that "Augustine's asymmetric understanding of predestination, in which God causes belief in the elect, but does not cause the unbelief of the regenerate, is replaced by a doctrine of ¹⁰double predestination".

Daane (1973:38) asserts that scholastic orthodoxy classified and treated election and reprobation in the first locus of systematic theology, the doctrine of God. Calvin "rescued"

¹⁰ Double Predestination is a version of the doctrine of predestination according to which God elects some individuals to eternal salvation and others to eternal damnation (Deist, 1987: 48).

these doctrines and placed them in the locus of soteriology and discussed these doctrines in terms of man's sin and God's grace. Daane (1973:38) is correct to say that,

In this soteriological context, where election and reprobation are defined within those matters that constitute the salvation wrought by God in Christ, election and reprobation cannot be reduced to the indistinguishable components of the all embracing decree of scholastic decretal theology.

Beza had unfortunately digressed into medieval scholasticism when he developed Calvin's theology on the doctrine of election. He developed a decretal theology, where he, under a general concept of predestination, took these concepts back to the doctrine of God.

In placing the doctrine of election back into the doctrine of God, Beza reduced the natural flexibility of Calvin's theology with systemic, concretized thinking of medieval scholasticism (Koekemoer, 1994:90). Most theologians followed Beza and treated the doctrine of election within the locus of the doctrine of God. As a dire consequence, election and reprobation were increasingly being defined in terms of divine sovereignty only, and the focus shifted from sovereign grace to mere sovereignty. Reprobation was also now being defined in terms of the sovereignty of God, apart from the doctrine of sin (hamartiology) and the doctrine of salvation (soteriology) (Daane, 1973:38).

According to Bangs (1985:66-67), Beza taught that,

Predestination is God's everlasting and unchangeable ordinance, going in order before all the causes of salvation and damnation, whereby God has determined to be glorified, in some by saving them of His own mere grace in Christ, and others by damning them through his rightful justice in Adam and in themselves. And after the custom of scripture we call the former the vessels of glory and the elect or chosen, that is to say, those appointed to salvation before all worlds through mercy; and the other sort we call reprobates and castaways, and vessels of wrath, that is to say, appointed likewise to rightful damnation from everlasting: both of which God has known severally from time without beginning.

Beza, through his scholastic interpretation on Calvin's theology, placed all things under the divine will of God and under God's eternal decree (Peterson and Williams, 2004:95, 96). This decree is not contingent on any human decision or action but every human action and decision is determined by God. God can never react to any human activity or choice in time and it means per implication that everything, including human sin (which is contrary to God's will), is determined by God. Peterson and Williams (2004:95, 96) assert that,

Even though Beza sought to soften the harshness of the doctrine of double predestination by emphasizing the role of secondary causes, human responsibility for sin, and the notion of divine permission in relation to human sin and unbelief, it is difficult to imagine how God escapes culpability for human sin in his thought...his conception of the all determining will of God has

led many commentators to conclude that he was incapable of denying that God is ultimately responsible for the existence of sin and unbelief. Even the fall of Adam and Eve took place in conformity to the predetermining will of God...Beza subjects even the first sin, the disobedience of the Garden, to the divine decree. The Adamic fall into sin was ordained by the divine will. Man was created to sin...Since the decree takes place in eternity rather than in time, the sequence was envisioned as logical rather than temporal, but in truth it is difficult not to assign some temporal value to it.

Arminius was introduced to Calvin's theology by Beza, who presented his interpretation of Calvin's theology to Arminius through the lenses of medieval scholasticism¹¹ with a metaphysical and philosophical emphasis. Beza's augmentation of Calvin's theology had definite and serious implications. Beza's metaphysical scholasticism leads to a definite but inaccurate "distinction between eternity and time, the preceding will of God and the execution of the divine plan in history" (Williams, 2004:93).

Decretal theology implies that history only plays out what God had decreed in eternity, but incorrectly views "eternity" as "another time", before time, in a linear line. Van Genderen and Velema (2008:195), in stead of seeing God's actions and decisions in eternity as being "a time before time", describes Reformed theology to hold that "In the doctrine of God's counsel we encounter the living God himself who has made and continues to make his decisions".

The revival of pre-Reformation scholastic theology precipitated a notion of a "speculative formulation of the will of God. divine decrees and the doctrine of predestination" (Williams, 2004:95). Peterson and Williams (2004:94, 95) hold that,

The return to pre-Reformation scholastic theological method enabled a more precise definition and more central place to the notion of divine decrees and the doctrine of predestination in the thought of such Reformed theologians as Beza, Vermigli and Zanchi than they had enjoyed in Calvin's more exegetically driven theology.

The turn toward Scholasticism and decretal theology had negative consequences for the progression of the Reformation. Noordmans (1979:239, 240) holds that,

Wij zagen dat de schoolse lering de neighing heft, Christus uit het middelpunt van de geloofsleer te dringen. In de scholastiek wordt Christus van de triniteit gescheiden. Hy word in de sacrament getrokken. De kerk komt dan alleen op zakelijke wijze met Hom in aanraking en niet door een persoonlijke geloof.

¹¹ The term "scholasticism" is defined as "the elevation of rational conceptualization over historical action and logical relationships over personal relationships for the sake of the creation of a rational theological system" (Peterson and Williams, 2004: 94).

Reformed Scholastic theology is equated by Van der Walt (2011:270) to synthesis philosophy in that,

It combined biblical revelation with extra-biblical ideas from Greek and Hellenistic philosophy. This synthesis was facilitated through two methods. Firstly through eisegesis-exegesis, according to which pre-Christian ideas were read into parts of Scripture (eisegesis) and afterwards – with the sanction of the Scriptures – explained from the Bible (exegesis). Secondly, synthesis was achieved by way of a nature-grace dualism, which in turn resulted in a distinction between reason and faith, philosophy and theology...Reformed Scholasticism's type of philosophy...[lead to a particular notion and understanding of] ontological dualism, vertical partial universalism, anthropological dichotomy and semi-mysticism.

The development of protestant theology, did fortunately, not totally regress in scholasticism. Noordmans (1979:240) holds that, "De protestantse gemeenteleer reikt aan de oude kerkleer de hand over de school heen." He (1979:240) describes the centrality of Christ in Reformed theology by saying that, "Christus duikt in geen zaak, die met Hem verbonden is onder. In geen sacrament, in geen verenging, in geen party, in geen staat. Hij houdt een aangezicht in de kerk. Hij komt tot ons door Zijn evangelie".

It was, however, Beza's doctrine of predestination, later known as ¹²Supralapsarianism, and his insistence on the details of this system as essential to Reformed orthodoxy, that precipitated the Remonstrance (Bangs, 1985:68). Slaatte (1997:10) asserts that Dirck Koornheert already challenged the Supralapsarian views of predestination and justification that he traced in the works of Calvin and Beza, as well as the practice of putting heretics to death, in 1587.

1.7.7 Jacob Arminius

The exact year of Arminius' birth is not known but it is accepted to be either 1559 or 1560. Arminius was born as Jacobus Harmenszoon (Olson, 2006:13), in the town of Oudewater, South Holland (Warburton, 1955:49). He Latinized his name, like many scholars of that time. This controversial Dutch theologian wrote three large volumes in his defense of synergism¹³ (Olson, 2006:13).

¹² Supralapsarianism is the theory that God elected some to be saved before the fall (Deist, 1987:165).

¹³ Belief in divine-human cooperation (Olson, 2006:13).

Arminius was not specifically opposed to Calvin and there are more similarities than differences between the theologies of Calvin and Arminius (Muller, 2008:46). Arminius was an admirer of Calvin and agreed with much of what Calvin taught; He even quoted from Calvin's works on occasions. Arminius wrote in a private letter, addressed to Sebastian Egbertszoon, the Amsterdam Burgomaster on May 3, 1607:

So far from this, after the reading of Scripture, which I strenuously inculcate, and more than any other (as the whole university, indeed, the conscience of my colleagues will testify) I recommend that the *Commentaries of Calvin* be read, whom I extol in higher terms than Helmichius himself, as he owed to me, ever did. For I affirm that in the interpretation of the Scriptures Calvin is incomparable, and that his *Commentaries* are more to be valued than anything that is handed down to us in the writings of the Fathers - so much so that I concede to him a certain spirit of prophecy in which he stands distinguished above others, above most, indeed, above all. His *Institutes*, so far all respects Commonplaces (loci communes), I give out to be read after the Catechism (i.e. of Heidelberg) as a more extended explanation. But here I add - with discrimination, as the writings of all men ought to be read (Clarke, 1982:26 - 27).

It is important to keep in mind that Arminius was a Reformed theologian although he disagreed with some of the doctrines of Calvin on predestination, especially, and more specifically, as it was articulated by Beza. Arminius took great pains to defend his views against Gomaris' accusation that he deviated from the confessional statements of the Reformed church. Olson (2006:49) holds that "Arminius always thought of himself as Reformed in a broad sense. To his way of thinking high Calvinism was just one branch of Reformed theology; he belonged to another. That did not make him less Reformed". Slaatte (1979:23) also reminds us that Arminius was a product of the Protestant Reformation and that he stood "historically within the stream of Calvinism that flowed through the Netherlands in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries".

Calvin had some contemporary theologians such as Pighius, Castellio, Bolsec, Heshusen, and Marbach, who challenged him on certain issues that *Arminius* would later write against (Clarke, 1982:25).

Arminius and Beza also shared some of the same theological philosophies. Peterson and Williams (2004:103) observes that it is interesting to note that "while the two men worked from decidedly different theological presuppositions, Arminius and Beza used the same methodological tools for doing theology". When Arminius did not agree with "Beza's idea of a divine decree that preceded all contingent causes", he used the methods of medieval scholasticism, as taught by Beza, to develop a "synergistic doctrine of divine decrees".

When the Amsterdam senate called upon Arminius in 1589 to defend Beza, and particularly Beza's Supralapsarian views against Dirk Koornheert, he decided to join the infralapsarian persuasion rather than attack Koornheert. He wrote a modified version of predestination, which rejected the notion of it being absolute and unconditional. This document was revised in 1590 and he, at that time, also included some aspects on free will. Arminius was now considered the leader of the Remonstrant movement that was initiated by Koornheert (Slaatte, 1997:11).

Arminius contested Beza's speculative supralapsarianism in favour of a more Christocentric approach. He correctly argued that according to Beza's theology, Christ is made the subordinate cause of an already foreordained salvation, and that it therefore divorced the decree of election from the decree of salvation through Christ. Where the manifestation of God's grace was a consequence of election according to Reformed orthodoxy, Arminius contended that grace preceded election (Ferguson et al, 1988:45).

The Remonstrants, and Arminius in particular, defined human freedom in relation to divine sovereignty while aiming not to "abrogate the primacy of divine grace nor to curtail the power of God" (Slaatte, 1997:23). Arminius asserted that, "any unconditional redemptive decision or action necessarily coerces the human will and is, therefore, a violation of human freedom.

According to Van der Walt (2011:270) "both Gomarus and Arminius accepted certain ideas of Aristotle, and can therefore be described as Aristotelians, but that Arminius was more Plato-oriented and therefore regarded the human will as of more importance than was the case with intellectualists like Gomarus". He further asserts that, "These philosophical anthropological differences resulted in different theological views on the relationship between God and mankind". Thus both Calvinist decretal schemes are deterministic and differ only in degree" (Peterson and Williams, 2004:103). Slaatte, (1979, 24) summarizes the Arminian perspective on the doctrine of election as follows:

Arminianism always shows a profound respect for the primacy of the faith-related grace of God and the doctrine of the sinfulness of man, while at the same time pleading for man's consistent responsibility in the saving relationship. This marks the endeavour to retain both the passive and active sides of the God and man relation on a Christocentric basis.

Arminius established a Christocentric, evangelical doctrine of predestination. In his formulation of this doctrine, God is not responsible for sin, and man is not responsible for

salvation. He maintained that salvation is by grace alone and through faith alone (*sola gratia, sola fidei*), while still keeping within the parameters of the Confessions and Catechisms of the Reformation and those held by his own church (Bangs, 1985:354).

Arminius was of the opinion that the doctrine of predestination was not specifically affirmed by the creeds and confessions of the Reformed church, and whatsoever references there were to predestination also allowed for his (Arminius') interpretation (Peterson and Williams 2004:100).

Within the first ten years of the Reformation, these differences of opinion among the reformers themselves lead to the development of a second front. Verdun (1964:19) holds that the Reformers were caught between two loyalties. The first being that of their loyalty to the New Testament Scriptures from which the Church could be nothing else than a Church based on personal faith. The second aspect was that of several years of Reformation tradition that he describes as, "*het historisch geworden*" where the Church was construed as to include all in a given locality. One could only escape the dilemma by either repudiating New Testament Scripture [or rather the interpretation of Scripture that leads to the understanding that faith is a prerequisite for regeneration], or repudiating several years of history.

Those who did repudiate the history were seen as the second front or in the words of Verdun (1964:19) as, "*the stepchildren of the Reformation*". The followers of Arminius fell into this category.

It was only after the death of Arminius in 1609 that his followers (Arminians) started contrasting his, (and other Remonstrants') interpretations of the doctrine of predestination with the interpretation of this doctrine as it was advocated by Calvinists (Clarke, 1982:26). A core difference between Gomarus and Arminius is that Arminius taught that God's grace is resistible and that God does not destroy or manipulate the human will. He also taught that one could lose your salvation. Calvinists explained apostasy with a theory of temporary faith (Van der Walt, 2011:284).

Arminius's theology is well described in his "Disputations", but it was Simon Episcopius (1583-1643), who succeeded Arminius at Leyden, who further developed his theology as a theological system. Utenbogaert drew up the five articles of the Remonstrants, also known as the five points of Arminianism (Slaatte, 1979:11,15). The Remonstrants were a group of forty-five ministers and theologians of the United Provinces (Olson, 2006:23) whose name was derived from the creed (Remonstrance) that was addressed to the states of Holland and Friesland in 1610 (Fisher, 1897:338).

Olson (2006:32) quotes A.W. Harrison's translation of the Remonstrance (the five points of Arminianism) from the original Latin, in a condensed form:

1. That God, by an eternal and unchangeable decree in Christ before the world was, determined to elect from the fallen and sinning race to everlasting life those who through his grace believe in Jesus Christ and persevere in faith and obedience; and, on the contrary, had resolved to reject the unconverted and unbelievers to everlasting damnation (John iii, 36).
2. That in consequence of this, Christ the Saviour of the world died for all and every man, so that He obtained, by the death on the cross, reconciliation and pardon for sin for all men; in such manner, however, that none but the faithful actually enjoyed the same (John iii, 16; I John ii,2).
3. That man could not obtain saving faith of himself or by the strength of his own free will, but stood in need of God's grace through Christ to be renewed in thought and will (John xv, 5).
4. That this grace was the cause of the beginning, progress and completion of man's salvation; insomuch that none could believe or persevere in faith without this co-operating grace, and consequently that all good works must be ascribed to the grace of God in Christ. As to the manner of the operation of that grace, however, it is not irresistible (Acts vii, 51).
5. That true believers had sufficient strength through the Divine grace to fight against Satan, sin, the world, their own flesh, and get the victory over them; but whether by negligence they might not apostatize from the true faith, lose the happiness of a good conscience and forfeit that grace needed to be more fully inquired into according to Holy Writ.

1.7.8 The Council of Dordt

The states-general convened a national synod in Holland in the town of Dordt. Delegates from England, the Palatinate, Hesse, Bremen, and Switzerland joined the Dutch theologians in the synod that lasted from 13 November 1618 until 13 May 1619 (Walker, 1970:400). Van der Walt (2012:192) contends that the influence of scholastic theology had a significant influence on the theology of the Reformers as well as on that of the Remonstrants. He (2012:192) further holds that, "The clash between the Reformed and Arminian parties at the Synod of Dort (1618–1619) and its Canons (1619) can be explained philosophically as the result of different interpretations of the philosophy of the pre-Christian Greek philosopher, Aristotle (384–322 BC)". It is evident in the formulation of the Canons of Dordt where a synthesis of pre-Christian philosophy (such as the Aristotelian doctrine of causality) and the

Scriptures resulted in the Canons having a strong deterministic, cause and effect character (Van der Walt, 2011:274).

Due to the nature and system of interpretation of Reformed scholasticism particularly evident in the Canons of Dordt, Van der Walt (2011:274) holds that,

'n Mens moet dus versigtig wees om nie deur 'n slagspreuk soos sola Scriptura (alléén die Skrif) mislei te word nie— dit kan op biblisistiese sintesedenke (inlegkunde) in plaas van op werklike Skrifmatige (uitlegkunde) denke dui. Tekste soos Matteus 25:34 en Efesiërs 1:4 hoef byvoorbeeld nie te lei tot die aanvaarding van 'n ewige goddelike dekreet tot verkiesing en verwerping nie. Dit kan ook dui op die diepere, goddelike geheim van die geskiedenis.

The Remonstrants were banished directly following the council of Dort, who voted against the Remonstrance and its five articles, and penned the *Canons* of Dordt that would later become famous as the five points of Calvinism. The Remonstrants later returned to Holland where they were officially recognized in 1795 (Walker, 1970:400).

Van der Walt (2012:192) also holds that the Council of Dordt was originally intended to serve as a judgment on the doctrine of the Remonstrants, rather than to serve as a confessional statement in support with and in addition to the Heidelberg Catechisms and the Dutch Confession of Faith. Due to the continued threat of the Arminian orientated Remonstrance, it was decided that Reformed ministers, elders, deacons, and even teachers at Reformed schools were required to sign this Confession.

1.7.9 The development of Arminian Theology

Theologians such as Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) and Peter Limborch (1633-1712) also further developed Arminius' theology. Limborch's theology was, unfortunately, tainted with semi-Pelagianism (Olson, 2006:23).

Arminian theology gained strength in especially the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Unfortunately, many Arminian theologians from Congregational Churches and in the Church of England were influenced by the Enlightenment and followed the trend set by Limborch. Among these were John Taylor (1694-1761) in New England, and Charles Chauncy (1705-1787) in Boston. Some of these liberal theologians ventured into semi-Pelagianism, Universalism, and Arianism, although they were strongly opposed by Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) (Olson, 2006:23).

John Wesley (1703-1791) contributed greatly to bringing Arminianism back to its orthodox roots. Wesley established the Methodist movement, and the first systematic theologian of the Methodist movement, John Fletcher (1729-1785) wrote nine volumes of theology (Olson, 2006:24). Fletcher held that, “divine sovereignty detracts nothing from God’s truth and equity”, and that “There is an election of free grace without a reprobation of free wrath” (Slaatte, 1979:118).

Arminian theology had an influence on Reformed theology as evident in the Westminster confession of 1647 as evidenced in the articles on “free will” and “election”. It includes the term “effectual calling”, the concepts of human responsibility, and the reception of divine grace. Its influence can still be observed as recently as 1961 when the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, (whose roots can be traced back to Calvin in Geneva), made a declaration stating that,

the doctrine of foreordination to everlasting death as formulated in the Westminster Confession of Faith is not an adequate statement of faith, because it implies, regardless of the intention of the authors, an eternal negative decree, and that the doctrine, as stated in the Confession, is not essential to Reformed theology, as is indicated by its absence in this vigorous form in such authentic reformed (sic) creeds as the Scot’s Confession of 1560, the second Helvetic Confession, and the Heidelberg Catechism (Slaatte, 1979:19).

There are many variants of Arminian theology. Olson (2006:17), however, gives a clear description of Classical Arminianism as holding to the original theology of Arminius and John Wesley. It distinguishes itself from the later Remonstrants who wandered into liberal theology, and from contemporary Arminianism, which, according to Olson (2006:17), “glorify reason and freedom over divine revelation and supernatural grace”. Contemporary Arminianism does not account for the bondage of sin and the need for God to make faith possible. Classical Arminianism acknowledges this need, but argues that God’s drawing grace is universally extended to all people by the Holy Spirit (2006:17).

1.8 CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 1

Many other theologians have since contributed to the development of both Calvinism and Arminianism in various ways. Wesley, Wiley, and Fletcher greatly influenced Arminianism in the nineteenth Century, while Dongell and more specifically Olson are currently greatly contributing to Arminian theology. Edwards, Whitfield, Owen and Spurgeon had a tremendous influence on Calvinism in past years and so do Piper, Packer and Sproul presently, especially in the North American context. It must be noted that Classical Reformed

theology is still upheld in the writings of Bavinck, Berkouwer, Van Genderen, Velema, Van Brink, Van der Kooi, and several other mainstream theologians.

Hansen (2008:109) contends that the momentum in American Calvinism has shifted from a more traditional Calvinism to evangelicals.¹⁴ These churches affirm Calvinist soteriology in terms of the five points of Calvinism (TULIP) but not necessarily doctrines such as *paedo*-baptism that is part of the covenant theology held by churches within the broader Reformed tradition. He attributes the “Reformed resurgence” among young evangelicals to a “desire for transcendence and tradition” that is precipitated by a watered down, self-help-gospel that is preached in many American churches.

There are constant shifts in theology, and as the above example illustrates, often a resurgence of a particular point of view. A lively debate between Calvinists and Arminians are the order of the day, many times involving different viewpoints and interpretations on either side. It is, therefore, not the theological traditions held by Reformed theology, or specifically the doctrines of Calvin and Arminius that will give us the background to this study (although they deserve credit for their valuable and copious contributions). It is more specifically the doctrine of election according to Calvinism (the system of belief that revolves around a strong view of God’s sovereignty, divine determinism, specifically subscribes to *all five* points of TULIP), as interpreted and advanced by theologians such as Packer, Piper, and Sproul, on the one hand, and Arminianism, as that is mainly held by current theologians such as Olson and Dongell that will be evaluated.

¹⁴ Those who affirm the necessity of a personal conversion experience as a prerequisite for salvation (Boyd and Eddy, 2009:146).

CHAPTER 2

CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

2.1 INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 2

A literature analysis is conducted in Chapter 2 and expository research is employed in order to analyse and study the Calvinistic and Arminian doctrines of election. The views of various Calvinist theologians will be reviewed with regards to the five points of Calvinism as set out in the Canons of Dordt. The views of various classical Arminians will be discussed and evaluated with regards to the five points of Arminianism. There are several objections to both of these models that must be considered in the development of a Pentecostal doctrine of election. It is not the intention of the author to construct a hybrid between the two models, or as previously said, to criticize any traditional view in a destructive manner, but rather to treat what we can learn from these models as serious considerations.

Both the Calvinist and the Arminian perspectives on the doctrine of election are strongly contested from Scripture, and the same Scriptures are often used in arguing two opposing viewpoints. Both the Calvinistic and Arminian models of election are discussed in the following chapters in some detail.

The debate between Calvinists and Arminians with regards to the doctrine of election hinges primarily on their interpretations of the concepts of “divine sovereignty” and the “free will” of man. The salient question can be asked, “If God is in control, are people really free?”

We accept as a fact that God created us as moral agents, responsible for our actions and accountable to God as stewards of God’s creation. Logic dictates that there can be no responsibility and no accountability without relatively free moral choices and yet, Scripture gives us undeniable proof of God’s sovereignty. Both Calvinism and Arminianism affirm the

sovereignty of God, and both make provision for *free*¹⁵ human decisions. The dilemma we face regarding God's sovereignty and human responsibility for "free" choice is the problem of how to reconcile them.

Sennet (Walls and Dongell, 2004:n.p.) holds that the debate about the sovereignty of God and human responsibility is not primarily exegetical, but theological, and to some extent, philosophical. He asserts that the debate is fundamentally about the character of God. Walls and Dongell (2004:121) elaborates on this statement by saying that "The issue is not sovereignty. The issue is what kind of world God in his sovereignty chose to create" and what kind of theological or philosophical paradigm will best reflect the character of a sovereign creator who has a nature of holy love?

This question begs for a description of God's sovereignty that will correspond with the character of God as revealed to us in Scripture and specifically through the revelation of God through the incarnation of the Son of God, "being the effulgence of His glory and the exact expression of His substance..." (Heb. 1:3 EMTV). Ringenberg (2005:34) quotes Guy who rightfully asserts that, "To the person who takes seriously Jesus' claim 'He who has seen Me has seen the Father' (John 14:9), it is obvious that divine power is expressed not by decreeing and controlling (in the fashion of an ancient despot or feudal lord), but by self giving and enabling."

The five points of Calvinism and the five points of Arminianism must, therefore, not only be evaluated theologically and philosophically; They must primarily be evaluated with regards to the Biblical concept of a sovereign Creator whose nature is holy love.

2.2 CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

It is important to give a brief discussion of certain concepts or doctrines that are used in the evaluation of the doctrine of election as proposed by Calvinists and Arminians before we

¹⁵The term "free choice" needs to be qualified. I agree with Reichenbach, (1986:103) where he rightly qualifies the libertarian "freedom to make choices" as follows:

Freedom is not the absence of influences, either external or internal...Rather, to be free means that the causal influences do not determine my choice or action. Freedom, as actually found in our experience, is a relative notion: There are degrees of freedom. But where we are free, we could have done other than we did, even though it might have been very difficult to do so.

engage in the actual evaluation of these specific views. Concepts that are common in the discussion are:

- The sovereignty of God and human responsibility (freedom)
- Libertarian freedom
- The doctrine of divine limitation
- Determinism
- God's foreknowledge

2.2.1 The sovereignty of God and human responsibility (freedom)

The meanings and implications of the terms; "The sovereignty of God", and "human responsibility" or "human freedom", as understood by Calvinists, are vastly different from the meanings lent to it by Arminians, and where either of these terms are not properly defined, the debate is doomed to fail. It is, therefore, imperative to the discussion that the terms "God's sovereignty" and human "freedom" (or "responsibility") and its interrelationship be clearly defined.

Reichenbach (1986:106,107) holds that, "God in his role as sovereign has frequently been confused with the novelist." He claims that a novelist determines the character he wants to create, and he also determines the whole scenario in detail. This view is inadequate to describe the sovereignty of God, since it cannot accommodate the notion of creatures who can freely respond to Him. Any description of freedom in this context must inevitably prove to be an illusion and cannot be equated with the Biblical idea of God's sovereignty as he rules over "responsive and responsible creatures". When creatures have no choice but to act as they are determined to do, there is an absence of freedom, and, as a consequence, there is no level of accountability or responsibility.

Basinger and Basinger (1986:10-13) makes a distinction between the concepts of *specific sovereignty*, that leads to determinism, and *general sovereignty*, which allows a libertarian view of human freedom. They describe "specific sovereignty" as, the belief that, "human freedom in no sense limits God's ability to bring about the specific events He desires", and "general sovereignty", as the belief that, "human freedom does place limitations on God's control over earthly affairs". While there are certain exceptions, Calvinism generally holds to a deterministic expression of God's sovereignty that results from an understanding of specific sovereignty, and Arminians generally hold to a description of general sovereignty that

accommodates their view of libertarian freedom. The understanding of these models of human freedom and divine determinism is crucial to the interpretation and understanding the doctrine of election.

The doctrines of divine sovereignty and human freedom can be illustrated in terms of three philosophical definitions, namely; “libertarian freedom”, “hard determinism”, and “soft determinism”.

2.2.2 Libertarian freedom

In order to understand the term “Libertarian freedom”, the term “freedom of choice,” must first be properly defined. Freedom of choice is not *absolute* freedom, but it is, even in the noblest sense relative to our circumstances, our state of being, and our available options. Our decisions are limited and confined by the available options we have, dependent on our understanding and insight into the problems we face, and our understanding of the possible implications of our choices. Libertarian freedom means that the choices that we make are ultimately “our” choices. It is not coerced¹⁶ or caused by outside influences to the extent that we can abdicate our responsibility for these choices. Walls and Dongell (2004:99) base their argument for libertarian freedom on the following premises:

- The common experience of deliberation assumes that our choices are undetermined.
- It seems intuitively and immediately evident that many of our actions are up to us.
- We are morally responsible for our actions and moral responsibility requires freedom.

Walls and Dongell (2004:105) further asserts that Libertarian freedom is intrinsic to the very notion of moral responsibility. That is, a person cannot be held morally responsible for an act unless he or she was free to perform or refrain from it. This is a basic moral imperative, and there are any relevant moral convictions more basic than this one that could serve as a premise to prove it.

If we maintain a libertarian view of freedom we can conclude from Jeremiah 7:1-29 and many others, such as the passage where Jesus calls out over Jerusalem, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *you* who kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to her! How often would I

¹⁶ “coerced means, “the use of force to persuade someone to do something that they are unwilling to do” (Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary & Thesaurus, 2011).

have gathered your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!” (Mat 23:37 EMTV), that:

- God wanted, and still does want, people to repent.
- The people were, and still are, able to repent.
- God’s threat to punish them means that they could have repented, but freely chose not to.

Drury (2014) holds that, “Arminians *start* with a particular understanding of God, which then leads them to affirm free will.” The Arminian understanding of “free will” can be classified as “libertarian freedom”. Packer (1993:86) rightly holds that, “The concept of *free will* , “has been defined by Christian teachers from the second century on the ability to choose all the moral options that a situation offers”.

In Libertarian freedom, a free action is described as an action that “does not have a sufficient condition or cause prior to its occurrence” (Walls and Dongell, 2004:99). Riser (2015:91) describes free will in asserting that, “What makes the act of will free is not that, having done what one willed to do, one could have done otherwise under the specific circumstances, but that one does in fact do otherwise than act in an uninformed, unreflective and thoughtless manner”. Libertarian freedom affirms the responsibility of man for his actions.

Free choice does not mean “choice without consequences”. Free choice is simply the ability and opportunity to choose otherwise. Many Christians have been faced with the choice to deny Christ or die. Some have been subjected to the most inhumane forms of torture. This could be considered coercion but it is not, since many under these extreme circumstances still choose to die, rather than to deny Christ. Limited options do therefore not cancel freedom of choice.

When one is coerced, causally determined, or determined, to make a specific choice, “choice” and “freedom” cease to exist. We, therefore, either have libertarian freedom or determinism. You may choose life, or death. Choices have consequences. Some choices have immediate consequences and some do not, but as long as there are options, and both opportunity and ability to choose, the choice remains free. In other words, freedom in this sense does not mean that there is an absence of influences, but that the choice of action is not determined by the said influences. F.P. Möller (Personal communication, April 17, 2014)

makes a significant distinction between “choice” and “freedom to choose” when he asserts that,

The ability to make a choice is not an indication of freedom, the devil can also make choices. Free choice implies that we are able to make the right choices like God. To make a wrong choice is a sign of bondage. The more we become like God, the more our ability to make choices also becomes free.

Möller defines “free choice” as “choosing with freedom from wrong influences”. We will, however, always be compelled to make decisions against the negative impulses of the flesh, until the day that Jesus comes again. We can, and must, make right choices in spite of our sinful nature. If it were not possible to make right choices, we would have no responsibility or accountability for the choices we make, and that, Scripture proves, is not the case.

2.2.3 The doctrine of divine limitation

While Calvinism’s extreme doctrine of determinism inevitably leads to a dead end of logical arguments, Arminians, as an alternative, opt for the doctrine of *self-limitation* and *passive permission*. Those who support the doctrine of self limitation as a model for understanding the sovereignty of God, hold that God does not cause, nor is he responsible for evil and sin. He may, however, in His sovereignty control circumstances to bring about his divine will and purpose. This view recognises God absolute freedom and sovereignty (Olson, 2011:98).

Olson (2011:100) asserts God is in complete control of the universe, but that He sovereignly chose to limit his power and in the process delegate some authority and a measure of free choice to man as a moral agent. Olson also holds that the doctrine of divine limitation,

- Places no restriction on God’s sovereignty, since he remains omnipotent and in complete control, while not determining every action that takes place, including sin and evil.
- Everything that takes place is thus permitted by God and nothing can take place if God does not allow it to.
- It allows moral agents to have libertarian freedom and be responsible for their own choices including sin and evil, limited by God’s permissive will.

Hart (2005:97) gives a relevant description of God’s sovereignty in relation to divine self limitation and free will,

How radically the Gospel is pervaded by a sense that the brokenness of the fallen world is the work of rebellious rational free will, which God permits to reign, and pervaded also by a sense that Christ comes genuinely to save creation, to conquer, to rescue, to defeat the power of evil in all things. This great narrative of fall and redemption is not a charade, not simply a dramaturgical

lesson regarding God's absolute prerogatives prepared for us from eternity, but a real consequence of the mystery of created freedom and the fullness of grace.

The doctrine of God's Self limitation, allows for everything that happens to be permitted by God. In other words, not specifically determined by God, but possible within the scope of human choice. Olson asserts that, "Every single passage that supposedly teaches divine determination of evil, innocent suffering, and sin can be interpreted as referring to God's permission¹⁷" (2011:98). God is, therefore, not responsible for sin and evil (a notion that is not possible when we believe that God determines all things), and man has the ability to act contrary to God's will, (without taking anything away from His sovereignty).

2.2.4 Determinism

In the evaluation of the concept of determinism in Calvinism, we are compelled to distinguish between what hyper Calvinists teach, and what is held by Reformed theology. Reformed theology is strongly influenced by the underlying theological idea of God as a God who stands in a covenantal relationship with His people. From this perspective, the stark stoic image of God portrayed by Aristotelian philosophy is not acceptable. Van der Walt (2012:181) holds that,

Die Bybel ken nie 'n starre, onbeweeglike God (*deus immutabilis*) nie (Van Eck 1997). Hy is 'n God wat in sy skepping teenwoordig is; iemand wat in die geskiedenis betrokke is; iemand wat hom oor sondaars ontferm; iemand wat selfs berou kan hê (vgl. Jona 3:10). Die Skrif openbaar God ook as die getroue, standvastige, maar nie as 'n onbeweeglike bewegter ('n kontradiksie in sigself) nie.

Terselfdertyd leer die Woord van die Here ook nie van 'n gedetermineerde mens nie, maar as iemand wat opgeroep word om (volgens God se liefdeswet) tussen goed en kwaad te kies en om verantwoordelikheid te aanvaar vir wat hy kies. Aristoteles het egter nie God se liefdeswet geken nie, maar slegs 'n oorsaaklike verhouding tussen sy god en die mens.

The concept of the sovereignty of God, from a hyper-Calvinist perspective leans strongly on the premise that God, in order to be the sovereign Creator, must determine everything that comes to pass. This is an unavoidable consequence of holding to the scholastic notion of the eternal decrees of God. This notion of determinism flows from the influence of Aristotelian philosophy that significantly influenced the early Reformers in their theology. Van der Walt (2012:181) holds that, Aristotle's hierarchical structure of being is causally determined. His

¹⁷ The problem of sin and evil is discussed later in this chapter, but it is important to mention here that God does not "allow" or "permit" evil in any sense as "to make room" for it, for the Bible declares in Prov. 6:16-19, that God hates sin (Möller, 1997:6).

god is the unmovable mover as well as the first uncaused cause, that causes all things to flow in a hierarchy of secondary, tertiary etc. causes.

Loonstra (1991:322) describes determinism and its consequences as,

Wanneer de bestaande werkelijkheid beschouwd wordt als noodzakelijk. Dat geldt niet alleen voor algemene omstandigheden, maar ook voor menselijke beslissingen. Wanneer Gods handelen met de mens reeds in de eeuwigheid plaats heeft, kan er in de geschiedenis geen sprake meer zijn van vrijheid van handelen aan de kant van God. Ook aan de menselijke verantwoordelijkheid kan geen recht worden gedaan, omdat de beslissing van de mens aangaande zijn houding tegenover God in alle opzichten reeds vast ligt buiten zijn daadwerkelijk reageren op Gods openbaring om. Het determinisme vormt de grootste bedreiging van de heilszekerheid, want het leidt tot resignatie en daarmee tot chronische onzekerheid.

Hyper-Calvinists such as Piper (2012:34) hold that, “God is not constrained by any inner deficiency or unhappiness to do anything he does not want to do.” This is a direct result of the influence of Aristotle on his theology, of which he may or may not be aware. Venter (1985:83,84) holds that, from an Aristotelian perspective, God is the reason of reason. The perfect intellect is self-centred and has no concern outside of himself. Concern, in Aristotle’s understanding, would imply change, change implies potentiality, and if God possessed potentiality, it would mean that He is not eternal.

The problem with holding to this deterministic notion is evident when natural catastrophes and crimes such as murder, rape, and the like are ascribed to God due to the doctrine that God determines everything, and these negative things are attributed to the will of God. These are only some of the consequences of Aristotelian philosophy on the deterministic theology of Augustine that are incorporated in Calvinism. Peterson and Williams (2004:41) admit that,

We [Calvinists] seek to out-Augustine Augustine. If a little monergism is good, more is better. As a result, we make God the sole cause of all things, sin as well as grace, unbelief as well as belief. And human beings become mere pawns and actors walking through the scenery of their lives.

There is a continues tension between hyper Calvinism and mainstream Reformed theology that is evident when Van der Walt (2012:180), from a Reformed perspective, distances him from this hyper-Calvinistic view of determinism and holds that, “So ’n absolute, alleen op homself gerigte godheid kan geen verhouding met die mens hê nie. Vergeleke met die verbondsgod van die Bybel is hierdie godheid ‘bloedlose marmer’”.

Feinberg (1986:24) holds that it is a common notion among Calvinists due to their understanding of God’s sovereignty, to believe that human beings *are not free*. They believe

that human beings are morally responsible for their sin, and that God, *who decreed that sin*, is not morally accountable. When required to explain this apparent contradiction, they maintain that it is “a paradox which nonetheless must be true because Scripture demands it”. Packer (1961:23) calls this contradiction an “antinomy” and asserts that,

Man is a responsible moral agent, though he is also divinely controlled; man is divinely controlled, though he is also a responsible moral agent....Accept it for what it is, and learn to live with it. Refuse to regard the apparent inconsistency as real; put down the resemblance of contradiction to the deficiency of your own understanding; think of the two principles as, not rival alternatives, but, in some way, that at present you do not grasp, complementary to each other.

Geisler (1986:64) holds that, “God’s sovereignty is not only exercised in general over his creation, but it is manifested in particular matters of human redemption and salvation”. Pinnock (1986:58) asserts that Calvinists generally make the mistake of following Augustine in clinging to determinism, and “thinking that God decrees and controls everything that happens in history down to the last detail”. He asserts that clinging to this deterministic model of God’s sovereignty “sweeps all contingency and novelty from the universe”.

Calvinists (who hold to a decretal theology) are inconsistent when they say that God “permits” something to happen, such as the holocaust, since it would mean that, (according to a decretal interpretation of God’s sovereignty), this event originated outside of God’s sovereign will. Pinnock (1986:58) states that, “According to the Bible, men and women can and do reject God’s will and plan. God in his sovereignty has given to them this dread power. Contrary to Calvin and Augustine, God’s will is not always done”, and that, “Calvinism [when holding to decretal theology] makes God some kind of terrorist who goes around handing out torture and disaster and even willing people to do things the Bible says God hates.”

Pinnock (1986:58, 59) uses the example of a “madman” who killed several innocent people in a McDonald’s restaurant. He claims that Calvinists [when holding to decretal theology] would agree that God does not like this sort of thing, but then asserts that He decreed it in any case. He holds that it would be simpler for these Calvinists to say that God likes it “and then retreat into dark mystery”.

Scripture attests to the (relative) free will of man in that,

- The Pharisees rejected God’s purpose for themselves (Luke 7:30).
- God is not willing that any should perish (Ezekiel 18:23; 33:11) – yet some do.

- Why would heaven rejoice if a sinner comes to repentance (Luke 15:7) - if God decreed it to be so in any case?
- Why would Jesus command His disciples to pray for God's will to be done (Luke 11:2) - if it was already the case?
- Jesus longed to gather the Jews as a mother hen gathers her chicks, but they were not willing (Matthew 23:37). God did not want them to resist the Spirit, but they did resist Him.

König (2001:12), who describes his own theology as “eschatological covenant theology”, does not advocate the TULIP system of Calvinistic thought, and he rejects the notion of determinism. He (1975:198-199) asserts that,

Anyone who levels things out in vague generalizations by attempting to explain everything and all possible circumstances as the will of God always ends up in the impossible situation that there are more exceptions than rules, more things that are inexplicable and that clash with the picture of God that is given to us in his word, than there are comforting confirmations that he is directing everything.... Anyone who tries to use the omnipotence and providence of God to propose a meticulously prepared divine plan which is unfolding in world history (L. Boettner) will always be left with the problem that other believers might not be able to discern the God of *love* in the actual course of world events.... It must be emphatically stated that...the Scriptures do not present the future as something which materializes according to a “plan” but according to the covenant....There are distressingly many things that happen on earth that are not the will of God (Luke 7:30 and every other sin mentioned in the Bible), that are against his will, and that stem from the incomprehensible and senseless sin in which we are born, in which the greater part of mankind lives, and in which Israel persisted, and against which even the “holiest men”...struggled all their days.... To try to interpret all these things by means of a concept of a plan of God, creates intolerable difficulties and gives rise to more exceptions than regularities. But the most important objection is that the idea of a plan is against the message of the Bible since God himself become incredible if that against which he has fought with power, and for which he sacrificed his only son, was nevertheless part and parcel of his eternal counsel.

Daane (1973:84) asserts that there is no correlation between “the bloodless decretal version of history”, when compared to the history portrayed in Scripture. The Bible records the history of Israel as constant conflict, crisis, rebellion, and judgement. It is a constant display of cause and effect, action and interaction between God's people and God himself. He (1973:84) contends that, “this suggests nothing of a single decree which determines all, but is itself free of conflict, serene as the divine being itself”.

Determinism leaves us with more questions than answers. Why would God continue to send one prophet after another to admonish people to repent, and even go so far as to threaten them with judgement, if he had determined them not to repent? Furthermore, if they were determined by God to be hard hearted, how could a loving and fair God send judgements on them, if they only did what he had determined them to do?

It must be concluded from a [hard] deterministic view of freedom, that God determined that some people (the reprobate) will remain hard hearted and “choose” not to repent. The Thomistic view of specific sovereignty held by ultra Calvinists or higher Calvinists such as Piper, Palmer, and Sproul, leads to a notion of *hard determinism*¹⁸.

2.2.4.1 Hard Determinism

Berkouwer (1971:424) admits that, “...in the case of divine election, we find an ‘ironclad determinism’ in complete detachment from man’s own willing and doing. Thus we observe a kind of ‘fatalism’ which emasculates man’s responsibility of all real meaning and sense.” Sproul (1997:172) describes the sovereignty of God from the perspective of hard determinism, asserting that,

The movement of every molecule, the actions of every plant, the falling of every star, the choices of every volitional creature, all of these are subject to his sovereign will. No maverick molecules run loose in the universe, beyond the control of the creator. If one such molecule existed, it could be the critical fly in the eternal ointment. As one grain of sand in the kidney of Oliver Cromwell changed the course of English history, so one maverick molecule could destroy every promise God has ever made about the outcome of history.

In explaining the relationship between divine sovereignty and human freedom, Packer (1985:143) asserts that,

- There is no contingency or indeterminacy in human choice.
- Human beings are fully responsible for their choices.

Since no logical sense can be made of these contradicting statements, Packer, under the guise of piety and reverence calls this obvious contradiction an “antimony”. He (1985:145) defines an antimony as two statements that are both true, but appears to our understanding as being contradictory, and holds that, “The reality of human moral agency and responsibility in a world where God is Lord is one of the mysteries of creation, which we reverently acknowledge, but do not pretend to fully understand”.

¹⁸ “Every event must have happened exactly as it did because of prior conditions....all things that happen are caused by sufficient conditions in which nothing that happens can vary in even the slightest detail...All events are part of an unbreakable causal chain that stretches back perhaps to eternity. Every link in the chain is strictly caused by the one that preceded it” (Walls and Dongell, 2004: 99).

MacArthur (1996:28) also reverts to mystery when facing the same problem, “How can God choose some, offer salvation to everyone, and hold people responsible who weren’t chosen? I don’t know. But it is a mystery only to us. I don’t know how God resolves it but I am content to leave it with Him”.

While Calvinists such as Packer are content with accommodating this kind of inconsistencies in their theology, not all Calvinists adhere to this extreme view of determinism (hard determinism). It is extremely difficult to imagine how this view can be reconciled to any notion of human responsibility. It also causes serious concerns regarding the origin of sin and the freedom of God. Sproul, (2012) holds that, “God ordains everything that comes to pass, and some of the things that come to pass are evil. So, does God ordain evil? There is only one biblical answer to that question: yes. If God did not ordain evil, there would be no evil, because God is sovereign.”

Theologians developed various theories in an attempt to reconcile divine determinism with human responsibility within *soft determinism*.

2.2.4.2 Soft determinism

Walls and Dongell (2004:99,113) describes soft determinism or compatibilism as follows,

In addition to affirming universal causality, soft determinists also believe that we are responsible for our actions, and they agree that we must be free in some sense if that were the case....Those who come to Christ by Irresistible Grace are not forced against their will to come. Sometimes critics of Calvinism makes this charge, but it betrays a serious misunderstanding of Calvinism....God can determine people without coercing them. He does it by changing the elect internally. He enlightens their minds, renews their wills, gives them a new heart and so on. So they come “most freely” in the sense that they want to come to Christ once God has caused them to think differently and desire differently. Given these factors, they couldn’t choose to reject Christ. Again, this doesn’t mean they want to reject Christ, but God won’t let them do so. Rather their desires have been so determined by God that they gladly come to Christ.

The Westminster Confession of Faith is a standard statement of faith for Calvinists. It ([1647] 1964:30 = WCF. 3, 1) states:

God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of

sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes¹⁹ taken away, but rather established.

The first and second parts of this confession seem to contradict each other. It is difficult to accept that God can determine people to act, without coercing them. The only way to make sense of the Westminster Confession of Faith is by evaluating this confession through a philosophical perspective of soft determinism, or compatibilism. This strong claim of all embracing determinism is closely linked to the meaning of “divine sovereignty” while some degree of human freedom is still maintained in terms of “second causes”. Peterson and Williams (2004:135) claim that the Canons of Dordt do not deny human responsibility and that the choices we make are real. They contend that,

divine sovereignty is not incompatible with true human freedom. God is not rendered idle by a world ruled by human freedom, but neither is the human being a puppet, a creature whose every thought, intention and move has been programmed by forces external to itself...We are creatures of God, and as such we are always bounded by his person, his law, and yes, his decree. Far from denouncing creaturely free will, this perspective demands that we affirm both a sovereign God and human free choice. For only a sovereign God could or would create a free human being.

Some Reformed theologians that subscribe to soft determinism or compatibilism, deny that Reformed theology is strictly based on determinism. They assert that everyday choices are free in the *libertarian* sense, and that God’s decree/determination/predestination only applies to salvation (Peterson and Williams, 2004:135).

Feinberg (1986:29) also holds a compatibilist or soft deterministic view of God’s sovereignty to human responsibility and believes that *all* human actions are *causally determined*, but free. He describes this view by asserting that, “God includes whatever means are necessary to accomplish his ends in a way that avoids constraining the agent to do what is decreed”. Sproul (2012) describes God’s causal determination saying that, “God ordains all things that come to pass, He ordains not only the ends but also the means to those ends, and He works through all things to bring about His righteous purpose.”

¹⁹ “Although God causes all things, the responsibility of the evil rests with the creatures they are the proximate causes who actually perform it” (Walls and Dongell, 2004:111).

From Sproul's explanation of causal determination, it is evident that there is very little, if any, difference between "hard determinism" and "soft determinism". Soft determinism simply means that God causes certain circumstances that narrow an individual's choice down to what is decreed. The individual then "freely chooses" to do what God *determined* him to do, in the first place, simply because it is the only option. Schlosser (2014:255) defends the notion of human freedom and uncoerced human choices when he correctly holds that, "Choosing and acting with free will is incompatible with being triggered to react in a way that bypasses one's rational capacities."

Feinberg (1986:28) strangely believes that even if the person could not have done otherwise, the person still maintains a notion of freedom. It, therefore, makes perfect sense that Feinberg (Walls and Dongell 2004:115) asserts that, "Calvinists as determinists must either reject freedom altogether or accept compatibilism".

Peterson and Williams (2004:155) describes compatibilism as follows:

Those who are enslaved to sin are as morally responsible as those who are free in Christ. The sinner is responsible for the sin that enslaves him because even as he follows its dictates he does so willingly, freely. He does what he wants to do. The sinner follows the deepest desires of his heart in his sin. Even though bound to sin, he chooses to sin...A person chooses and acts according to character. The will is not independent of the person and nature who chooses. We do what we want to do (Deut 30:19; Mt 17:12; Jas 1:14), even though our characters, which are themselves determined by a myriad of forces external to us and outside of our control, determine what we want to do. Personal character is not nearly as spontaneous as those who see the will as contrary choice like to suggest.

If we are bound by God's plan, by our sinful blindness and slavery, and by an almost countless number of sociological and environmental factors, how do we account for our sense of freedom, that from moment to moment we can choose one option over another? We sense that we are free because none of the things that go into making us the persons that we are constrains us such that we choose our every act contrary to our natures or against our wills. We do as we please. The compatibilist holds that every human choice has a sufficient cause outside of the human will. Freedom in the compatibilist sense is the contention that even if every choice we make and every act we perform is determined by forces outside of ourselves, and ultimately by God's ordaining guidance, we are still free, for we still act according to our desires.

Walls and Dongell (2004:160) correctly hold that the only version of Calvinism that does not contradict itself, is the one holding to hard determinism. This is the version that God knows the future because he determined every detail of it. It claims that everything that happens is caused by God, it does not only happen because he determined it to happen, but he could also have changed the outcome if he so wished. The only version of freedom that can exist within this framework is a compatibilist freedom. All choices are thus determined by God, whether caused directly or indirectly. Humans have freedom of choice insofar as that we freely choose to do what God has determined us to do. This is notwithstanding the fact that

it is impossible for us to choose to do anything else. We are, therefore, responsible for our actions, even though all our choices are predetermined by God.

Walls and Dongell (2004:161) hold that freedom and determinism are not compatible, and argue that, “If freedom and determinism are compatible in this way, then it follows that God could determine everyone to accept his love freely and be saved”. They contend that, in order to be consistent, Calvinists must then hold that, although God could choose to save everyone, and determine that everyone would be saved, he does not. God, whose holy nature is love, then chooses in His sovereignty to reprobate some, while saving others, even though we are born as sinners and can do nothing else but sin. They further contend that, “If freedom and determinism are compatible, then it is possible that God could determine all persons to freely do good at all times”. If we could accept this, serious questions about the problem and origin of evil must be asked, and large portions of Scripture will make no sense at all. If God does *not* determine our every choice and action, how does he know what we will do? How does he know the future?

2.2.5 God’s foreknowledge

Calvinism claims that God knows the future because he determined it in detail. This view of God’s foreknowledge has serious implications for the notion of “free will”. Walls and Dongell (2004:60) hold that, “Many Calvinists have reasoned that God’s knowledge of the future, since it is absolutely complete and infallible, locks every detail of the future in place and eliminates the possibility of free will (as power to choose otherwise).”

With regards to the foreknowledge of God, the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF. II, 2) states that, “In his sight all things are open and manifest; his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain”. The doctrine of predestination is further explained in chapter 3, (WCF. III: 2, 3, 4, 5;

2. Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, yet hath he not decreed anything because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such and such conditions.
3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.
4. These angels and men, thus predestined and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

5. Those of mankind that are predestined unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid...hath chosen...without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes, moving him thereunto; and all the praise of his glorious grace.

2.3 CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 2

We can therefore conclude that, according to Calvinism, God's knowledge of the future is infallible because:

- God has determined/decreed/predestined all things from all eternity
- Nothing can possibly happen without it being determined/decreed/predestined by God.
- God's decree/determination/predestination does not depend on his foreknowledge of what could happen, but his foreknowledge is based on the fact that he determined/decreed/predestined everything to happen, as well as the choices every human will make, either directly or indirectly.
- Every intention of every man is governed by God's will, (His intentions); manifested through his divine determination/decreed/predestination. If everything is not determined by God, he cannot infallibly know the future.

God knows the future simply because he is outside of time. In terms of describing God "in time", we could say that God dwells in past present and future simultaneously. God is not affected by time as we are; everything is at all times present to Him. What the Westminster confession says, with regards to God knowing the future (in time), is a description of God from the limited perspective of time that does not account for His omniscience. God is eternal and exists in eternity, but He is also omnipresent, which means that even though He is transcendent, He is also eternally present. The concept of God's *foreknowledge* does not make sense in the perspective of *eternity*, since eternity encompasses time.

Using the term "foreknowledge" places God (or what God does) *in time*, but God is not limited by time. He exists and works in eternity. Christ did not at a specific point in time *become* the Alpha and Omega, He *was* (and is) that from eternity. God, therefore, does not

know things “before hand” He simply *knows*! His knowledge is not limited by time. He knows all things. He is omniscient (Isa. 46:10; 48:5, 16; Acts 15:18).

While election takes place in *eternity*, salvation is actualised in *time*. Salvation is, therefore, “the realisation of the eternal election in time”. It is impossible for us to understand the relationship between time and eternity simply because our minds, limited by our concept of *time*, cannot grasp the concept of *timelessness*. The relationship and interconnectedness of time and eternity must consequently be typified as a mystery. Foreknowledge and determinism, if not correctly defined, do violence to the concept of God’s eternity and ultimately to our understanding of God. (F.P. Möller, personal communication, November 12, 2013).

Walls and Dongell (2004:122-125) explains God’s foreknowledge (by determinism) in the light of the Westminster confession, through the following presupposition; If God knows what our grand children will have for breakfast on a specific day in the future, without it being determined/decreed/predestined, it means that God’s knowledge of the future is contingent on their choice. The Westminster Confession of Faith states that God’s knowledge of the future is *not* contingent on the choices of any creature. - Therefore, according to Calvinism, everything must be determined/decreed/predestined, in order not to contradict the Westminster confession.

While the Westminster Confession of Faith rightly states that God’s knowledge of the future is *not* contingent on the choices of any creature, it is also not contingent on His determination of future events, simply because His omniscience is an attribute of God that exists outside of time.

Calvinists who do not wish to embrace full-on determinism, may opt for the Molinist approach. Molinism, with its concept of middle knowledge, seems to be an answer to some, but it also has its challenges and shortcomings. Walls and Dongell (2004:135) defines middle knowledge as God’s knowledge of, “what all possible created free wills would do in all possible circumstances or states of affairs”. And, that, “God’s decrees are dependent on what he knows creatures would freely do in various circumstances”. God exercises providential control over the choices people make, since he knows what they may choose to do because of his middle knowledge. Molinism holds that God has complete knowledge of the future without determining it to take place. He does not have any control over what He knows by means of middle knowledge.

Walls and Dongell (2004:138-140) hold that Molinism is particularly enticing for its view of providence that offers a high level of control, without resorting to determinism. It does, however, not give any definite answer as to how God can know the choices of moral agents or have the middle knowledge on which the knowledge of the future depends. It also cannot answer the question as to whom or what makes this knowledge true.

The “openness view” is an alternative to Molinism. Advocates of this view hold that God is sovereignly in control of the world, while he gives moral agents freedom, in the libertarian sense, to make significant decisions, including whether to trust and believe in him or not, without any foreknowledge as to the result of these decisions. The openness view concedes that freedom in the libertarian sense implies that God cannot foreknow the actions of moral agents. The proponents of this view therefore contend that libertarian freedom and infallible foreknowledge is incompatible. They argue from Scriptures such as God’s testing of Abraham, that God did not know what choice Abraham would make in terms of obedience to God or saving his son. God therefore sovereignly chose to create a world with moral agents, over creating a world where He would determine all actions of His creatures (Walls and Dongell, 2004:144-146).

CHAPTER 3

THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION AS ARTICULATED BY CALVINISM

3.1 INTRODUCTION AND DEMARCATION OF THE TERM “CALVINISM”

It is essential to first study all the facts and arguments relating to a specific theology in order to do a proper evaluation of that theology. This evaluation of the Tulip System is, therefore, a sincere attempt to engage with the Calvinist arguments and statements from recognised Calvinist theologians for the purpose of gleaning from its positive aspects what can be implemented in the formulation of a Pentecostal doctrine of election. Walls and Dongell (2004:156) correctly asserts that,

While logical consistency may not be a sufficient condition to show that a theology is true, it is a necessary condition. When inconsistency is exposed, we know that something is awry...to succeed in showing that a theology is inconsistent is to show that it can't be altogether true as it stands.

A well defined model of election is, therefore, depended on consistency and accurate Scriptural interpretation. These requirements must consistently be applied to the Calvinistic, Arminian, and Pentecostal interpretations of the doctrine of election.

Calvinists and theologians from the broad Reformed tradition developed a high standard for scholarship and a distinct approach to epistemology²⁰ (Walls and Dongell, 2004:9). There is, however, a myriad of different views on Calvinism among its circle of theologians.

²⁰“A specific philosophical reflection and criteria on scholarly and scientific knowledge” (Deist, 1987:173).

For the purpose of this study, we must distinguish between Reformed theology and Calvinism. The Reformed tradition is in general Christ-centred and forms part of the “large tapestry of Classical Christianity” Olson (2011:13). Calvinism forms part of the historical development of Reformed theology, but Reformed theology itself is much broader than Calvinism and should not be equated with it.

Olson (2011:53) describes Calvinism as a system of theological beliefs about God’s sovereignty, especially in relation to the doctrines of providence and predestination, which are firmly embedded in, and yet distinct from the Reformed tradition, and as “the soteriological system stemming from Calvin, which is generally known under the rubric of TULIP” (2006:16,38). Walls and Dongell (2004:10) makes the same distinction between Calvinism and Reformed theology, and maintains that doctrines commonly associated with Calvinism such as, Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace and Perseverance of the saints (TULIP) can be utilised as a convenient overview of its main tenants.

The importance of the *five points of Calvinism* as a doctrinal model of election with regards to general Reformed theology is, therefore, debatable. Boettner (1969:59) contends that, “The Calvinistic system especially emphasizes five distinct doctrines. These are technically known as ‘the five points of Calvinism,’ and they are the main pillars upon which the superstructure rests”. He (1969:59) also holds that the Five Points of Calvinism is,

a simple, harmonious, self-consistent system; and the way in which they fit together as component parts of a well-ordered whole has won the admiration of thinking men of all creeds. Prove any of them true and all others will follow as logical and necessary parts of the system. Prove anyone of them false and the whole system must be abandoned.

All Calvinists *do not* agree with Boettner. Olson (2011:154) asserts that, “many Reformed people and many Calvinists cannot stomach this element [Limited Atonement] of the TULIP system, and they extract it out, and reject it even if that brings them into conflict with the rest of what they believe and with their fellow Reformed and Calvinist believers”. Calvinists who reject the doctrine of Limited Atonement but still affirm the other points, call themselves four-point Calvinists. Olson (2011:150) contends that, “Four point Calvinists who try to avoid “L” but hold on to the rest of TULIP, have to explain why Christ would suffer the punishment for the reprobate sinners God intentionally rejects from possible salvation”.

McKinley (1965:74) claims that many “followers of Calvinism” distance themselves from the doctrine of predestination. Hansen (2008:111) equates Calvinism with the five points of TULIP and then quotes Horton who makes a distinction between those who hold to what he calls, “Five point Calvinism” but shuns covenant theology and paedobaptism, from Reformed theology, which he describes as the whole confession that includes covenant theology and paedobaptism. Horton (2011:180) holds that, “the doctrine of election is inextricably bound up with covenant theology and with the covenantal life that is shaped in the New Testament by the means of grace”.

Horton (2005:1) further differentiates between Reformed theology and hyper-Calvinism in asserting that,

Often, detractors define Reformed theology not according to what it actually teaches, but according to where they think its logic naturally leads. Even more tragically, some hyper-Calvinists have followed the same course. Either way, “Calvinism” ends up being defined by extreme positions that it does not in fact hold as scriptural. The charges leveled against Reformed theology, of which hyper-Calvinism is actually guilty, received a definitive response at the international Synod of Dordt (1618–1619), along with the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms.

Horton (2005:2) speaks about the seemingly contradicting statements in the Confessions such as the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF, III, 1), as “guardrails” that guides Reformed theology where hyper-Calvinism leans over too far on one of two extremes. In other words, he holds that hyper Calvinism, when it goes beyond what the Scripture teaches, tends to give Reformed theology a bad name. To illustrate his concept of “guardrails”, he refers to the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF, III, 1) that states, “God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass;”, as one guardrail, and the rest of the statement, “yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creature; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established,” as the second guardrail.

Feinberg, who has devoted much of his life in the defence of Reformed theology (Bryson, 2004), has some of the same concerns as Horton and holds that some Calvinists have portrayed Calvinism in a way that is not compatible with Reformed theology. Feinberg (1986:24) holds that,

Unfortunately, some Calvinists, because of their understanding of God’s sovereignty, have denied that humans are free. Yet some of those Calvinists maintain that we are morally responsible for our sin, while God, who decreed our sin, is not morally accountable. When asked how this can be true, they respond that it is a paradox that nonetheless must be true because Scripture demands it.

Among the distinctives of Calvinism, the doctrine of limited atonement stands out. Bryson (2004:33) holds that,

While the Calvinist doctrine of a limited atonement, which says Christ died redemptively *only* for some, is a distinctive of Calvinism, it is not the case that a universal atonement is a distinctive of Arminianism. That is, belief in a *provisionally* unlimited atonement does not set Arminians apart from most other believers. A universal atonement, provisionally speaking, is common to almost all, if not all, other orthodox believers.

Pratt (2010:[1]) who contends that “Reformed theology is covenant theology”, raises a concern that many of the newer advocates of Reformed theology have abandoned covenant theology and have reduced Reformed theology to the doctrines of grace (TULIP). He holds that it brings an imbalance to their theology in at least three areas. Firstly, an over emphasis of grace where “the covenants of both testaments consistently teach that God has always required determined effort from His people in response to His grace, and that He will reward obedience and punish disobedience”. Secondly, they neglect the idea of covenantal communities and place the focus on individuals, and thirdly an over focus on spiritual matters and neglect the physical and social effects of sin and salvation.

Whether Pratt is correct in his assertions and conclusions is debatable. What is, however, conclusive in his arguments is that he identifies the same trend among newer groups of Calvinists that Horton does. We can, therefore, make a distinction between broader Reformed theology and Calvinism as being associated specifically with the doctrines of grace (TULIP).

Various theologians have endeavoured to describe Reformed theology, but as Crisp (2014:3) points out, “Reformed theology is always being reformed in each new generation”. He refers to the variations in doctrine within the Reformed tradition of theology between theologians such as, Zwingli and Calvin, Edwards and Hodge, and Schleiermacher and Barth, which makes it near impossible to limit Reformed theology to a narrow definition.

Crisp (2014:2) describes his view on Reformed theology, asserting that, “the Reformed tradition comprises of a variegated and diverse body of theological views even on matters once thought to be definitive of those churches bearing its name, including the doctrines of double predestination and limited atonement, to name but two of the most obvious candidates”. He (2014:5) contends that the work of Jonathan Edwards, for example, while considered “perhaps the most sophisticated and unrelenting philosophical account of the

relationship between divine determinism and human freedom ever penned by a Reformed theologian”, does not entirely agree with classical Reformed theology.

Van Ruler (1971:102) describes the pure Reformed structure of preaching as, “testimonium-mandato-permissio” which he explains as follows:

‘Testimonium’ wil zeggen: de dienaar van het Woord geeft getuigenis van het heil; hy zegt wat het is en hy zegt dat het er is; het is eenmaal eens voorgoed verworven en geschonken. ‘Mandatum’ wil zeggen: de dienaar zegt er van Godswege bij, dat allen mensen worden geroepen, om dit heil in geloof aan te nemen en te ontvangen. Ja, zij worden niet allen geroepen, hul wordt van Godswege geboden en bevolen, alles wat God schenkt in de gehoorzaamheid van het geloof tot zich te laten komen in zich op te nemen. Zo staat de Geest gedurig en geduldig te kloppen op de deur van het hart. De prins fluit buiten de poort van het kasteel, opdat de slapende prinses wakker zou worden. De vocation externa wil deur alle muren deur penetreren en vocation interna worden. ‘Promissio’ wil zeggen: en degene die het in geloof aanneemt, ontvangt het heil, het volle heil, ook daadwerkelijk en kan vanuit de eeuwige raad absoluut zeker zijn van zijn eeuwige zaligheid.

Van Ruler (1971:102) gives this brilliant explanation of preaching of the gospel message, and he holds that, there is, for him, no better or more beautiful links to the order of salvation (heilsproses) than these three principles, which he contends are principles of pure Reformed preaching.

Men zecht niet vanaf de kansel: mensen, het volle heil is ten volle volbracht en ik vekondig jullie, dat jullie allemaal behouden bent. Dan is de zaak puur Christolochies. Maar men zecht ook niet: mensen, het volle heil is ten volle volbracht, maar brant je niet aan, want het is alleen voor de uitverkorenen. Dan is de zaak puur pneumatologisch en dat zeer op een eenzijdige en schrale wijze. De genoemde drieslag bewaart ons voor beide eenzijdigheden. Het Christologische komt volledig aan z'n trekken. Dat bevelen en beloven zijn manieren, waarop de Geest een menzeshart bewerkt.

Van Ruler makes a very definite distinction between the absolutes that hyper-Calvinism teaches and what is preached in Reformed churches. Van Ruler (1971:102) in agreement with Horton (2005:[1]) contends that, “er heel wat ketterse addertjies onder het welige gras van de ultra-gereformeerdeheid (hyper-Calvinism) steken”.

Yasushi Sekiguchi, (2007:1) who is the chairman of the Van Ruler Translation Society in Japan, holds that,

Van Ruler's theology have a trinitarian-predestinational-eschatological character. He denied the Christ-centered theology of Barth(ians). Now he names 'one of the greatest three Dutch Reformed (hervormed) theologians in 20th Century' in the Netherlands. He did not like the Ultra-Reformed groups, but his theology is based on the Dutch Reformed Tradition (linked from so-called Second Reformation), especially on the Heidelberg Catechism.

He criticises the “ultra-reformed” or hyper Calvinists on the one end of the Reformed spectrum as well as the “vrijzinnigen”²¹ on the other end of the spectrum and pleads for a sober minded approach to theology, where both the dogmatic and the practical aspects of Christianity can be reconciled. He admonishes us to remember that there are many principles in theology, and that over-accentuating one at the cost of another may lead to an unbiblical theology. What Van Ruler is saying corresponds with the admonishment of Horton who relies strongly of the confessional statements to act as guardrails for sound theology. Van Ruler (1971:1) further holds that,

de logica moet gebroken worden door het historische evangelie, dat ons in de veelvoudige, ondoorgrondelijke werkelijkheid van het heil dompelt. Er is meer werkelijk dan denkbaar is, althans voor een zondaar. Dat plegen de ultra-gereformeerden niet door te hebben. Ze wisselen de evangelie in voor de logica. Ze gaan alles uitsluitend doordenken vanuit de eeuwige, dubbele predestinatie. Dan hebben ze natuurlijk in alles wat ze zeggen volmaakt gelijk. Ook wanneer de helle zon van de dubbele predestinatie alles doodschroeit, de hele historische Christus, de hele bemiddeling van het heil in de traditie, de hele uitwendigheid van de evangelie en de kerk, de hele subjectiviteit van de mens. Er blijft maar een ding over: de eeuwige raad.

He pleads for a pure Reformed perspective, a “middle of the road” approach to preaching and practice of theology where the preaching of the gospel takes centre stage, and where we do not allow ourselves to become so entangled in philosophy of dogmatics that the gospel becomes un-preachable. He then asserts that,

Het evangelie roept ons terug uit dergelijke woestijnen van de logica. Het wil ons bekeren. Dát is het! Het is een echte bekering, om niet langer logisch op loop te gaan met de predestinatie-idee, maar in te keren in de onbegrijpelijke overvloed en vastheid van het evangelie.

Van Ruler (1971:106) then asks the question’ “Is het geen ketterij, als men deze overvloed en vastheid kwijt is? Ook al is dat het geval aan de gedachte aan de predestinatie? Is men dan van pure gereformeerdheid niet ongereformeerd geworden?”

It is therefore necessary, when speaking or writing about Calvinism or Reformed theology to clarify and describe the terms to be used.

Olson (2011:36) distinguishes three categories of Reformed theology:

1. The first category is an open and flexible Reformed theology that is open to revision and that does not regard TULIP as a central theme.

²¹ “Vrijzinnig” could be translated as “liberal”, and in this context means that a minister is not required to sign the “confession” (three confessional statements, namely: The Canons of Dordt, the Heidelberg Catechisms, and the Dutch Confession of Faith.) (D’Assonville, 1980:65).

2. The second category advocated by theologians such as Sproul, revolves around a strong view of God's sovereignty, divine determinism, and TULIP. This category is strongly supported by Piper and the young, restless and Reformed generation of Calvinists, also known as the movement of new Calvinism.
3. The third category does not regard TULIP or absolute divine authority as essential tenants of Reformed theology, while retaining the historic elements of Calvinism. Theologians in this category subscribe to some but not all of the five points of Calvinism.

For the purpose of this study, the author will specifically refer to the second category of Reformed theology as "Calvinism", it is also this category of theological persuasion that Van Ruler (1971:102) refers to as "ultra-reformed" and Horton (2005:[1]) refers to as hyper-Calvinism. Theologians from this category are specifically concerned with the TULIP system, or "Five points of Calvinism" which stands in contrast with the "Five points of Arminianism", constituted by the Remonstrance (Slaatte, 1979:11,15).

Fisher (1897:339) contends that, "the Canons of Dordt, both in spirit and in letter, present Calvinism, not in its extreme, yet in its unadulterated form", while Warburton (1955:47) holds that Calvin's work was summed up by the Counsel of Dordt. He also claims that it was Dordt that brought the teachings of Calvin, as set out in his famous institutes, into clear focus. The teachings of Calvin with regards to the doctrine of election are therefore embedded in the model of election constituted by the acronym, TULIP, which is synonymous with Calvinism. The doctrine of election can, therefore, from a specifically (higher) Calvinistic point of view be defined as the "Five points of Calvinism".

3.2 THE FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM EVALUATED

The five points of Calvinism (TULIP) as set out by Steele and Thomas (1963:16-19), are discussed and evaluated.

3.2.1 "T" - TOTAL DEPRAVITY

- I. Because of the Fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the gospel.
- II. The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt.
- III. His will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature, therefore, he will not-indeed he cannot choose good over evil in the spiritual realm.
- IV. Consequently, it takes much more than the Spirit's assistance to bring a sinner to Christ-it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature.

- V. Faith is not something that man contributes to salvation but is itself a part of God's gift of salvation - it is God's gift to the sinner, not the sinner's gift to God (Steele & Thomas, 1963:16) *Roman numerals added.*

3.2.1.1 Supralapsarianism and Infralapsarianism

Supralapsarianism and infralapsarianism are terms that are used in reference to the specific order of decrees. The decrees are based on speculation and are not revealed in Scripture. The basis for the decrees can be found in the Westminster Confession.

3.2.1.1.1 Supralapsarianism

Hyper-Calvinists or Ultra Calvinists hold this view. Man is hereby consigned to perdition "before they sin and without a cause, except it be by the sovereign will of God" (Chafer, 1948:179). The same applies to those who are saved, which means that it is God's will that some are reprobated as much as it is his will that some are saved. Drawing this argument to a conclusion, we can say that it is, therefore, (according to Calvinism) God's will that some people are not saved, while Scripture testifies to the contrary.

Calvin, in his commentary on Rom. 9:18 (*Comm.*, XXXVIII/19) asserts that, "Paul teaches us, that the ruin of the wicked is not only foreseen by the Lord, but also ordained by his counsel and his will ... not only the destruction of the wicked is foreknown, but that the wicked themselves have been created for this very end—that they may perish." He (*Inst.* III, 23, 7) also asks "how it is that the fall of Adam involves so many nations with their infant children in eternal death without remedy, unless that it so seemed meet to God?"; and answers his own question by saying "The decree I admit is dreadful; and yet it is impossible to deny what the end of man was before he made him, and he foreknew, because he so ordained by his decree".²² Bryson (2004:15, 16) contends that,

²² The author acknowledges that this line of thought is viewed partly or in its entirety differently from the viewpoint of Calvinistic Theology. The Calvinistic viewpoint is not discussed at this point.

The key to understanding Calvin is not only in the words “predestined to” but in the words “created for.” *Where* you go when you die, is, according to Calvin, determined by *why* God created you in the first place. It is possible, according to Calvin, that God created you *for eternal life*. Calvin also taught that it was equally possible that God created you *for eternal death*.

Calvin holds that, (*Inst.* III, 21, 5) “some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of those ends, we say that he has been predestined to life or death”.

Christ says in Luke 15:7 (EMTV) that, “I say to you that likewise *there* shall be more joy in heaven over one sinner repenting than over ninety-nine righteous who need no repentance” and God also says in Ezekiel 33:11 (KJV) “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?”. Paul writes in 1 Tim. 2:4 (EMTV), that God, “... desires all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth”, and Peter writes in 2 Pet. 3:9 (EMTV), that it is not God’s will, “... that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”.

Supralapsarians place the decrees in the following order:

- Decree to elect some to be saved and to reprobate all others.
- Decree to create men both elect and non-elect.
- Decree to permit the fall.
- Decree to provide salvation for the elect.
- Decree to apply salvation to the elect.

3.2.1.1.2 Infralapsarianism

Infralapsarians place the decrees in the following order:

- Decree to create man.
 - Decree to permit the fall.
 - Decree to provide salvation for man.
 - Decree to elect those who do believe and to leave in just condemnation those who do not believe.
 - Decree to apply salvation to those who believe.
-

Sproul (1986:96) believes that supralapsarianism is an insult to Calvinism, while he strongly advocates infralapsarianism, in the sense that God unconditionally elects some sinners to be saved and to assign others, whom he could just as well save, to eternal damnation. Sproul (1986:96) holds that election took place in the light of the Fall (Infralapsarianism). He assigns guilt to the entire human race on the premise that the entire human race acted with libertarian freedom, and is fully to blame for sin, sins *we wilfully* sinned with Adam.

What Sproul advocates stands in stark contrast to what Calvin taught. Calvin believed that election preceded the Fall (Supralapsarianism), that God elected some to be saved according to his sovereign decree, and then determined the Fall. Calvin (*Inst.* III, 21, 5) describes predestination as,

the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death.

Van Genderen and Velema (2008:193) Describes the deterministic character of Reformed theology, where it coincides with that of Calvinism, in asserting that, “A work on Reformed dogmatics usually contains a chapter about God’s council or his decrees, specifically focussed on predestination. All of God’s actions are based on his counsel or decree”.

Decretal theology (theological assumptions based on the premise of the “decrees of God”) rejects the possibility of a “decisive moment”, or that one moment can be conditioned by another moment, but wants to relate to each moment in “vertical directness” to God’s decree. If one moment can be conditioned upon another, God’s decree becomes historically involved, which would then limit God’s total determination of his decretive will (Daane, 1973:89).

It is from this perspective that Berkhof (1953:123) criticises the doctrine of infralapsarianism in stating that, “Infralapsarianism really wants to explain reprobation as an act of God’s justice. It is inclined to deny either explicitly or implicitly that it [reprobation] is an act of the mere good pleasure of God.” He contends that the infralapsarian interpretation of reprobation makes it a conditional decree and therefore leads to Arminianism. Berkhof, in other words, affirms the Calvinistic position that it is God’s will, and an act of his mere good pleasure, that some people will be damned to eternal perdition.

Godfrey (1976:1) defends the doctrine of reprobation and holds that, “To abandon reprobation is to make both election and atonement either conditional or universal. To abandon reprobation is to abandon the whole Reformed theology”.

3.2.1.2 General objections to the doctrine of total depravity

3.2.1.2.1 The imputation of sin and guilt of sin to Adam’s progeny

Augustine, who was a devoted student of Gnostic philosophy, became a bishop in the church and started to saturate the Church with a concept from Manichaeism²³ now known as “the doctrine of original sin” (Morrell, 2012). Wiley, (1952, 109) agrees with Morrell that Augustine was responsible for the formulation and advancement of this doctrine, but also notes that “it appears in germinal form in the writings of Tertulian (d.220), Hillary (350) and Ambrose (374)”.²²

Augustine taught that “all men were seminally in the loins of Adam when he was condemned, and, therefore he was not condemned without them” (Seeberg, 1961:343). Augustine’s theory of imputation is known as “The Realistic Mode of Transmission”, which, with the exception of Zwingli, was the generally accepted theory of the Reformers (Wiley, 1952:109). Berkhof (1959:219) states that “the western church reached their culmination in Augustinianism which stressed the fact that we are both guilty and polluted in Adam”.

²³ Loudovikos (2002:[2]) describes Manichaeism as, “The syncretic, dualistic religious philosophy taught by the Persian prophet Manes, combining elements of Zoroastrian, Christian, and Gnostic thought and opposed by the imperial Roman government, Neo-Platonist philosophers, and orthodox Christians. A dualistic philosophy dividing the world between good and evil principles or regarding matter as intrinsically evil and mind as intrinsically good” The Oxford dictionary (2015: Manichaeism) describes Manichaeism as, “A dualistic religious system with Christian, Gnostic, and pagan elements, founded in Persia in the 3rd century by Manes (circa 216-circa 276) and based on a supposed primeval conflict between light and darkness. It was widespread in the Roman Empire and in Asia, and survived in eastern Turkestan (Xinjiang) until the 13th century.(Manichaeism).

Van den Brink and Van der Kooi (2012:292) describes inherited sin (*Erfzonde*) saying that, “*Erfzonde* wil zeggen dat de natuur van de mens (en dan special de wil) is aangetast, waardoor zoned een collectief en sociaal verschijnsel is”. The doctrine of inherited sin is also evident in the Heidelberg Catechisms (*HC* I, 4, 10) where it states that He [God] is terribly angry about the sin we are born with as well as the sins we personally commit”. Augustine also taught that, mankind, as a direct result of Adam’s disobedience, lost the ability to abstain from evil and to do good, and that “all of Adam’s descendants were born spiritually dead and guilty of Adam’s sin” (Olson, 2006:30). This is the main premise upon which the TULIP system is built.

Berkhof (1933:143) raises a very interesting question on this point when he asks why we are held responsible for only the “first sin of Adam, and not for the rest of his sins, committed by the same human nature, nor for the sins of our forefathers?” This is a question that remains to be answered.

Since Augustine could not read Greek; he had to rely on the Vulgate, a Latin translation of the Scriptures by Jerome (Morrell, 2013:2). Jerome mistranslated Rom. 5:12 to read “*quo omnes peccaverunt*”, meaning, “in whom [i.e., in Adam] all men have sinned” (Meyendorff, 1983:144) instead of reading “for that all have sinned”.

This error was initially perpetuated in the Western Church for 1200 years because of the flawed Latin translation until Erasmus correctly translated the *ἐπι* *ὅ* to read “on whom” (Morrell, 2013:2). Augustine’s error was, unfortunately, then further promulgated by Luther, Calvin, and their followers. It is important to note that the Church in the east did not know any doctrine of inherited sin (Van den Brink and Van den Kooi, 2012:294).

Bretschneider (1999:[1]) correctly contends that, in order to interpret Rom. 5:12 to mean that “all men sinned in Adam”, one must first prove that Paul refers to “universal sin-guiltiness”. This interpretation is however not possible due to the expressions, “sin entered the world”, ‘sin is not imputed’, ‘not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression’, and, ‘where sin hath abounded’.

Paul said that while death came into the world as a result of Adam’s sin, it [death] was transferred to all men who sinned (Morrell, 2013:2). The consequence of Adam’s sin was that “death”, not the universal imputation of Adam’s sin. We are only responsible for personal,

actual sin. We are born with a bias toward sin, not with actual sin. We become sinners by sinning; not because we are born with “inherited” sin.

Carnell (Kumar, 2005:63) asserts that, “Philosophy is like a railway without switches – once man is committed to a given direction, he is determined in his outcome.” This statement literally applies to Augustine when he made certain seemingly logical conclusions based on his flawed premise. It led him to a forced hermeneutic to support his theology, rather than the other way around. This caused several contradictions, and some seemingly illogical assertions.

Calvin (*Inst.* 2, 1, 8) affirms the doctrine of total depravity, and rightly defines original sin as, “a hereditary corruption and depravity of our nature, extending to all the parts of the soul, which first makes us obnoxious to the wrath of God, and then produces in us works which in Scripture are termed works of the flesh”. Calvin, unlike Augustine, held that we are not responsible for Adam’s sin. Calvin (*Inst.* II, 1, 8) asserts that,

For when it is said that the sin of Adam has made us obnoxious to the justice of God, the meaning is not, that we who are in ourselves innocent and blameless, are bearing his guilt, but by since by his transgression we are all placed under the curse, he is said to have brought us under obligation.

In other words, we are, according to Calvin, not held accountable for Adam’s sin, “but rather that we (including infants) are guilty because of our sinful and corrupted nature” (Lane, 2009:66, 67).²⁴

²⁴ Calvin deals with the doctrine on original sin inter alia in Book 2, chapter 1 of his Institutes. In the translation of Beveridge (1966:209, 210) the different sections of this chapter are summarized as follows:

1. The knowledge of ourselves most necessary. To use it properly we must be divested of pride, and clothed with true humility, which will dispose us to consider our fall, and embrace the mercy of God in Christ.
2. Though there is plausibility in the sentiment which stimulates us to self-admiration, the only sound sentiment is that which inclines us to true humbleness of mind. Pretexts for pride. The miserable vanity of sinful man.
3. Different views taken by carnal wisdom and by conscience, which appeals to divine justice as its standard. The knowledge of ourselves, consisting of two parts, the former of which having already been discussed, the latter is here considered.
4. In considering this latter part, two points to be considered; 1. How it happened that Adam involved himself and the whole human race in this dreadful calamity. This the result not of sensual intemperance, but of infidelity (the source of other heinous sins), which led to revolt from God, from whom all true happiness must be derived. An enumeration of the other sins produced by the infidelity of the first man.
5. The second point to be considered is, the extent to which the contagious influence of the fall extends. It extends, 1. To all the creatures, though unoffending; and, 2. To the whole posterity of Adam. Hence hereditary corruption, or original sin, and the depravation of a nature which was previously pure and good. This depravation communicated to the whole posterity of Adam, but not in the way supposed by the Pelagians and Celestians.
6. Depravation communicated not merely by imitation, but by propagation. This proved, 1. From the contrast drawn between Adam and Christ. Confirmation from passages of Scripture; 2 From the general declaration that we are the children of wrath.
7. Objection, that if Adam’s sin is propagated to his posterity, the soul must be derived by transmission. Answer. Another objection--viz. that children cannot derive corruption from pious parents. Answer.
8. Definition of original sin. Two parts in the definition. Exposition of the latter part. Original sin exposes us to the wrath of God. It also produces in us the works of the flesh. Other definitions considered.
9. Exposition of the former part of the definition--viz. that hereditary depravity extends to all the faculties of the soul.

10. From the exposition of both parts of the definition it follows that God is not the author of sin, the whole human race being corrupted by an inherent viciousness.

11. This, however, is not from nature, but is an adventitious quality. Accordingly, the dream of the Manichees as to two principles vanishes.

It is significant that Calvin, in section 11 of chapter 1, Book 2, categorically rejects the viewpoint of the Manichees. He calls it "the absurd notion (Beveridge, 1966:220).

Further to this, the reformed doctrine on original sin or hereditary corruption, is based on passages of Scripture such as Job 14:4, Psalm 51:7, Romans 5:12, 15, 17-19 etc. and is summarized in the Canons of Dordt (*COD* 1:1),

God's Right to Condemn All People

Since all people have sinned in Adam and have come under the sentence of the curse and eternal death, God would have done no one an injustice if it had been his will to leave the entire human race in sin and under the curse, and to condemn them on account of their sin. As the apostle says: The whole world is liable to the condemnation of God (Rom. 3:19), All have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23), and The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23).

and other Reformed confessions like the Belgic Confession (*BCF*: 15),

We believe that sin, which is called Original, has been sown into and poured throughout the whole human race by the disobedience of Adam. Moreover, original sin is a corruption of the entire nature and a hereditary crime, with which even infants themselves are polluted in the womb of their mother. And just as a toxic root, it sprouts forth every type of sin in humanity, and, in the presence of God, it is so filthy and detestable, that it is sufficient for the condemnation of the entire human race. Truly, it is not thoroughly extinguished nor plucked out by the roots through Baptism, seeing that just as waves of a stream continually rise up and pour forth from a corrupt bubbling spring, so too from it. Although, to the children of God it is not handed over or imputed to condemnation, but for them it is remitted according to the pure grace and mercy of God, not so that they may fall asleep confident in this remission, but so that with the sense of this corruption it wakes up more frequent groans in the faithful, and so that by it they more passionately desire themselves to be free from this body of death. From this, we therefore damn the error of the Pelagians, who assert that this original sin is nothing other than imitation. Phil. 2:13; John 15:5; Psal. 51:7; Rom. 3:10; Gen. 6:3; John 3:6; Rom. 5:14; Eph. 1:5; Rom. 7:18, 24.

and Heidelberg Catechism (*HC* 1:Lord's Day 3:7) "From where, then, does this depraved nature of man come? From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise,¹ whereby our nature became so corrupt ² that we are all conceived and born in sin. ³ 1 Gen 3; 2 Rom 5:12, 18-19; 3 Ps 14:2-3, 51:5".

It is also dealt with in numerous handbooks of Reformed scholars (cf. in this regard Boice, 1981:204-206; Berkhof, 1969:237-254). "The universality of sin is the result of God's judgment upon the race because of Adam's transgression. Adam was the representative of the race. He stood before God for us, so that, as Paul says, when he fell we fell and were caught up inevitably in the results of his rebellion" (Boice, p. 206). "This sin is called 'original sin', (1) because it is derived from the original root of the human race; (2) because it is present in the life of every individual from the time of his birth, and therefore cannot be regarded as the result of imitation; and (3) because it is the inward root of all the actual sins that defile the life of man" (Berkhof, p. 244).

In response to the Scriptural foundation and Reformed doctrine, the following can be stated:

When a study is made of the confessional statements of the Heidelberg Confession of Faith, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dordt, it is clear that these confessional statements which are part of the rich history of classical Reformed theology, forms the foundation of what is understood as *Calvinism*. These confessions are without exception, based on the interpretation of the Bible as a textbook of faith and doctrine.

Classical Reformed theologians affirm these foundational confessions of faith, and it serves as beacons of light to guide every Reformed theologian in his interpretation of Scripture and the teaching and practice of his or her theology.

Calvinism's interpretation of Original sin

There are varying interpretations, and a slight inconsistency of the doctrine of original sin, within Calvinism. Some Calvinists believe that we are held accountable for Adam's sin, and that we have actually inherited the sin, and consequent guilt for that sin. Others believe that we, while not accountable for the sin of Adam, are condemned on account of our sinful nature.

Both these interpretations imply that infants are condemned to eternal damnation. The one group contends that infants are responsible for Adam's sin, and is therefore condemned. The sinfulness of our nature, are, according to the other group, enough reason for God to condemn infants to eternal punishment and Hell, without having committed any actual (personal) sin.

Calvinism's premise (1) that we are *not* accountable for Adam's sin

Calvin did not, and Calvinists in general do not believe in inherited sin (*erfsonde*), in that we are held accountable for the sin of Adam or our ancestors. They do, however, account the depraved nature or sinfulness in itself as *actual* sin and guilt, as Calvin (*Inst.* II, 1, 8) holds that,

Through him [Adam] however, not only has punishment been derived, but pollution instilled...Hence even infants bringing their condemnation with them from their mother's womb, suffer not for another's, but for their own defect. For although they have not yet produced the fruit of their unrighteousness, they have the seed implanted in them. Nay, their whole nature is, as it were, a seedbed of sin, and therefore cannot but be odious and abominable to God. Hence it follows, that it is properly deemed sinful in the sight of God; for there could be no condemnation without guilt.

Pentecostals believe that infants are born innocent, (despite being born with a depraved nature) and that the curse that resulted from original sin brought death (physical death to all mankind), and not eternal condemnation and personal guilt. Pentecostals also object to the assertion of Calvin (*Inst.* II, 1, 8) that infants are "odious and abominable to God" and deserve torment in hell for eternity simply for being conceived. Pentecostals view this to be at odds with Scripture and the general revelation of God as

a loving Father and a righteous Judge. Psa. 127:3 (MKJV) holds that, "...children *are* the inheritance of Jehovah; the fruit of the womb *is* a reward".

Calvinism's premise (2) that we are accountable for Adam's sin

Some Calvinists, such as Berkhof, hold that, God holds us responsible for the sin of Adam and our forefathers. Berkhof (1953:221) holds that, "Adam sinned not only as the father of the human race, but also as the representative head of all his descendants; and therefore the guilt of his sin is placed on their account, so that they are all liable to the punishment of death." Horn (1980:10) holds that, "Adam's sin has been imputed to all by virtue of the fact of the solidarity of the race and the principle of representation".

Original sin as depravity

Pentecostals affirm the doctrine of total depravity and describe it as spiritual helplessness apart from God's grace, and do not contest the fact of original sin and its consequence for the human race in that it resulted in a universal inherited depravity of human nature. Some of the implications drawn from these statements are, however, slightly different from what is believed by Calvinists.

The Pentecostal interpretation of the depraved human nature corresponds with the Belgic Confession ([1561] 2013:11= BCF Art. 14) as it describes the Fall of Adam as, "But when he was in honor, he did not understand it, and did not recognize his excellence. But he subjected himself willingly to sin and consequently to death and the curse, lending his ear to the word of the devil".

Pentecostals also agree with the Calvinist, and classical Arminian doctrines, that the sinful inclination that is inherited by Adam's progeny is more than weakness for sin, but it imprisons the whole person and cannot simply be overcome by the exercise of "free will".

A distinction between original sin as depravity, and actual sin

Whilst Pentecostals agree with Calvinists in many respects with the doctrine of original sin they do, however, make a distinction between depravity (as an inherited bias toward sin), and sin itself, which constitutes a transgression of a law, or an act, contrary to the will of God.

The fact that we are born with a depraved nature as a direct consequence, or fruit, of Adam's sin does not mean that we are born "with" sin. There is a significant difference between the fruit of sin and sin itself. Depravity, or the fruit of sin, is not sin. In other words, Pentecostals confirm and teach the depravity of human nature, but do not consider being born with a depraved nature as an act of sin, or that an infant is liable for eternal damnation due to being born with a corrupted nature.

Augustine, not being able to read Greek, relied on Jerome's (Vulgate) incorrect Latin translation of the original text of Rom. 5:12 (Morrell, 2013:2), which caused him to come to the erroneous conclusion that we all sinned in Adam (Meyendorff, 1983:144). Thiselton (2015:266) explains that Augustine understood what is written in the Greek, *eph' hō* not to mean "because", but, since he followed the Vulgate, wrongly understood this Scripture to mean "in whom".

Unfortunately Augustine's theological assumption, built on a flawed premise, was blindly accepted by most of the Reformed theologians, such as Luther and Calvin (Morrell, 2013:2). It is of significant importance to note that the doctrine of inherited sin was never taught in the Church in the East, who was not influenced by Augustine (Van den Brink and Van den Kooi, 2012:294). Pentecostals, therefore, disagree with the assertion of the Canons of Dordt (1:1) that, "all people have sinned in Adam...". The entire human race bears the consequence of original sin, but not the guilt. A distinction must be made between "original sin" and "actual sin". Möller (1997:22) rightly holds that, "The sins of commission, those deeds by which man becomes accountable and guilty to God, only arise once man has reached the age of discernment and becomes aware of the law of God".

Original sin and guilt

Can a person inherit someone else's guilt? Some Calvinists believe that infants are born responsible for Adam's (original) sin (Boettner, 1975:14). Berkouwer (1971:426) rightly observes that, "Guilt, by very definition, is that which concerns ourselves. Therefore, we must make *our confession*. Certainly it is one of the most elementary of legal maxims that we can never assign to a person a guilt for which he is not responsible."

Pentecostals object to statements such as "The universality of sin is the result of God's judgment upon the race because of Adam's transgression" and "He [Adam] stood before God for us, so that, as Paul says, when he fell we fell and were caught up inevitably in the results of his rebellion" (Boice, 1981:206) for the following reasons:

1. Firstly, the Scripture is unambiguously clear that God hates sin. Paul in Rom. 1:18 (EMTV) contends that, "...the wrath of God is revealed from heaven upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness". What Boice implies is that God brought sin upon the human race. This statement borders on blasphemy. The apostle James, in Js. 1:13 (EMTV) warns us, "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone". God's judgement is always *against* sin.
2. Secondly, there was a threefold curse that resulted from the judgement of God (Gen. 3:14-19) on the sin of Adam, was directed to *the serpent*, (v.14, that he would eat dust and that there would be enmity between him and mankind), *the woman* (v. 16, that women would have pain in childbearing, and that her husband would rule over her), and the man (v. 17-19, for his sake the ground was cursed so that he would have to work hard all his life). This curse or punishment for Adam's sin did not include God, pronouncing a curse of sinfulness on the human race. Boice's (1981:206) assertion that, "The universality of sin is the result of God's judgment upon the race", is not supported by Scripture.

3.2.1.2.2 The implication of Augustine's doctrine of original sin: paedo-baptism

3. Thirdly, Boice (1981:206). writes, "as Paul says, when he fell we fell and were caught up inevitably in the results of his rebellion". Where does Paul say that? Does he mistakenly refer to Augustine? He could make that assumption from his *interpretation* of something that Paul wrote, but there is no Scriptural evidence that Paul actually made any such statement.

Pentecostals in general, reject the notion that Adam's actual sin is imputed to his progeny and hold that inherited depravity or a corrupted nature does not constitute actual sin or guilt.

It is unfortunate that there are several philosophical assumptions that were accepted by Augustine and incorporated in the theology now known as Calvinism. Some of the concepts that were developed by Augustine such as original sin, determinism, and individual election, were never mentioned in Scripture. Toews (2013:88) contends that,

We should be clear that there is no biblical basis for Augustine's doctrine of original sin. There is no basis for it in the Genesis 3 text, or elsewhere in the Old Testament. There is no basis for it in the New Testament, and certainly not in the *locus classicus* for Augustine, Romans 5:12. Specifically, there is no biblical evidence for the notion of "seminal identity" which asserts in one form or another that all humanity was present in Adam's genitals and that an infinitesimal part of Adam's corrupted soul has been transmitted to each subsequent person through the semen of his or her father through the process of sexual intercourse. The platonic and stoic foundations for such speculations about the origin and nature of the soul have been abandoned long ago. There is no biblical basis for such a theology, no theological justification for such a theology, and no scientific evidence for such a theology...The disobedience of Adam and Eve was a result of child like immaturity rather than wilful intention. There is no such thing as "original sin" or "inherited guilt". Sin is always a personal act, never a function of nature.

The innocence of Infants

Berkhof (1953:221) insists that, "Adam sinned not only as the father of the human race, but also as the representative head of all his descendants; and therefore the guilt of his sin is placed on their account, so that they are all liable to the punishment of death." Infants are, therefore, born guilty, condemned to eternal damnation, simply on account of Adam's sin, and Boettner (1969:77) argues that, "Suffering and death are declared to be the consequence of sin; and the reason that all die is that 'all sinned.' Now we know that many suffer and die in infancy, before they have committed any sin themselves. It follows that either God is unjust in punishing the innocent, or that those infants are in some way guilty creatures."

Boettner is correct in saying that suffering and death are the consequence of sin. It is part of the curse that God pronounced on the earth due to (Adam's) original sin. However, every saint who ever lived suffered and (apart from Elijah and Enoch) died, and even Jesus "...learned obedience by the things which He suffered" (Heb. 5:8 EMTV). Physical death and suffering befalls all those of Adam's posterity affected by the Fall (Gen. 2:17; Heb. 9:27) – it is simply a consequence of the curse, and physical death and suffering is, therefore, not an indication of personal sin or guilt. God does not punish infants by death and suffering for their sin and guilt, just as He is not punishing any adult who, while saved and justified by the perfect propitiation of Christ's death, is punished by suffering and death. If that were the case, if we truly believe that infants suffer and die because of the guilt of sin, we must then concede that all those who suffer and die, even after being saved, are also punished for some sin or guilt for which the perfect propitiatory sacrifice of Christ was simply not sufficient.

Physical suffering and death cannot be equated to eternal damnation. The fact that infants suffer and die is, therefore, no indication that they are eternally damned, or punished, or that they have inherited any guilt. Duffield and van Cleave (1987:160) make a distinction between sin and evil, and hold that, "Sin is a specific type of evil. There are physical evils and moral evils in the world. Physical evils such as floods, hurricanes, frost and drought, etc., are not sins. They are not moral evils, but are sometimes sent by God to chastise those who have broken His Law". Boettner's argument is therefore fundamentally flawed.

Pentecostals contend that a just God would not punish a newborn baby for the sin of somebody else (Adam), or for the sin of his/her parents as God declares in Ezek. 18:20 (MKJV) "The soul that sins, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, nor shall the father bear the iniquity of the son...", and in Deut. 24:16 (MKJV) "The fathers shall not be put to death for the sons, neither shall the sons be put to death for the fathers. Every man shall be put to death for his own sin". Sin and guilt are defined in terms of personal transgression, in the same way that salvation cannot simply be inherited, but must personally be appropriated. The fact that infants suffer and die is, therefore, no indication that they are eternally damned, or punished, or that they have inherited any guilt.

An infant is not born condemned, but they are born innocent. This view is supported by the words of Jesus in Mat. 19:14 (ESV) he said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven".

Pentecostals believe that a child, at a certain stage of development, develops the capacity to understand the Law of God, and then, has through that understanding a level of responsibility. Only once the child has that level of responsibility, can he or she be held accountable for personal sin. Pentecostals believe that every person needs a Saviour (Rom 3:23), to be delivered, or saved, from personal sin and the consequences of that sin. No man is responsible or accountable for the sin of Adam, and can solely be condemned on the grounds of a volitional rejection of Jesus Christ as Saviour, and will then be condemned and held accountable for his own, personal, transgressions of the law of God.

The false premise that even infants are born guilty of Adam's sin led Augustine and his followers to adopt the “sacerdotal²⁵ dogma” of baptismal regeneration. Madueme and Reeves (2014:129) asserts that “Augustine reasoned that baptism is a sacrament of forgiveness and grace. Baptizing infants evidenced an assumption that they had to be forgiven something — if not actual sins, then the original sin contracted from Adam”. Thiselton (2015:286,384) concurs with Thiselton and contends that, “he [Augustine] argued that infant baptism was necessary, because no human being could be without sin” and that he “connects infant baptism with the fall of humankind, often with the suggestion of removing the “taint” of sin.

Möller (1970:97) now asks if the baptised baby has less sin than the unbaptized baby? He also asks if paedobaptism can wash away inherited sin? If with “the taint of sin” implies the depravity of human nature, the testimony and experience of every honest Christian that the act of paedobaptism does not remove human depravity. This is, therefore not a valid argument for paedobaptism.

This false doctrine implies that regeneration is brought about by a volitional act of man, has its roots in the worship of Semiramis. The Roman Catholic Church holds that *paedo*-baptism eradicates the guilt and corruption of original sin (Horton, 2012:85). In other words, *the act of paedo*-baptism brings about the remission of sins, sanctification, and regeneration. This introduces justification by works, and not faith. This practice of baptismal regeneration, as long as any salvific value is reckoned to this act, stands in stark contrast to the motto of the Reformers of “Justification by Faith alone”.

Since Augustine depended on the Vulgate (rather than the original Greek texts) for constituting his theology (Meyendorff, 1983:144; Morrell, 2013:2), his understanding of the term “justification” was flawed. Horton (2012:92) holds that, “. . . the Greek verb *dikaioō*, ‘to declare just,’ is unmistakably judicial in character. However, this meaning of the original text was lost through the faulty Latin Vulgate translation... [the word] *dikaioō* (to declare just) was erroneously rendered *iustificare* (to make righteous)”. Wiley (1960:102) holds that,

The Augustinian idea that the posterity of Adam must be considered guilty as well as depraved, found its logical development in the damnation of infants. Since baptism was regarded as the ground of remission for original sin, Gregory applied the principle to the full. He maintained that to the *pœna damni* or loss, was added the *pœna sensus* or conscious suffering, and hence the damnation of all unbaptized infants.

²⁵ CollinsDictionary.com (2015:sacerdotal) describes the word “sacerdotal” as, “Relating to or denoting a doctrine which ascribes sacrificial functions and spiritual or supernatural powers to ordained priests”.

This practice of baptismal regeneration is further endorsed by the theologies of Augustine and classical Reformed churches (Slaatte, 1979:57), and remains one of many contradicting theological conundrums in Calvinism.

One of the major objections to this doctrine and theological implication of this practice is that the conferral of salvation is orchestrated by the church, intercepting the mediatory role of Christ. *Paedo*-baptism is considered to be a sacrament, a means of grace in itself. Ericson (2001:1020) holds that, "In the historic Catholic view, the sacraments are effective *ex opere operato* ["from the work done"]...It indicates that the conferral of grace depends on the act itself, not on the merits of either the priest or the recipient". If regeneration is then conferred by the Church, what is the significance of the election, the atonement, and the work of the Holy Spirit? Salvation is then administered by "an act"; It is salvation by works and stands diametrically opposed to salvation on the grounds of faith in the substitutionary death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Calvinists give a lot of attention to grace as a means of salvation, but in some instances neglect the role of faith, which the Bible insists is imperative for salvation. In Calvinism, faith follows regeneration and is, therefore, antecedent to salvation, whereas faith is a condition for salvation in Arminian and Pentecostal theology. Gal. 3:7-8 states that, "Know therefore that those who are of faith, these are sons of Abraham. (8) And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying that, "In you all the nations shall be blessed" (EMTV). We are saved by faith in the atoning blood of Christ, justified by faith, and live in relationship with God by faith.

The folly of the doctrine of imputation of sin is especially evident when applied to infants who have no concept of faith or depravity, and when theologians insist that infants need to be regenerated to be saved. Infants cannot even think about death and life, salvation and eternity, or for that matter, "regeneration", never mind "believing" to salvation. Sears (1854:123-125) correctly states that,

No one is regenerated unless he comes to something more than 'indulging a hope,' or as long as the land of promise lies off in the distance, and is not a present possession and fruition. The new man is not someone who has got some mystic title-deed to the heavenly country hereafter. He is the man whose foot already is planted on its ground, and who breathes its fragrance; into whose soul, that is, heaven has passed and is passing now.

It is logically impossible for infants to be regenerated. Kuiper (1959:27), however, asserts that,

The emphatic and sweeping statement of Jesus; "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" John 3:3 applies to infants as well as adults, but it is precisely in regeneration that the seed of saving faith is planted in the human heart. Regenerated infants certainly are not capable of exercising active faith, but they do possess the habitus of faith.

Infants, as Kuiper (1959:27) has correctly and graciously admits, cannot believe (exercise faith). What Kuiper implies, when speaking about "regenerated infants" is firstly, that infants are regenerated without faith, and secondly, that the very human act of paedo baptism affects regeneration. Van der Walt (2011:280) asserts that the notion of immediate regeneration without the proclamation of the Word of God, as held by theologians such as Maccovius, Voetius, Kuyper, and others, are directly related to their semi-mystical theology. He correctly holds that semi-mysticism that strives toward an ontic union with God instead of a religious relationship of obedience is not the relationship between God and man revealed in Scripture.

Regeneration is invariably linked to faith and the preaching of the Word (John 1:12; 1 John 5:11; 1 Pet.1:23) (Möller, 1970:99). Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). The exercise of faith (believing) is imperative to salvation and infants who are not capable of exercising saving faith can, therefore, not come to salvation, and cannot by any means, be regenerated. Paul, in Rom. 4:3 (EMTV), teaches that "...Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness", and Rom. 4:9 (ISV) "...Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness". Paul categorically states here that faith leads to righteousness. Faith is a prerequisite for salvation and precedes regeneration. Rom. 10:14 (EMTV) "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear apart from a preacher?".

Paedo baptism cannot affect regeneration and any argument for paedo baptism on the grounds of it affecting regeneration is, therefore, invalid.

3.2.1.3 The problem of sin and evil

Augustine caused a series of conundrums on the subject of evil, because of his specific perspective on evil. He coined the concept of "Original Sin" in the year 396 AD (Loudovikos,

2002:[2]). Augustine understood original sin to be a historical event, which was according to Loudovikos (2002:[2]) “an entirely inconceivable notion for the Hellenic-speaking Patristic tradition”.

Augustine taught that sin “gives birth” to Evil, while Athanasius, for example, held that evil exists due to “the ‘ex nihilo’ creation of the world; in other words, it exists, not only towards the direction of Being, but also in another direction - towards the ‘decomposition (*apogenesin*) of beings: evil, fundamentally, is a deterioration of the being, and not a ‘moral’ event (Loudovikos (2002:2).

Athanasius’ teaching, that “the primeval seed of *nihil* inside the bowels of the being that gives birth to the potential of sin and consequently of evil (if and provided it is activated by Man’s free will)” was replaced by Augustine’s teaching that, “it -reversely- is the moral decision of humans (Adam and Eve) that gave birth to evil (with all its guilt)” (Loudovikos (2002:2). Loudovikos (2002:2) calls Augustine the “father of guilt, in the West”.

Daane (1973:78-79) describes the dilemma of decretal theology with regards to the fact that decretal theology attributes sin, and evil, to God;

Viewed from the perspective of decretal theology, each event of history is willed by God, is related vertically to the divine determination, and is revelatory of divine glory. This is God’s sovereignty. Theologians in this tradition urge that God is the ultimate cause and the primary source of sin, that the function of the proclamation of the gospel is to make some men ripe for judgement; that God created sin...that God takes pleasure in the death of sinners; that preaching is per se a curse for the reprobate; that everything that occurs is a divine wish-fulfilment, for if anything would occur contrary to what God wills, God would not be sovereign, but a godling that created more world than he can take care of...Such theological assertions cannot be dismissed as enthusiastic and excessive overstatements or written off as putting too much emphasis on God’s sovereignty. On the contrary, such statements simply articulate the inherent theology of the single decree. Those who make such assertions understand the theology of the single decree better than those who discount their formulations as excesses.²²

Calvinists often use the terms, *allow* or *permit* with regards to the question of sin and evil. Boettner (1969:234) holds that, “Sin...is **permitted** in order that the mercy of God may be shown in its forgiveness, and that his justice may be shown in its punishment. Its entrance is **the result of a settled design** which God formed in eternity...” (Emphasis mine). Berkhof (1959:124) holds that God “willed sin in a certain sense”, and Sproul (2010b:175) holds that,

We know that God is sovereign because we know that God is God. Therefore we must conclude that God foreordained sin. What else can we conclude? We must conclude that God’s decision to *allow* sin to enter the world was a good decision. This is not to say that our sin is really a good thing, but merely that God’s *allowing* us to do sin, which is evil, is a good thing.

God's *allowing* evil is good, but the evil he *allows* is still evil....The fact that God *allow* us to do sin does not absolve us from our responsibility for sin.

Can Calvinists sustain a coherent and consistent theology that includes God permitting or allowing things to happen without causing it directly? Walls and Dongell contends that they cannot. "The view of foreknowledge by the Westminster confession is contradicted if one claims that God somehow foreknows things he does not cause" (2004:125).²²

Olson (2011:88) asserts that Calvinists, who hold that God merely permits sin and evil contradict themselves when they also claim that "God purposefully plans and renders certain and controls everything without exception". What they are in effect saying is that "God wants sin, evil, and innocent suffering to happen...and he wants them to happen in a causal way; he renders them certain".

This dilemma causes many Calvinists to embrace the concept of full on determinism and by default causes them to face the next dilemma; how do you as a determinist account for sin in a morally accepted way? Hart (2005:91) illustrates this dilemma when he states,

If indeed there were a God whose true nature – whose justice or sovereignty – were revealed in the death of a child or the dereliction of a soul or a predestined hell, then it would be no great transgression to think of him as a malevolent or contemptible demiurge, and to hate him, and to deny him worship, and to seek a better god than he.

Berkhof (1933:86) holds that, "The decree of God...renders the future sinful act absolutely certain, but his does not mean that God by His own act brings it to pass. God decreed not to hinder the sinful act of the creature's self determination, but nevertheless to regulate and control its result". Berkhof implies that God determines every sinful act to happen, and renders it certain, He is not responsible, for while God is responsible for the primary act of determination of the act, it is in the secondary clause of the human act itself, where the responsibility is attributed. God only "permits", these (predetermined) acts to take place.

While we, as finite beings, identify many contradictions in history (and theology), a decretal theologian will assert that these are only "apparent contradictions", and that our understanding of these contradictions is limited by finite thought. Daane (1973:81) explains how decretal theology interprets history by asserting that,

The clash of historical forces, contention between economic systems, racial groups, warring nations, all the explosive convulsions, upheavals, and crisis in the personal and social life of

man, all the demonic cruelties of history, all the storm and stress, all the shouting and tumult, all are in reality a beautiful harmony, a divinely woven artistic pattern, each thread in place. Decretal theology is a profound rationalization of whatever is. Like all rationalization, it reduces reality to harmony, proportion, symmetry, unity. All reality reflects the unbroken beauty of divine essence. With his eye of faith the decretal theologian can look out on a broken, bleeding humanity, on a world at war with itself, and see only a thing of beauty and peace....Decretal theology denies not only all contradictions and disharmonies in the data of history. It denies that anything in history can go contrary to God's decree.²²

The deterministic character of Calvinism, therefore, leads to assumptions that seems to be diametrically opposed to Scripture. If a person cannot commit any evil, unless he God willed it, how can this person be responsible for his evil deed and God is not? What Daane (1973:81) and others refer to above, with regards to the determination of evil and sinful deeds are also illustrated in what Calvin (*Inst.* I, 17, 5) holds in book one of his Institutes when he asserts that,

As all contingencies whatsoever depend on it, therefore, neither thefts nor adulteries, nor murders, are perpetrated without an interposition of the divine will. Why, then, they ask, should the thief be punished for robbing him whom the Lord chose to chastise with poverty? Why should the murderer be punished for slaying him whose life the Lord had terminated? If all such persons serve the will of God, why should they be punished? I deny that they serve the will of God. For we cannot say that he who is carried away by a wicked mind performs service on the order of God, when he is only following his own malignant desires. He obeys God, who, being instructed in his will, hastens in the direction in which God calls him. But how are we so instructed unless by his word? The will declared by his word is, therefore, that which we must keep in view in acting, God requires of us nothing but what he enjoins. If we design anything contrary to his precept, it is not obedience, but contumacy and transgression. But if he did not will it, we could not do it. I admit this. But do we act wickedly for the purpose of yielding obedience to him? This, assuredly, he does not command. Nay, rather we rush on, not thinking of what he wishes, but so inflamed by our own passionate lust, that, with destined purpose, we strive against him. And in this way, while acting wickedly, we serve his righteous ordination, since in his boundless wisdom he well knows how to use bad instruments for good purposes. And see how absurd this mode of arguing is. They will have it that crimes ought not to be punished in their authors, because they are not committed without the dispensation of God. I concede more—that thieves and murderers, and other evil-doers, are instruments of Divine Providence, being employed by the Lord himself to execute the Judgments which he has resolved to inflict. But I deny that this forms any excuse for their misdeeds. For how? Will they implicate God in the same iniquity with themselves, or will they cloak their depravity by his righteousness? They cannot exculpate themselves, for their own conscience condemns them: they cannot charge God, since they perceive the whole wickedness in themselves, and nothing in Him save the legitimate use of their wickedness. But it is said he works by their means. And whence, I pray, the foetid odour of a dead body, which has been unconfined and putrefied by the sun's heat? All see that it is excited by the rays of the sun, but no man therefore says that the fetid odour is in them. In the same way, while the matter and guilt of wickedness belongs to the wicked man, why should it be thought that God contracts any impurity in using it at pleasure as his instrument? Have done, then, with that dog-like petulance which may, indeed, bay from a distance at the justice of God, but cannot reach it!

Calvin (1961:176-177) also says,

How foolish and frail is the support of divine justice afforded by the suggestion that evils come to be, not by His will but by His permission. . . . It is a quite frivolous refuge to say that God indirectly permits them, when Scripture shows Him not only willing, but the author of them. . . . It is quite clear from the evidence of Scripture that God works in the hearts of men to incline their wills just as He will, whether to good . . . or to evil.

Even in this exposition of Calvin and in his answers and explanations of his statements, the dilemma is still apparent that God seems to be implicated in every single evil and sinful deed ever committed. These deeds are either determined by God or they are not. If God determined these sinful deeds, or brought them to pass by secondary causes, God is still responsible. If a person simply acted on impulses from his sinful nature, then we cannot say that God determined every action. In book three of his institutes, Calvin (*Inst.* 3, 23, 7) “God not only foresaw the fall of the first man, and in him the ruin of his posterity; but also at his own pleasure arranged it”

Scripture teaches us that God hates sin, and that evil comes from Satan, who is the father of lies (John 8:44²⁶). Peter describes Satan as, “a lion who seeks to devour” (1Pet. 5:8²⁷), and Jesus calls him “a thief who comes to steal, kill, and destroy” (John 10:10²⁸). God will not determine anyone to sin or cause any sin to come to pass, directly or indirectly, since it is simply against His holy character and His revelation of Himself to us in Scripture.

3.2.1.4 An evil inclination

Some Calvinists (in concurrence with Calvin above) do not believe that God is responsible for sin. Sproul (1997:132) justifies his view in the light of his definition of free will when he asserts that, “There is a reason for every choice we make. In a narrow sense, every choice we make is determined”.

Sproul (1986:30) holds that Adam had a predisposed *inclination* to sin, which precipitated his action (to sin). It was an action of free will. This means, according to Sproul, that his action was predetermined by this *inclination*, this inner motive, and that he could not do anything else but sin. Sproul, (1986:30) holds that “Before a person can commit an act of sin he must first have a desire to perform that act. The Bible tells us that evil actions flow from evil

²⁶ John 8:44 (LITV) “...That one was a murderer from *the* beginning, and he has not stood in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from *his* own, because he is a liar, and the father of it.”

²⁷ 1Pet. 5:8 (EMTV) “... your adversary the devil walks about as a roaring lion, seeking someone he may devour.”

²⁸ John 10:10 (LITV) “The thief does not come except that he may steal, and kill, and destroy...”

desires. But the presence of an evil desire is already sin. We sin because we are sinners. We were born with a sin nature. We are fallen creatures.” He (1986:54) further holds that, “I am not accusing God of sinning; I am suggesting that he created sin”

Berkhof (1933:87) describes the freedom of man as, the power of man to determine his moral actions freely in harmony with his previous thoughts and judgements, with his inclinations and desires, and even with his very character.

Olson (2011:79) asks, “from where did Adam’s evil inclination come?” Boettner (1969:30) is of the opinion that,

Even the sinful actions of men can occur only by his [God’s] permission. And since he [God] permits not unwillingly, but willingly, all that comes to pass – including the actions and ultimate destiny of men – must be, in some sense, in accordance with what he [God] desired and purposed.

Calvinism does not allow for the possibility that sin could originate in the free will of man, since free choice, according to their definition, only means acting on one’s strongest inclination. The logical deduction from what Calvinism claims with regards to the evil inclinations of man would be to trace Adam’s evil inclination back to its source, making God the author of sin. However, Calvinism in general teaches that God is not the author of sin.

Sproul (1997:132), in concurrence with Augustine (Boettner, 1969:366) holds that Humans do not have the ability to do otherwise than sin since “every choice we make is determined” and yet, he and other Calvinists claim that the person committing evil is guilty and God is not. Because of Sproul’s insistence on divine determinism with regards to every human action, he implies that God is responsible for sin. In their criticism of Supralapsarianism, Peterson and Williams (2004:97) hold that according to this theory,

Creation is for the sake of salvation and damnation. The fall serves God’s elective purpose. Subsuming all history to the doctrine of predestination suggests, as Harold, O.J. Brown has pointed out, that “some human beings are created for the express purpose of being damned forever,” and thus “supralapsarianism implies that God is responsible for the fall.”

Daane (1973:43) gives a sober Reformed perspective that contradicts many of the above mentioned theologians. He rightly holds that, the fall of the world into sin cannot be described as a predetermined destiny since “this would be to deny that Christ died to save and bring

the world to its final destiny in spite of the fall. When predestination is defined as God's eternal determination of 'Whatsoever comes to pass,' the dimension of the historical, which is the very fabric of Christianity, is lost".

Daane (1973:44) criticises decretal theology by asserting that,

Decretal theologians cannot take seriously the term 'come to pass.' For if every event is itself destiny, then nothing moves toward a destiny, and nothing comes to pass in the historical sense. If everything in history is destiny (destination), then there is no historical datum that moves toward its destiny. If the future is now, then there is no predestination, and every man and institution may face the future either with proud defiance or despairing hopelessness, whatever his present status allows. In an authentic view of predestination there is an inherent reference to the future. The term is essentially a historical one. As such it is open to preaching, for preaching also is oriented toward the future.

What Daane is in effect saying is that decretal theology renders the doctrine of election unpreachable. There is no "gospel message", there is no "freedom" to accept or reject the grace of God, and therefore no human responsibility. Decretal theology leads to a philosophical dead end, and it leaves us with no other alternative than fatalism. This is not the message of the Bible. This is not what the Old Testament prophets foretold, and this is not reflected in the preaching of Jesus, Paul or the New Testament Church.²²

Edwards (1839:217) denies that Reformed theology implies or infers that God is the originator of any evil inclinations. He holds that "In order to account for a sinful corruption of nature, yea, a total native depravity of the nature of man, by any positive cause, or influence whatsoever, either from God, or the creature; or of supposing that man is conceived and born with a fountain of evil in his heart such as anything properly positive". Edwards (1839:218), seems to say that sin is simply the result of the flesh gaining superiority over the spirit of man, and that, "the inferior principles of self love, and natural appetite, which were given only to serve, being alone, and left to themselves, of course became reigning principles, having no superior [spiritual] principles to regulate or control them, they became absolute masters of the heart". According to Edwards, man therefore follows the inclinations or promptings, of the flesh. This description corresponds with Scripture and does not make God the author of sin. However, when he (1839:539) contends that, "The foreknowledge of God will necessarily infer a decree: for God could not foreknow that things would be, unless he had decreed that they should be...", he implies that God is responsible for every human action, including sin and evil deeds.

3.2.1.5 God decreed sin due to causal determination

Some Calvinists claim that evil lies in the intentions of the actions and not in the actions itself. They hold that while God created sin and evil, His intentions were to create a world where human beings can act as moral agents. His intentions were good, and He is, therefore, not responsible for sin and evil (Olson, 2011:94, 95). Palmer (2010:100) asserts that, "It is even biblical to say that God foreordained sin. If sin was outside the plan of God, then not a single important affair of life would be ruled by God".²²

Others such as Feinberg (1986:39) interpret Ephesians 1:11 to mean that God "decreed all things, even sin". They argue from a point of causal determination that, God cannot actualise a contradiction. God chose to create humans "who among other things have compatibilistic freedom", and therefore could not also choose to create a perfect world (without sin). God cannot be held morally accountable for being the author of sin, since "creating human beings is of highest value and thus justifies a world in which there is evil.

Calvinists, who hold to causal determination, are inconsistent when they assert like Feinberg (1986:39), that God cannot be held accountable for creating sin and evil since *He* is causally determined to do so, while they hold humans responsible for sin when *they* are causally determined, *by God*, to sin. Geisler (1986:47) contends that if we can only do what we desire, and that desire is caused by God, Feinberg's moderate Calvinism is no different from Hyper Calvinism and that he must then concede to the idea (as hyper Calvinists do) that we are not really free.

3.2.1.6 A distinction made between God's decrees and God's desires

Geisler (1986:82) makes a distinction between what God decrees and what He desires in order to exempt God from decreeing evil. He contends that God decrees both good and evil but that He desires only good. Geisler holds that God does whatever he pleases. It follows that God will decree what he pleases, and if he decrees sin and evil, he must certainly be pleased by it. Reichenbach (1986:93) is correct when he holds that, what God decrees must stem from his desires and his moral character, for him not to act irrationally. He contends that, "It is impossible for God to decree something which he does not desire and is inconsistent with his goodness. But if God as good desires what is good, then God can only

decree good, not both good and evil.” What Geisler (1986:82) then propose, is not logical. Jesus Himself said that a tree cannot bear both good and bad fruit (Mat. 7:18).

3.2.1.7 The three wills in God

Geisler (1986:82, 83) also suggests that God has three wills, prescriptive, permissive, and providential. The first (prescriptive) bears no significance unless human will is free in the libertarian sense. If God controls and determines everything, the second option does not make any sense either, and Geisler is left with the hard determinism which he tried to avoid in the first place (Reichenbach, 1986:94).

2.2.1.8 God withholds His grace

Boettner (1969:104) holds that, “We believe that from all eternity God has intended to leave some of Adam’s posterity in their sins”, and quotes Mosley where he asserts that, “it pleased God of his sovereign mercy to rescue some and to leave others where they were; to raise some to glory, giving them such grace as necessarily qualified them for it, and abandon the rest, from whom He *withheld such grace*, to eternal punishment”. This statement supports divine determinism, or decretal theology. Boettner implies that it pleased God to leave some sinners in their sin, (for no apparent reason) while the Bible in contradiction teaches that God has no delight in the death of the wicked, but rather therein that a sinner turns to God and be saved (Ezek. 33:11).

Mosley (Boettner, 1969:104) also asserts that, “God *deliberately* abandons those that *He can save*, and *deliberately withholds his grace* from them”, and Boettner (1969:91) further holds that God “*withholds* from them [the reprobate] the *opportunity and power of believing and being saved*”. These statements are inconsistent with regards to what we believe about God’s loving character and specifically what we see reflected in the revelation of God through Jesus Christ, who had a sincere compassion for sinners (Mat. 9:36; 14:14; Luke 7:13).

Boettner argues that God did not owe Adam the constraining grace to withhold him from the Fall. However, Calvinists such as Boettner and Helm follow Edwards in saying that God *deliberately* rendered Adams fall certain by withholding his constraining grace (Edwards,

Rogers, & Dwight, 1839:17). The question arises, “Would a God of love deliberately remove such constraining grace, knowing that this action would infallibly cause Adam to sin?”

Some Calvinists hold that God is the author of sin, and that He determines and renders human sin certain, but that He is not responsible for sin but humans are. Piper (2009, YouTube) calls this inconsistency in Calvinism a mystery that cannot be “relieved by human reasoning”.

3.2.1.9 God (effectively) wills sin and unbelief unwillingly

Some Calvinists such as Palmer (2010:139) believe that God, whom the Bible teaches; hates sin, is responsible for causing men to sin. He holds that, “God hardened the hearts of Pharaoh and Sihon...God caused their sin to come to pass”. He (2010:144) also, holds that, “Although sin and unbelief are contrary to what God commands (his perceptive will), God has included them in his sovereign decree (ordained them, caused them to certainly come to pass). He then refers to the sin of David and says, “Just as Christ’s crucifixion was determined by God, so David’s sin was determined by God. It was decreed by God. Nothing, not even Satan’s evil plans, are outside the decrees of God”.

Firstly, this means that God is forced to do something he does not want to do. Secondly, the question must be asked; “Why?” Why would God do something “for his glory” that he takes no delight in? Palmer (2010:131) asserts that,

Reprobation as condemnation is conditional in the sense that once someone is passed by, then he is condemned for his sins and unbelief. Although all things – unbelief and sin included – proceed from God’s eternal decree, man is still to blame for his sins. He is guilty; it is his fault and not God’s...**He [the Calvinist] realizes that what he advocates is ridiculous, nonsensical, and foolish...**this secret matter belongs to the Lord our God, and we should leave it there. We ought not to probe into the secret counsel of God (Emphasis mine).

Erickson (2001:620) correctly observes with regards to God’s reaction to sinful human actions, “His reaction to our every deed is determined by his unchanging nature. God has indicated quite clearly that he cannot and does not tolerate certain things. It is part of his holy nature to be categorically opposed to sinful actions”. It is therefore inconceivable that God

could determine any one of his creations to commit sin. It would at the same time be unreasonable for God to judge any human being for a sin that he is not able to avoid. Should the ability to do good be compromised through the Fall of Adam, it would be unreasonable for God to expect any person to serve and obey him from a stance of libertarian freedom. If all actions were determined by God, Adam's disobedience must therefore also be the result of His determination.

If God determined the Fall, did He cause Adam to sin? If He did, how much of the blame should be attributed to Adam? Slaatte (1979, 30) makes a correct and rather significant statement when he holds that the Supralapsarian doctrine of election of higher Calvinism "pushes the problem [of sin], with the element of blame, back into the sovereign nature and will of God and relieves man of genuine responsibility". Walls and Dongell (2004:129) hold that, "no events can be seen in isolation from the events that caused it. With this in mind, it is hard to see how Calvinists can speak of any events or choices as *being permitted*". It is difficult to see how Calvinism can exempt God from being the cause of sin and evil while saying that He determines human beings to commit the sins, which the Bible clearly teaches, God hates.

Den Boer (2010:106) raises a very important point regarding God and sin. He argues that, "Sin is defined as a transgression of the law, and for that reason is a violation of God's will". For this reason only, because sin is a violation of God's will, God cannot possibly be the Author of sin, since that would mean that He had to "will" sin into existence.

Peterson and Williams (2004:155) hold that, while there is no clear explanation in Scripture "for the ultimate origin of sin" or how "a supremely good and holy God can sovereignly ordain the sinful acts of human beings. It simply affirms both. Sin ought not to be. It does not fit with any conception of a good and just God." It is, therefore difficult to understand that when (according to Calvinism) a person carries out sinful acts in accordance to God's will (intent), that the person is guilty and God is not.

3.2.1.10 God hardens the hearts of the reprobate

It is interesting that Sproul (1986:143) condemns Higher Calvinism for the same reason as Walls and Dongell. He states that, "The dreadful error of higher-Calvinism is that it involves

God in coercing sin. This does radical violence to the integrity of God's character". Sproul's definition of God's sovereignty does not allow for Pharaoh to have any part in the hardening of his own heart. Pharaoh is (according to Sproul) passively waiting for God to make every decision on his behalf. He aims to sidestep the higher-Calvinistic determinism by making a distinction between "active hardening" and "passive hardening" as the only options and defines active hardening as,

God's direct intervention within the inner chambers of Pharaoh's heart. God would intrude into Pharaoh's heart and create fresh evil in it. This would certainly ensure that Pharaoh would bring forth the result that God was looking for. It would also ensure that God is the author of sin (1986:144).

"Passive hardening", according to Sproul's definition, means that God only removes the restraints or restrictions to human freedom, increasing their freedom. One should really ask, where Sproul gets this idea from? What does he mean by "God removing restrictions"? What kind of restrictions is he talking about? If the removing of restraints are detrimental to the person, is God now not actively aiding in the person's downfall?

Sproul (1986:146) correctly holds that God could harden a persons heart, which is "already desperately wicked", by giving him over to his sin. He then asserts that the evil inclinations of Pharaoh came to the surface when God removed his arm of restraint. God, in "permitting" Pharaoh to sin, is therefore (in Sproul's opinion) not responsible for Pharaoh's sin. However, he takes back with the one hand what he gives with the other when he (1986:147) says "The evil desires of men's hearts cannot thwart God's sovereignty. Indeed they are subject to it". What else does this mean, then that the evil of men's hearts are determined (caused) by God?

Berkhof (1933:87) holds that, "it is quite conceivable that He [God] should determine the future actions of man in such a way as not to impinge on the moral freedom of man, even if we do not fully understand how this can be done".

There is a problem with this premise when we must from this line of arguments conclude that "God determines man to sin". If this would be correct, we must also agree that God is responsible for those sinful acts which He determined man to commit.

3.2.1.11 Human guilt with regards to the sin of Adam

Should the entire human race, (including infants) be held responsible for Adam's sin? Augustine's doctrine of original sin means that babies are not only born with a corrupted nature (*male*), but born responsible for the sin of Adam, and with the guilt (*culpa*) of Adam's sin.

Sproul (1986:98) perpetuates Augustine's flawed doctrine when he asserts, with regards to original sin and its consequences, that, "Adam jumped into the pit. In Adam we all jumped into the pit...Adam did not simply slip into sin; he jumped into it with both feet. We jumped headlong with him. God didn't push us. He didn't trick us. He gave us adequate and fair warning. The fault is ours and only ours."

Sproul (1986:98) holds that Adam made a wilful decision to sin, was fully responsible for his decision, and, that Adam's progeny became guilty for the same reason. It is here where his argument does not make sense. Adam wilfully sinned. His descendants have the inability to do anything else but sin, yet, he assigns the same level of blame, and guilt, to all? Sproul relies on Adam's libertarian freedom, and him acting as representative for the entire human race, to give credibility to the notion of assigning guilt to those who could do nothing else but sin (Walls and Dongell, 2004:184,185).

Boettner (1975:14) argues that, because infants suffer pain and death, and the Scriptures attributes pain and death to the wages of sin, infants must have sin. He contends that, "God would be unjust if He executed the penalty on those who are not guilty. Since the penalty falls on infants, they must be guilty; and since they have not personally committed sin, they must, as the Scripture says, be guilty of Adam's sin."

There is more than one problem with this statement. Firstly, Scripture does not support the idea that anyone is guilty of Adam's sin. Secondly, he contends that God would be unjust to penalise those who are not guilty; how can God then be just in attributing the sin of Adam to "innocent" infants? This argument is devoid of logic. Sheldon (Wiley, 1952:116) challenges the notion of imputed sin by saying,

What is this but the apotheosis of legal artifice? The same God whose penetrating glance burns away every artifice, with which a man may enwrap himself, and reaches at once to the naked reality, is represented as swathing His judgment with a gigantic artifice, in that He holds countless millions guilty of a trespass which He knows was committed before their personal existence, and which they could no more prevent than they could hinder the fiat of creation. If this is justice, then justice is a word of unknown meaning.

Boettner is actually making the situation worse by trying to justify the death of infants as a *penalty for sin*. He thereby contradicts himself and implies that God is indeed unfair, since infants cannot possibly be guilty of sin. His problem starts with the premise that physical death is a penalty or the penalty for sin which it is not. The penalty for sin is *eternal* death, not *physical* death. Jesus said in John 11:25 (EMTV) "...He that believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live." The Bible also says in Psa. 116:15 (KJV), "Precious in the sight of the LORD *is* the death of his saints", which means that physical death is not the penalty for sin, since the saints, who are the elect of God, and believe in Jesus to salvation, do not suffer the penalty for sin.

3.2.1.12 Sinners cannot choose good over evil

Sproul (1986:75) writes that "God commands us to believe in Christ. He is pleased by those who choose Christ", but he then claims that the unregenerate person cannot adhere to God's commandments, and therefore, cannot choose Christ. He (1986:75): asserts that while fallen man is,

free to choose what he desires, but, because his desires are only wicked he lacks the moral ability to come to Christ. As long as he remains in the flesh, unregenerate, he will never choose Christ. He cannot choose Christ precisely because he cannot act against his own will. He has no desire for Christ.

For someone unfamiliar with Calvinist theology, this must be confusing! Is Sproul contradicting himself? How could God command us to do something which we do not have the ability to do? Why would He do that? Is this not illogical? He says that God is "pleased by those who choose Christ", but then says that no unregenerate person has the ability to "willingly" choose Christ. Consequently, he *should* then also say that God is pleased by those who refuse, due to their inability, to respond to His command to believe.

3.2.1.13 Sinners cannot seek after God.

Calvinism teaches that “The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt (Steele & Thomas, 1963:16), and that, man’s “will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature, therefore, he will not-indeed he cannot choose good over evil in the spiritual realm” (Steele & Thomas, 1963:16).

Augustine advocated the idea that mankind, as a direct result of Adam’s disobedience, lost the ability to abstain from evil and to do good. He advocated therefore, not only a propensity toward evil, but a total and extreme corruption of the human nature to such a degree that doing anything good is impossible without divine intervention (Ericson, 2001:922).

In his commentaries on Acts, Calvin (*Comm. Acts 17:26-27, XXXVII/2*) asserts that, “...nothing is more absurd, than that men, should be ignorant of their Author, who were endued with understanding principally for this use. And we must especially note the goodness of God, in that he doeth so familiarly insinuates himself, that even the blind may grope after him.” Yet, Calvinists claim that sinners are “dead, blind, and deaf, to the things of God” and will not and cannot seek after God.

This idea that necessitates regeneration to precede repentance and faith was developed by Heinrich Bullinger, a contemporary of Calvin and the successor to Zwingli in the middle to late 1500’s. His writings initiated the notion that regeneration is an inception of spiritual life in a fallen and spiritually dead creature (Steward, 2011:44). Bullinger’s theory circumvents the consciousness of man. It makes salvation an abstract concept. This regeneration is not only a work fully and solely by God, but it takes place without human choice or even consent. Man is here treated as an object and not a moral agent. It is simply an act of God grounded in His eternal impersonal decree. It describes salvation apart from the historical work of Christ, and outside of Christ, and makes the atoning sacrifice of Christ an afterthought, and eternalises salvation. His ideas have been perpetuated by theologians as recent as Thiesen (1992:279), who describes regeneration as, “the communication of divine life to the soul”.

It is, however, evident throughout history that mankind has the innate urge (and ability) to seek after God. Luke affirms this truth when he writes in Acts 17:26-27 that God, “hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth...That they should

seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him” (KJV). If it was God’s intention that people would *seek after Him – and find Him*, logic dictates that He would also grant them the ability and potential to do so. If they did not have the ability to do so, why would a fair and righteous God judge them for not seeking Him? (Rom. 1:18-21).

It would seem from Calvin’s exegesis (*Comm.*, XXXVII/2, 166-167) on Acts 17:26-27, that he does not deny the ability of human beings to choose God, but only that the illumination of the Spirit is required for them to do so because of the impediment of their sinful nature. This illumination of the Spirit of God, this gift of faith, is however withheld from the non elect, whilst they are at the same time condemned for not seeing what they could not see,

Here ariseth a question, whether men can naturally come unto the true and merciful knowledge of God. For Paul doth give us to understand, that their own sluggishness is the cause that they cannot perceive that God is present; because, though they shut their eyes, yet may they grope after him. I answer, that their ignorance and blockishness is mixed with such frowardness, that being void of right judgment, they pass over without understanding all such signs of God’s glory as appear manifestly both in heaven and earth. *Yea, seeing that the true knowledge of God is a singular gift of his, and faith (by which alone he is correctly known) cometh only from the illumination of the Spirit*, it followeth that our minds cannot pierce so far, having nature only for our guide. Neither doth Paul intreat in this place of the ability of men, but he doth only show that *they be without excuse*, when as they be so blind in such clear light, as he saith in the first chapter to the Romans, (Rom 1:20.) Therefore, though men’s senses fail them in seeking out God, *yet have they no cloak for their fault, because, though he offer himself to be handled and groped, they continue, notwithstanding, in a quandary.* (Emphasis added).

The question of whether man can know God is easily answered if we read the Scripture on face value and not through the lenses of Calvin’s theology. Firstly, The Bible says that God wants all men to be saved (Acts 17:26-27) secondly that, “the grace of God that brings salvation” (Tit. 2:11) is revealed to all men, and thirdly, that the men discussed in Rom. Chapter 1, could not possibly be condemned by a just God for not “glorifying Him” if they did not have the ability to do so. Rom 1:19-20 (KJV) explicitly says that, “Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them. (20) For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse”. If it (the revelation of God) is “clearly seen”, and if they are truly “without excuse”, man can know God through God’s natural revelation.

Van Ruler 1971:107, 108) in his discussion on the state of the sinner, steers away from determinism and fatalism, by saying that what the Apostle Paul writes in Col. 2:13 in saying that a sinner is dead in sin, he does not mean that the sinner is passive like a corpse. A

sinner is, in fact, very much alive. A sinner is actively involved in deeds of sin, in constant rebellion and in stubborn animosity toward God. He (1971:108) asserts that,

Deze levendigheid van de zonde, deze actuositeit, en moetwilligheid moeten we er niet uithalen. Want dan neutraliseren we de zonde. Dat wil zeggen: dan hebben we een neutralistisch begrip van het zondaar zijn van de mens. Het wordt als een gegevenheid van het lot verstaan en doorleefd. Een mens kan alleen maar wachten totdat het op een soortgelijke wijze, ook als gegevenheid van het lot, nog een keer anders met hem gemaakt wordt, zodat hij – puur passief – wordt omgezet van wereldling tot hemelling. Aan een naturalistisch begrip van zondeval en erfzonde beantwoordt een min of meer fatalistisch begrip van uitverkiezing.

Sproul claims that Adam and his descendants lost the ability *not to sin* as a result of the Fall. According to Sproul (1986:98), Adam, having libertarian freedom, had the ability to sin and the ability not to sin before the Fall. After the Fall, he only had the ability to sin, and lost the ability *not to sin*. This means that every human action, however well intended is a transgression of God's law. This is taking the doctrine of depravity to an extreme that cannot be reconciled to Scripture. Man loses his status as a moral agent to choose to sin, or not. He (with other Calvinists) then still maintains that man is responsible for his sin.

Man cannot be saved by good deeds, but even sinful men and women can commit acts of kindness and goodness. This does not mean that they are saved or that they are not still bound in sin. It only means that man lives according to a moral guideline with regards to natural law. Morrel (2012:5,6) in stark contradiction to Augustine, Calvin, and Sproul, holds the Biblical and correct view that God created man to live a holy life and that it is unnatural for man to sin. He contends that, "God designed our constitution or nature with a conscience so that we have the natural tendency, a constitutional bent, or a compositional influence to obey the law of God." In strong support of this argument, he quotes the apostle Paul, (Rom. 2:14-15) who says,

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, *do by nature the things contained in the law*, these having not the law are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their *conscience* also bearing witness, and *their thoughts* the mean while *accusing* or else *excusing* one another.

In the same way that a converted person does not automatically do everything right, an unconverted person does not automatically do everything wrong. If this was the case, there would be no justice in the world. The concepts of, and contrasts between good and evil, and right and wrong is then obliterated and even the testimony of a saint's righteous life would be meaningless, and wasted with regards to those lost without a moral compass. This kind of

thinking is out of sync with reality, and it can only exist in a textbook of warped theology and not in real life.

3.2.1.14 Regeneration precedes faith.

Calvinist theologians such as Boettner hold that regeneration *must precede conversion*. This does not only exclude free human cooperation with God's grace, but also the requirement of repentance and faith (Olson, 2011:158). It follows that faith is not needed for regeneration, but that it is a gift supplied by God to the regenerate (after regeneration), and that repentance merely follows as a consequence of regeneration. Picirilly (2002:165) concludes that "salvation, at least regeneration, is *to*, not *by* faith" in the Calvinistic system.

According to Berkouwer (1977:29), there is a difference in Reformed terminology with regards to the subject of faith and grace once noticed by Kuyper. He refers to Article 24 of the Belgic Confession of Faith (BCF:XXIV) that reads, "We believe that this true faith, produced in man by the hearing of God's Word and by the work of the Holy Spirit, regenerates him and makes him a 'new man', causing him to live a 'new life' and freeing him from the slavery of sin". Berkouwer (1977:29) contends that, "The relation between faith and regeneration as found here is suggestive of Calvin's statement 'that we are regenerated by faith'." He also holds that, "The newer terminology is that is used by later theologians, who limit regeneration in the *ordo salutis* to the beginning of new life" and that, "Kuyper spoke of the older Reformation and confessional terminology as the result of an 'unfinished conception', of which the later, more limited idea of regeneration was 'the consistent development'".

Whatever the argument, it seems that there is a difference or at least a development in Reformed theology that caused later theologians to change the *ordo salutis* from the way that it was formulated in the Belgic Confession of Faith. The main difference is that regeneration, where it followed repentance and faith in the Belgic Confession of Faith (Art. 24), has now being placed before repentance and faith.

Van Genderen and Velema are not consistent on the order of salvation with regards to repentance, faith, and regeneration. They (2008:590) are correct to assert that "In the light of the call, there is no regeneration without faith". However, they also contradict themselves by

saying that “faith is a fruit of regeneration”. Van Genderen and Velema (2008:592) admit that, “In Reformed dogmatics there was in this regard initially a difference in emphasis, which subsequently developed into a difference of view”. Van Genderen and Velema (2008:597) as many other Calvinist and Reformed theologians, incorrectly hold that faith, with regards to salvation, is a gift from God.

Velema (1993:476) asserts that while Calvin held that repentance and faith is a prerequisite for obtaining the promise of salvation, he also made an association between faith and election. However, he is of the opinion that, according to Calvin’s theology, “de verkiezing niet de inhoud van de belofte beheerst”.

Sproul (1986:72), who is one of the theologians holding to the “new” order, asserts that, “If a person who is in the flesh, who is not yet reborn by the power of the Holy Spirit, can incline or dispose himself to Christ, what good is rebirth?” Sproul bases his statement on the canons of Dordt which concur with Sproul when they assert that, “it takes much more than the Spirit’s assistance to bring a sinner to Christ; it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature” (Steele and Thomas, 1963:16) Calvinism, therefore, rejects the notion of synergism, as the “Spirit’s assistance” to bring a sinner to Christ.

How could a totally corrupted sinner receive salvation when doing anything good is impossible without divine intervention? As a consequence of Augustine’s doctrine of total depravity, he is forced to argue that fallen man had to be unilaterally regenerated by God without any choice or cooperation of man, through God’s irresistible grace.

Sproul (1986:63) holds with regards to the bondage of original sin, that, “Without acknowledging that we are fallen, we cannot acknowledge that we are sinners. If we do not acknowledge that we are sinners, we can hardly flee to Christ our Saviour. Admitting our fallenness is a prerequisite for coming to Christ”. Sproul (1986:72, 73) then contradicts himself when he says that, “One does not first believe and then become reborn...A cardinal point of Reformed theology is the maxim: ‘Regeneration precedes faith’...We do not believe in order to be born again; we are born again in order that we may believe”.

This same line of reasoning is followed by Boettner (1969:116) in quoting Hamilton who suggests that, “God saves all those who want to be saved, but no one whose nature is

unchanged, wants to be saved". To what other conclusion can we come but to say that God saves (regenerates) people who *do not* want to be saved, *against their wills*? The only way that he can be consistent is if he states that one can only come to Christ *after* regeneration. This follows that you can only repent, and come to Christ, after you have been saved. If you admit to being a sinner after you are saved (regenerated), are you then really saved, and if you then repent, what do you repent from?

The Biblical pattern as given in Acts 2:38 (EMTV) "Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'. Clarke (2012:E-sword) explains the word "repent" Μετανοήσατε, as follows; "Humble yourselves before God, and deeply deplore the sins you have committed; pray earnestly for mercy, and deprecate the displeasure of incensed justice". Repentance cannot be interpreted in any other way as turning to God in faith in order to seek salvation. Act 16:30-31 (EMTV) explicitly teaches that faith precedes salvation, which implies regeneration. In response to the jailor's question, (vs. 30) "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?", the apostles answered (vs. 31) "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, you and your household".

3.2.1.15 A person receives a new nature

Calvinism, in following the Manichaeism²⁹ notion of Augustine theology claims that God gives the regenerated sinner a new nature. Manichaeism taught that man's nature was totally and irredeemably corrupt. Augustine, and Calvin after him taught that man, consequently, needs to receive a new nature. The concept of man having two opposing natures is not found anywhere in the Bible.

Willard (2013:154) contends that human nature has not entirely been corrupted, but only certain aspects of it. He holds that,

²⁹ Loudovikos (2002:[2]) describes Manichaeism as, "The syncretic, dualistic religious philosophy taught by the Persian prophet Manes, combining elements of Zoroastrian, Christian, and Gnostic thought and opposed by the imperial Roman government, Neo-Platonist philosophers, and orthodox Christians. A dualistic philosophy dividing the world between good and evil principles or regarding matter as intrinsically evil and mind as intrinsically good" The Oxford dictionary (2015: Manichaeism) describes Manichaeism as, "A dualistic religious system with Christian, Gnostic, and pagan elements, founded in Persia in the 3rd century by Manes (circa 216-circa 276) and based on a supposed primeval conflict between light and darkness. It was widespread in the Roman Empire and in Asia, and survived in eastern Turkestan (Xinjiang) until the 13th century (Manichaeism).

Flesh is not necessarily bad, and it certainly is not “fallen or sinful human nature.” For one thing, it is not human nature, but only one part of it. For another it is not *essentially* sinful, fallen, or bad. It is a good creation of God, and needs only to keep or be kept to its proper function in life before God...The “mind set on the flesh” is death (Rom. 8:6), because it draws upon natural human abilities alone, not upon the gracious actions of God in our life.

There is some truth in what Willard is saying, but the reality of sin supersedes the simple notion that the nature of man is selfish and bent on fulfilling its own desires. Sin is a constant force that can overwhelm the conscience of man and enslave man to the extent that all of his faculties submit to its rulership (John 8:34). He does, however, give an alternative to the Augustinian/Aristotelian notion of two natures, which in this context, is easier to reconcile with what is taught in Scripture.

In discussing the five points of Calvinism (TULIP), Steele and Thomas (1963:16) under the heading of “total depravity”, hold that, “Consequently it takes much more than the Spirit’s assistance to bring a sinner to Christ—it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature”.

The idea of receiving a “new nature”, or of a person having two natures, creates a philosophical dualism within the person. Scripture does not support this view. Adam did not receive a new nature when he sinned, it was his human nature that became corrupted. This corrupted nature must be transformed into the likeness of the Last Adam.

Does the “new nature” (according to Calvinism), replace the “old nature” or do Christians have two natures? If there are two natures, how does this dualism play out with regards to the actualisation or suppression of free will? Paul speaks about *two laws* in Rom. 7:23. These two laws can also be defined as (a) a tendency to sin (promptings of the depraved human nature / the flesh) and (b) a desire to please God (promptings of the Spirit). A person has only one nature.

The Apostle Paul describes two “laws” at work in him. This conflict is a daily reality for every Christian. Rom. 12:2 (EMTV) says that we must be “transformed by the renewing of our minds”. This can only take place through engrafting God’s Spiritual law in our hearts and minds through His Word. James gives the instruction to lay aside “all filthiness and

abundance of evil, in meekness receive the implanted word, which is able to save your souls (Jas. 1:21 EMTV). Clark gives the following insight into this process of transformation in his discussion of 2 Cor. 3:18,

As by the Spirit of the Lord - By the energy of that Spirit of Christ which gives life and being to all the promises of the Gospel; and thus we are made partakers of the Divine nature and escape all the corruptions that are in the world. This appears to me to be the general sense of this verse: its peculiar terms may be more particularly explained.

The word *κατοπτριζόμενοι*, *catoptrizomenoi*, acting on the doctrine of catoptries, which we translate beholding in a glass, comes from *κατα*, against, and *σπουμαι*, I look; and properly conveys the sense of looking into a mirror, or discerning by reflected light. Now as mirrors, among the Jews, Greeks, and Romans, were made of highly polished metal, (see the note on 1Cor. 13:12), it would often happen, especially in strong light, that the face would be greatly illuminated by this strongly reflected light; and to this circumstance the apostle seems here to allude. So, by earnestly contemplating the Gospel of Jesus, and believing on him who is its Author, the soul becomes illuminated with his Divine splendor, for this sacred mirror reflects back on the believing soul the image of Him whose perfections it exhibits; and thus we see the glorious form after which our minds are to be fashioned; and by believing and receiving the influence of his Spirit, *μεταμορφουμεθα*, our form is changed, *την αυτηνεικονα*, into the same image, which we behold there; and this is the image of God, lost by our fall, and now recovered and restored by Jesus Christ: for the shining of the face of God upon us, i.e. approbation, through Christ, is the cause of our transformation into the Divine image.

Möller holds that a person who is born again (regenerate) remains a reasoning entity while willingly subjects his will to God. His will is “encompassed and incorporated” by God’s will, but not replaced or relinquished. He still faces a daily struggle to do what is right, he can still “will that which is wrong” (1997:85). This reality is clearly expressed by the Apostle Paul when he says: “Therefore I find this law, that *when* I wish to do the right *thing*, that evil is present with me” (Rom. 7:21 EMTV). Jamieson Fausset and Brown (2012:E-sword) comments on this Scripture that,

The conflict here graphically described between a self that “desires” to do good and a self that in spite of this does evil, cannot be the struggles between conscience and passion in the *unregenerate*, because the description given of this “desire to do good” in Rom. 7:22 is such as cannot be ascribed, with the least show of truth, to any but the *renewed*.

The new nature (that is mentioned in sentence four of the first point of Calvinism), is therefore not scripturally defensible.

3.2.1.16 The Early Church (before Augustine) believed that “free will” was a faculty of man’s constitution.

Packer (1993:86) holds that,

It is worth observing that will is an abstraction. My will is not a part of me which I choose to move or not to move, like my hand or my foot; it is precisely me choosing to act and then going into action. The truth about free agency, and about Christ freeing sin's slave from sin's dominion, can be expressed more clearly if the word will is dropped and each person says: I am the morally responsible free agency; I am the slave of sin whom Christ must liberate; I am the fallen being who only have it in me to choose against God until God renews my heart.

Packer makes a valid point, and he also expresses the notion of free agency without which each of us would be no more than a robot. Man can only be held responsible for his actions because of the fact that he is a free moral agent. Van Genderen and Velema (2008:219) hold that, "Most church fathers who preceded him emphasized man's responsibility and freedom. Augustine initially did the same thing". Prior to his letter to Simplicianus in 396AD, Augustine, in consensus with the early Church Fathers, maintained a strong doctrine of human freedom, and held that God's election of some to salvation depended on His foreknowledge of future human choices rather than divine pre-determinism (Beilby and Eddy, 2012:19). Morrell (2012) quotes Origin who states that "the heretics introduce the doctrine of different natures", and he quotes Irenaus who held that "all men are of the same nature". Morrell holds that, "The Gnostics...believed that the human nature of each man was created so corrupt and ruined that mankind did not have the freedom to choose what was good". The notion of a "new nature" was precipitated by this Gnostic premise perpetuated by Augustine. It is not a Biblical doctrine and is devoid of truth.

If not a new nature, what does a person receive through regeneration? The main difference between the Old Testament saints and the New Testament saints is this: Sanctification (a clean conscience), and justification (right standing with God and positional holiness). Jamison Fausset and Brown (e-sword) correctly interprets 2 Peter 1:3,4 as follows;

"might, etc. — *Greek*, "that ye MAY become partakers of the divine nature," even now in part; hereafter perfectly; 1Jo 3:2, "We shall be like Him." the divine nature — not God's essence, but His *holiness*, including His "glory" and "virtue," 2 Pe1:3; the opposite to "corruption through lust." Sanctification is the imparting to us of *God Himself* by the Holy Spirit in the soul. We by faith partake also of the material nature of Jesus (Eph 5:30). The "divine *power*" enables us to be partakers of "the divine *nature*."

We can only *become* (2 Pet. 1:3, 4) partakers of the divine nature of Christ when we are *delivered from* the power of darkness and *translated into* the kingdom of God (Col. 1:13) through regeneration.

The Old Testament saints “were saved by faith in the Messiah and what He would have done, and we are saved by faith in what Christ has done” (F.P. Möller, Personal communication July 16, 2014). However, Old Testament saints were never born again! Chafer (1948:105) contends that that while covenant theologians assumes regeneration in the Old Testament, the following questions must be answered:

Why the direct and unconditional demand upon one of the character that Nicodemus represented? Why the oft repeated and emphasise account of the salvation of Saul of Tarsus who had lived in all good conscience before the law (Acts 9; 22; 26, etc.)? And why the salvation of the Apostles, of three thousand Jews on the Day of Pentecost, and of the many priests who were obedient to the faith? Is it contended that not one of all these thus saved had answered before to the spiritual ideals of Judaism? Is it true that all these might have been as perfectly saved under Judaism as they later were under Christianity, but that everyone only accidentally declared his adjustment to God after the Christian faith was established? What, indeed, does the Apostle mean when he says: “But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we may be justified by faith....Why in any contrast between the features of Judaism and the features of Christianity is the former represented as insufficient from which the individual must be saved by adherence to the latter? The answers to all such questions will be found when it is determined that God was not doing precisely the same thing in Judaism as He is now doing in Christianity. God never said to Israel, “I will present you faultless before the presence of my glory.”...Regeneration accordingly is as much as a necessity for Jew as for Gentile. Apart from it even Nicodemus could not see the kingdom of God.

The Old Testament saints did not experience the benefits of living a regenerated, quickened Spirit-empowered life. The Old Testament saints may have experienced a close walk with God, but only such as the presence of God manifested to Israel in the pillar of cloud or fire. We have the privilege to say that we are in Christ, (Col. 3:3) and Christ is in us the Hope of glory. (Col. 1:27) They never experienced “partaking of the divine nature” since they did not have the Holy Spirit “indwelling”.

They had the Law as an external ordinance, engraved in tablets of stone, while we have the Law of God engraved on our hearts. (2 Cor. 3:3). Heb. 11:39 (MKJV) says about the Old Testament heroes of faith, “And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, did not receive the promise”.

We are enabled and empowered to live a holy and victorious life by the guidance and the resurrecting power of the Holy Spirit we receive at regeneration. 2 Peter 1:4 does not mean that we receive a “new nature” at regeneration, neither is this notion conveyed anywhere else in Scripture.

3.2.2 “U” - UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

- I. God’s choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world rested solely in His own sovereign will.
- II. His choice of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response or obedience on their part, such as faith, repentance, etc.
- III. On the contrary, God gives faith and repentance to each individual whom He selected.
- IV. These acts are the result, not the cause of God’s choice.
- V. Election therefore was not determined by or conditioned upon any virtuous quality or act foreseen in man.
- VI. Those whom God sovereignly elected He brings through the power of the Spirit to a willing acceptance of Christ.
- VII. Thus God’s choice of the sinner, not the sinner’s choice of Christ, is the ultimate cause of salvation (Steele & Thomas, 1963:17).

3.2.2.1 Christ as the elect of God in Reformed theology

Heyns (1992:205) holds that election, according to the Dutch Confession of Faith (*DCF*), is in essence an election of Christ. Election must be understood as a revelation of the person and work of Christ, and predestination, in this context, becomes an extension of Christology. He supports this statement by quoting Eph. 1:4 (EMTV) “just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love”. Christ is, therefore, not only an agent that needs to execute a decision that was made in eternity, but is also the architect of election while working with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

On this point, Berkhof (1953:114) disagrees with Heyns, when he contends that, Christ as mediator is not the impelling, moving, or meritorious cause of election, as some have asserted”. Berkouwer (1955:155) in agreement with Berkhof holds that that, according to Reformed theology, Christ is not the cause or grounds (*fundament*) of election, as the Remonstrants contended, but only the instrument and executor of election. He (1955:155) further holds that, Men wilde niet Christus in de zin *fundament* en *oorzaak* eer verkiezing noemen, alz zou de Goddelijke verkiezing door het werk van Christus zijn gemotiveerd”.

Van Genderen and Velema (1992:216) also hold, with regards to Eph. 1:4 “just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world...” (EMTV), that, In de woorde van de apostel ligt niet opgesloten, dat Christus de grond of de verdienende oorzaak van de verkiezing is”.

This is interesting, since the Canons of Dordt (COD 1:7) explicitly states that Christ was appointed by God from eternity "...to be the mediator, the head of all those chosen, and the foundation of their salvation.

Bavinck (1908:421) holds that while other theologians may have called Christ the cause of election. Reformed theologians have rightly argued against it. He argues that since Christ is the object of predestination, He cannot possibly be the cause as well. He (1908:241) further motivates his statement by saying that, "Hy is ene gave van de liefde des Vaders en deze gaan dus aan de zending des Zoons vooraf, Joh. 3:16, Rom. 5:8, 8:29, 2 Tim. 1:9, 1 Joh. 4:9".

Reformed theology does not contend that Christ is *only* the object of election. That would not be reconcilable with Scripture, and would invite criticism that the work of Christ is made unnecessary due to a decision of God in eternity. Berkouwer (1955:158) explains,

Een specifieke relatie van Christus tot de verkiezing zou niet meer nodig zijn, omdat alle nadruk valt 'op het eeuwige raadsbesluit, waardoor feitelijk dan ook de werking van Christus overbodig wordt gemaakt, slechts als een spiegeling wordt gesteld, terwijl zijn middelaarschap, zijn bemiddelingswerk geheel wevalt'.

Reformed theology steers away from the concept of Christ as cause or grounds (fundament) of election. Berkouwer argues against the eternalizing of salvation and the devaluation of the work of Christ, but also admits that, the Reformed doctrine of election tends to lean towards the abstract (1955:161). However, Van Genderen and Velema (1992:216, 217) holds that the place of Christ in the doctrine of election, is crucial to our understanding of this doctrine, to prevent us from understanding it as an abstract concept. Van Genderen and Velema (2008:226) holds that, "It has been suggested that if Christ is not the grounds of election...he can only be the means of the implementation of an eternal decree that God established independent of him. This places Christ outside the decree (Van Niftrik, KI.D., 125)". They (2008:226) admit that "It would be difficult to defend all of Reformed theology against such criticism".

Heyns (1992:207) explains that although "time", in which we live, and "eternity", in which God makes decisions and executes these decisions does not meet, God is active in time. He (1992:208) explains that God, from the perspective of eternity, begins with election (regarding the salvation of man). Man, from his perspective in time, cannot begin with

election; he begins with faith in Jesus Christ, and concludes his election. He contends that, “As die geloof vrug is van die verkiesing, dan is dit tog mos korrek om te redeneer: *omdat* ek die vrug in my lewe waarneem, *is* ek uitverkies.”³⁰ He (1992:208) therefore argues that “faith” is the “fruit” of election, and that God does not elect us *because* we believe or *on the grounds of* our faith in Christ, but, we are elected *in order that* we can believe.

Heyns (1992:210) follows his own argument in saying that faith is the fruit of election, and rightly concludes that according to this formula, unbelief is the fruit of reprobation. This follows that God elected some to believe and others not to believe, which means that, God elected some for salvation and others for reprobation. He admits that if he stands by the first assumption, the second must logically follow, but he then argues that God's logic and our logic is not the same.

3.2.2.2 Unconditional Election (predestination) described

Olson (2011:103) holds that the doctrine of predestination is crucial to all true Calvinists and is “inextricably linked to the foundational Reformation doctrine of justification by grace through faith alone”. Those who subscribe to this doctrine view it as an expression of God's sovereignty, goodness, and mercy.

From a Reformed perspective, the doctrine of unconditional election and predestination brings hope peace, and comfort. Calvinists view this doctrine as extremely positive, while Arminians criticise this doctrine for various reasons. Van Zyl (2004:128) holds that, “Die leer van die uitverkiesing is die mees eksplisiete belydenis van die sola gratia, aangesien dit bely dat God met 'n absolute vrye daad die mens uit genade uitverkies het tot verlossing, sonder dat die mens enigsins daartoe kon bydra.”

Graafland (1987:23) describes the importance of the doctrine of predestination to Calvin and the Reformation, especially as it relates to the confession of *sola gratia*. It lies therein that, “het heil word geschonken door God en ontvangen door de mens alleen uit genade. De diepste fundering van de genade licht namelijk niet in de rechtvaardiging van de goddeloze,

³⁰“If faith is the fruit of election, it is correct to conclude that: *because* I see (and experience) the fruit in my life, I am elected.”

maar daarachter in de soevereine verkiezing Gods van eeuwigheid". Noordmans (1979:238,239) ads his voice, and holds that,

De predestinatie brengt orde in ons bestaan (Rom. 8:29v.); maar die orde is niet begripmatig; ze volgt niet uit het wezen van de mens. Ze is ook niet deterministisch (sic); ze berust niet op de band tussen oorzaak en gevolg. Zij brengt vast verband in tijd en toeval, die ons wedervaren; ze verbindt het onverbindbare; ze betreft de Zonde op Christus en Christus op de zonde. Door haar worden vele eersten de laasten en vele laasten de eersten. Zij vindt haar grond in Gods goedheid en wie haar wil leren kennen, moet haar zoeken in de beloften van het Evangelie. De school weet niets van haar.

De predestinatie laat zich als zodanig niet prediken. Maar achter iedere toespraak moet zij aanwezig zijn. Dan maakt zij het mogelijk om de-mens-hier-en-nu (sic) toe te spreken; om 'ons' in het Evangelie te betrekken. Deze toevallige scholier hier op de hei, in de barak, in de tent, deze stormvogel, deze padvinder, deze bakvis, wat doet die hier in de kerk? Vanwaar? Waarheen? Waarom? Waartoe? Levensvragen en geen antwoord. Een hart en geen grond. Diepte, eeuwigheid. – En wanneer dit alles nog slechts neutral was, existentie, zoals men dit tegenwoordig noemt. Maar de bijbel noemt het zonde. Hier kan alleen Gods vrije verkiezing redden.

The positive side of this doctrine in the Calvinist tradition is indeed very positive, if you are part of the elect, however, there is nothing good about this doctrine from the perspective of the reprobate. Calvin (*Inst* 3, 21, 5) defined predestination as,

...the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with every man. All are not created equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and accordingly as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestined to life or death.

Bryson (2004:15, 16) holds that,

The key to understanding Calvin is not only in the words "predestined to" but in the words "created for." *Where* you go when you die, is, according to Calvin, determined by *why* God created you in the first place. It is possible, according to Calvin, that God created you *for eternal life*. Calvin also taught that it was equally possible that God created you *for eternal death*. Thus, for Calvin, there is both a bright side and a dark side to the destiny question (where will you go when you die?). If you are one of those individuals that God created for *life*, then your future (whether you know it or not) is indeed very bright. If, on the other hand, you are one of those individuals that God created for *death*, then your future (even if unknown to you) is dark indeed.

Bryson finds support for his statement by referring to what Calvin (*Inst.* 3, 23, 6) wrote in his Institutes, asserting that,

Now since the arrangement of all things are in the hand of God, since to him belongs the disposal of life and death, he arranges all things by his sovereign counsel, in such a way that individuals are born, who are doomed from the womb to certain death, and are to glorify him by their destruction.

Calvin's writings, therefore, led to the development of a very important and pertinent characteristic of Calvinism, when the "reflection upon the ways of God came to be dominated

by the concept of divine will and divine goodness, and justice became correspondingly less important” (Williams, 2004:94).

The Westminster Confession (WCF: III, 4) corresponds to the writings of Calvin, and confirms that,

By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life; and others are foreordained to everlasting death. (III) These angels and men, thus predestined and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished. (IV).

Calvinists in their doctrine of Unconditional Election therefore maintain that God makes certain people willing to believe, and leaves those in sin, “who are doomed from the womb to certain death” (*Inst.* 3, 23, 6) and whom He does not, and never did intend to save. They argue that humanity collectively fell in Adam, and *with* Adam (total depravity), and rightfully argues that humanity does not deserve salvation. Bryson (2004:63), is correct in his assertion that, “According to Calvinism, God determines the destiny of both the *included* and the *excluded* without consideration of, or factoring in, faith or unbelief”. God, therefore, arbitrarily elected some to be saved while deliberately passing others over according to His divine decree.

Reformed theologians such as Van Genderen and Velema (2008:194) objects to the term “arbitrarily” and holds that God “has reasons for willing what he wills, and to will as he wills”. This line of reasoning is problematic in terms of the concept of “unconditional election” in that it introduces certain conditions albeit those conditions, which constitutes the reasons for God’s decisions are only known by God himself.

Some Calvinist writers aim to establish God’s election of Israel as a principle from which to prove deterministic individual election. They do not make a distinction between individual and corporate election. Peterson and Williams (2004:48) assert that, “God’s choosing of Israel alone to be his covenant people is not arbitrary; it lies in his love and will”. Upon which Arminians, Walls and Dongell (2004:87), answer that,

Paul distinguishes the irrevocable call to the nation of Israel as a whole from the fate of individual Israelites. While the final destination of the people of Israel is absolutely certain, the future of any given individual is determined by his or her continued faith and trust in God. Gentiles who believe are grafted into the ancient tree while Jews who fall into unbelief are broken off.

While God chose Israel as a nation and led them out of Egypt, as recorded in the book of Exodus, individuals died in their sin during the forty years of desert wandering. John the Baptist and Jesus went so far as to call the Pharisees, who were very conscious of the fact that they were children of Abraham and heirs to the covenant, “a brood of vipers” (Mat.3:7; 12:34; 23:33; Luke 3:7).

The election of Israel is discussed further under the evaluation of Arminian theology.

3.2.2.3 Romans 9 as grounds for Unconditional Election

Noordmans (1979:238) contends that Protestant Dogmatics is built on the commentary or interpretation of Romans 9, and that it in essence, and as a result, lends a particular characteristic to it. Romans 9:11-12, 16, 18, 21 states that,

(11) for *the children* not yet being born, nor having done anything good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might abide, not of works but of Him who calls, (12) it was said to her, “The older shall serve the younger.”(16) So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God who shows mercy. (18) So then He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens. (21) Or does not the potter have authority over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and the other for dishonor? (EMTV).

It is upon these verses that the doctrine of unconditional election and [unconditional] reprobation is built. Calvin (*Comm. Rom. 9:10-13*, XXXVIII/19:348,349) lends a very specific interpretation to it that steers the doctrine in a direction and lends to it a characteristic distinctive only to Reformed theology. In his commentary on Romans, Calvin begins his exegesis of this pericope by asserting that,

Now indeed he openly ascribes the whole cause of the election of God, and that gratuitous, and in no way depending on men; so that in the salvation of the godly nothing higher (*nihil superius*) must be sought than the goodness of God, and nothing higher than the perdition of the reprobate than his just severity.

Since this is such an important passage regarding the doctrine of election for Reformed theology and particularly also in the theology of Calvin, we need to highlight the three

propositions that Calvin (*Comm. Rom. 9:10-13, XXXVIII/19:349,350*) derives from his interpretation of this passage, namely:

1. As the blessing of the covenant separates the Israelite nation from all other people, so the election of God makes a distinction between men in that nation, while he predestinates some to salvation, and others to eternal condemnation.
2. There is no other basis for this election than the basis of the goodness of God alone, and also since the fall of Adam, his mercy; which embraces whom he pleases, without any regard whatever to their works.
3. The Lord in his gracious election is free and exempt from the necessity of imparting equally the same grace to all; but on the contrary, he passes by whom he wills, and whom he wills, he chooses.

It is interesting to note that Calvin (*Comm. Rom. 9:10-13, XXXVIII/19:349*), with his interpretation of this passage includes the following statement, "I do not dwell thus long on explaining these things, because the meaning of the Apostle is obscure; but as the Sophists³¹, being not content with his plain sense, endeavour to evade it by frivolous distinctions, I wished to show, that Paul was by no means ignorant of those things they allege.

Why did Calvin see the meaning of the passage as obscure? Is it possible that he saw another possible interpretation of this passage?

Calvin (*Inst. 3, 24, 5*) correctly held that, "If we are elected in him, we cannot find the certainty of our election in ourselves; and not even in God the Father, if we look at him apart from the Son", and Daane (1973:114) elaborates on Calvin's assertion in saying that, in his evaluation of Romans 9-11, contends that, "...the Bible knows nothing of an isolated, individualistic doctrine of election; it knows only of an election that involves both the father and his seed, one that moves in history "throughout their generations". The Bible knows nothing of an individual election with a direct reference to eternity; it knows only of a divine election that is historical, one that moves and is actualised in the continuity of father and son, family and nation. Election is only in Christ, Christ is the Elect of God and we are corporally elected in him. Paul's three-chapter argument in Romans 9-11 is precipitated by Israel's unbelief and possible future conversion. Jacob and Esau, therefore, represent the believing Jews and the unbelieving Jews. The hardening of some of their hearts (as with Pharaoh) does not originate from an "irreversible, eternal, unconditional divine decree" but in their own unbelief (Rom. 9:31-32; 10:1-4, 18-21; 11:20, 30-31) (Walls and Dongell, 2004:92).

³¹ "The members of an ancient Greek school of philosophy that specialized in subtle argumentation and was more interested in persuasion than in wisdom" (Deist, 1987:160).

When Romans 9:11-12 is quoted out of the context of Paul's three-chapter argument, it may seem to support Calvinist doctrine. However, interpreted within the context of Paul addressing unbelieving Jews, who believed that their physical connection to the lineage of Abraham or the works of the law guaranteed their salvation, it takes on another meaning.

God's choosing of Jacob over Esau (Romans 9:11-12) can correctly be explained by emphasizing that God's purpose of election had nothing to do with works, and it is not precipitated by human desire or will (Rom. 9:16). Paul argues that salvation is neither granted as a birthright to Abraham's descendants, nor gained by fulfilling the works of the law (Walls and Dongell, 2004:94).

Paul is in this passage refuting the Jewish misconception that salvation is contingent on the physical relationship of the bloodline of Abraham. The Jews believed that they were saved because they were children of Abraham. Paul points out that although Jacob and Esau were both descendents of Abraham, neither were saved, on the grounds of their lineage. Berkouwer (1979:69) agrees that the Jews misunderstood the concept of God's election and that they "did not recognise that there is an Israel in the flesh and an Israel in the spirit".

Möller (1997:73) correctly points out that "God's plan of salvation is based on the promise of Abraham that found its conclusion in Christ and which was intended for all nations" and that, "If the criterion [for salvation] had been progenitive relationship to the flesh, Esau and his descendents would have shared equally in God's salvation with Jacob and his descendents". Möller (1997:73) also contends that the fact that God hated Esau stands in direct relation to his reckless living as it is illustrated in Heb. 12:16 "lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright", and in the judgement of Edom for their sin, in Mal. 1:1-4.

In rejecting his birthright, Esau did much more than to disregard a custom of the time, or to reject a material blessing. Esau chose the flesh over the spirit, and in that sense showed a disregard for the promise of God to Abraham, and he thereby rejected Christ.

Möller (1997:74) correctly holds that Paul, in this passage, is not speaking of Jacob and Esau as individual persons, and that Paul does not in any way indicate that this is an illustration of individual election, but that it pertains to two nations, Israel and Edom. He

supports his argument by saying that, while Rom 9:12 (ASV) states that, “it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger”, there is no historical evidence that Esau (as a person) ever served Jacob. God does, however, judge Edom because of their sin and condemn them as a nation in Mal 1:1-4.

It is interesting to note that a Calvinist like Daane (73:150), in concurrence with Möller, holds that “Romans 9–11 does not form a Biblical commentary on the truth of individual election. Rather, it is a commentary on the fact of the inviolability³² of God’s election of Israel as a nation”. The election of Israel as a nation is clear from Gen. 25:23, where God expressly tells Rebecca that, “Two nations *are* in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and *the one* people shall be stronger than *the other* people; and the elder shall serve the younger” (KJV).

Rom. 9:1-11 must not be read or interpreted in isolation of the context of the entire chapter, and the context and message of the previous and following chapters. Rom. 9:21, when viewed in isolation, seems to support the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination. However, this Scripture cannot be, and must never be divorced from the context where Paul speaks about how God brings salvation to the gentiles, who by faith, becomes “children of Abraham” and are engrafted into the “tree” that is Israel. Buchler (nd:47) renders a Biblical and contextual explanation of Rom. 9:21,

Of heeft God – de pottenbakker- geene macht over het leem, om uit denzelfden klomp – dat is uit Israël, de nakomelingen van den uitverkoren en beminden Jacob – te maken het eene – dit is, een oorblijfsel uit Israël, tezamen met diegenen uit de Heidenen die het Evangelie gehoorzaam zijn.

Buchler (n.d.:48, 49) in explaining the message of Rom. 9:21 in context of the entire chapter of Romans 9, as then asks,

Kan iets duidelijker wezen dat dat de gehele toepassing van Paulus eene verklaring is, waarom Israël, God’s eerstgeborene en beminde volk (Ex 4:22; Deut. 7:7, 8), (dat gelijk Esau, door hulle vleeschelijke afkomst een natuurlijk recht had of de geestelijke eerstgeboorte), dat recht en het koninkrijk er aan verbonden, verbeurt heeft, door hun ongeloof en ongehoorzaamheid? Want zij zochten een rechtvaardigheid op grond van vleeschelijke afkomst, en het houden der wet, dat op een beginsel rust, dat zo vijandig is tegenover God, dat indien men het niet opgeeft, de wedergeboorte of Geestelijke Eerstgeboorte eené onmogelijkheid wordt; terwijl het oorblijfsel, tezamen met de heidenen, die God’s volk niet waren, nog door hem beminden worden en hulle plaats innemen, eenvoudig omdat zij de genade en barmhartigheid Gods, geopenbaard in de gave van Zijn Zoon, Jezus Christus onze Heer, door het geloof annemen; en alzo met Abraham

32 The word “inviolable” is described as; too important to be ignored or treated with disrespect or; secure from violation or profanation (Webster, 2014).

de rechtvaardigheid des geloofs deelachtig worden, en erfgenamen van het Verbond dat op Christus bevestigd is (Rom. 15:8; Gal. 3:17)?

Buchler sees the need to connect this explanation of Paul to salvation through faith in Christ, rather than the interpretation lent to it by most Calvinists regarding the doctrine of predestination.

Heyns (1992:210, 211) rightly contends that the grounds of election is unconditional in the sense that God elects not on the grounds of human merit or achievement, but solely on the achievement and merit of the death of Christ. He then refers to Romans 9:10-13, where he interprets this passage of Scripture with the election of Israel as a nation. He correctly holds that Paul's intension in writing this passage was to show that although Israel was elected as a nation, some rejected the Messiah because they depended on their own merit, rather than on their faith. He further holds that, "Paulus se bedoeling hier is nie om Israel se afval te verklaar vanuit 'n vermeende verwerping [passing by] van God van ewigheid af nie, maar om Israel se afvalligheid aan sy eie ongehoorsaamheid toe te skrywe. Deur die genade te verwerp, het Israel homself verwerp".³³

Daane also describes election as unconditional, but not relating to individual persons. He asserts that God unconditionally elected Jesus Christ, the Church, and Israel and refutes and denies determinism as held by ultra Calvinists. He correctly holds that election is unpreachable if you make it about individual persons because it necessarily also implies reprobation. Daane (73:150), correctly states that "Election in Biblical thought is never a selection, a taking of this and a rejection of that out of multiple realities...election is a call to service, a summons to be a co-labourer with God in the actualisation of God's elective purpose and goal."

Daane's interpretation of this passage corresponds, in this respect, with Wesley's (classical Arminian) interpretation. Wesley (1831:229) held that Jacob and Esau were ciphers for Israel and Edom, and that there is no "instance of any man being finally condemned by the mere sovereign will of God".

³³ Paul's intention here is not to explain Israel's apostasy from a perceived rejection [passing by] of God from eternity, but to attribute Israel's reprobation to his own disobedience. By rejecting God's grace, Israel rejected himself.

3.2.2.4 Conditional or unconditional election?

Calvinists strongly rely on their interpretation of Romans 9 to support their doctrine of predestination and unconditional election, but cannot justify their doctrine in the context of Romans 10–11. The apostle Paul contradicts the Calvinistic doctrine of Unconditional Election, Predestination and Perseverance (of the saints), when he says,

You will say then, 'Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.' (20) Well *said*. By unbelief they were broken off, but you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but fear. (21) For if God did not spare the natural branches, perhaps He may not spare you either. (22) Behold then the kindness and severity of God: upon those that fell, severity; but upon you, kindness, if you continue in His kindness. Otherwise you also shall be cut off (Romans 11:19-22 EMTV).

Paul speaks about some of those from Israel who lost their salvation, and also gives a very serious warning to the Roman church, that they could be cut off through unbelief. This clearly means that they stood to lose their salvation, which they had already obtained, if they fail to "stand by faith". It would be ridiculous to argue that this was not a very real possibility for Paul, that these regenerated Christians could lose their salvation.

In the context of Paul's argument in chapter 10 and 11, it is evident that he describes Unconditional Election in a corporate sense and individual salvation, not on a divine decree, but contingent on the faith of individuals (Walls and Dongell, 2004:85).

3.2.2.5 Reprobation (double predestination)

One of the most important objections to the Calvinist doctrine of unconditional election is the doctrine of reprobation. Deist (1987:121) defines reprobation as "the conditional or unconditional damnation of a person by God".

The Canons of Dordt (*COD* 1:6) states that "That some receive the gift of faith from God and others do not receive it, proceeds from God's eternal decree", and in (*COD* 1:15) it states that,

God, out of His sovereign, most just, irreprehensible, and unchangeable good pleasure, has decreed to leave in the common misery into which they have wilfully plunged themselves, and

not to bestow upon them saving faith and the grace of conversion; but, permitting them in His just judgment to follow their own ways, at last, for the declaration of His justice, to condemn and punish them forever, not only on account of their unbelief, but also for all their other sins.

The reprobate are therefore “passed by” because they are “preordained...to eternal damnation” (*Inst.* 3, 21, 5), and excluded from salvation “for no other cause but because he [God] is pleased to exclude them...” (*Inst.* 3, 23, 1). In fact, these unfortunate creatures have been created for damnation, since they are born “doomed from the womb to certain death...” (*Inst.* 3, 23, 6).

The Canons of Dordt (*COD* 1:15) also state. “And this is the decree of reprobation, which by no means makes God the Author of sin, but declares Him to be an awful, irreprehensible, and righteous Judge and Avenger thereof”. On this point Calvin (*Inst.* 3, 23, 7) asserts that,

Scripture proclaims that all were, in the person of one made liable to eternal death. As this cannot be ascribed to nature, it is plain that it is owing to the wonderful council of God...I again ask how it is that the fall of Adam involves so many nations with their infant children in eternal death without remedy, unless it is so seemed meet to God? Here the most loquacious tongues must be dumb. The decree I admit, is dreadful; and yet it is impossible to deny that God foreknew what the end of man was to before he made him, and foreknew, because he had so ordained by his decree.

The Canons of Dordt (*COD* 1:15) use the word “permitted”, in stating that God “permitted” the reprobate to follow their own ways to their destruction, but his concept is contradicted in Calvin’s own words when he states that the reprobate are “doomed from the womb” (*Inst.* 3, 23, 6). The word “permitted” is a term that is not reconcilable with a decretal view of election and predestination, which implies that God determined very single detail of what takes place in time, according to His eternal decree. What it really should, therefore, say (according to the principle of decretal theology) is that God created, decreed, and determined them to eternal damnation.

Berkhof (1953:116) makes a distinction between preterition (the determination to pass some men by) and pre-condemnation (the determination to punish those who are passed by). He states that man does not know the reason for preterition, that reason cannot be sin, for the simple reason that all men are sinners. While he then claims that the reason for pre-condemnation is sin, he supposes that God passed some men by for reasons only He knows. Brunner (1954:34) contends that,

The Scripture teaches a divine predestination of election: it also teaches the judgement of the unbelieving. It teaches too, that nothing happens without God’s will, but it never teaches –let me

repeat it – even in one single word – a divine predestination of rejection...The dogma of double predestination is a product of human logic that cannot withstand the a-logical teaching of Scripture.

Calvinists are generally reluctant to attribute the positive act of reprobation to God, and reject the idea of *double predestination* or *reprobation of the non-elect*, and they claim to believe in a doctrine of *single predestination*. The positive act of “individual election” (as advocated by Calvinists) necessarily implies that God *also* deliberately chose *not to* elect certain individuals. Once a person, therefore, subscribes to *unconditional election*, the doctrine of (unconditional) *reprobation* follows as a “good and necessary” consequence. Boettner (1969:105) contends that, “Those who hold the doctrine of Election but deny that of reprobation can lay but little claim to consistency. To affirm the former while denying the latter makes the decree of predestination an illogical and lop-sided decree.” Unconditional election is, therefore, synonymous with double predestination.

Wesley (1938:488) held that the doctrine of double predestination “represents the most holy God as ‘worse than the devil, as more false, more cruel and more unjust’”. He was adamant when discussing Romans 9 that “No Scripture can prove that God is not love, or that his mercy is not over all his works. That is, whatever it proves beside, no Scripture can prove predestination.”

Olson (2011:124) quotes Daane who argues convincingly against the doctrine of reprobation and he then asserts that,

Daane argues that Calvin’s followers increasingly defined election apart from grace by incorporating reprobation into their theologies. For him, “Scripture speaks of predestination to life but not to death” and he recognises that predestination to death is automatically the flipside of Unconditional Election of individuals to salvation. Daane rejects the whole approach of traditional Calvinism as it inevitably makes God the author of sin and damnation and has to appeal to two or three wills in God, including a secret will (to damn some in spite of revealing his will to save all). It also contradicts itself for blaming humans for their depravity and condemnation when God decreed all of it from the beginning.

Sproul (1986:141) while criticising higher Calvinism, holds that election is positive and reprobation is negative and that these two concepts should not be placed “on the same plane in the plan of God and the outworking of this plan by God”. He (1986:141) defines double predestination as follows:

This is how we must understand double predestination. God gives mercy to the elect by working faith in their hearts. He gives justice to the reprobate by leaving them in their own sins. There is no symmetry here. One group receives mercy. The other group receives justice. No one is the victim of injustice. No one can complain that there is unrighteousness in God.

Sproul attempts to create a notion of justness and fairness in his description of God's work in predestination by applying arguments and examples to an old debate without changing any of the essential elements. Eventually, his argument comes across as weak, and he ends up affirming what high Calvinists promote, even when trying to lobby for a doctrine of single predestination. When Unconditional Election is the basis of double predestination, there can be no single predestination. It does not matter what kind of verbal camouflage is added to the existing doctrine. There is an unavoidable and unfortunate result of Unconditional Election in that those who are not elected for heaven are by default elected for hell. It is either double predestination or nothing.

Because The Canons of Dordt (*COD*1:17) states that,

... choice of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response or obedience on their part, such as faith, repentance, etc. On the contrary, God gives faith and repentance to each individual whom He selected. These acts are the result, not the cause of God's choice. ... Thus, God's choice of the sinner, not the sinner's choice of Christ, is the ultimate cause of salvation.

Bryson (2004: 65,67) is correct to assert that,

Logically, a consistent Calvinist would also have to say that God's ... rejection of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response on their part, such as unbelief, a refusal to repent, etc. On the contrary, God withheld faith and repentance from each individual He rejected. These are the result, not the cause of God's choice to reject. ... Thus, God's rejection of the sinner, and not the sinner's rejection of Christ, is the ultimate cause of damnation....[and] he who ends up in hell is there because this is what pleases God and where He unconditionally sends him.

Olson (March 16, 2014) correctly contends that, "belief in double predestination is simply logically incompatible with the claim that God is good—unless "good" is emptied of all meaning so that it is a useless cipher for something we don't know". Sproul, therefore, tries to justify God's seeming unfairness, which is implicated by his (Calvinism's) interpretation of the doctrine of election, without any convincing argument.

Heyns (1992:211) strongly rejects double predestination and reprobation when he contends that God does not sovereignly reject individual persons outside the context of their sin. He (1992:210) he holds that, God elects not on the grounds of human merit or achievement, but solely on the achievement and merit of the death of Christ.

This statement could lead to universalism apart from the following conditions:

a. As Calvinists believe:

That Christ did not die for the whole world (Limited Atonement), and that God deliberately passed some individuals by whom he could have saved (Unconditional Election). Grace is forced on some and withheld from others (Irresistible Grace), and Faith is a gift deliberately withheld from some,

OR, as Arminians and Pentecostals believe,

b. That Christ died for the whole world (God does not reject or pass anybody by in the *provision* of salvation), but individuals are to blame for their own demise. Individuals have the *ability to believe*, when aided by divine grace, but some choose not to accept Christ by faith and believe unto salvation. They wilfully and consciously reject Christ as a result of their unbelief, and condemn themselves to everlasting perdition.

If we want to be consistent about the way God elects, a parallel must be drawn between the election and (self) reprobation of Israel, and the election and (self) reprobation of mankind.

The election of Israel compared with the election of mankind

Election of Israel	Election of mankind
God elected Israel as a nation	God elected mankind in Christ
Israel's reprobation is a result, not of God non-election, but due to his/her own rejection of God and salvation.	An Individual's reprobation is a result, not of God passing him/her by, but due to his/her rejection of God and salvation.

(Table 1)

Bucler (n.d.:56, 57) holds that "Niet alleen vind men in den geheelen Bijbel, wanneer hij is zijn verband gelezen wordt, geen zweem van bewijs dat God enich mensch voorbestemd heeft tot het verderf, maar in tegendeel word het tegenovergestelde positief gestaafd", and refers to scriptures such as,

- 1Timothy 2:3-4 (EMTV) "For this is good and acceptable before God our Savior, (4) who desires all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth."

- 2Peter 3:9 (EMTV) “The Lord does not delay concerning His promise, as some reckon slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”
- 1John 2:2 (EMTV) “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not only concerning ours, but also concerning *those* of the whole world.”

He (n.d.: 56, 57) also contends that, “van Gods kant is de onwrikbare grond van Zijn uitverkiezing Zijne eindeloze ontferming”, and quotes the following Scriptures specifically in relation to the doctrine of election in the context of the requirement of personal faith in Christ,

- Rom 3:21-22 (EMTV) “But now the righteousness of God apart from the law has been revealed, being witnessed to by the Law and the Prophets, (22) even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and upon all those that believe. For there is no distinction.”
- Rom 11:32 (EMTV) “For God has shut up all to disobedience, that He might show mercy to all.”

Some Calvinists have various rather unconvincing explanations of how the “all” Scriptures refers only to the elect and not the whole world, as it must be assumed from the general reading of the text. However, the overwhelming testimony of Scripture tends to support what Buchler and others contend, and that is that God is not a respecter of persons, that He extends his mercy to all. It is further contrary to His character and His revelation in Scripture, that He would assign any of his creatures to eternal damnation.

3.2.2.6 Double predestination affirmed

Calvin (*Inst.* III, 23, 1) affirms double predestination when he asserts that, “those whom God passes over, *he condemns*; and this he does *for no other reason* than that *he wills to exclude them* from the inheritance which he predestines for his own children”. The Westminster Confession of Faith (*WCF.* III, 3) defines double predestination in stating that “By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory some men and angels are predestines to everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death”. Boettner (1969:104) in affirming the teaching of the Westminster Confession of Faith, asserts that, “The doctrine of absolute Predestination of course logically holds that some are foreordained to death as truly as others are foreordained to life”.

Pink (1993:36) affirms double predestination when he asserts,

That many *will be* eternally damned is clear from Scripture, ... and that God decreed that the non-elect *should* choose the course *they* follow"...and that, ...concerning the *election of some* to salvation, it would unavoidably follow, even if Scripture had been silent upon it, that there must be a *rejection of others*. Every choice evidently and necessarily implies a refusal, for where there is no leaving out there can be no choice. If there be some whom God has elected unto salvation (2 Thess. 2:13), there must be others who are *not* elected unto salvation. If there are some that the Father gave to Christ (John 6:37), there must be others whom He did not give unto Christ. If there be some whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life (Rev. 21:27), there must be others whose names are *not* written there...

The dilemma Calvinists face with regards to double predestination as unavoidable consequence of unconditional election is how to reconcile the character of God (which they believe to be good) to their doctrine.

Barth (1978:345) comes to the rescue when he, in stepping away from decretal theology, asserts that Christ is the elect of God and that men, "may be assured of their election by faith in Jesus Christ, in whom it was brought about".

3.2.2.7 Salvation by grace or by arbitrary choice?

Most Calvinists stagger at the use of the term "arbitrary". However, the fact that Calvinists insist that God's choice is "unconditional", not based on any "foresight of faith or good works" (WCF. 3, 5) still seems to *imply* that the choice is "arbitrary".

If God's election and reprobation are arbitrary, there is as little grace in his choice of the elect as that there is justice in his choice of the reprobate. If the choice to reprobate is arbitrary, God's love, grace, and goodness, are irrelevant to salvation, and John 3:16 and many other similar Scriptures must be seen as lies, which we know they are not. If election and predestination flowed from an arbitrary act of God, there would be no grace in that decision, no justice, and no love. It makes the atoning sacrifice of Christ's death an afterthought. It becomes an irrelevant historical fact, unrelated to the despair of a fallen sinner calling out for a Saviour! Salvation must either be by grace or by arbitrary choice.²²

Berkouwer (1979:53) holds that the concept of arbitrary election is grounded in Occamistic nominalism³⁴ “which posed that God was the great *Exlex*, and, more common, the concept of *potential absoluta*, the power before whose completely inscrutable arbitrariness man has no choice but to bend”. Berkouwer (1979, 53) admits that, should the concept of arbitrariness in God’s decision of election prevail, and be accommodated in Calvinistic theology, God’s faithfulness and integrity is compromised. He wrestles with this concept of arbitrariness in God over fifty-eight pages and concludes that the meaning of arbitrariness as it relates to humans cannot be applied to God.

Theologians who hold to decretal theology claim that God’s will and actions are not contingent on any event or action in time or history. The Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF. III, 1) states that, “God’s decrees are the wise, free, and holy acts of his will, whereby, from all eternity, he hath for his own glory, *unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass in time*, especially angels and men” (Emphasis mine). These decrees are, according to the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF. III, 1, 2) “unchangeable; they cannot be changed; therefore they are certain to be fulfilled...God’s decrees are all-inclusive; they include everything that ever happens.” It follows that whatsoever happens is the will of God, since every event, action and thought is predetermined by God.

Daane (1973:89) contends that if any moment in God’s decree can be proven to be contingent on another moment in the decree, that the foundation of decretal theology will be dismantled. This is possible when it can be proven that “the moment of reprobation is a response of God’s justice to man’s sin, and not an act of the mere good pleasure of God”.

We can now argue that the very act of reprobation is unjustified if reprobation *is not* a response of God’s justice to man’s sin. To contend that God derives pleasure from the act of reprobating sinners whom the Bible teaches us, God loves (Rom 5:8), will be detrimental to our understanding of God being good. We must then conclude that it cannot be the case, and that sinners are reprobated (as a positive act of God) because of their sin. Because the moment of reprobation is a response of God’s justice to man’s sin, and reprobation is contingent on the moment of sin, the “the divine decrees of God” is then according to Daane, dismantled.

³⁴ “The belief...that God’s creative activity determined the nature of things in a somewhat arbitrary fashion and that real knowledge can therefore only be obtained by observation (Deist, 1987:118).

Sproul (1986:119) correctly holds that “God doesn’t do anything without a reason.” He holds that while there is no reason found in us, for God to elect us, there is a *reason*, and this reason is found in God himself. He contends therefore, that even in “unconditional election”, “God is not capricious or whimsical” in his eternal election, only that the reason for election (and reprobation) is not revealed to us. He (1986:157) asserts that, “God predestines us according to what pleases him...What pleases God is goodness”. This explanation does not answer any questions and it is not supported by Scripture. The Bible pertinently teaches us that faith pleases God: “But without faith *it is impossible to please him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb 11:6 KJV).

Rom. 5:8 says, “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (KJV). Daane (1973:92) holds that the “historical dimension of the ‘while’ must be recognised’ and that God’s love toward the sinner is not merely a narcissistic love of his own image in man, as decretal theology suggests, since sinful man is not a reflection of God. Daane (1973:92) further contends that, “the object of divine love is precisely sinful man; and God’s love is shown, Paul says, in the consideration that Christ died for man *while* a sinner”.

3.2.2.8 Are election and reprobation related *in the same manner*?

The Canons of Dordt (COD1:17) states that “His [God’s] choice of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response or obedience on their part, such as faith, repentance, etc.” Pink (1993:36), however, in contrast to the Canons of Dordt, asserts that, “God certainly foreknew and foresaw who would and who would not receive Christ as their Saviour, therefore in giving being and birth to those He *knew would reject* Christ, He necessarily created them *unto* damnation”.

It seems that according to what Pink says here, could be construed as Arminianism, in that he believes election and reprobation to be conditional and that God rightfully and justly condemns those who would reject Him. He is implying that God’s action of election is contingent on human response, and this is contradictory to Calvinist theology. How does Pink argue himself out of this corner? He wrongly believes that faith is a gift from God, and that God deliberately withholds faith from some, so that they cannot believe and be saved.

Pink (1993:36) holds that, “if there were some of Adam's descendants to whom He purposed not to give faith, it must be because He ordained that they should be damned”.

We could now ask, “How did God, according to Pink (1993:36), ‘foreknow and foresee who would and who would not receive Christ as their Saviour’?” He determined to deliberately withhold faith from them! This serves as just another example of how Calvinists attempt, and miserably fail, to justify decretal theology with regards to unconditional reprobation.

Daane (1973:35) in defence of the Canons of Dordt claims that,

The conclusion of the canons of Dordt explicitly rejects – in fact, *detests* – the position that election and reprobation are related “in the same manner” (*in eodem modo*). God does not elect men in the same manner in which he rejects men. Election and reprobation are not simply two sides of the same coin...or the simple affirmation that one logically implies the other.

Daane (1973:41) criticises the theology of theologians such as Berkhof, Hoeksema, Van Til, and Boettner for not making a clear distinction between the process of election and reprobation. Daane contends that their disregard for “not in the same manner” which is part of the conclusions of the Canons of Dordt, “make it possible to propagate with considerable popular success that the Canons can easily be interpreted in supralapsarian terms”. He (1973:34) asserts that,

if election is for the elect only, whereas the gospel is to be proclaimed to all men, what keeps election and preaching apart is non-election, or reprobation. Reformed theologians never solved the problem of “an election for some and a gospel for all”. Their sophisticated and ingenious attempts to resolve the difficulties and produce a preachable theology of election lie largely forgotten in the past, of historical interest only. But the theological problem itself remains.

Daane fails to explain how election and reprobation is not “two sides of the same coin” (1973:35), but at least acknowledges that there is a very real problem with the doctrine of reprobation as advocated by decretal (Calvinist) theologians.

3.2.2.9 Reprobation as an arbitrary act of God

Some Calvinists argue that election is unconditional, but salvation is conditional. Calvinism's doctrine of unconditional election implies that that God arbitrarily chose some people to be saved, but that salvation is only appropriated through repentance and faith. Olson (2011:

201) argues that this distinction is “a distinction without a difference”. Salvation, according to Calvinism, is therefore unconditional in relation to God’s arbitrary choosing of the elect.

Calvinism claims that the election of God is not contingent on His foreknowledge. This implies that God arbitrarily chose some for salvation *and* some for reprobation. If election is “unconditional”, then it logically follows that reprobation is also unconditional. This in itself casts a very dark shadow on the justness of God.

Boettner (1969:125) claims that God’s will is the decisive factor in the damnation of the reprobate. He states that God sovereignly determines people’s choices, and that God’s decision to reprobate certain people is not contingent on the people, their actions or their characters – (this argument corresponds to the Canons of Dordt). He then states that the reprobate *voluntarily chose sin* and therefore deserves the eternal flames of hell. Boettner (1969:222) tries to justify this contradiction by saying that “Predestination and free agency are the twin pillars of a great temple, and they meet above the clouds where the human gaze cannot penetrate”. This statement leads to more questions than answers.

Calvinism has no Scriptural or logically viable explanation for their doctrine of reprobation, and it is impossible to reconcile this doctrine with God’s character. Bavinck (2006:371) holds that “All that God does, he does for his own sake. Election, too, has its cause and its end solely in God”, *and contradicts himself by saying that*, “But that which he brings to pass in accordance to the decree of reprobation is not directly and in itself the object of his good pleasure.” If all that God does is for his own pleasure, than why does he not take pleasure in reprobation?

There are several Scriptures that are interpreted by Calvinist theologians in such a way that it seems that God unilaterally and unconditionally decided who will be saved or reprobated such as: John 6:37, 39, 44 (EMTV) “All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me...(39) And this is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me, I should lose nothing, ... (44) No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me should draw him...”

Calvinists understand from these Scriptures that, those who are “elected” for reprobation, will not be drawn, will not be given the “gift” of faith, will never have the opportunity or ability to see who Christ is, and will therefore not be saved. Jacob Prasch asserts that,

There are multiple problems with this false doctrine [unconditional election and reprobation]. To begin with it directly contradicts too many scriptures that explain the divine nature relative to salvation which prove God does not create people for eternal torture (e.g., 1 Tim. 2:4, Eze. 33:11).

The second problem is that this notion of God intentionally making people for eternal torment for which they have no choice and others to salvation for which they have no choice logically contradicts the need for evangelism and carrying out the Great Commission since the predestined will, of necessity, be saved anyway and those created by a God of love to be eternally tormented have no choice. While alien to scriptural thought both theologically and philosophically, this is purely a westernized variant of the Islamic doctrine of "*Insha'Allah*"; philosophically Calvinism is Islamic, not Judeo-Christian (Prasch, 2011:9).

Olson (2011:159) asserts that in Calvinism, "Satan wants all people damned to hell, and God wants only a certain number damned to hell. According to Walls and Dongell (2004:52), Calvin held that the reprobate deserves to perish, and God is just in punishing them. They deserve eternal damnation because of their "malice and perverseness", and he claims that God at times "deprives them of the capacity to hear his word" and "at other times blinds and stuns them by the preaching of it".

Walls and Dongell (2004:164), correctly asserts that Calvinists can only claim consistency when "They concede that the ultimate and only reason why anyone is finally damned, is because of God's sovereign choice not to save them".

3.2.2.10 The need for the demonstration of God's wrath

Piper (2010:50) asserts that "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him." He claims that this is the most important sentence in his theology. He holds that "God's pursuit of his own glory is not at odds with my joy, and that means it is not unkind or unmerciful or unloving for him to seek his glory. In fact it means that the more passionate God is for his own glory, the more passionate he is for my satisfaction in that glory". Piper also claims that God's full glory cannot be displayed unless some extent of his wrath is demonstrated and some people, who God could save, are unconditionally passed over and consigned to eternal damnation. This is inconsistent with his claim that God is glorified in our satisfaction in him. Walls and Dongell (2004:179) correctly comments that, "those who are saved surely experience more satisfaction in God than those who are damned!"

Daane (1973:36) holds that, "if God must damn some in order to elect and bless others, he is not sovereignly free in his grace...God was obliged to reprobate. He could not do otherwise". Barth (1978:347) taught that election and reprobation lies in Christ, who is "both reprobate

and elect”, and Brunner denied the idea of a decree of reprobation (1954:34). Daane (1973:37) rejects the idea of “predestination to death”, and contends that some Reformed theologians “blurred the distinction between election and whatsoever comes to pass, dissociated ‘predestination’ from ‘life,’ and blurred the Canons’ rejection of ‘in the same manner’ far from thought and memory”.

Daane, however, takes this quote from the conclusions of the Canons of Dordt out of context, since “in the same manner” here, refers more specifically to the consequences of reprobation and not a differentiation between election and reprobation, as he asserts. “...that in the same manner in which the election is the fountain and cause of faith and good works, reprobation is the cause of unbelief and impiety...” (*COD*: Conclusions)

3.2.3 “L” - LIMITED ATONEMENT

Christ’s redeeming work was intended to save the elect only and actually secured salvation for them.

- I. His death was a substitutionary endurance of the penalty of sin in the place of **certain specified sinners**.
- II. In addition to putting away the sins of His people, Christ’s **redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation**, including faith which unites them to Him.
- III. The **gift of faith** is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died, thereby guaranteeing their salvation (Steele & Thomas, 1963:18).

3.2.3.1 Salvation for some, means damnation to others

Calvinists concede that Scripture clearly teaches that God loves the entire world (including the non-elect) and passionately wishes that all men will be saved, they claim that Christ’s redeeming work was intended to only save “certain specified sinners” (Walls and Dongell, 2004:53). The Canons of Dordt (*COD*, 2:8) state that,

This was the Sovereign counsel and most gracious will and purpose of God the Father, that the quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of His Son should extend to all the elect, for bestowing upon them alone the gift of justifying faith, thereby to bring them infallibly to salvation.

This is a doctrine that even some Calvinists shy away from. Olson (2011:154) asserts that, “many Reformed people and many Calvinists cannot stomach this element [Limited

Atonement] of the TULIP system, and they extract it out, and reject it even if that brings them into conflict with the rest of what they believe and with their fellow Reformed and Calvinist believers". Culpepper (1966:123) holds that the doctrine of limited atonement is only taught by the most rigid and ardent Calvinists such as Boettner and Berkhof. Steele and Thomas (1963:46) also hold that Christ did not "die for the purpose of saving each and every last sinner". Horton (2005:[1]) asserts that "The Canons of Dordt pick up on a phrase that was often found in the medieval textbooks ('sufficient for the world, efficient for the elect only') when it affirms that Christ's death 'is of infinite worth and value, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world'" (COD, 2:3).

With regards to the doctrine of limited atonement, Bryson (2004:139) rightly argues that the logical conclusion of this passage, which he describes as "the dark side of this view", means for the reprobate that:

This was the Sovereign counsel and most incomprehensible but just will and purpose of God the Father, that the quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of his Son should not extend to all people, thereby to withhold from all but the elect the gift of justifying faith, thereby to bring them infallibly to damnation ...

Drawn to its logical conclusions, these statements, which at first appears to be such good news for the elect, becomes very bad news for the non-elect, and held up to the scrutiny of Scripture such proves to be out of sync with the gospel message. The following Scriptures apply:

- 1Tim. 2:3-4 (EMTV) "For this is good and acceptable before God our Savior, (4) who desires all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth."
- 2Pet. 3:9 (EMTV) "The Lord does not delay concerning His promise, as some reckon slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
- John 3:16-17 (EMTV) "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (17) For God did not send His Son into the world so that He might condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."

Calvinists believe that if they should consent to the fact that Christ bore the sins of the whole world, it would lead to universalism and imply that everyone must then be saved. Calvinists such as Boettner (Olson, 2011:116), therefore, interprets the Scriptures that speaks about God's redemption plan for the "world" to mean "all kinds of people". Walls and Dongell (2004:52) hold that Calvinism's "restrictive interpretations of "all" requires such textual

gymnastics that they condemn themselves as invalid.” while some Calvinists want the word “world” in John 3:16 to mean “all kinds of people”. No Calvinist would interpret Scriptures such as John 1:10 as saying that “all kinds of people” (not everyone) did not recognize Christ as the Son of God (Olson, 2011:116).

Piper (2000:165), realizing the absurdity of promulgating the idea that Christ did not die for all, in the light of overwhelming Scriptural evidence to the contrary, takes another approach; He acknowledges that Christ died for the whole world, but he then contends that Christ did not die for everyone *in the same way*. While he strongly holds to the Calvinist doctrine that Christ only died for the elect in the salvific sense, he says that “we do not deny that all men are the intended beneficiaries of the Cross in some sense”. This is his meagre attempt to negotiate the Scriptures that prove that Christ died for everyone. He adds a condition to the Scripture (falling into the condemnation of the Pharisees) to say that Christ’s death was beneficial to all, but only salvific to the elect. If this is true, then Olson (2011:139) is correct to say that, God gives the reprobate “a little heaven to go hell in!”

Why would God, if He truly loves the whole world, and invites and commands all to repent, withhold salvation from some, and then punish them for not being saved? This view is contradicted by many Scriptures that specifically state that God’s mercy and offer of salvation is extended to *all men*, such as Rom. 11:32, “For God has shut up all to disobedience, that He might show mercy to all” (EMTV).

It is interesting to note that Calvin (in stark contrast to the canons of Dordt) believed that Christ died for the whole world. In his commentary on Mark 14:24, Calvin (1999:15) rightly holds that, “By the word many he means not a part of the world only, but the whole human race; for he contrasts many with one; as if he had said, that he will not be the Redeemer of one man only, but will die in order to deliver many from the condemnation of the curse.”

3.2.3.2 Faith a prerequisite for salvation or a gift bestowed on the elect?

Van den Brink and Van den Kooi (2012:600) states that the classic protestant dogmatics identifies three aspects of the act of faith namely, knowledge (*notitia*), assent (*assensus*) and trust (*feducia*). They (2012:602) hold that, the Reformers understood that justification is appropriated when a person believes the gospel (door de gelowige aanvaarding van Gods heilsboodschap). The “through faith” (*dia pisten*) is explicitly and pertinently expressed as

instrumental and not causal. The accreditation any salvific merit to the act of faith cannot be supported by Scripture.

Van den Brink and Van den Kooi (2012:600) admits that, “Het geloof in de boodschap van Gods vrijspraak is weliswaar onmisbaar: zonder zulke geloof komt de rechtvaardiging niet tot stand”, but then adds that, “Maar het is niet op nieuw een sort voorwaarde waaraan we ‘eerst’ moeten voldoen of een prestatie die we alsnog moeten verrigten.” In other words, although faith is essential for justification, it is not a prerequisite for justification. It seems that they wish to avoid admitting to faith being a prerequisite for salvation as if calling faith a condition for salvation would assent to it being meritorious or salvific.

Chafer (1948:113) contends that, “Reason alone would dictate the truth that, since salvation is altogether wrought of God, the individual who cares to be saved can sustain no other relation to it than to receive it in simple faith.” He (1948:113) further goes on to say that, “The great realities namely *forgiveness*, the *gift of eternal life*, and the *gift of righteousness* which is the ground of justification (Rom. 3:22, 26; 4:5; 10:4), are the portion of those who do no more than to believe in Jesus as Saviour”.

3.2.3.3 Limited atonement leads to universalism

Olson (2011:150) holds that the Calvinist argument that atonement secures salvation “in a necessary way so that all for whom Christ died must be saved” inevitably leads to universalism. Olson (2011:150,151) contends that,

It seems to me and to many other non-Calvinists, that any person who has a profound grasp of the biblical witness to God as revealed especially in Jesus Christ, but also in verses such as John 3:16 and John 4:8, will have to give up particular redemption [limited atonement] and, in order to avoid universalism, any necessary connection between redemption accomplished and applied. Four point Calvinists who try to avoid “L” but hold on to the rest of TULIP, have to explain why Christ would suffer the punishment for the reprobate sinners God intentionally rejects from possible salvation.

Most high Calvinists, including Boettner, Steele and Thomas, Sproul, and Piper, believe passionately in universal evangelism; they reject hyper Calvinism that says a well-meant offer of salvation cannot be made to everyone either by God or by preachers. As already intimated, however, there is tension and even conflict between particular atonement and indiscriminate evangelism.

Olson highlights one of many Calvinism's conundrums. How can a sincere offer of salvation be made if the atonement is limited to exclude many of the hearers of the message?

Calvinism does not make a distinction between the provision and the application of salvation. In fact, salvation is already secured in the election, and denied in the reprobation! What Olson (2011:151) proposes is that, in the light of overwhelming evidence that Christ died for the whole world, and on Calvinism's insistence on indiscriminate evangelism, Calvinists must concede to accepting the doctrine of universalism.

3.2.3.4 Is the call to salvation Genuine?

Berkouwer (1979:218) states that "We have seen that where election is confessed, there is also place for the preaching of the gospel", but he also admits that, "the doctrine of election, if understood in a specific manner, seems to make difficult or even quite impossible the task of ascertaining this connection".

Some Calvinists contend that the call to salvation is qualified in terms of the general call which all people receive who hear the gospel, and the effectual call, which only the elect receives. It is the latter that has the effect on the elect that they respond to the gospel in a positive way by either being enabled, or made willing. The non-elect may also experience the "common operations of the Spirit" which is not enough to save them. They "never truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved" (Walls and Dongell, 2004:168).

Schultz, (Olson, 2011:151) contends that these Calvinists cannot make a sincere universal offer of salvation (particularly to the non-elect), since, *according to their theology*, Christ *only* died for the elect. There is therefore, *according to their theology*, no salvation available for the non-elect. The offering of salvation by a Calvinist preacher (one holding to the TULIP system) would therefore be misleading and insincere at best and cruel and deceitful at worst. Olson (2011:151) contends that,

most, if not all, non-hyper Calvinists believe that not only the preacher but also God himself offers salvation to all as a "well meant" offer ... Surely God knows who the elect and non-elect are. Why would God, having that knowledge, offer salvation to those whom he intends to exclude and for whom Christ did not die?...if you believe that there are some in your audience who cannot be saved because Christ made no provision for their salvation, you cannot in all honesty preach that all may come to Christ through repentance and faith because Christ died for them. You have to tailor your offer and invitation to your theology and say something like this; 'If you are one of God's elect and if Christ died for you, you can respond by repentance and faith.'...insofar as the preacher believes in Limited Atonement he or she should join the hyper-Calvinists and not offer the gospel of salvation to everyone indiscriminately. Also...how can belief in Limited Atonement not hinder evangelism?

Van Genderen and Velema (2008:581) from the perspective of Reformed theology, holds that the call to salvation is universal and that, “It is in accordance with God’s good pleasure that the gospel is proclaimed to all nations and persons without distinction”, and that, “If the content of the call varied between the elect and the non-elect, its universal nature would be diminished”. They (2008:582,583) also asserts that, “We may offer Christ in the promise of the gospel...The call is an appeal coupled with a “command to repent and believe”. Van Genderen and Velema (2008:583) then draw the following conclusions from Matthew 22: 14 “many are called but few are chosen”:

1. Election neither limits nor emasculates the call.
2. The call is meant seriously. Rejection implies guilt.
3. The call does not coincide with election. In the parable of the sower and the seed, the call comes first. Election can only be inferred from the outcome.

Van Genderen and Velema (2008:584) give a brilliant explanation of the difference between the internal, and external call of the gospel, in stating that,

In its original meaning, this distinction does not imply a differing content of the call. It is not intended to contrast one type of call with another. There is only one call. It identifies a *twofold outcome* of one call. The Canons of Dordt refers to being called “earnestly” and “effectually”. *Vocatio interna* does not mean that the other call comes externally, and would therefore be less serious and effective. How could this be if Christ himself is the content of the call? The term *interna* means that something needs to happen inside the human heart before a positive reaction can take place. Consequently, the direct effect of the *vocatio interna* is regeneration.

Horton (2005:[3]) contends that God does not love the elect and the non elect *in the same way* when he asserts that “God loves the world and calls everyone in the world to Christ *outwardly* through the Gospel, and yet God loves the elect with a saving purpose and calls them by His Spirit *inwardly* through the same Gospel...” and that, “Both Arminians and hyper-Calvinists ignore crucial passages of Scripture, resolving the mystery in favor of the either-or: either election or the free offer of the Gospel”. In other words, “Election, as implied by Calvinists, excludes the free offer of salvation”.

3.2.3.5 The notion that God has two wills

Piper (2013: 53) holds that God unconditionally elects those who will be saved and others to be reprobated but still desires that all will be saved. He believes that God has *two wills* with regards to the damned. He promotes the idea that the full glory of God cannot be manifested unless the mercy and the wrath of God are also manifested. God desires to save all, but his will to save all is restrained by his desire to manifest his full glory.

The question arises if God's offer of salvation to all could be sincere in the light of his Unconditional Election of some to salvation, and others to reprobation? Piper (2010:26) holds that God could at any moment in time, act on any sinner, to such an extent that the sinner will willingly come to Christ and be saved. God could bestow his irresistible saving grace on any person at any time and transform the sinner into a saint.

If sinners had libertarian freedom, it would make sense that God could give a bona fide offer of salvation that some may reject. It also makes sense to say that God sincerely and compassionately desires all to be saved, and that He desires them all to accept his offer of grace. If sinners, on the other hand, do not have libertarian freedom to accept God's bona fide offer of grace, and God could save them, but decides not to do so, "there is no meaningful sense in which he desires their salvation" (Walls and Dongell, 2004:177).

3.2.3.6 Can the non-elect (reprobate) be saved?

The question that must be raised on this point is whether the non-elect can potentially be saved as the Confession suggests, but refuse to accept the grace offered to them? It would be inconsistent with other statements in the confession. Walls and Dongell states that: "It would be more accurate to say of the non-elect that 'they cannot truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved.' But the actual language of the confession obscures the hard truth at this point and suggests that the non-elect could come to Christ" (2004:168). Calvin, when describing the effectual call or special call, also gives the impression that the non-elect can be saved. He says, with regards to the special call, that God,

deigns for the most part to give to the believer alone, which by the inward illumination of the Spirit he causes the preached Word to dwell in their hearts. Yet sometimes he also causes those whom he illuminates only for a time to partake of it; then he justly forsakes them on account of their ungratefulness and strikes them with even greater blindness (Calvin, 1960:3.24.8).

If the non-elect could not be saved it poses a question about what they could be ungrateful for, and would then be punished with "even greater blindness". Walls and Dongell (2004:169) hold that "Calvin's language suggests a freedom and ability to respond that is incompatible with his other commitments". The above mentioned passage stands in contradiction to other

texts such as the Westminster confession and the “five points of Calvinism”. The Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF, 10: 1,2) states that,

All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased, in His appointed time, effectually to call, 215 by His Word and Spirit, 216 out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature to grace and salvation, by Jesus Christ; 217 enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God, 218 taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; 219 renewing their wills, and, by His almighty power, determining them to that which is good, 220 and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ: 221 yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace. 222 This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, 223 who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, 224 he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it. 225.

Three confessional statements compared

Calvin's Institutes	Westminster Confession	Five points of Calvinism
<i>Who can be saved?</i>		
“deigns <u>for the most part</u> to give to the believer alone,	“All those whom God has predestined unto life, and <u>those only</u> ,	On the contrary, God gives faith and repentance <u>to each individual whom He selected</u> . These acts are the result, not the cause of God's choice.
<i>The role of irresistible grace and perseverance</i>		
which by the inward illumination of the Spirit he causes the preached Word to dwell in their hearts. Yet sometimes he also causes <u>those whom he illuminates only for a time to partake of it</u> ;	“The effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything foreseen in <u>man</u> , who is altogether passive <u>therein</u> , until being <u>quickened and renewed</u> by the Holy Spirit,	<u>All those who were chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Spirit are eternally saved.</u> They are kept in faith by the power of Almighty God and thus persevere to the end. (Steele & Thomas, 1963:19).
<i>Man's responsibility, accountability, and subsequent judgement</i>		
<u>then he justly forsakes them on account of their ungratefulness and strikes them with even greater blindness</u> ” (Calvin, 1960:3.24.8).	he is thereby <u>enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it...</u>	His choice of particular sinners was <u>not based on any foreseen response or obedience on their part</u> , such as faith, repentance, etc. He is <u>not limited</u> in His work of <u>applying salvation</u> by man's will, <u>nor is He dependant on man's cooperation for success</u> (Steele & Thomas, 1963:19).

(Table: 2)

The table above indicates some very obvious and contradictory statements which may account for some of the variations in the theology of various Calvinist theologians.

3.2.3.7 A *bona fide* offer of salvation

Berkouwer (1979:133) admits that a very serious question fundamental to the Calvinistic interpretation of the doctrine of election exists with regard to the free and joyous offer of salvation. He holds that “the question is raised whether the gospel is really for us, and whether the promises of the gospel are directed at us, or whether we must first be assured regarding our election in a different way before we can appropriate them”. He further holds that, “It is clear that under these circumstances the preaching of the gospel loses its power, and man is in continuous uncertainty”.

Some contemporary Calvinist theologians convey the inconsistencies disguised in ambiguous and misleading language. Packer (1995:421) advocates that God's offer of salvation is a sincere *bona fide* offer which can be accepted by any person who believes on Him, and contends that,

Everyone in the Reformed mainstream will insist that Christ the Savior is freely offered – indeed freely offers himself – to sinners in and through the gospel; and that since God gives all free agency (that is voluntary decision making power) we are indeed answerable to him for what we do, first, about universal general revelation, and then about the law and gospel when as these are presented to us....But Calvinism at the same time affirms the total perversity, depravity, and inability of Fallen human beings, which results in them naturally and continually using their free agency to say no to God.

Packer calls this contradiction an “antinomy”. We should ask whether grace makes it possible for the non-elect to respond positively, or if everyone only (willingly) responds the way they are pre-determined to respond? Packer could only reconcile human freedom and determinism without contradicting himself, if he defined freedom in a compatibilist sense, *and* if he did not insist on using the term “*bona fide* offer”.

A *bona fide* offer implies that the elect, *as well as* the non-elect, are given an opportunity to come to salvation. We face an implicit contradiction that exists in Calvinist theology, in that God gives a *bona fide* offer of salvation to all persons to be saved – (which means that anyone who accepts the offer can actually be saved), while Calvinism holds that only the elect can accept the offer of salvation and be saved. Since all people are not elected; the

non-elect cannot accept the offer to be saved. The doctrine of limited atonement holds that salvation is limited to the elect.

Walls and Dongell (2004:171) concludes that, “The unvarnished truth for Reformed theology is that any sinner who is not elect simply cannot respond positively to the gospel”, and correctly asserts that,

Packer then faces a dilemma. On the one hand, if he believes the non-elect really could accept the offer of the gospel and be saved, then he is at odds with the Reformed teaching that no one can be saved apart from electing grace. On the other hand, if he doesn't believe the non-elect can truly respond to the preaching of the gospel and be saved, his insistence on a bona fide offer of salvation is hollow and misleading....We assume that Packer is not dishonest, therefore he is inconsistent.

Daane (1973:22) contends that, “Once one commits himself to the decree of decretal theology, it is theologically impossible for him to allow, justify, or explain preaching the gospel to all men”. The Reformed doctrine of election caused severe theological difficulties for Calvinists with regards to preaching the gospel, to the extent that it made the preaching of the gospel virtually impossible. Reformed theologians in seventeenth century Scotland also held that “the doctrine of election precluded the preaching of a gospel offer of salvation to all men”. The same problem surfaced in eighteenth century Netherland where “the identification of the elect became an indispensable condition for proper proclamation of the gospel”. The “gospel” could then only be preached to those who demonstrated the fruits of being the elect, or in other words, those who were already saved, and this defeated the purpose of the preaching of the good news of salvation. (Daane, 1973:22).

Daane (1973:22,23) comments that, “Curiously, this identification of a hearer as elect before he heard the gospel and without aid from it was not regarded as something forbidden by the warning against ‘vainly attempting to investigate the secret ways of the most high’ (Canons of Dordt, I, 14)”.

3.2.3.8 Limited Atonement in relation to God's character

Edwards, as in the case of Calvin does not try to justify the doctrine of Limited Atonement in terms of God's love for the world or God's loving character. He speaks only about God's justice and sovereignty. He argues that God can damn people to Hell after foreordaining (determining) their demise and rendering their sin certain (causing them to sin) and then

causing them to remain in that state without affecting His righteousness (Olson, 2011:113).
Edwards (1839:670) holds that,

When men are fallen and become sinful, God by his sovereignty has a right to determine about their redemption as he pleases. He has a right to determine whether he will redeem any or not. He might, if he had pleased, have left all to perish, or might have redeemed all. Or, he may redeem some, and leave others; and if he doth so, he may take whom he pleases, and leave whom he pleases.

Calvin (*Inst.* II, 3, 10) contends that God “does not move the will in such a manner as has been taught and believed for many ages – that is afterward in our choice either to obey or resist the motion - but by disposing it efficaciously”. Calvin holds that, the will of man is completely passive with regards to salvation. There is no choice involved – not even after regeneration. This doctrine as it was held by Calvin in its purest form ties the inability of man (total depravity) to the completed work of salvation (perseverance of the saints) through God’s work alone, with a passive human will (irresistible grace).

Walls and Dongell 2004:184,185) hold that,

Calvinists are particularly prone to slip into libertarian freedom in a way that is incompatible with their other theological commitments when they are accounting for unbelief or attempting to explain how God can make a bona fide offer of salvation to persons he has not elected to save. This suggests that a morally satisfactory theology requires a more principled commitment to libertarian freedom than they can consistently allow. Their very inconsistency indicates they recognize this at some level, though they haven’t fully acknowledged it...If libertarian freedom is rejected and Calvinists want to be consistent, they should face unflinchingly the implications of their position. They should follow Piper when he says the potter has absolute rights over the clay, and if God chooses not to save some persons it is not for us to understand but simply to adore. This position is more forthright than his unconvincing attempt to argue that God has deep compassion for persons he has consigned to damnation. Wright, who is more consistent and more straightforward than most Calvinists, puts the matter with unswerving honesty when he says, ‘God never had the slightest intention to save anyone. That is what the doctrine of election means in the first place: God chooses some but not all’.

Olson (2011:99) holds that, Calvinists have “clever but unconvincing explanations” of certain Scriptures that they claim support their view of predestination, but that their arguments are inconsistent and does not reflect the heart of God. He refers specifically to Piper who holds that,

God has ‘complex feelings and motives’ such as that he genuinely regrets that sin and evil has to be part of this world, genuinely wishes that all people will be saved, and is grieved when those he predestined to die and even suffer in hell for eternity for his glory experience that fate.

Is Piper saying that God predestines people to hell, for His glory, against His will? If God “genuinely wishes that all people will be saved” why does He not save them by His irresistible grace? Is God “forced” to predestine some people to hell, when He “genuinely wishes that all people will be saved”, because of His overwhelming need to display his wrath and glory? This need, that Piper claims God has to display his wrath and glory, makes God dependent on creation and stands in contradiction to Calvinist theology in general.

Boettner (Olson, 2011:114) argues that God’s act in reprobation was for the sole purpose of displaying his glory through his justice. Justice? How can it be seen as just when God determined people to sin “voluntarily” (meaning of course that they could not do otherwise), and then punishing them for it?

Boettner (1969:306) attempts to justify this doctrine (and saving God’s reputation) in quoting Warfield, who asserts that “God in his love saves as many of the guilty race of men as He can get the consent of His whole nature to save”. He tries to justify this obvious limitation in God’s action of redemption because he is of the opinion that God has to damn some to eternal Hell to display his glory. According to Olson (2011:116), Boettner implies that “God hates the non-elect and that is why he reprobates them”. Sproul seems painfully aware of this Calvinist dilemma but tries to sidestep this question by answering that he doesn’t know why, but that God “does not have to answer to our standards of fairness” (Olson 2011:117).

Piper goes so far as to claim that God is glorified even in sin, evil and suffering. (Olson, 2011:88). Olson relates an incident where he experienced a child dying an agonising death. He asks how it could possibly be morally plausible to say that God rendered the horrible suffering of this child certain to reflect his glory? (2011:88). Olson (2011:94) quotes Little saying that:

Piper carefully uses his words to say that in all the evil on this earth, God has a purpose: to make the glory of Christ shine more correctly...[A child’s] torturous death is part of his will. The position not only makes evil necessary to God, it makes God the only one morally responsible for evil .

Little criticises Piper’s extreme view of sovereignty by saying, “God must [according to Piper] create, allow sin and evil, redeem, and reject in order to fulfil the potential of his own self-glorification” (2011:94). God is, therefore, in Piper’s theology made dependant on the world and on evil to be glorified. God would be less than he is without the world and evil.

God's creation of the world, and his providence, is therefore necessary and not free. (Olson, 2011:94).

God's need to be glorified therefore overrides his love for his creation. God must, according to Calvinism limit his love, but he cannot limit his need to be glorified. Olson (2011:114) argues that it is actually the other way around! He holds that, "in the light of Christ's self emptying (Phil.2), God can limit his glory (power, majesty, sovereignty) but not his love (because God *is* love; see 1 John 4!)".

3.2.3.9 Calvinism makes God a respecter of persons

Calvin (*Inst.* III, 21, 5) describes predestination as,

the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. *All are not created on equal terms*, but *some are preordained* to eternal life, others *to eternal damnation*; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death.

From a Pentecostal perspective, it is hard to understand how the above mentioned statement can be reconciled with Scriptures such as Rom. 5:5-10, and even Calvin's own statement in his commentary on Mark 14:24 (1999:15) that, Christ died for the whole human race. Serious questions must be asked about the Old Testament strivings of the prophets to lead Israel back to God; the book of Hosea, and its illustration through the life of Hosea of a God who yearns for a relationship with the unfaithful Israel.

Reformed Theologian Geerhardus Vos (1862-1949)³⁵ seems to embrace this extreme view of determinism. He holds that,

the Scriptures do not leave any room for the opinion that at any point, either in the eternal decree or in its historical unfolding, God's love for those intended to become his people has been undifferentiated from his love for wider groups of humanity. Every formula that would efface or even tend to obscure this fundamental distinction ought to be at the outset rejected as unbiblical.

³⁵ "Geerhardus Johannes Vos was an American Calvinist theologian and one of the most distinguished representatives of the Princeton Theology. He is sometimes called the father of Reformed Biblical Theology" (Geerhardus Vos - Wikipedia, March 21, 2014).

Vos (Olinger, 2005:88, 89) states that, “The Scriptures do not assert that election and preterition are arbitrary decrees to the mind of God. All they insist upon is that the motives underlying them are inscrutable to us, and have nothing whatsoever to do with the worthiness or unworthiness of man”.

3.2.4 “I” - IRRESISTIBLE GRACE

- I. In addition to the outward general call to salvation which is made to everyone who hears the gospel, the Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call which inevitably brings them to salvation.
- II. The external call (which is made to all without distinction) can be, and often is, rejected; whereas the internal call (which is made only to the elect) cannot be rejected; it always results in conversion.
- III. By means of this special call the Spirit irresistibly draws sinners to Christ.
- IV. He is not limited in His work of applying salvation by man’s will, nor is He dependant on man’s cooperation for success.
- V. The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ.
- VI. God’s grace, therefore, is invincible; it never fails to result in the salvation of those to whom it is extended (Steele & Thomas, 1963:18).

3.2.4.1 Irresistible Grace or Prevenient Grace?

Calvinism holds that God’s grace is irresistible and effectual, and that this grace regenerates a person without any consent, or cooperation from his side. The regenerated person then receives repentance and faith as gifts from God. The belief that regeneration precedes faith and repentance is problematic on more than one level. It firstly implies that salvation is not by faith, since faith is only added as an afterthought. Secondly, it is inconsistent with Scripture such as John 3:18 (LITV) that implies human responsibility to believe, as it says, “The *one* believing into Him is not condemned; but the one not believing has already been condemned, for he has not believed into the name of the only begotten Son of God.” Thirdly, regeneration in Scripture, always implies salvation. In other words, regeneration is a synonym for salvation and where regeneration is mentioned, salvation is assumed, complete in all its aspects (Möller, 1997:97).

Peterson and Williams (2004:185) hold that the term “irresistible grace” was coined by Arminians, and often leads to the idea that God “grabs poor sinners by the scruff of the neck and forces them to believe”. This is a caricature of this doctrine. They hold that sinners who are touched by God’s grace willingly believe (if they are part of the elect) and the non elect can and will resist this grace of God (which is not offered to them as non-elect). How the

reprobate can resist something (the grace) that is not offered to them remains to be answered. They also hold that, “God’s effective calling of his people testifies to irresistible grace” and “The effective calling of God’s people are not in doubt. And that means that grace is finally irresistible” (Peterson and Williams, 2004:187). Geisler (1986:64) holds that, “since Augustine believed that heretics could be coerced to believe against their free choice, he saw no problem in God doing the same for the elect”.

In their defence of limited atonement, Peterson and Williams (2004:212, 213) admit that John 3:16 cannot possibly apply to the elect only and agree with Arminians that this scripture and others like it speaks of God’s *universal* love for the world. They do, however, attempt to make a distinction between God’s *universal* love for the world and his *special* love for the elect. Peterson and Williams (2004:212, 213) admit that they cannot explain how God can “love all persons savingly in one sense and only love some savingly in another sense”. They assert that “we would rather have an imperfect theology and be faithful to the whole witness of scripture than to mute the voice of some texts as Calvinists have sometimes done” (John 3:16 and similar passages). Peterson and Williams (2004:212) quote Carson in his defence of limited atonement,

If the love of God is exclusively portrayed as an inviting, yearning, sinner seeking, rather lovesick passion, we may strengthen the hands of Arminians, semi-Pelagians, Pelagians, and those more interested in God’s inner emotional life than his justice and glory, but the cost will be massive. There is some truth in this picture of God, as we shall see, some glorious truth. Made absolute, however, it only treats complementary texts as if they were not there, but it steals God’s sovereignty from him and our security from us.

In a desperate attempt to defend their definition of God’s sovereignty, even to the point of distorting the Biblical image of God’s character, many Calvinists agree with Hoeksema that,

God loves the elect because they are righteous in Christ; he hates the reprobate because they are sinners. The elect alone are the object of grace; for them alone the gospel is good news. For the reprobate God has no blessing at all, but only an eternal hatred...The gospel is never an offer of salvation-neither to the elect nor to the reprobate...The preaching of the gospel...does not offer but actualizes the salvation of the elect – and no less the damnation of the reprobate (Daane, 1973:24).

Hoeksema (Daane, 1973:25) contends that, “in the preaching of the gospel God makes no offers to man, presents no conditions for human acceptance and fulfilment. Daane (1973:28) asserts that, “Hoeksema brought election and reprobation into the pulpit and in the process, theologically speaking, lost the gospel and came up with a form of gospel that the pulpit could not preach”.

Sproul (Olson, 2011:161,162) argues that justification cannot be considered to be by grace alone if a person would contribute to salvation by giving God permission to work in their lives.

He contends that,

In the Reformation view, the work of regeneration is performed by God, and by him alone. The sinner is completely passive in receiving this action. Regeneration is an example of operative grace. Any cooperation we display toward God occurs only after the work of regeneration has been completed.

Olson (2011:162) argues that Sproul has no grounds to call this “the Reformation view”, since while Luther expressed this view in his response to Erasmus, Melancton, Hubmaier, and Simons supported a synergistic view. Olson criticises Sproul for pitching his monergistic view as the only possible Protestant view, and labelling all others as being Roman Catholic. He says that it is “misleading at best and disingenuous at worst”.

Peterson and Williams (2004:167) interprets God’s “drawing” of men to Christ in John 6:35 as a work of God where men “are caught in a net” and drawn without any other option. They (2004:167) hold that, Wesley’s idea of drawing grace is a work of the Holy Spirit, as “a light attracting a moth”. The difference being mainly that in Calvinism, man’s will is inactive, where in Arminianism, men come willingly.

Peterson and Williams (2004:168) argue, from their interpretation of 1 Cor. 2:14, that unsaved people cannot understand, and therefore, believe the gospel, due to them not having the Spirit of God. They contend that, “The saving grace of God does not nullify inability in order to grant all sinners free will. Instead, God’s grace enlightens sinners, with the result that they believe and know Christ...God’s sovereign grace effectively overcomes the inability of many sinners”. In other words, God saves *some* sinners unconditionally, in the same way that he passes others by, unconditionally. This idea corresponds with what is portrayed by the Canons of Dordt.

It is interesting to note Augustine’s interpretation of John 6:65, where he allows the will of man to be the deciding factor. Clarke (2010) gives us this insightful quote, where Augustine asserts that, “it was the sole fault of these disciples that they did not believe, and were saved. *Quare non Poterant credere, si a me quaeratur, cito respondeo, quia Nolebant*. If I be asked why these could not believe, I immediately answer, because they Would Not. Aug. Tract. 53, in Joan”. If Augustine’s theology could be judged on this statement alone, we could easily assume that he was an Arminian, and not the real father of Calvinism.

3.2.4.2 Grace: a gift imposed or freely received?

Calvinism (Steele & Thomas, 1963:16) teaches that, “it takes much more than the Spirit’s assistance to bring a sinner to Christ - it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature”. It teaches that a person is completely passive and that God does all the work regarding salvation. Sproul (1986:121) is adamant that God does not give an invitation to salvation. He asserts that “He (God) creates spiritual life within us. When he calls something into being, it comes into being. The inward call of God is as powerful and effective as his call to create the world. God did *not invite the world* into existence” (emphasis added).

Calvinists and Arminians agree that sinners can be saved by the grace of God alone. The contested issue is, however, whether it is a gift imposed (Calvinism), or whether it is a gift freely received (Arminianism). Peterson and Williams (2004:134) hold that “the central point of contention between the Calvinists and the early Arminians was whether election is unconditional or conditional upon human acceptance of the gospel, whether salvation is to be understood monergistically...or synergistically”. They suggest that all other disputes were precipitated by this assumption.

Calvinists hold that salvation is God’s work alone, without any human co-operation (monergism) (Olson, 2001:16). Arminians believe that, while salvation is by grace alone, the application of salvation can only be appropriated by free choice in the libertarian sense, to cooperate with God’s grace and to freely accept of the gift of salvation by faith in the atoning work of Christ (synergism).

Bryson (2004:150) describes one of the reasons why Calvinists do not believe that salvation is conditional upon the faith of the penitent sinner, in saying that,

Atonement in the Calvinist sense “inherently saves.” In this view, the elect are actually saved at the time Christ died to save them. The rest is just a formality, adding nothing necessary to the salvation process. Faith, and everything else that appears to be required of the elect, are already provided for the elect by the very fact of Christ’s atoning work on their behalf. The Calvinist dismisses even the possibility that God could, much less would, provide forgiveness of sins on the condition that the sinner trusts the sin-bearer for the salvation offered through His sacrifice for sin on the cross. In doing so, the Calvinist must dismiss the very language in which God communicates

the meaning of the cross and how it is we can receive what He offers us, by virtue of Christ and His death on our behalf.

Sproul quoted by Olson (2001:160) defines Irresistible Grace in saying that, “God unilaterally and monergistically does for us what we cannot do for ourselves”, while Meeter, (quoted by Olson, 2011:156) defines the Calvinistic doctrine of Irresistible Grace as follows:

One might say, God planned salvation and he earned it in Christ. Now the choice of acceptance or rejection is mine alone. In a sense it is so. But who causes a Christian to accept Christ? “For we are all gone astray. There is none that seeketh after God.” So Christ sends the Holy Spirit into our stubborn hearts, regenerates us, and puts faith and love to God there, as well as new ambitions and desires. This he does with irresistible power – not, as the Arminians say, if we let him. We only work out our own salvation because it is God that worketh in us....Thus, the entire work of redemption in its essentials is the work of God. God the Father planned it. And God the Holy Spirit applies it, regenerating heart and life.

What needs to be said is that, according to Calvinism, God sovereignly and arbitrarily chose to create some people who would be saved and created some who would be eternally damned for his own glory. God’s irresistible grace is, therefore, applied to the elect only, whom He predestinated to eternal life (without their knowledge or consent) and that He withholds salvation from the reprobate (without their knowledge). THEN, He sent Christ to die for *only* those he predestined to save.

There is no conviction (of the Holy Spirit) for sin, and subsequently no sense of the need for a Saviour, a desperate longing to be saved from sin, no remorse for a sinful life, and a wilful decision to turn from darkness to light. No, God effects regeneration an, gives faith and repentance (which is, superfluous if it *follows* regeneration) to the elect. There is no acceptance or rejection of Christ, since God already made the unilateral, executive decision for both the elect and the reprobate. This is especially interesting in the light of Scriptures such as John 16:9, which states that the Holy Spirit convicts those of sin who do not believe in Christ. (This is not possible in Calvinism since the sinner is dead deaf and blind to the things of God.)

Olson (2011:157) quotes Calvin, from his *Institutes of Christian Religion*, where he says that God, when He,

shines with the light of His word upon the undeserving, he thereby shows a sufficient free proof of his free goodness. Here, then, God’s boundless goodness is already manifesting itself but not to the salvation of all; for a heavier judgment remains upon the wicked, because they reject the testimony of God’s love. And God also, to show forth his glory, withdraws the effectual working of the Spirit from them.

Olson interjects here by saying that Calvin made clear that the reprobate were predestined to reject “the testimony of God’s love”. Non Calvinists object to monergism because it ultimately does damage to God’s reputation as good and loving when it implies that God the causes of the reprobates’ unbelief and damnation. It requires God to deliberately withhold his grace from people created in his image, and it holds that God deliberately damns people to an eternity of suffering for the need to be glorified (Olson 2011:158).

Steele and Thomas (1963:48) define the doctrine of Irresistible Grace in saying that,

election and redemption - do not complete the work of salvation, because included in God’s plan for recovering sinners is the renewing work of the Holy Spirit by which the benefits of Christ’s obedience and death are applied to the elect. It is with this phase of salvation (its application by the Spirit) that the doctrine of Irresistible or Efficacious Grace is concerned. Simply stated, this doctrine asserts that the Holy Spirit never fails to bring to salvation those sinners whom He personally calls to Christ. He inevitably applies salvation to every sinner whom He intends to save, and it is His intention to save all the elect.

The gospel invitation extends a call to everyone who hears its message. It invites all men without distinction to drink freely of the water of life and live. It promises salvation to all who repent and believe. But this outward call, extended to the elect and non-elect alike, will not bring sinners to Christ. Why? Because men are by nature dead in sin and under its power. They are of themselves unable and unwilling to forsake their evil ways and to turn to Christ for mercy. Consequently, the unregenerate will not respond to the gospel call to repentance and faith...Such an act of faith and submission is contrary to the lost man’s nature.

How can Calvinists speak of “an invitation to sinners” if they believe that these sinners are “blind, deaf and dead” and are unable to respond? What is meant by the term “invitation”? Steele and Thomas (1963:48) hold that, “The gospel invitation extends a call to everyone who **hears** its message” while Calvinism holds that sinners are (among other things), *deaf*.

Calvinism, therefore, implies that the gospel “call” is wasted on deaf people who cannot respond. Did Jesus not know that, when He in John 7:37 (EMTV) called out, “...“If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink....”, or when He lamented over Jerusalem, saying, Mat. 23:37 (EMTV), “...How often would I have gathered your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, **but you were not willing!**” (Emphasis mine).

Steele and Thomas through the contradicting statements above, prove how much the doctrine of total depravity influences the rest of TULIP. How can any honest preacher extend an invitation of salvation to “all men without distinction to drink freely of the water of life and live”, when “the unregenerate will not [cannot] respond to the gospel call to repentance and faith”?

Boettner (quoted by Olson, 2011:159) holds that election to salvation is unconditional, and repentance and faith, are gifts of God to the elect. God can therefore save anyone, but “for reasons that have been only partially revealed, He leaves many impenitent.” He states that, the free agency of the sinner is not violated, and then says that, “the elect are so influenced by divine power that their coming is an act of voluntary choice” (Olson, 2011:159).

Their “voluntary choice” in this context (albeit it can only be possible in a compatibilist sense) does not make any logical sense when unconditional, monergistic, and unilateral “election has already produced salvation”. When this “voluntary choice” is a consequence of election it has no significance. Logic dictates that, in the light of the above mentioned arguments, monergism circumvents and ignores the sinners’ faculty of free choice completely. Why do Calvinists say that “their [the sinners] coming is an act of voluntary choice”, when the logical definition of monergism and the Calvinistic doctrine of Irresistible Grace denies the sinner that opportunity of choice? Palmer (Olson, 2011:160) adds to the confusion by asserting that,

Although it is true that none would be saved were it not for the Irresistible Grace of God, no one may ever fall into the rationalistic trap of saying that he has nothing to do. He may not reason that since all depends on the Holy Spirit, he does not need to believe; or that he must simply wait for the Spirit to move him, and there is nothing that he can do to be saved....If you do [believe], thank God for causing you to do so.

Olson (2011:160) deducts from the above statement by Palmer, that God, according to Calvinism, “‘causes’ the elect person to believe, and we are forbidden to suggest that it is in any way an act of free will. On the other hand, we are forbidden to suggest there is nothing a person can do to be saved. These ideas are difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile. It is therefore understandable that some Arminians argue that, “according to Calvinists it is not Christ and his historical work that saves, but rather salvation is a product of an impersonal decree lost in the mists of eternity” (Peterson and Williams, 2004:113).

3.2.4.3 Irresistible Grace robs us from a personal relationship with God

Vincent Brümmer (Olson, 2011:169), a Dutch philosopher-theologian, criticizes the character of the Calvinistic notion and heart of the doctrine of salvation. He places it in perspective when he compares it with the character of the doctrine of salvation as advanced by most Evangelical theologians,

It strikes me that the difficulties here have their source in the fact that the Dordt theologians did not view human salvation in terms of a personal relationship with God but in terms of a reborn condition in us. The only question that concerns the cause of this condition: is it God or us, grace or human will?

Brümmer (Olson, 2011:168) criticizes Irresistible Grace from the point that it robs us from a personal relationship with God. He asserts that, “God cannot bring about our choice without it ceasing to be ours...for this reason the doctrine of factual irresistibility excludes a personal relationship between God and human persons”. He argues that a personal relationship requires mutuality, implying a resistible free response from both parties as well as free acts toward each other. He further holds that when a person acts without freedom of will and the ability to resist, the “act” is merely an “event” and does not qualify as an act. Brümmer makes a distinction between symmetrical relationships and causal relationships. Personal relationships must be symmetrical, which requires initiative (from both parties), free will, and the factual possibility to say “no”. In a causal relationship, there is only one initiator, and without the freedom and ability to say “no” the other person becomes an object of manipulation. A causal relationship is not a personal relationship and the possibility of a personal relationship between God and man is, therefore, excluded by the doctrine of factual irresistibility. Salvation must include both grace and human (libertarian) free will, and not a mere causal event as understood by Calvinists (Olson, 2011:168).

The focus of Calvinist theologians is so strongly fixed on protecting and propagating the sovereignty of God, that the God portrayed by Calvinist theology seems too distant and indifferent to be the same God who stood in relationship with Adam before the Fall.

3.2.4.4 Calvinism ignores the possibility of an un-coerced human response

Calvinism’s definition of God’s sovereignty leans strongly on its interpretation of God’s perfection. In order for God’s power and will to be perfectly enacted, human beings cannot possibly have a will that is undetermined by God. Morris coined the term “perfect-being theology”. It implies that a theology is built up from the premise that God is perfect. The definition that is lent to the term “perfect” means that:

- God must be in control and
- must determine every detail of reality.
- God’s will is perfect and because God is perfect and He can never change, that
- human action can therefore not influence God’s decisions or actions.

This view of God's sovereignty does not make any allowance for humans to be moral agents. The basis of this argument comes from Plato who argued that any changes in a perfect God would by default render God imperfect. This theory does not allow for the divine incarnation (Walls and Dongell, 2004:58). Walls and Dongell (2004:59) hold that, "Plato concluded that God does not love, since love implies a lack of perfect self satisfaction. God's inner perfection, furthermore can experience neither joy nor sorrow, since these involve change and imperfection..." and they caution, in the light of Plato's assumption, that, "Given only the abstract principle of perfection, we can reasonably deliver a God quite unlike the loving and redeeming Father revealed by the incarnate Son.

The risk of building a theology based solely on an abstract principle is clearly evident from the above mentioned example. Lemke (Olson, 2011:164,165) refers to the passage where Jesus calls out to Jerusalem, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *you* who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often would I have gathered your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!" (Mat 23:37 EMTV), and asserts that, if the Calvinist interpretation of this Scripture was correct, "Jesus' lament would have been over God's hardness of heart", and "If Jesus believed in Irresistible Grace...His apparent lament over Jerusalem would have been just a disingenuous act, a cynical show because he knew that God had not and would not give these lost persons the necessary conditions for their salvation." If Jesus really wanted them to be saved, why did he not just use his Irresistible Grace to draw them to himself? If they (as reprobates) were not destined to be saved, why would Jesus lament over them, if it was for the glory of God, and in God's perfect counsel, that they were doomed to everlasting perdition?

3.2.4.5 Faith is *not* the gift of God according to (Eph.2:8)

Calvinism holds that faith is a gift that is given *after* God unilaterally regenerates a person and that God, through divine sovereignty, withholds this gift from the non-elect while graciously extending it to the elect. Faith is therefore, according to Calvinists, a result of divine causation.³⁶

³⁶ A different viewpoint, that from a Reformed perspective with regard to Ephesians 2:8, is noted here. A detail understanding of the exegesis of Ephesians 2:8 can be found in authoritative commentaries such as those of Floor (1995:95-96, 98-99) and Hendriksen (1976:121-123). "[I]n a context in which the apostle places such tremendous stress on the fact that from start to finish man owes his salvation to God, to him alone, it would have been very strange, indeed, for him to say, 'Grace is God's part, faith ours'" (Hendriksen, p.121). Hendriksen deals extensively with the argument that the Greek word *touto* (this) is neuter and does not correspond with the gender of the word "faith" which is feminine. Hendriksen's answer is that grammarians agree that in the original the demonstrative (*this*), though neuter, by no means always corresponds in gender with its antecedent. He

also refers to scholars such as Grosheide, Calvin (in his commentary on Ephesians) A. Kuyper, Van Leeuwen, Greijdanus, Beza, Erasmus etc., who all agree that "faith is included in the gift". Finally, Hendriksen (p.123) concludes: "that the credit for the entire process of salvation must be given to God, so that man is deprived of every reason for boasting, which is exactly what Paul says in the words which now follow, namely, 9, 10 not of works, lest anyone should boast".

Floor (1995:99) states categorically by way of conclusion of his exegesis: "Het is beslist niet zo dat de genade Gods deel is en dat het geloof het aandeel van de mens zou zijn (Robertson). Zowel het behoud als het geloof waardoor dat behoud ontvangen wordt, is Gods gave. Paulus noemt het een geschenk (to dooron) van God. Zelfs het instrument waardoor de verlossing ontvangen wordt, is een gave van God".

In response to this Reformed exegesis, the following can be stated:

There is a very strong appeal from the Calvinistic interpretation of this Scripture that salvific faith is a gift from God. There are several arguments, as are evident from the exegesis of this Scripture above by Floor and Hendriksen in favour of this interpretation. However, as in the case of the contradicting interpretations of Ephesians 2:8, the outcome of the interpretation will always be influenced by the theological paradigm of the interpreter.

There are two very distinct aspects to the interpretation of Ephesians 2:8 which Floor and Hendriksen accentuates in their exegesis of this Scripture. The one aspect is that they claim that faith is a gift of God, and the other aspect they highlight is that they rightly assert that salvation is a work of God from the beginning to the end. Pentecostals (as well as some Calvinists) disagree with Hendriksen and Floor and contends that faith is not a gift of God, given subsequent to regeneration.

In spite of the difference of opinion (interpretation) of the fact that salvific faith is a gift or not, what remains uncontested, is the fact that *salvation* is a work of God from start to finish and that man cannot add anything that would account to merit. Pentecostal theologians (and Arminians) wholeheartedly agree with Hendriksen (1976:123) that, "the credit for the entire process of salvation must be given to God, so that man is deprived of every reason for boasting, which is exactly what Paul says in the words which now follow, namely, 9, 10 not of works, lest anyone should boast".

The Reformed theologians at the Synod of Dordt was concerned that the Remonstrants, by viewing faith as a condition could give faith a decisive functional meaning that would, like the Pelagians, describe the concept of faith in isolation from grace (Berkouwer, 1973:40). Machen (1925:172) however, gives a description of faith that would calm that concern while one can still maintain with this description, that faith is a condition for salvation and that we are saved by faith alone, when he rightly holds that,

The faith of man rightly conceived, can never stand in opposition to the completeness with which salvation depends on God; it can never mean that God does part, while God merely does the rest, for the simple reason that faith does not consist in doing something but in receiving something. To say that we are justified by faith is just another way of saying that we are justified not in slightest measure by ourselves, but simply and solely by the One in whom our faith is reposed.

Two different views in Calvinism

While evaluating the work of Floor and Hendriksen, it must be noted that their interpretation cannot simply be accepted as the standard Reformed view. There are Calvinist theologians who do not agree with Floor and Hendriksen about the role, and place, of faith in the *ordo salutis*. One group places faith (as a prerequisite) before regeneration and the other group places faith (as a gift) subsequent to regeneration.

Berkouwer (1977:29), as well as Van Genderen and Velema (2008:592), admit to a difference in Reformed terminology with regards to the subject of faith and grace. The older Reformation and confessional terminology, as was used by Calvin, has now developed into a different viewpoint. The older Reformational statements endorsed by Calvin hold that, "we are regenerated by faith", while the newer perspective is that, faith is a gift that follows regeneration (Berkouwer, 1977:29).

Van Genderen and Velema are not consistent about the order of salvation with regards to repentance, faith, and regeneration. They (2008:590) correctly assert that "In the light of the call, there is no regeneration without faith", but then contradict themselves by saying that "faith is a fruit of regeneration". To affirm both these statements is to defy logic.

Faith is a prerequisite for salvation

Pentecostal theologians agree with the Belgic Confession of Faith (BCF: XXIV) that salvific faith "is produced in man by the hearing of God's Word and by the work of the Holy Spirit, [in that man is enabled to believe, and that God then] regenerates him and makes him a 'new man', causing him to live a 'new life' and freeing him from the slavery of sin". This statement is based on the Scriptural description of the origin of faith as explained by the apostle Paul in Rom. 10:17 (EMTV) "So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by *the* word of God."

Pentecostals also affirm the definition of saving faith as set out in the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF, 11, xiv: 1-3) where it states:

1. The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word; by which also, and by the administration of the seals, prayer, and other means, it is increased and strengthened.
2. By this faith a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God himself speaking therein, and acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are, accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone, for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.
3. This faith, although it be different in degrees, and may be weak or strong yet it is in the least degree of it different in the kind or nature of it (as is all other saving grace) from the faith and common grace of temporary believers;

and therefore, though it may be many times assailed and weakened, yet it gets the victory, growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our faith.

Pentecostals agree with the order in which the WCF deals with these doctrines in that repentance and faith leads to salvation, and not *visa versa*. The only objection may be that the Bible nowhere speaks of any group of people who are elect, and not saved. Had this confession be written by a Pentecostal theologian, the word “elect” would have been replaced with the word “sinner”.

Pentecostals, therefore, agree with “the older Reformation and confessional terminology”, but object to “the later, more limited idea of regeneration”.

Faith is not work

The main gist of the (Reformed) argument that faith is a gift, is reliant on the premise that faith, if not a gift, must be a work that is meritorious to salvation. Spurgeon (1958:381) describes the relationship of faith to salvation in asserting that,

We are not saved merely because Christ died. The good news would be to us as rain upon Sahara, did not grace incline to penitence and prayer and faith...Salvation by grace is appropriated by faith. Grace is the fountain, but faith is the channel. Grace is the lifeline, but faith is the hand that clutches it.

Hoener (2014:526) in agreement with Spurgeon that faith is not “a work”, holds that,

A good illustration of this is the life of Abraham whereby his faith (ἡ πίστις αὐτοῦ) was reckoned for righteousness (Rom 4:5). Notice, it was Abraham’s own (αὐτοῦ) faith that gave him a right standing. However, faith is never thought of as a work, for the preceding verse (v. 4) explicitly states that if a righteous stand before God were obtained by works, it would not be according to grace but according to obligation. Verse 5 continues by saying that it is to those who do not work but believe in the one who justifies the ungodly that their faith reckons to them a right standing. This is confirmed in the present context in Ephesians, for following the above statement Paul reinforces the idea that this salvation was not by means of any kind of works done by humans but solely by faith.

Salvation by faith alone (not by works)

Calvin, in his commentary on Ephesians 8:2 (2009:227) describes the meaning of this Scripture brilliantly, and Pentecostals agree with Calvin’s exegesis as he holds,

First, he [Paul] asserts, that the salvation of the Ephesians was entirely the work, the gracious work of God. But then they had obtained this grace by faith. On the one side, we must look at God ; and, on the other, to man. God declares that he owes us nothing ; so that salvation is not a reward or recompense, but unmixed grace. The next question is, in what way do men receive that salvation that is offered to them by the hand of God? The answer is, *by faith* ; and hence he concludes that nothing connected with it is our own. If on the part of God, it is grace alone, and if we bring nothing but faith, which strips us of all commendation, it follows that salvation does not come from us.

Calvin (2009:228) then emphatically and rightly declares that , “...righteousness comes to us from the mercy of God alone, - is offered to us in Christ by the gospel, and is received by faith alone, without the merit of works”, and then continues to say (2009:228-229) that, “Many persons restrict the word gift to faith alone. But Paul is only repeating in other words the former sentiment. His meaning is, not that faith is the gift of God, but that salvation is given to us by God, or, that we obtain it by the gift of God”.

It can be understood from Calvin’s commentary above, that he does not perceive faith to be “a work of man”, and that it holds no merit in its own, but that it is essential as a channel through which the gift of salvation is received. In that we receive this gift of God (salvation) by faith, (*believing*) is a condition for salvation, yet, without merit. Velema (1993:476) confirms that Calvin held that repentance and faith is a prerequisite for obtaining salvation.

Ephesians 8:2 cannot be interpreted outside of the context of the passage as a whole. In agreement with Calvin’s interpretation of Ephesians 8:2 (2009:228-229), Thielman (2013:286) holds that,

In various ways throughout the paragraph, Paul emphasizes that the salvation he has just described in 2:4–7 came entirely at God’s initiative and as a free gift. The vocabulary he uses brings out the utterly free nature of salvation: Paul describes it as an act of “grace” (χάρις, *charis*) and as a “gift” (δῶρον, *dōron*). It is received “through faith” (διὰ πίστεως, *diapistēōs*), and for Paul, this means that no meritorious human effort was involved.

The “gift” that Paul refers to, is therefore, “salvation” received through faith, and not “faith” received through regeneration.

Hoehner (2014:524) also agrees with Thielman that “salvation is truly of God’s grace and does not originate or result from the effort of humans” and describes the role of faith in this scripture in asserting that, “the addition of the words διὰ πίστεως, ‘through faith,’ denote the subjective means by which one is saved”. Hoehner (2014:524) further contends that,

Paul expresses the means of faith twenty-one times by ἐκ πίστεως (Rom 1:17bis; 3:26, 30; 4:16bis; 5:1; 9:30, 32; 10:6; 14:23bis; Gal 2:16; 3:7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 22, 24; 5:5) and fourteen times by διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως (Rom 3:22, 25, 30, 31; 2 Cor 5:7; Gal 2:16; 3:14, 26; Eph 2:8; 3:12, 17; Phil 3:9; Col 2:12; 2 Tim 3:15).

Hoehner (2014:525, 526) from his exegesis of Ephesians 8:2, makes a very important distinction between the objective and subjective aspects of salvation when he asserts that, “‘grace’ is the objective cause or basis of salvation, ‘through faith’ is the subjective means by which one is saved”. He then, in agreement with the Pentecostal view holds that, “This is important, for the salvation that was purchased by Christ’s death is universal in its provision, but it is not universal in its application. One is not automatically saved because Christ died, but one is saved when one puts trust in God’s gracious provision”.

Faith as a prerequisite for salvation

One very clear distinction between the Pentecostal and Reformed perspectives on salvific faith (faith as it relates to salvation) is that, from the Pentecostal perspective, one must believe to be saved (regenerated), while from the Reformed perspective, one must be saved (regenerated) to believe. In other words, Pentecostals hold, with Calvin (2009:227), that faith is a condition for regeneration, and (some) Calvinists, such as Sproul (1986:72, 73), imply that regeneration is a condition for (receiving) faith.

Faith is not a gift

While all Calvinists believe that salvation is a gift of God, without human merit and by grace alone as a complete and sovereign work of God, it is difficult to understand how these Calvinists claim that salvation is "by faith alone", if it is a gift of God subsequent to regeneration.

When faith is described or interpreted as being "a gift", it is described as an object. Salvific faith in the Scriptures is never a "gift". Where the Bible speaks about faith in relation to salvation, it is never an object or a noun, but it is a verb, salvific faith is an act. It is an act of obedience to a command. Tillich (1957:10) rightly asserts that, "There is no faith without a content toward it is directed. There is always something meant in the act of faith. And there is no way of having the content of faith except in the act of faith".

There is no logical way that faith, as it relates to salvation in the Scriptures, can be interpreted as a gift. The concept of salvific faith always implies helplessness on the side of man, an absolute surrender to the will of God, and an unconditional act of placing one's trust in God. Salvific faith cannot stand in isolation from God's grace. The very concept of Christian faith implies a hope, reliance and a dependency on God who is the Saviour, Healer, and source of life for the one who believes.

Whitelaw, (1958:312) in describing faith as a prerequisite for salvation, contends that,

Men everywhere are invited to repent and be converted, that their sins may be blotted out (Acts 3:19). Nothing more is required of men to be freely and fully justified from all their transgressions than faith in the propitiation of the cross (Rom. 3:25) ; and nothing will shut a sinner out from forgiveness except refusal to believe. (John 3:36).

Pentecostal theologians such as Möller (1997:123), hold that, although faith is a condition for salvation (regeneration), "The call to man to believe is accompanied by the grace which enables him to believe". Faith is, therefore, not a work of man, but it is a condition for salvation that precipitates regeneration, and it is not simply a gift of God subsequent to regeneration. Möller (1997:123) in agreement with Calvin's interpretation of Eph. 2:8, holds that, "The preaching of the gospel should reach the hearer in such a way that he becomes conscious that he is being addressed by God. It is this working of the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the gospel to which man must respond to achieve true faith".

Faith is, therefore, not simply a natural ability of man, nor a "force" at his disposal to wrestle salvation from the hand of God. It is a work of grace and the outworking of the hearing of the gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of man that makes saving faith possible. In this context, we must concede that the ability to believe is a gift of God to man, but still insist that the act of believing, the exercise of faith, is a volitional and an essential response of man in order to appropriate the gift of salvation.

Pentecostals understand that the central biblical presupposition for salvation is "faith" (Eph. 2.8-9). Hankins (2011:99,100) rightly holds that,

Faith captures the fundamentally relational nature of NT soteriology. "Justification by faith," which lies at the center of Protestant soteriological identity, speaks of the initiating and sustaining activity of God in bringing an individual into right relationship with Himself and the necessity of the individual's response for God's justifying work to be actualized in his life. While the totality of justification has numerous aspects (past, present, future, spiritual, physical, individual, moral, social, ecclesiological, cosmic, etc.), it does not happen without personal faith. Faith has a variety of nuances as well, but, ultimately, it is an act of the will that belongs to the believer. It is not a "gift" God gives to some and not others. When we call people to salvation, we emphasize the biblical concept of faith, not election... faith has never been something that occurs without our willing. We deny that people's eternal destinies have been fixed without respect to a free-response of repentance and faith. We preach that the decision of each individual is both possible and necessary for salvation...

Christ is the central object of belief. He is believed as the mediator of covenant relationship, the full expression of the kingdom of God, eternal life, God's ultimate purpose for everyone and for the cosmos (John 3:16). We have no interest in a series of extrabiblical covenants created to bolster a soteriology that does not take seriously the necessity of personal faith as an expression of free-will. In our preaching, we do not burden people with the calculus of covenants of works, grace, and redemption. We do not invite people to believe in Calvinism or Arminianism. We offer Christ alone, the only hope of Adam, Noah, Abraham, the Patriarchs, Moses, David, Israel, and the whole of humankind. His perfect life, substitutionary death, and victorious resurrection comprise the object of confession and belief that is sufficient to save (John 14:6, Rom. 10.9-10).

Because Pentecostals, assert that faith is a prerequisite for regeneration (and not the result), it is possible for them, to present the gospel as a free offer of salvation (gift) to all who will believe (prerequisite).

In conclusion

It can be categorically stated that Pentecostals believe that,

1. Salvation is the work of God from start to finish (Eph 2:8).
2. Faith is not a natural ability of man (Möller, 1997:123).
3. Faith is made possible by the outworking of the hearing of the gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of man (Rom. 10:17).
4. The act of faith (believing) is a prerequisite for salvation (Rom. 3:28; Rom. 5:2; Gal. 2:16; Gal. 3: 8, 11, 22, 23; Eph. 2:8).
5. Believing is not a work and in the words of Calvin (2009:227), "...righteousness comes to us from the mercy of God alone, - is offered to us in Christ by the gospel, and is received by faith alone, without the merit of works".

Calvinists base their doctrine on faith on Scriptures such as Eph.2:8 "...through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God" (KJV).³⁷ Walls and Dongell (2004:56), Picirilli (2002:165), and Wuest (1961:451) cautions us not to depend solely on the English translation of the Bible, but to also study the Greek text in order to fully comprehend the meaning of this Scripture.

Walls and Dongell (2004:56) assert that the terms, (*faith, this, it*) that seems so clearly linked in English are not so neatly connected in Greek. The English ear depends largely on word order for making sense of language, and so automatically presumes that *this* (which "is not from yourselves") must obviously refer back to *faith*, since *faith* immediately precedes *this* in the word order of the text. But Greek, being an inflected language, actually depends on "tags" that are attached to words for guiding the reader. If our writer had desired readers to connect *faith* directly to *this*, these two words should have matched each other as grammatically feminine. We find, however, that "this" being neuter in gender, likely points us back to several words earlier-to the idea of salvation expressed by the verb. Bryson (2004:192) explains, "Faith in Christ does not regenerate or justify the spiritually dead sinner—God does. God, however, *only* and *always* regenerates and justifies a lost person *when* the lost person believes in His Son".

Picirilly (2002:165) holds that, we should read the text with a different line of connections as follows: "*For by grace* [instrumental case, *tē chariti*, by the instrumentality of grace] *you have been saved* [periphrastic perfect, looking at the present condition that flows from the prior act], *through faith* [*dia* plus the genitive, intermediate agency]; *and this* [neuter *touto*] *not of you, the gift of God; not of works, in order that one may not boast.*"

Wuest (1961:451) concurs with Picirilly as he also translates Eph. 2:8, 9 from the Greek text saying, "and this [salvation] is not from you as a source; of God it is the gift, not from a source of works, in order that no one might boast; for we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus with a view to good works which God prepared beforehand in order that within their sphere we may order our behavior". Jesus himself, in John 5:38-40 (EMTV) says,

But you do not have His word abiding in you, because *Him* whom He sent, Him ***you do not believe***. (39) You search the Scriptures, because you think *that* in them you have eternal life;

and these are they which testify about Me. (40) But you are **unwilling** to come to Me, so that you may have life (*emphasis added*)

Jesus highlights the importance of personal faith as a *condition* for salvation. It is obvious from the plain reading of the text that Jesus expected His audience to believe due to His criticism of their unbelief. It is also clear from the context of this Scripture, that this faith was not granted as a “package deal” for certain people and withheld from others. This Scripture in the words of the Master implies personal responsibility, and therefore, the inherent ability for the hearers of this message, to believe.

The following Scriptures convey a similar message, implying personal ability, responsibility, and a required willingness on the part of the penitent, to believe as a condition for salvation:

- John 6:35, 36 (EMTV) “And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. **He who comes** to Me shall never hunger, and **he who believes** in Me shall never thirst. (36) But I told you that you have both seen Me and **you do not believe**” (*emphasis mine*).
- John 6:40 (EMTV) “And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and **believes in Him may have eternal life**; and I will raise him up at the last day” (*emphasis mine*).
- John 6:47 (EMTV) “Most assuredly I say to you, **he who believes in Me has eternal life**” (*emphasis mine*).
- John 6:51 (EMTV) “I am the living bread which came down from heaven. **If anyone** eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world” (*emphasis mine*).
- John 6:53 (EMTV) “Then Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves’” (*emphasis mine*).
- John 6:54 (EMTV) “**Whoever** eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up in the last day” (*emphasis mine*).
- (Joh 6:56 EMTV) **He who eats** My flesh **and drinks** My blood abides in Me, and I in him (*emphasis mine*).
- Hebrews 4:7 (EMTV) “again He appoints a certain day, saying in David, “Today,” after such a time, just as it has been said: “Today, **if you will** hear His voice, **do not harden** your hearts” (*emphasis mine*).
- Acts 17:30 (EMTV) “So then these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now He **commands all men** everywhere **to repent**,” (*emphasis mine*).

- Romans 10:13-14 (EMTV) “For **“whosoever shall call** upon the name of the LORD **shall be saved.”** (14) How then shall they call on Him in whom they **have not believed?** And **how shall they believe** in Him of whom they have not heard? And **how shall they hear** apart from a preacher?” (emphasis mine).

Verses that are used by Calvinists to suggest that saving faith is a gift of God, are, 1 Cor. 12:9, that refers to faith as one of the gifts of the Spirit, which applies to someone who is already a Christian and can, therefore, not qualify as “saving” faith, and Gal. 5:22,23 which refers to the fruit produced in the lives of Christians, and can for the same reason not be seen as “saving” faith (Picirilly, 2002:165).

Walls and Dongell (2004:56) hold that, “Calvinists believe in Irresistible Grace without ignoring the Biblical data of successful human rebellion against God’s invitations.” Their argument is that those who rebel against God’s invitation have not been given grace by God to repent and be saved, simply because they were not elected to salvation. God unilaterally decided to withhold His saving grace from them. He truly loves the whole world, but chose to send some to everlasting perdition for His glory. Calvinists believe that, “When one resists God’s call, it is simply because God has chosen not to move the human will to respond appropriately. Furthermore, no human being can respond appropriately to any divine invitation or command unless God’s unilateral transforming action accompanies it” (Walls and Dongell, 2004:56). We must, therefore, conclude that it is God’s will (according to Calvinists) that some do not respond to His command and do not accept His invitation to eternal life.

3.2.5 Perseverance of the Saints

- I. All those who were chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Spirit are eternally saved. They are kept in faith by the power of Almighty God and thus persevere to the end (Steele & Thomas, 1963:19)

Peterson and Williams (2004:74-76) suggest that Arminians tend to ignore texts that refers to the preservation of the saints, while admitting that Calvinists sometimes ignores texts relating to apostasy. They argue that Arminians, when dealing with preservation passages, would firstly “appeal to features within the passages in an attempt to qualify the accent on

preservation". Secondly, Arminians would appeal to systematic theology "that is, drawing on the whole of scripture".

Calvinists refer to Rom 8:29-30 as a golden chain leading from Unconditional Election to eternal security of salvation. The elect are assured of salvation and final glorification. Romans 8:28-30 states that,

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Peterson and Williams (2004:75) disagree with Osborn's (Arminian) interpretation of Romans 8, that they say, contends that God's foreknowledge takes human response into account. It seems that they would like to interpret these scriptures on face value without properly considering the context of the passage, never mind "drawing on the whole of scripture". The very first verse of this chapter sets a qualification to the rest of chapter and the context in which the whole chapter must be evaluated. Romans 8:1 (KJV) says that, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, *who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*" (Italics added for emphasis). Considering the first verse, it seems that Osborn has solid Scriptural ground for his argument. The qualification that applies to this passage if considered in context, is "*who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*". Human responsibility is, therefore, a very important condition in this passage. It is simply bad hermeneutics to ignore the context of any scripture, especially if you build a doctrine on it.

Calvin (*Cat.*, 105,106) holds that forgiveness of sins is conditional, firstly, upon an association with the Church as body of Christ; and secondly upon a continued commitment to promoting (works) the Church with perseverance to the end, and an individual's witness that he/she remains a member of the Church. He therefore implies that perseverance with regards to salvation is also conditional for the same reasons, since a person whose sins is not forgiven, cannot possibly be saved.

Peterson and Williams (2004:67) use the example of Jesus' warning to Peter that Satan desired to "sift" him (Luke 22:31-32) to illustrate their understanding of perseverance. They suggest that the fact that Jesus told Peter that he prayed for him means that Christ intercedes for everybody in such a way that the elect cannot fall away. This is intriguing.

Steele & Thomas (1963:19) describe perseverance as “All those who were chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Spirit are eternally saved. They are kept in faith by the power of Almighty God and thus persevere to the end”. What Calvinists believe is that election starts an inevitable unstoppable process that necessarily leads to eternal salvation. If this is the case, why was Jesus concerned about Peter, if Peter was unconditionally elected for salvation?

Calvinism claims that “Election produces results, namely salvation” (Peterson and Williams, 2004:57). They hereby imply that salvation is a result of God’s unconditional, arbitrary choice not only without any human interaction, but also not contingent on any human action or human choice in the libertarian sense of the word. Calvinists claim that the elect choose Christ when they are “so influenced by divine power that their coming is an act of voluntary choice” (Olson, 2011:159). Arbitrary election, according to Calvinism, results in eternal security. If you are elected you are saved. Otherwise, you are unconditionally passed over simply *because* you are “elected” to be damned to hell. Eternal security of salvation therefore, primarily depends on the roll of the dice...”Are you arbitrarily chosen before creation or not?”

3.3 CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 3

In this chapter, the doctrine of election as held by Calvinists has been discussed. Calvinist theologians have a sincere desire to reconcile their theology with Scripture. They write many pages of arguments and explanations, but fail in some cases, simply because they have inherited confessional statements that are in certain aspects flawed by incorrect premises.

Some of these incorrect premises are that they assume that:

- The philosophical “decrees of God” determines every human action *in time*. In these instances, eternity is assumed to be a “time” before time.
- God is the author of sin (only taught, or implied, by some Calvinists).
- Man is so depraved that he does not have the ability to react to the call of salvation, even when aided by divine (prevenient) grace.
- Unconditional election, insofar as it implies unconditional reprobation.

- Faith is a gift from God. (See the discussion on Faith is *not* the gift of God according to Eph.2:8 and also footnote ³⁶ above).
- God deliberately withholds faith, and therefore, salvation from some people, excluding them from salvation.
- Regeneration precedes repentance and faith.

Olson (March 16, 2014) highlights one of the doctrines of Calvinism, that Pentecostals and Arminians find problematic, when he refers to the doctrine of reprobation. Calvinism implies, with regards to the doctrine of reprobation, that God deliberately passes over some people who He could just as easily have saved, and thereby condemns them to hell (for His glory). This doctrine stands in stark contrast to the revelation of the character of God in the Bible and in the person of Jesus Christ. The Bible teaches us that God is good but, with regards to the doctrine of reprobation, Olson (March 16, 2014) is correct to contend that, “There is no conceivable analogous human behavior that we would call ‘good.’ The very concept of ‘good’ rules out such behavior.”

Heyns (1992:207) makes a distinction between time and eternity and describes salvation from two perspectives, firstly from God’s perspective (election in eternity) and then man’s perspective, that of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. He holds that although “time”, in which we live, and “eternity”, in which God makes decisions and executes these decisions does not meet, God is active in time. He (1992:208) explains that God, from the perspective of eternity, begins with election (regarding the salvation of man). Man, from his perspective in time, cannot begin with election; he begins with faith in Jesus Christ, and concludes his election.

It is, however, still puzzling to a non-Calvinist to understand what Heyns means by saying that man begins with faith in Christ, when Calvinism teaches that faith, as a gift, is only extended to the elect, and that by irresistible grace. The Canons of Dordt (*COD* 1:6) states that “That some receive the gift of faith from God and others do not receive it, proceeds from God’s eternal decree”, and in (*COD* 1:15) it states that,

God, out of His sovereign, most just, irreprehensible, and unchangeable good pleasure, has decreed to leave in the common misery into which they have wilfully plunged themselves, and not to bestow upon them saving faith and the grace of conversion; but, permitting them in His just judgment to follow their own ways, at last, for the declaration of His justice, to condemn and punish them forever, not only on account of their unbelief, but also for all their other sins.

There also seem to be some inconsistencies in Calvinist theology with regards to God's determination of human choices. Walls and Dongell (2004:164), correctly hold that Calvinists can only claim consistency when, they explicitly qualify the choices they claim are determined by God. They must decide whether all choices are determined (according to their theology) or only those choices pertaining to salvation, and then clearly define the distinction. They must also acknowledge that choices (in Calvinist theology) can only be free in the compatibilist sense, which means that a person "willingly" does what he is causally determined (compelled) to do.

Calvinists believe that their choices are free, that God is not the author of sin, and yet, that all things stem from the eternal decree of God, which means that all things, all human decisions, and acts, are pre-determined by God. Calvinists such as Feinberg (1986:29) who holds a compatibilist or soft deterministic view of God's sovereignty to human responsibility and believes that *all* human actions are *causally determined*, but free. He describes this view by asserting that, "God includes whatever means are necessary to accomplish his ends in a way that avoids constraining the agent to do what is decreed". Sproul (2012) describes God's causal determination saying that, "God ordains all things that come to pass, He ordains not only the ends but also the means to those ends, and He works through all things to bring about His righteous purpose."

From Sproul's explanation of causal determination, it is evident that there is very little, if any, difference between "hard determinism" and "soft determinism". Soft determinism simply means that God causes certain circumstances that narrow an individual's choice down to what is decreed. The individual then "freely chooses" to do what God *determined* him to do, in the first place, simply because it is the only option. Human actions and choices are either determined, or they are not. When Calvinists hold to decretal theology and claim that God knows the future, simply because He determined every detail to come to pass, they must accept that their choices are pre-determined, and they are, therefore, not free. A conclusion to this point, it is appropriate that Calvin should have the final say, and he (*Inst.* III, 23, 6) holds that,

Now since the arrangement of all things are in the hands of God, since to him belongs the disposal of life and death, he arranges all things by his sovereign counsel, in such a way that individuals are born, who are doomed from the womb to certain death, and are to glorify him by their destruction.

Walls and Dongell (2004:165) have reason to suggest that inconsistencies in contemporary Reformed writings may be a reflection of confusion in the classical sources. They refer specifically to a passage in the Westminster Confession of Faith (*WCF*. 10.1) that claims that salvation takes place when God determines a person to be saved and this person is “made willing” by his grace. Article 10.2,4 uses the word “enabled”.

Walls and Dongell (2004:168) correctly argue that there is a significant difference in “being made willing” and “being enabled”. If someone is made willing, he has no option but to do that very thing which he is made willing to do, while enablement does not imply that the choice is determined. Enablement implies libertarian freedom, while the term “being made willing” can only be read in the compatibilist sense. The way that God’s interaction with the human will is described in the Westminster Confession, therefore, appears to be problematic.

Many of the arguments, Scriptures, and illustrations used give a lot of perspective on the doctrine of election as a very complicated theological system. This together with the “Five Points of Arminianism”, that will be discussed and evaluated in the next chapter, should provide an adequate foundation for the development of a Pentecostal definition of this doctrine.

CHAPTER 4

THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION AS ARTICULATED IN ARMINIANISM

4.1 INTRODUCTION AND DEMARCATION OF THE TERM “ARMINIANISM”

4.1.1 How is the doctrine of election described in Arminianism?

The most crucial question that can be asked with regard to the doctrine of election is, “How is salvation attained?” Steele and Thomas (1963:19) states that according to Arminianism,

Salvation is accomplished through the combined efforts of God (who takes the initiative) and man (who must respond) – man's response being the determining factor. God has provided salvation for everyone but His provision becomes effective only for those who, of their own free will, "choose" to cooperate with Him and accept His offer of grace. At the crucial point man's will plays a decisive role; thus man, not God, determines who will be the recipient of salvation.

Steel and Thomas (1963:19) are correct in their description of Arminianism where they say that, (according to Arminianism) "God has provided salvation for everyone but His provision becomes effective only for those who, of their own free will, "choose" to cooperate with Him and accept His offer of grace". In Arminianism, election is conditional; the condition for salvation is faith. Rom 10:9 (KJV) says, "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Olson (2006:30) highlights certain corresponding factors between Calvinism and Arminianism when he contends that, "Arminians [also] believe in the Trinity, the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ, the depravity of humanity due to the primeval Fall, salvation by grace alone through faith alone, and all other essential Protestant beliefs" and that "Justification as imputed righteousness is affirmed by classical Arminians following Arminius himself". It is, however, with regards to God's sovereignty over history and salvation and the doctrines of providence and predestination, where Arminians part ways with Calvinists. Pinnock, in Pecota (1995:330, 331) asserts that, "If power, control, and sovereignty are the preeminent divine qualities of God according to Calvinism, then love, sensitivity, and openness, as well as reliability and authority, are the essential qualities of God for Arminians".

Olson (2006, 38,39) gives a concise and accurate description of Arminianism when he says that, the essential difference between Calvinism and Arminianism centres around the three middle points of the TULIP system, namely, unconditional election, limited atonement, and irresistible grace. From these points several consequences follow. Arminians believe that God is "in charge" of nature and history, but unlike Calvinists, they do not believe that God determines every event. Arminians do not believe that God foreordained the Fall, that God through providing secret inclinations, controls humans, angels, or demons. They also do not believe that God "positively wills" or "renders certain" every minute detail of every event that takes place or that God determines evil men and woman to do evil things.

Peterson and Williams (2004:15) holds that while Wesley's theology played a significant role in the eighteenth century; H. Orton Wiley's *Christian Theology* became the modern standard

work for Arminians in the early 1940's. They contend that Grider and Dunning used Wiley's theology as a basis to develop their theologies.

Wesley's alternative to Calvinism was classical Arminianism. Contrary to what most Calvinists think, Wesley (and classical Arminianism), hold that "salvation is all of grace and has nothing to do with man's merit" (Olson 2011:128). Calvinists define salvation as being either by Unconditional Election or by works. Wesley (1938:482) contends that,

[Salvation] is free to all to whom it is given. It does not depend on any power or merit in man; no, not in any degree, neither in whole, nor in part. It does not in any wise depend either on the good works or righteousness of the receiver; nor on anything he has done, or anything he is. It does not depend on his endeavours. It does not depend on his good tempers, or good desires, or good purposes and intentions; for all these flow from the grace of God.

4.1.2 Classical Arminianism and Wesleyan Arminianism compared

Reasoner and Jones (2011:10) hold that, Wesley, and Wesleyan Arminianists advocate the doctrine of entire sanctification, which classical Arminians reject. They assert that while Fletcher holds that we are made righteous when we become partakers of Christ's divine nature (1 Pet. 1:4), classical Arminians refer to justification as the imputation of Christ's³⁸ active and passive obedience. Watson (Reasoner and Jones, 2011:10) contends that Scripture does not support the notion of imputation as accounting the actions performed by one person to another, but describes the "imputation of righteousness" rather, as non-imputation, meaning the pardon or remission of sin.

Reasoner and Jones (2011:11) observe that classical Arminians and Wesleyan Arminians also disagree about the concept of apostasy. Classical Arminians views apostasy as "a complete shipwreck of saving faith". Forlines (Reasoner and Jones, 2011:11), while describing apostasy as being 'climatic and irreversible, also sees apostasy as the culmination of backsliding, which is ultimately the result of a progressive digression into sin. Classical Arminians hold that apostasy is, therefore, a result of wilful unbelief, or the cessation of belief in God, rather than a specific act of sin, and that "a believer who dies in a state of unconfessed sin would, therefore, not lose his salvation". This view stands in stark contrast to Wesleyan Arminianism where one can never really have assurance of

³⁸Active obedience is described by Reasoner and Jones (2014:10) as "Christ's sinless life", while "passive obedience" is described as "Christ's atoning death".

salvation, and tends to understand “performance” as a condition for salvation. Both classical and Wesleyan Arminians do, however, agree that “Sin is the road to apostasy and one cannot continue to practice sin without losing faith in Christ” (Reasoner and Jones, 2011:11).

There is also some tension between classical Arminians and Wesleyan Arminians with regards to whether the doctrine of election (Rom 9) is corporate or individual, but they find common ground in the belief that it is both agree that election is conditional (Reasoner and Jones, 2011:10).

4.1.3 Classical Arminianism and semi Pelagianism compared

What distinguishes classical Arminianism with semi Pelagianism (and Pelagianism), is in essence, their understanding and expression of the concept of total depravity, and how it affects unregenerate man’s ability with regards to the appropriation of salvation.

How can we differentiate between classical Arminianism and semi-Pelagianism? Olson (2006:30) quotes Wiley as he defines semi-Pelagianism in stating that, “It [Pelagianism] held that there was sufficient power remaining in the depraved will to initiate or set in motion the beginnings of salvation but not enough to bring it to conclusion”. Picirilly (2002:151) holds that Arminians do, and that Arminius himself did, affirm the doctrine of total depravity, but that the implications of this doctrine are different for Arminians than what it is for Calvinists. He describes the Arminian view of the results of The Fall in relation to human ability to respond to God, by saying that, “by constitution man has the ability to choose for good or evil. But practically speaking, given the seriousness of depravity, man’s constitutional nature has been warped and God’s grace must work before he can respond to the offer of salvation by faith.”

Olson (2006:33) agrees with Picirilly and states that, “Arminianism teaches that all humans are born morally and spiritually depraved, and helpless to do anything worthy in God’s sight without a special infusion of God’s grace to overcome the affects of original sin.” He quotes Wiley who asserts that, “Not only are all men born under the penalty of death, as a consequence of sin, but they are born with a depraved nature also, which in contradistinction

to the legal aspect of penalty, is generally termed inbred sin or inherited depravity". Olson continues in saying that,

Classical Arminianism agrees with Protestant orthodoxy in general that the unity of the human race in sin results in all being born "children of wrath". However, Arminians believe that Christ's death on the cross provides a universal remedy for the guilt of inherited sin so that it is not imputed to infants for Christ's sake. This is how Arminians in agreement with Anabaptists, such as Mennonites, interpret the universalistic passages of the New Testament such as Romans 5, where all are said to be included under sin just as all are included in redemption through Jesus Christ. It is also the Arminian interpretation of 1 Timothy 4:10, which indicate two salvations through Christ: one universal for all people and one especially for all who believe. Arminian belief in general is that redemption is not universal salvation; it is universal redemption from Adam's sin. Thus, in Arminian theology all children who die before the age of awakening of conscience and falling into actual sin (as opposed to inbred sin) are considered innocent by God and are taken to paradise. Among those who commit actual sins only those who repent and believe, have Christ as Savior.

In labouing the point, Olson (2006:42, 58) contends that, "Arminius affirmed the necessity of supernatural assisting (prevenient) grace to unbind the will of the fallen person before he or she could respond to the gospel", and that, "Any fair minded person who reads serious Arminian theology...cannot help but see the overwhelming Arminian insistence on inherited total depravity; it is simply a myth that Arminianism rejects this point of high Calvinism".

Peterson and Williams (2004:39) agree with Olson in saying that, "From Jacob Arminius and the 'Remonstrant Articles' on, the Arminian tradition has affirmed the corruption of the will by sin and the necessity of grace for redemption. Arminianism is not Pelagian".

4.1.4 Contemporary Arminianism and Classical Arminianism compared

Walls and Dongell (2004:67) hold that Wesley's preaching represented a classical Arminian soteriological view that agreed with Calvinist contemporaries that sinners were hopeless and helpless before God as a direct result of the dreadful effects of the Fall. He believed that sinners could only be saved when God "radically, powerfully and graciously invades the human heart", while contemporary Arminian theologians, especially in the camp of American Methodism, caused the focus to shift from "free grace" to "free will", with the understanding that free will is a natural human ability.

Contemporary Arminian theology advocates the notion that sinners have the ability to accept divine truth, neglecting the biblical teaching regarding the fallen human condition. The critical fault of contemporary Arminianism is that the problem of sin is narrowed to the matter of guilt, merely understood as a liability to future judgement. Salvation is presented as the offer of forgiveness of sin, with the understanding that the audience enjoys “freedom of will, relatively sound judgement, and openness to consider fairly the gospel message”. A successful gospel message thus depends (according to contemporary Arminians) on the evangelist’s power of persuasion and fails to accommodate the “fuller range of sin’s destruction, the depth of human helplessness and the degree of human hostility to God”.

Olson (2006:33) correctly holds that Calvinists (and classical Arminians) understand that “sin perverts the very mechanisms of insight and judgement, of desire and will, and of the fundamental moral disposition.” He (2006:33) asserts that, Classical Arminianism regards original sin “primarily as a moral depravity that results from deprivation of the image of God; it is the loss of power to avoid actual sin”.

Olson (2006:30) holds that while commonly supposed that Arminianism is the most popular theology preached from evangelical pulpits, it is in reality, a myth. He asserts that, “The gospel preached and the doctrine of salvation taught in most evangelical pulpits and lecterns, and believed in most evangelical pews, is not classical Arminianism, but semi-Pelagianism if not outright Pelagianism”. He argues that this fact is demonstrated in popular clichés such as; “If you take one step toward God, he will come the rest of the way to you” and God votes for you, Satan votes against you, and you get the deciding vote”. He (2006:30) also holds that popular Evangelical Christianity totally ignores the fact of human depravity and spiritual helplessness.

Walls and Dongell (2004:68) gives a very apt illustration of the different views of contemporary Arminianism, Calvinism, and Classical Arminianism regarding what they call “the nature of God’s rescue operation”:

The contemporary Arminian addresses the sinner as a convicted criminal standing at the gate of the penitentiary. Standing under a legal obligation to enter into eternal imprisonment, the prisoner will be escorted into inescapable confinement and punishment upon death. There at the front gate, an evangelist offers release from the coming horror and urges the convict to accept the gift of total pardon.

In contrast, Calvinists and classical Arminian see the sinner as already imprisoned in the deepest corner of a terrorist camp. Bound, gagged, blindfolded and drugged, the prisoner is weak and delusional. Calvinists and classical Arminians know that the preacher at the gate cannot reach the prisoner through the layers of confinement and sensory distortion. The prisoner can’t even begin to plead for help or plan an escape. In fact, the prisoner feels at home in the dank squalor of the cell; she has come to identify with her captors and will try to fight off any attempted rescue. Only a divine invasion will succeed.

The Calvinist view of the divine invasion is simple. God invades the camp, carries the prisoner out, strips the prisoner of her shackles and blinders, and injects "faith" into the prisoner's veins. The former prisoner having already been rescued from prison and positioned outside its walls, now trusts the Deliverer because of the potency of the administered faith serum. God has been the lone actor throughout, in the sense that the human response of faith is directly and irresistibly caused by God. Whether this saving action of God takes place over a longer or shorter period of time, faith is the inevitable result of divine illumination.

The classical Arminian believes that God steals into prison and makes it to the bedside of the victim. God injects a serum that begins to clear the prisoner's mind of delusions and quell her hostile reactions. God removes the gag from the prisoner's mouth and begins to shine a flashlight around the pitch-black room. The prisoner remains mute as the Rescuer's voice whispers, "Do you know where you are? Let me tell you! Do you know who you are? Let me show you!" And as the wooing begins, divine truth begins to dawn on the prisoner's heart and mind; the Saviour holds up a small mirror to show the prisoner her sunken eyes and frail body. "Do you see what they've done to you, and do you see how you've given yourself to them?" Even in the dim light, the prisoner's weakened eyes are beginning to focus. The Rescuer continues, "Do you know who I am, and that I want you for myself?" Perhaps the prisoner makes no obvious advance, but does not turn away. The questions keep coming: "Can I show you a picture of who you once were and the wondrous plans that I have for you in the years to come?" The prisoner's heartbeat quickens as the Saviour presses on: "I know that part of you suspects that I have come to harm you. But let me show you something - my hands, they're a bit bloody. I crawled through an awesome tangle of barbed wire to get to you." Now here in this newly created sacred space, in this moment of new possibility, the Saviour whispers, "I want to carry you out of here now! Give me your heart! Trust me!" This scenario we believe, captures the richness of the Bible's message: the glory of God's original creation, the devastation of sin, God's loving pursuit of helpless sinners and the nature of love as the free assent of persons.

Here also is room for tragedy, for the inexplicable (but possible) rejection of God's tender invitation by those who really know better and who might have done otherwise. Sin shows up in its boldest colours when it recapitulates the rebellion of Eden and freely chooses to go its own way in the face of divine love and full provision. The tragedy of such rejection is the risk God took in making possible shared love between creature and Creator, the very same love shared between the Father and the eternal Son (Jn 17:23-26).

As we see it, the prisoner's trust in the Rescuer was not caused by God, though God caused every circumstance that made it possible. God did all the illuminating, all the clarifying and all the truth telling. The prisoner's trust possessed no power of its own, for it didn't remove one shackle or take one step on the way to freedom. God alone shatters all bonds and lifts the emaciated body on his own shoulders. The prisoner's trust had no monetary value for enriching the Rescuer or compensating him for his wounds. Since God bore all the cost, took all the initiative and exercised all the power required for the saving event, God owns exclusive rights to all praise and glory for the miracle of redemption.

The classical Arminian belief about the atonement, as illustrated by the dramatic story above, is summarised by Walls and Dongel as follows: "We believe that the death of Jesus makes provision for the forgiveness of all sins [for all people], but it doesn't enact that forgiveness until sinners surrender in faith to God" (2004:71). Contemporary Arminianism does not account for the bondage of sin and the need for God to make faith possible, while Classical Arminianism acknowledges this need, but argues that God's drawing grace is universally extended to all people by the Holy Spirit.

4.1.5 Some deviations from classical Arminianism

Wesley is notorious for teaching a doctrine of entire sanctification, as did Arminius who interpreted Romans 7 (Paul's struggle with the flesh) as being an experience that Paul had prior to conversion. This teaching was accepted and is advocated by three-stage Pentecostals who believe in an experience of total sanctification as an event subsequent to salvation and the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Olson, 2006:25).

Finney held that a person could freely accept God's gift of salvation through a voluntary decision to repent when the Holy Spirit illuminates a person's human reason. He did not see the need of prevenient grace for a person to believe. This teaching of Finney was contrary to the view held by classical Arminians. Arminius, Wesley, and classical Arminians in general affirmed total depravity as utter helplessness apart from a supernatural awakening called prevenient grace (Olson, 2006:27). Olson (2006:28) suggests that Finney's theology falls nearer to semi Pelagianism than to classical Arminianism, while many critics of Arminianism judged Arminians on Finney's theology. Finney's theology is, therefore, distinct from classical Arminian theology.

4.2 THE FIVE POINTS OF CLASSICAL ARMINIANISM DISCUSSED AND EVALUATED

4.2.1 "T" - Free will or human ability (versus Total Depravity)

- I. Although human nature was seriously affected by the Fall, man has not been left in a state of total spiritual helplessness. God graciously enables every sinner to repent and believe, but He does so in such a manner as not to interfere with man's freedom.
- II. Each sinner possesses a free will, and his eternal destiny depends on how he uses it. Man's freedom consists of his ability to choose good over evil in spiritual matters; his will is not enslaved by his sinful nature.
- III. The sinner has the power to either cooperate with God's Spirit and be regenerated or resist God's grace and perish.
- IV. The lost sinner needs the Spirit's assistance, but he does not have to be regenerated by the Spirit before he can believe, for faith is man's act and precedes the new birth. Faith is the sinner's gift to God; it is man's contribution to salvation (Steele & Thomas, 1963:16).

4.2.1.1 Arminians affirm the doctrine of total depravity

Arminians affirm the doctrine of total depravity, but render a slightly different interpretation to this doctrine than what Calvinists hold. Den Boer (2010:198) holds that, “Arminius does admit that original sin is sin, but denies that it is actual sin. According to him [Arminius] a distinction must be drawn between actual or real sin and that which is the cause for other sins”. Purkiser, Taylor, and Taylor (1977:289) state the Arminian position on the fallen nature of man by referring to the phrase, “*phronē matēs sarkos*”, or the “mind of the flesh” (Rom. 8:6) and describe this condition of original sin as the fact that, “man comes into the world no longer primitively holy as was Adam, nor dispositionally neutral, but premorally bent toward sin”. They (1977:299) qualify this corruption of human nature as not being inherent to human nature or the essential constitution of man, as that would imply that “its removal would be an injury rather than correction” but rather that, “the corruption” what we inherited from Adam is “an inherited impulse to sin, pervasively resident, but not irremediably inherent”.

Stewart (1951:106), describes Paul’s view of sin as “something that took possession of him, something the man was, something that turned him into an open enemy of the God who loved him” and that “destroyed life itself”, and Schleiermacher (Redeker, 1973:125,126) holds that, “Original sin is the internal and timeless predisposition toward sin. The primordial³⁹ sin [Ursünde] is manifested in time and is thus actual sin, which is to be differentiated from primordial sin, which comes into being as a concrete act and guilt”.

Goudriaan (2011: 88) contends that Arminians and the Contra Remonstrants disagreed on the consequences of the fall regarding impact of sin. The Synod of Dordt especially rejected the view held by Arminians, that the human *will* is not drastically affected by sin. There was, however, consensus that the fall affected the state of the soul.

Fowler (1998:28-29) renders an insightful perspective to the concept of “spiritual death” that results from the Fall. From the premise that, “man is not independent and autonomous, but dependent on an ontic identification with either God or Satan”, he holds that there are many misconceptions about death that result in us having a distorted perception of spiritual death, and he claims that, “If death is defined as termination, annihilation or cessation of function, then the spiritual death of man implies either that the life of God was obliterated and God ceased to be, or man ceased to be man with all three levels of physiological, psychological

³⁹ Primordial meaning, “existing from the beginning of time: very ancient” (Webster, 2014).

and spiritual function.” Neither of these options are possible since God was not affected by the Fall, and man still kept on functioning as man.

He (1998:29) then asserts that the ontological severance from dependency on God precipitated the exchange to an ontological dependency upon Satan for “the derivation of spiritual condition and identity. Spiritual death must, therefore, not be described as “spiritual non-function, but is rather the absence of the spiritual function of the life of God in the spirit of man and the spiritual function of the satanic spirit in man’s spirit”. Fowler (1998:30) further holds that,

The “personal resource of death” expresses his diabolical character and nature in the “prevailing ramifications of death” through the behaviour of the soul and body of man. The “power of sin” manifests itself in the behavioural “presence of sin” as character contrary to the character of God becomes derivatively operative and is enacted in man’s behaviour. The “law of sin and death” (Rom.7:24; 8:2) is operative. “The one committing sin derives what he does from the devil” (1 Joh. 3:8). The behavioural manifestations are devoid of the life and character of God. They are dead works (Heb. 6:1) that “bear fruit for death” (Rom.7:5) and “bring forth death” (James 1:15).

Nee (1977:51,52) is therefore correct in describing “spiritual death”, to contend that spiritual death does not mean that the spirit ceases to exist, “although it is darkened by sin and impotent to hold communion with God”. He asserts that,

However dead this spirit may be toward God it may remain as active as the mind or the body...Sometimes the spirit of a fallen man can even be stronger than his soul or body...Such persons are “spiritual” just as most people are largely soulical or physical, because their spirits are much bigger than that of ordinary individuals. These are the sorceresses and the witches. They indeed maintain contacts with the spiritual realm; but they do so through the evil spirit, not the Holy Spirit.

4.2.1.2 Arminians do not affirm the inheritance of the guilt of Adam’s sin

Berkhof (1933:145) correctly asserts that, “Arminians from the seventeenth century...deny that original sin involves original guilt.” Arminius holds that the original sin of Adam does not constitute guilt in his propensity, but only an inherited weakness. He believes that this sin distorts the image of God in man (*imago dei*) and leaves him with a permanent bias toward sin. He strongly asserts that infants are not born with sin, and are, therefore, not lost when they die. Arminius held that God pardoned Adam’s sin and that there is no reason to believe that God would impute this sin to infants. He hereby dismisses the necessity for the

“sacerdotal dogma” of baptismal regeneration necessitated by the theologies of the Roman Catholic Church, Augustine, and classical Reformed churches (Slaatte, 1979:57).

Möller (1997:21) holds that sin “cannot exist in a material form or even appear as a biological phenomenon”. It is only insofar as that man is accountable to God for his actions as a free, but responsible moral agent, that sin can manifest itself in his choices and actions. Sin can therefore not be accounted to a child before they have reached understanding, and have knowledge of the law of God.

Sin can only manifest itself in man because he is more than a biological phenomenon... It follows that a child who has not yet reached understanding, and who, as yet, has no knowledge of the law of God, cannot do something that may be reckoned to him as sin.

Miley (1813-1895), in publishing his *Systematic Theology* in 1859, affirmed “native depravity” while rejecting “native demerit” (Olson, 2006:26). This simply means that he believed that the human race inherited a depraved nature through the bloodline of Adam, without the guilt of Adam’s sin, in other words, the *male* (evil) of sin, without the *culpa* (guilt) of sin.

Some Arminian theologians share the notion with Calvinists, that guilt from the sin of Adam was imputed to the human race, but, in contrast to Calvinism, hold that it was universally cancelled by the atoning death of Christ. Others such as Purkiser, Taylor and Taylor (1977:301), hold that “the internal movement of this passage [Rom.5:12] would seem to indicate the transmission of the sin, but not the transmission of Adam’s guilt”.

Slaatte (1997:35) holds that “Arminius accentuates the humanly responsible aspect of the fall, apart from which no guilt would be incurred”. Bangs (1985:186,188) holds that Arminius’s view on the free will of man is illustrated in his treatment of Romans chapter 7, and that, while Calvin and Beza applied Romans 7 to a regenerate man, Arminius argued that Paul was speaking about an unregenerate man. Bangs (1985:186) holds that Arminius wrote a lengthy dissertation on Romans 7 in Latin that was published under the title, *A Dissertation on the True and Genuine Sense of the Seventh Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans* in 1613. Bangs (1985:188) further asserts that Arminius drew four propositions from Romans 6:14, namely that,

- Christians are not under the law.
- Christians are under grace.
- Sin shall have dominion over those who are under the law.

- Sin shall not have dominion over those who are under grace.

Bangs (1985:189) further holds that Paul uses the word, ενοικουσα, "indwelling", indicating that Romans 7:14-25 applies to the unregenerate and that Arminius argues that there are two modes of sin namely, "indwelling (*inhabitans*) and inbeing (*inexistence*). Sin as indwelling (*inhabitans*) is sin as reigning (*dominance*). Reigning sin is to be distinguished from sin as merely inbeing (*inexistence*). The man in Romans 7 is marked by *peccatum inhabitans* which is dominance. These two modes of sin are, according to Arminius, critical in the evaluation of a person as being regenerate or not.

With regards to Paul's reference to the law of sin and death in Romans 7, Purkiser, Taylor, and Taylor (1977:296) quote Dayton who states that, "Paul...must have been referring to the innocence of infancy when grace was neither conditional nor resisted." Paul was saying that the dormant energy of sin was awakened in him when he came to moral awareness. Sin produces death when it is activated "by inducing specific acts of voluntary sinning". Paul speaks of sin as being pre-volitional and therefore non-volitional. It is the latent sin that every human being is born with.

In order to avoid the assumption that guilt for Adam's sin is inherited, Purkiser, Taylor, and Taylor (1977:299) contend that, "inherited sin must be viewed as sub-ethical in nature, carrying in itself no personal culpability, until endorsed as the chosen set of the soul in responsible maturity".

There is no scriptural proof that anyone else except Adam was guilty of Adam's sin; on the contrary, the Bible specifically states that each person is responsible for his own sin. God gave Israel 613 moral and ethical codes with regards to the treatment of others (Clarke, E-sword). One of these laws is illustrated in Deuteronomy 24:16 (KJV), "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin." It is further elaborated on in Ezekiel 18:20, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (KJV). God uses this law to demonstrate his justness in applying it to Himself in his judgment of Israel.

Miley's scriptural stance to depravity, in affirming "native depravity" while rejecting "native demerit", is therefore much more appropriate than the theory of depravity that is influenced by Augustine's Manichaeian error.

In describing human responsibility with regards to sin, Stewart (1951:107) contends that, "even where sin is regarded as an external force waiting to take advantage of human nature in its frailty, he [Paul] will allow no blurring of the fact of personal accountability. Principalities and powers may lie in wait, but in the last resort man's is the choice, man's the responsibility, and man's the doom".

4.2.1.3 A free response to prevenient grace

Steele & Thomas (1963:16) hold that, Arminians believe that, "Although human nature was seriously affected by the Fall, man has not been left in a state of total spiritual helplessness. God graciously enables every sinner to repent and believe, but He does so in such a manner as not to interfere with man's freedom."

Goudriaan (2011:90) holds that in respect of the ability to respond to the call of salvation, Arminian theology can be distinguished from the view held by the Contra Remonstrants in at least two ways; Firstly, because of the special role assigned in Arminian theology to "the light of nature (*lumen naturae*)", and he holds that "Several delegations (at the Synod of Dordt) accused the Arminians of considering natural light as 'grace' or as a 'first grace' and, accordingly, that of repeating the error made by Pelagius and his followers, who blurred the distinction between nature and grace". Secondly, in relation to the human intellect, that contrary to the view held by the Contra Remonstrants, Arminians hold that, "the human being has a natural ability to read and understand the Bible and what it says about Divine matters". Goudriaan (2011:93, 94) further holds that,

In this context, several delegations referred to university disputations in which Simon Episcopius had claimed that humans have this natural ability. The Synod criticized the lack of an admission that special Divine help is needed in order to understand the Bible well in these matters. Here too, the Arminian intellect seemed to be adorned with more abilities than the darkened intellect that the Contra-Remonstrants knew.

Dake, (1993: [N.T.] 169) States that, "God sends the message, but He does not obligate men to accept and obey it." He holds that the ninth Old Testament prophecy fulfilled in the book of Romans where Paul quotes Isaiah 53:1 (Rom. 10:16), indicating that all would not believe.

Morrell (2012) defends free will in contending that,

Walter Arthur Copinger said, "All the Fathers are unanimous on the freedom of the human will..." Lyman Beecher said, "the free will and natural ability of man were held by the whole church..." And Dr. Wiggers said, "All the Fathers agreed with the Pelagians, in attributing freedom of will to man in his present state." This is a very important point because whenever a person today holds to the belief that all men have the natural ability to obey God or not to obey Him, or that man's nature still remains the faculty of free will and can choose between these two alternatives and possibilities, he is almost immediately accused of being a heretical "Pelagian" by the Calvinists. This accusation is being unfair to the position of free will since all of the Early Church Fathers held to free will long before Pelagius even existed.

Peterson and Williams (2004:164) quote Wesley as he describes man's sinful state in saying that,

'...for allowing that all souls of men are dead in sin by nature, this excuses none, seeing that there is no man that is in a state of mere nature; there is no man, unless he has quenched the Spirit, that is wholly void of the grace of God. No man living is entirely destitute of what is vulgarly called 'natural conscience.'

If man were destitute of natural conscience, there could be no responsibility, and therefore, no judgement ascribed to man for not reaching out to God, as implied in Romans 1. Wesley believed that salvation is given by God to the person who freely responds to the gospel with repentance and faith. He held that repentance and faith are not gifts of God or good works. These are merely human responses to God's gift of Prevenient Grace (Olson, 2011:129). Olson, (2006:24) contends that Wesley, "affirmed passionately and wholeheartedly justification by grace alone through faith alone because of what Christ has done on the cross". Repentance and faith are therefore man's reactions to God's initiative of offering salvation to "whosoever believeth in him" (John 3:16 KJV).

Goudriaan (2011:94) holds that there are three profound differences with regards to the anthropological perspective of Arminians and the orthodox Reformed view on the will of man, and that is, "the *freedom* of the will", the "*moral quality* of the will", and the "*power* of the will". The variances in understanding of freedom, consequently leads to different perspectives on the influence of sin.

According to Slaatte (1979:31), Arminius maintained that the Fall did not destroy man rationality, freedom, or reason. Man could therefore, still choose and believe and that, "Man's freedom thus conditions God's will to some degree—but only as God has willed such a relationship. Since this is an aspect of divine economy, it does not jeopardize divine sovereignty". Slaatte (1979:31) quotes Fairbairn where he states that "He [God] has chosen to make men free and responsible, and his conduct to man will be conditioned by the nature

he has made. So God's relations to man are in terms of reason and freedom, not will and compulsion".

4.2.1.4 Divine enablement through the gift of prevenient Grace

Human freedom is impaired by the corrupted nature that we inherit from Adam, but, if sin's hold over the freedom of man's choices were absolute, it would render sin, with guilt, impossible. There can be no accountability for sin where there is an absolute inability to do otherwise than sin. Purkiser, Taylor, and Taylor (1977:300) hold that Adam, in his primitive state, had a "created natural leaning" toward God that they call "primitive holiness" that made it easier to love God, but did not make loving God inevitable or reversible. They believe that inbred (or inherited) sin "must be viewed as comparable, albeit in reverse to Adam's primitive holiness", and that inbred sin must likewise be viewed as, "a primitive, subethical leaning toward self that makes self-idolatry easy, but not as an absolute cause-and-effect mechanism".

What Adam and Eve possessed was, however, "innocence", that relates more to naivety than to holiness. Holiness implies a separation of something or someone from that which is sinful or contaminated, for a specific purpose. A person who is holy has the knowledge of sin but wilfully separates himself or herself from it. Adam and Eve did not know sin, and could therefore not be deemed holy.

The role of prevenient grace as held by Arminians follows from Scriptures such as Tit 2:11 KJV "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men". Peterson and Williams (2004:126) contend that,

[when Calvinists say], That God has predestined some people to faith does not mean, according to the teachings of the Canons, that God has predetermined all things such that human choice and responsibility are removed. Rather, **God's sovereign work repairs the enslaved will and the corrupted heart of the sinner.** The fall into sin constituted, in part, a loss of true free will. Man became a slave to sin; and what remains of the will is incapable of breaking the bonds of sin, and thus cannot be said to be free in any true sense. Yet some semblance of man's original integrity remains. Though the Canons of Dordt insists on the radical corruption of human nature as a result of the fall, sinners are not regarded as "blocks and stones." In falling, "man did not cease to be man, endowed with intellect and will." Though sin has pervasively spread through all our members, it "did not abolish the nature of the human race but distorted and spiritually killed it." (Emphasis mine)

What Peterson and Williams claim above, comes very close to what they say Arminians claim God achieves by prevenient grace, which they describe as that,

God begins by giving each sinner sufficient repairing grace that he or she is enabled to freely accept or reject the gospel. Human beings, who were formerly unable to contribute to the slightest of their own redemption, who were depraved by and enslaved to sin, are sufficiently restored by God's gift of prevenient grace so that they are able to choose for or against the work of Christ. Grace nullifies the moral, affective and intellectual effects of the fall. Rather than being predisposed toward the self, rather than seeing evil as good, under prevenient grace, the will is restored so that sin does not impede the will's response to the gospel (Peterson and Williams, 2004:116).

The only real, but very crucial difference is, that for Calvinists, this work of God is limited to the elect while Arminians believe that God bestows this grace on all of humanity, and that while "the Calvinist claims that grace causes salvation, the Arminian can only say that grace causes the freedom of the will" (Peterson and Williams, 2004:117). Purkiser, Taylor, and Taylor (1977:411), from the Arminian perspective, refer to enabling grace as "God's remedy for man's moral impotence".

With regards to human responsibility, Peterson and Williams (2004:137, 138) criticize Arminius and Arminianism when they contend that,

for Arminius and the Arminian tradition, human freedom is axiomatic. Because of this the freedom of the human will serves as a grid through which all other notions or doctrines must pass in order to be accepted. That which may qualify or question human free will must be rejected. The assumption of the unblemished integrity of human free will leads Arminian theology toward indeterminist incompatibilism: divine sovereignty and true human freedom are incompatible, and human beings are free; therefore God cannot sovereignly govern human history, events, or personal destinies.

Peterson and Williams base their conclusion on the erroneous premise that Arminians hold the same definition of God's sovereignty as Calvinists. It is intriguing to see how fast Calvinists jump to a compatibilist view of freedom to justify and explain the inconsistencies regarding human responsibility and God's sovereignty within Calvinism, but they refuse to see how human freedom and the sovereignty of God stands in natural harmony according to Arminian theology.

4.2.1.5 The role of faith

Boyd and Eddy (2009:150) criticise Arminian theology by stating that Arminians hold that people are depraved while at the same time asserting that God elects men on the condition

of their faith. They ask the question, “How are humans capable of faith if they are truly depraved?” and John Frame criticises the Arminian view of faith by saying that, “The Arminian wants it both ways. He wants to say that faith has no merit, but he also wants to say that our faith somehow motivates God to save us, that God chooses us on the basis of our choosing him. But if faith motivates God to save us, then it must have merit in his eyes” (Peterson and Williams, 2004:113, 114).

Purkiser, Taylor, and Taylor (1977:300) assert that, “Paul never permits his readers to forget that faith is the essential God-ordained catalyst which releases the power of God’s grace in the soul” and that grace is “not an irresistible and magical infusion but a divine activity that can be rejected by unbelief”. They further contend that, while salvation depends entirely on God’s initiative, it is not imposed. Man must open the door of his heart. (Rev.3:20).

Purkiser, Taylor, and Taylor (1977:418) describe faith from an Arminian perspective as “a rational acceptance of a positive revelation” and hold that faith is a response to God’s initiative. God made promises to Abraham, and when Abraham believed God this faith was accounted for righteousness.

God’s gracious gift of salvation must be appropriated through a believing human response, and this makes Arminian theology evangelistic in character.

4.2.1.6 The emphasis on relationship within Arminian theology

Stewart, in the preface of his book, “A Man in Christ” (1951: vii), states his conviction that, “the union with Christ, rather than justification or election or eschatology, or indeed any of the great apostolic themes, is the real clue to an understanding of Paul’s thought and experience”. Knight, quoted by Olson (2007:92) asserts that, “It is no accident that so much of scripture is narrative, metaphor and the like - God is not simply sending us a memorandum but preparing a medium through which we can have true relationship with God, one in which we come to know God as God actually is”, and Fromke (1998:47) holds that, “God’s answer to man’s need is not a philosophy, but a Person.”

Arminians view personal relationship as paramount in terms of preaching the gospel message. Sinners are invited to accept Christ as their “personal Saviour”, and disciple into a living and real relationship with Christ. The whole Christian experience is about “knowing” Christ in a perspective of relationship, rather than a theological knowledge about Christ.

While Peterson and Williams (2004:147) hold that, “Both God and the believer are fully active in the work of salvation, and active at the same time”, it does not constitute synergism. They claim that because “God’s sovereignty extends over and is the ground for our choices and actions”, and contradicts themselves when they say that, God is sovereignly in control of uncoerced human actions. God either determines human actions, or, it is uncoerced. It is either monergistic or synergistic. It cannot be both.

Sproul (June 11, 2014) correctly cautions against the very real danger of “Man-centered” theology that “leads to emotional manipulation wherein thousands are coerced into making false professions of faith” and, “sets Christian living in the wrong direction and gives us no grounds for assurance. We start believing the kingdom cannot survive without us, and we base our relationship with the Lord on our performance instead of His grace. Arminian theology is, however, Christ centred (Bangs, 1985:351), and while Arminians affirm the sovereignty of God (Basinger and Basinger, 1986:10-13), they believe that human actions are not “causally” (or in any other way) determined by God and that it does constitute synergism when the believer works in harmony with God to secure his own salvation.

Olson (2006:194) holds that “Arminianism preaches predestination and free will as an instrument for inclusion in either election or reprobation, which are corporate and conditional”. God supplies salvation and the sinner freely accepts this gift by faith. The accepting of the gift, though crucial to the process of salvation, does not constitute “work” and cannot save a person. At the same time, while God does all the work in salvation, if the gift is rejected, the sinner is lost.

Boyd and Eddy (2009:150) ask how Arminians can avoid the conclusion that those who persevere are better than those who do not. If they are implying that perseverance is meritorious, they are right, and Arminians can simply refer to the promise of James 1:12 “Blessed is the man who endures temptation; because when he is approved, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord promised to those who love Him”. Scripture attests to the fact that there is a reward for those who persevere. If perseverance was solely a work of God, surely God must then receive the crown or reward, and not the person who persevered?

4.2.2 “U” - Conditional Election (*Versus Unconditional Election*)

- I. God’s choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world was based on His foreseeing that they would respond to His call.
- II. He selected only those whom He knew would of themselves freely believe the gospel. Election therefore was determined by or conditioned upon what man would do.
- III. The faith which God foresaw and upon which He based His choice was not given to the sinner by God (it was not created by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit) but resulted solely from man’s will. It was left entirely up to man as to who would believe and therefore as to who would be elected unto salvation. God chose those whom He knew would, of their own free will, choose Christ. Thus the sinner’s choice of Christ, not God’s choice of the sinner, is the ultimate cause of salvation (Steele & Thomas, 1963:16,17).

4.2.2.1 Arminius’s doctrine of predestination

Arminius’s doctrine of predestination is documented in his *Declaration of Sentiments* where he defines his version of this doctrine according to four decrees, namely, the election of Jesus Christ, The election of the church, the appointment of means, and the election of individuals. Bangs, (1985:352) holds that Arminius gave very specific parameters for his doctrine on predestination, such as that,

it must be understood Christologically; it must be evangelical; it must not make God the author of sin; it must not make man the author of salvation; it must be scriptural, not speculative; and it must not depart from the historic teaching of the church, by which Arminius means the faith of the first six centuries, the confessions of the Reformation, and particularly the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism.

Bangs (1985:350-352) translated Arminius’s decrees from Dutch:

The first decree:

The election of Jesus Christ. “The first and absolute decree of God for affecting the salvation of sinful man is that he has determined to appoint his Son, Jesus Christ, as a Mediator, Redeemer, Savior, Priest, and King, to nullify sin by his death, to obtain the lost salvation through his obedience, and to communicate it by his power.

Bangs (1985:351) holds that according to Arminius, the object of the first decree is Jesus Christ. The focus is not on man, or on the problem of sin, but on God’s provision for salvation. “Jesus Christ, then, is more than a means for carrying out a prior, non-Christological decree. He is more than the executer of the decree. He is the foundation of the decree, so that all election is ‘in Christ’”.

The second decree:

The election of the church. The second precise and absolute decree of God is that he has determined graciously to receive in favour those who repent and believe, and, the same persevering, to affect their salvation in Christ, for Christ's sake, and through Christ, and to leave the unrepentant and unbelieving in sin and under wrath, and to damn them as strangers to Christ (Bangs, 1985:350-352).

The third decree:

The appointment of means. The third decree of God is that by which he has predetermined to administer the necessary, sufficient, and powerful means of repentance and faith, which administration occurs according to the wisdom of God, by which he knows what becomes his mercy and his severity, and according to his justice, by which he is prepared to follow what his wisdom has carried out (Bangs, 1985:350-352).

The fourth decree:

The election of individuals. From this follows the fourth decree to save certain particular persons and to damn others, which decree rests upon the foreknowledge of God, by which he has known from eternity which persons should believe according to such an administration of the means serving to repentance and faith through his preceding grace, and which should perish through subsequent grace, and also who should not believe and persevere (Bangs, 1985:350-352).

Arminius argues against unconditional reprobation by drawing a logical conclusion that, if sin resulted from God's act of reprobation, Adam and his entire progeny would as a consequence be reprobated. He also holds that original sin must be seen as a punishment, rather than "sin" itself, which means that we are not guilty, and therefore, not liable for punishment for that particular sin (Den Boer, 2010:199, 200).

4.2.2.2 What significance does Arminian predestination have?

Den Boer (2010:168) holds that, Arminius disagreed with Calvin's unconditional doctrine of predestination because he reasoned that,

It hinders true sorrow for sin since the conscience is not affected by sin; sin was committed according to an unavoidable necessity resulting from God's decree. It takes away assurance for one would be as a dead man before grace, unable to feel or hear it, and unable to agree with or be obedient to it (and thus be converted, etc., on account of an unavoidable necessity).

For Arminians, election is corporate while predestination applies to the individual; Predestination is described by Olson (2006:37) from an Arminian perspective, as "God's determination (decree) to save through Christ, all who freely respond to God's offer of free grace by repenting of sin and believing (trusting) in Christ". It can also be formulated as, all

those for “whom he (according to his foreknowledge) knew would accept Christ, repent, and believe”.

What is the significance of this view of predestination? If it is up to the individual to freely receive or reject God’s grace, the individual is either going to accept Christ, or not. God’s foreknowledge, (or knowledge) of whether a person will by “free choice” accept God’s gift of salvation is irrelevant. This choice is not affected by whether God would predestine a person or not. Predestination itself loses its significance. Boettner (1969:87) objects to the Arminian interpretation of the doctrine of election by saying that “Arminianism takes this choice out of the hands of God and places it in the hands of man.” Geisler (1986:66) holds that, “if God’s choice to save was based on those who chose him, it would not be based on divine grace, but would be based on human effort... (Eph 2:8-9; Tit 5:5-7)”.

It is not correct to say that because the sinner has a choice in accepting or rejecting salvation, that he can by any means save himself by human effort, or, that salvation is dependent on the sinner. Human choice (to accept God’s gift of salvation) cannot be equated to “works” or “the actual accomplishment of salvation” as Geisler implies. The work of salvation is completed in Christ. We cannot do anything to earn it, deserve it, or add anything to it. While we cannot contribute anything to our salvation, we have the God given libertarian freedom of choice whether to accept it, or reject it. Arminianism does not base the accomplishment of salvation on human effort but on the contrary, it is based on the work of Christ alone.

Geisler does however have a valid point in questioning the significance of God’s election (according to Arminianism). If God’s election (according to his foreknowledge) solely depends and is contingent on the choice of the individual, it implies that it is man that “elects” and not God.

4.2.2.3 Predestination: divine determinism or divine foreknowledge?

Peterson and Williams (2004, 106) quotes Arminius, saying that, “a thing does not come to pass because it is foreknown or foretold; but it is foreknown and foretold because it is yet to be”. Arminius, therefore, denies the causality of God’s foreknowledge. Peterson and Williams (2004, 107) hold that Arminius accepted some of Aquinas’s ideas, such as priority of the

intellect over the will, and making a distinction between potency and actuality, but unlike Aquinas, he believed that divine foreknowledge was not causal, but merely cognitive.

Peterson and Williams (2004:107,109) hold that Arminius leaned on Molina's "middle knowledge" to accommodate the idea that, "the divine will to save particular persons rests upon God's knowledge of the future free choices of human beings", and therefore, preceding, empowering, grace makes it possible to believe, but salvation still depends on the free choice and active faith of the sinner.

Möller (1997:93) who describes salvation in the context of man's relationship with God, asserts that, "salvation implies that man, by identifying in faith with Christ, participates in that which God has intended for him in all eternity. This occurs in accordance with the everlasting covenant of God whereby He created man in a specific relationship to Him". The relationship of right standing with Christ, resulting from the completed work of salvation of Christ (provision of salvation) and the (free) acceptance of God's gift (application of salvation) is, therefore, (fore)known by God, but not determined.

Geisler (1986:73) describes an option of free will in that God, "simply knows (not foreknows) what we are doing with our free choices. For what we have, are and will choose is present to God in his eternal NOW"...God's foreknowledge is not foreordaining anything that will later occur to him".

4.2.3 "L" - General Atonement Versus Limited Atonement

- I. Christ's redeeming work made it possible for everyone to be saved but did not actually secure salvation of anyone.
- II. Although Christ died for all men and for every man, only those who believe in Him are saved. His death enabled God to pardon sinners on the condition that they believe, but it did not actually put away anyone's sins.
- III. Christ's redemption becomes effective only if man chooses to accept it (Steele & Thomas, 1963:17).

4.2.3.1 Christ died for all men

Where Calvinism accentuates the glory and sovereignty of God, Carter (1983:635), from the Arminian perspective, holds that, "Since the Judeo-Christian God is a God of love...all of His attitudes and acts towards His creatures are motivated by love". Arminians believe that Christ died for all mankind and that while some of these benefits (such as propitiation for the guilt of Adam's sin) are automatically applied to all, salvation is conditional upon personal repentance and faith. Wiley (Olson, 2006:35) holds that redemption is "universal or general in the provisional sense, but special or conditional in its application to the individual".

Two Scriptures that support the notion of universal atonement is, 2 Pet. 3:9 "The Lord is...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (EMTV) and 1Tim. 2:3,4 "For this is good and acceptable before God our Savior, (4) who desires all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth" (EMTV).

Picirilli (2002:106) asserts that "Universal atonement matches the plain Biblical assertion that God wills the salvation of all", and he quotes Scaer (Picirilli, 2002:107), who states that, "The *a priori* exclusion of even a few persons of the atonement and its results is contrary to 2 Pet. 3:9". Picirilli (2002:125,126) offers a very strong case for the doctrine of universal atonement when he examines the context and use of the Greek word, *kosmos*, as it appears 23 times in 1 John. The consistent meaning of the word "world" or *kosmos* proves that it cannot possibly be interpreted as "the elect from all nations" as Calvinism would want us to believe, but, it does give us every reason to believe otherwise. Erickson (2001:831) asserts that, "The hypothesis of universal atonement is able to account for a larger segment of the biblical witness with less distortion than is the hypothesis of limited atonement."

God did not elect Israel to the exclusion of other nations. This election was universal in character, since God said to Abraham that all the families of the earth would be blessed through him (Gen. 12:3). Israel's election was conditional in revealing God's plan of redemption to all nations. Barth (1960:78) concurs and contends that "Israel's mission must be understood as a mission fulfilled, revealed and accomplished in Jesus Christ". Carter (1983:634) quotes Rowley, who contends that, "The purpose of the election [of Israel] is service, and when the service is withheld, the election loses its meaning, and therefore fails". The failure in fulfilling their responsibilities led to a loss of privileges.

4.2.3.2 Atonement: Universal in design, but limited in accomplishment

Arminians believe “that the atonement is universal in its divine design but limited in its actual accomplishment” (Kuiper, 1959:24). Arminianism makes a very significant distinction between the *provisions of salvation*, and the *application* of these provisions. Picirilly (2002:103) holds that, “Arminians do not believe that God intended by the atonement to save all people”, and that, the provision of salvation is available to all men universally, while the application or appropriation of the atonement is conditional upon the faith of the individual.

4.2.3.3 The significance of the Great Commission

One of Arminius’ aims in establishing a theology of predestination was that it must be evangelical (Bangs, 1985:352). The Great Commission, therefore, holds specific priority in Arminian theology.

Arminians hold that saving faith is not a gift (as Calvinists believe) but is appropriated through the message of the gospel, when the Word of God is preached – “So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:17 KJV). Paul states in Rom. 10:13-14 (KJV) that “(13)...whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (14) How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?”

The conditions for salvation are herein set out in sequence:

1. There must be a preacher.
2. Men need to hear the message.
3. They must believe the message.
4. They must call on the Name of the Lord.

In contrast to Calvinism, that promotes the idea that God only intends to save certain people, Arminians literally believe John 3:16 in the sense that “God [really] so loved the [whole] world”, that “*whosoever* believeth in him” – (meaning any person) can be saved. Arminians believe that God genuinely does not want anybody to perish (not even for his glory).

4.2.3.4 Reprobation in the light of God’s love for the world

The “reprobate” (those who are condemned to hell) according to Arminianism, are those who “hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18 KJV). Williams (1996, Vol.2:20) “Christ did not come into the world to save some and condemn others, but to save all. The only barrier is man’s own disbelief: ‘This is the condemnation that...men loved darkness’ (John 3:19 KJV).” Salvation, and condemnation, therefore, does not depend on a fictitious decree, but on whether a person chooses to believe on the Son of God or not. This makes the gospel preachable to all men.

Möller (1997:89) holds that man is saved by the complete sacrifice of the blood of Christ when we turn to him in contrition and faith (1 John 1:7). We are condemned by the same blood when we reject His offer of salvation. Christ’s blood accuses us before the Father and brings us under everlasting judgement (Heb. 10:28-29).

4.2.4 “I” - Resistible Grace (Versus Irresistible Grace)

- I. The Spirit calls inwardly all those who are outwardly called by the Gospel invitation; He does all that He can to bring every sinner to salvation.
- II. But insomuch as man is free, he can successfully resist the Spirit’s call.
- III. The Spirit cannot regenerate the sinner until he believes; faith (which is man’s contribution) precedes and makes possible the new birth. Thus, man’s free will limits the Spirit in the application of Christ’s saving work.
- IV. The Holy Spirit can only draw to Christ those who allow Him to have His way with them. Until the sinner responds, the Spirit cannot give life. God’s grace, therefore, is not invincible; it can be, and often is, resisted and thwarted by man (Steele & Thomas, 1963:18).

4.2.4.1 Resistible Grace and the sovereignty of God

Arminians do not object to the sovereignty of God, but rather to the Calvinistic interpretation of what they (Calvinists) assert that the sovereignty of God implies. Arminians believe that God is sovereign and that He is in complete control of the universe, but He does not determine every human action, including moral choices. God is not the author of sin and evil and does not infringe moral liberty. Although *many* things are *directly controlled* and *caused* by God, the will of God *can* be resisted (Olson, 2006:121).

Arminians believe that God graciously allows man the freedom to choose between life and death (Jos. 24:15; Rom. 6:15-23), that the drawing grace of Christ is *resistible*, that it is freely

available, and that it is extended to *all men* (and women). Olson, (2006:34) holds that “the bondage of the will to sin” is an unavoidable consequence of inherited depravity which, he suggests, can only be overcome by supernatural prevenient grace. He asserts that this supernatural prevenient grace is extended to all of mankind by the Holy Spirit on the grounds of Christ’s sacrifice, and is amplified by the proclamation of the gospel.

Peterson and Williams (2004:174, 175) describes seven points of the Arminian interpretation of prevenient grace;

1. It is Trinitarian
2. It is necessary for salvation
3. It is universal
4. It precedes salvation
5. It restores free will to sinners
6. The result of prevenient grace restoring free will is a gracious synergism
7. It is resistible

Peterson and Williams (2004:176) hold that “Universal and resistible prevenient grace, then, is the genius of Arminian systematic theology, enabling it to be evangelical and synergistic at the same time.” They also quote Collins who asserts that, “Wesley’s doctrine of prevenient grace allows him to hold together, without any contradiction, the four motives of total depravity, salvation by grace, human responsibility, and the offer of salvation to all”.

Peterson and Williams (2004:176) criticise Arminian theology, when they contend that, while the doctrine of prevenient grace is “the glue that holds together their entire systematic theology”, it lacks the necessary biblical support. They argue that scriptures such as John 1:9 (used by Wesley to defend the doctrine of prevenient grace), is quoted outside of its historical and literal context, and does not support the Arminian doctrine.

Peterson and Williams (2004:178) mistakenly suggest that the enlightenment of every man, does not literally apply to every man, but only to those who came in contact with Jesus’ earthly ministry, and by this interpretation they lend a meaning to the text that does not correspond to the context of Christ’s revelation to “the world” as implied by Scriptures such as John 1:9 and 1 John 4:9. They concede that Arminians correctly use Rom. 2:4 to indicate God’s intention in bringing men to repentance by his goodness, but they wrongly argue that, it cannot be applied to all men and that Paul (who is the apostle to the gentiles) directs his arguments to Israel only and excludes the New Testament Church in general and the congregation of Christians to whom the letter was addressed.

4.2.4.2 Salvation by grace alone

The Synod of Orange (AD 529) condemned semi-Pelagianism, refused to affirm Augustine's doctrine of predestination, and seemed to soften Augustine's rigid Monergism into a synergism that is more compatible with Arminianism than Calvinism. They held that, divine grace is necessary unto faith and that universal preceding grace is universally given to all but that a personal response to the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit is necessary for salvation (Peterson and Williams, 2004:38, 39). This decision of the Council of Orange is compatible with Arminian theology but not with the determinist Calvinistic and monergistic Calvinism that would follow some years later.

Olson (2011:169), in his defence of Arminian theology, asserts that God's grace, "is powerful and persuasive but not compelling in the determinative sense. It leaves the sinner a person, not an object". Grounds (Olson, 2011:169) rightfully asserts that, "God deals personally with human beings....Grace that left no option whatever would not be grace, it would be something else. We should have to say 'By force were ye saved, and not of yourselves'".

Arminians affirm the New Testament teaching that salvation is by grace alone (Eph. 2:8), and that it cannot, by any means, be earned. Olson (2006:36) makes an important statement with regards to the Arminianism interpretation of the role of prevenient grace, in contrast to what many Calvinists believe,

Arminian and Calvinist theologies - like all synergisms and monergisms - diverge over the role humans play in salvation...prevenient grace does not interfere with the freedom of the will. It does not bend the will or render the will's response certain. It only enables the will to make the free choice to either cooperate with or resist grace. Cooperation does not contribute to salvation, as if God does part and humans do part; rather cooperation in Arminian theology is simply non-resistance to grace. It is merely deciding to allow grace to do a work by laying down all attempts at self justification and self purification, admitting that only Christ can save. Nevertheless, God does not make this decision for the individual; it is a decision individuals, under the pressure of prevenient grace, must make for themselves...Arminians recognise also that the cooperation of the human will is necessary because in the last stage the free agent decides whether the grace proffered is accepted or rejected.

Peterson and Williams (2004:140) correctly contends that Arminian theology places a restriction on the freedom of God. They say that, according to Arminian theology,

God can never determine a human decision. He may act persuasively, but never coercively. Further, God can only will what he foresees will happen through the agency of human beings.

Thus, human decision is logically prior to and determinative of the divine will. The human will is free, but the divine will is not.

Wesley (Olson, 2011:129) affirmed that man was totally depraved and spiritually helpless. It is God's gift of prevenient grace, offered freely to all, enabling all to willingly and freely (libertarian freedom) accept the offer of God's free salvation. This grace is resistible. Man is enabled by God, through the gift of Prevenient Grace, to work together with God for his salvation. Olson (2011:129) summarises; "This power to work together with God for salvation (which is all God's doing) is simply the calling, enlightening, enabling grace that God implants in a human heart because of his love and because of the work of Christ". Arminians hold that election is based on God's foreknowledge of "whosoever will" freely accept God's offer of salvation, and reprobation is the result of freely rejecting God's offer of salvation. Prevenient Grace is freely given to both the elect and the reprobate, enabling them to make this decision Wesley held that it is more to the glory of God to save a person as a free agent than by Irresistible Grace. Classical Arminianism, unlike Calvinism, does not require, according to Wesley, that God "hate anyone or treat anyone unjustly." Wesley rejected Calvinism's omnicausality with relation to God, sin and evil and on the grounds of God's morally perfect character (Olson 2011:129).

Olson (2006:35) correctly concludes that both Calvinists and Arminians affirm a belief in prevenient grace, although they do interpret it differently. Calvinists view prevenient grace as irresistible and effectual, which means that this grace regenerates a person without any involvement, consent, or cooperation from his side. After passively receiving regeneration, he is then given the gifts of faith and repentance. Arminians view this grace as resistible, but essential enablement to overcome the resistance to God's love and to then choose to either accept God's gift of salvation or reject it.

The doctrine of prevenient grace is also defended theologically from the Arminian perspective by asserting that God's love for mankind is universal due to God's nature of love. Scriptures such as John 3:16, Rom 11:32, 2 Pet 3:9, John 1:29, Rom 5:17-21, 1 Tim 2:6, and Heb 2:9 are used to support the Arminian argument (Peterson and Williams, 2004:179).

Peterson and Williams (2004:117) objects to the Arminian interpretation of God's grace. They assert, from their interpretation of what "grace" is that,

The Arminian notion of prevenient grace is barely gracious at all. Its goal is the restoration of the free will, a will that the vast majority of people will then employ to reject Christ and his

work. From a Calvinistic perspective, such grace is decidedly underwhelming, for it suggests a view of God whose primary interest is not redemption but rather the restoration and protection of free will.

When Peterson and Williams says that, “The Arminian notion of prevenient grace is barely gracious at all”, one must ask the question, “What is their definition of ‘grace’? Chafer (1947:4) contends that, “the one thought that is almost exclusively expressed in the New Testament by the word grace, is, in the Old Testament, almost exclusively expressed by the word favour. Grace is favour, and favour is grace.” He describes the word “grace” as, “pure unrecompensed kindness and favour”, and contends that,

What is done in grace is done graciously. From this exact meaning there can be no departure; otherwise grace ceases to be grace. To arrive at the scope and force of the Bible doctrine of salvation by grace alone we need to follow consistently the path indicated by the exact meaning of the word.

If this is an acceptable definition of grace, and it can consistently be applied, the Arminian notion of universal prevenient grace seems to be more congruent with the meaning of the word than the Calvinistic notion of grace, as being overpowering, irresistible, and forcefully applied.

4.2.5 “P” - Conditional Perseverance (VS Perseverance of the Saints)

- I. Those who believe and are truly saved can lose their salvation by failing to keep up their faith, etc.

(All Arminians are not in agreement on this point; some have held that believers are eternally secure in Christ-that once a sinner is regenerated, he can never be lost) (Steele & Thomas, 1963:18).

4.2.5.1 Conditional perseverance

Calvinists and Arminians agree that Christians need to persevere in “believing the gospel, loving Christ and other believers and living Godly lives”. Arminians, however, disagree with Calvinists when Calvinists insist that scripture teaches that perseverance is a consequence of salvation in the same way that salvation is a consequence of election (Peterson and Williams, 2004:77, 79).

Williams (1996/2:122) holds that, Gods grace is unconditional but that there is no unconditional persistence in salvation. He supports this statement with the following Scriptures:

- 1 Cor. 10:12 (EMTV) “So then, let him who thinks he stands take heed, lest he should fall!”
- Heb. 2:1 (EMTV) “On account of this we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away”
- John 15:6 (EMTV) “If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out like a branch and dries up; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned.”
- Col. 1:23 (EMTV) “if indeed you continue in the faith, having been founded and firm and not drifting away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was proclaimed to all creation under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.”

Möller (1997:97) gives a very apt description of salvation in saying that, “Salvation is not ‘something’ which man receives” but that it is, “nothing less than sharing in the life of Christ”. He contends that, “Man either has Christ or he does not have Him. You are either in Christ and Christ in you, or you are estranged from Him” and that “there is no intermediate stage in which you are not saved, yet not lost”. He then quotes John 3:36, which says that, “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe in the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

4.2.5.2 Assurance of Salvation

The final article of the remonstrance (Peterson and Williams, 2004:118) states that,

Those who are incorporated into Jesus Christ and thereby become partakers of his life-giving Spirit have abundant strength to strive against satan (sic), sin, the world, and their own flesh and to obtain the victory; it being well understood [that this is] through the assistance of the grace of the Holy Spirit, and that Jesus Christ assists them through his Spirit in all temptations, extends the hand, and – if only they are prepared for warfare and desire his help and are not negligent – keeps them standing, so that by no cunning or power of satan (sic) they can be led astray or plucked out of Christ’s hands...”

Assurance of salvation does not lie in the belief in an eternal decree that some are elected, but in the witness of the Spirit, that testifies of salvation, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with

our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Rom 8:16 KJV). Arminius is quoted by Picirilly (2002:203), where he asserts that,

[God] embraces no one in Christ unless he is in Christ. But no one is in Christ except by faith in Christ, which is the necessary means of our union with Christ. If anyone falls from that faith, he falls from that union, and consequently, from the favor of God by which he was previously embraced in Christ.

Möller (1997:108) agrees with Arminius, and states that salvation exists in the relationship we have with Jesus Christ and that, “certainty of salvation and endurance in salvation do not comprise of a one-time rebirth or a one-time experience by which one obtains participation in everlasting life. Perseverance in salvation is directly related to this continuing relationship.”

How can one then have assurance of salvation? Lockyer (1964:204) holds that, “As a letter can be written and yet not sealed, so grace may be written within the heart, but faith is not strong enough to set the seal of assurance to the accomplishment of the Holy Spirit.” There is, however, a seal to salvation. The Holy Spirit hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

- 2Co 1:22 “in whom also you, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise”(KJV)
- Eph 1:13 “And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (EMTV).
- Eph 4:30 “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (EMTV).

Rom 5:8 says that, “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (KJV), gives us the assurance that God's attitude toward sinners never changed. We know this simply because God does not change. Jesus died because “God so loved the world” (John 3:16).

4.3 CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 4

Arminians believe that the Bible does not teach justification by election, but that justification is achieved by grace alone in Christ alone. Salvation is a complete work and accomplished by Christ alone, and the appropriation of salvation is by faith alone. Election is a blueprint of God's plan of salvation, accomplished in Jesus Christ.

As in the case of Calvinist theology, there seems to be a myriad of variations in Arminianism regarding certain doctrines. It is also evident that the doctrines of Calvin and Arminius have not consistently been applied in Calvinist and Arminian theologies. It is important, however, that particular insights have been gained by this evaluation that can be used in developing a Pentecostal doctrine of election.

The insights gained in comparing, contrasting, and analysing, the models of election as it is advocated by both Calvinism and Arminianism will be employed in the next chapter in developing a model of election that will scintillate with existing Pentecostal theology. This model of election will incorporate Pentecostal sources, books, and articles in order to construct a model that corresponds to current theological thinking in Pentecostal theology. This proposed model of election is presented in correlation with the TULIP system that stands as the basis for the doctrine of election from both the Calvinist and Arminian models of the doctrine of election.

CHAPTER 5

ESTABLISHING A PENTECOSTAL PARADIGM WITH REGARDS TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ACCEPTABLE MODEL FOR THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

5.1 INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 5

The doctrine of election according to Calvinism and Arminianism has been discussed in the previous chapter. What is learned from the evaluation of the previous two chapters must now be evaluated in terms of Pentecostal theology.

Because there is not a formal, and universally accepted doctrine of election from a Pentecostal perspective, the doctrines of election according to Calvinism and Arminianism can only be compared to what Pentecostal theologians have written with regards to theology, anthropology, hamartiology, and soteriology; as they relate to the subject of election. Pentecostal doctrine in this regard, must, therefore, be gleaned from various sources in support of this model of election, and the views of several Pentecostal theologians are, therefore, incorporated in the development of this model of election.

Möller, (1975:3) correctly contends that, while Pentecostal theologians reject the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, they also must not accept the Arminian perspective without reservation because what Pentecostals believe with regards to the doctrine of election is unique to Pentecostalism. This uniqueness must now be identified and described. What is taught by Pentecostal theologians is now being critically analysed and evaluated in comparison to the doctrines of election from the Calvinist and Arminian persuasion with the Scripture as ultimate authority.

In order to better understand how Pentecostals approach theology, it is important to know how this theology came to be what it is. As with any other theology, knowledge about the roots from which the movement grew and developed illuminates the underlying theological and philosophical assumptions of the theology. Stephenson (2009:1) correctly comments that, “While sometimes dismissed as a movement *merely* of devotional significance with great emphasis on spirituality, Pentecostalism was in fact a theological movement from the beginning.” It was precisely the character of the awakening of the movement in the beginning of the 20th century that led to the writing of many apologetic tracts and booklets.

Pentecostal theology is still relatively young compared to Calvinism and Arminianism. Yong (2009:xiii) affirms this development among Pentecostals and holds that, Pentecostal scholarship is still a fairly new phenomenon” and that Pentecostal theology can still be seen as “a scholarly enterprise that is arguably still in its gestational stage”. The unique character of Pentecostal experience of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, glossalalia and the manifestations of the gifts of the Holy Spirit does, however, lend itself to both the need for an apologetic defence, and an explanation of the experiences and the manifestations. In other words, the extraordinary *sound* of Pentecost still draws the crowds, and calls for a “Peter” to say “For these are not drunken, as ye suppose...” (Act 2:15 KJV), and the conviction and work of the Holy Spirit still makes men call out “What shall we do?” (Act 2:37).

The baptism and operation of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Pentecostal believer has a profound effect on how Pentecostals think about God, themselves, theology, and consequently, their hermeneutical interpretation of the Bible.

Pentecostals do not only see salvation (and election) as merely a theology, that must be read and understood, but also as a unique spiritual experience. Möller (1998:36) renders important insights from a theologian's perspective to the development of theology when he says that,

That which the dogmatist submits is not mere intellectual insight. It also represents insight derived from definite spiritual experiences, enlightenment of the intellect, opening of the heart, a vision of faith and encountering a revelation of that which you cannot comprehend by natural and relational means.

What Möller so eloquently describes, is especially applicable to the writing of Pentecostal theology where theology must describe spiritual experiences that were, at the time of the 20th century awakening, and still are, to a large extent, unknown to many people. The historical background and development of Pentecostalism therefore lends us important insights on the development of classical Pentecostal theology, a classical Pentecostal hermeneutic. Pentecostal theology is still developing, it is in a sense still being written, and the development in theology brings with it also a developing hermeneutical paradigm that is unique to Pentecostalism.

Where Pentecostal theologians such as Williams, Pearlman, Duffield, Van Cleave and Burke had leaned strongly on Arminian paradigms, others such as Möller, Oliverio, Kay, and Anderson have contributed to new paradigms for Pentecostal Theology. These paradigms challenge our way of looking at theology and the Bible and contributes to a better way of expressing what Pentecostals experience and believe.

5.1.1 A historical background to Pentecostalism and the development of Pentecostal theology

Möller (1998:37) quotes Niftrik, who correctly asserts that, "Dogmatics is a function of the church in order to keep on track that which is preached from the pulpit". This particular function of the church was greatly neglected in Pentecostal circles in the 20th century

awakening and the years directly after that. Pentecostals were more concerned about winning souls than writing theology.

Stephenson (2009:1,2) holds that early Pentecostal theology was marked by certain detrimental characteristics which have significantly receded in the last thirty five to fifty years:

1. It was not systematic or comprehensive. (Issues such as the trinity, baptism in the Holy Spirit, glossalalia, divine healing, the rapture of the church, sanctification, and various individual aspects of doctrine were covered in an abundance of tracts. These individual aspects of theology were, however, not comprehensive as a systematic theology.)
2. A lack of academic theological training. (Most early Pentecostal theologians did not have formal academic training. Stephenson (2009,2) claim that this lack of academic training resulted in Pentecostals being accused and labelled as anti-intellectual and opposed to learning while many were in fact avid students of the Scripture.)
3. The pre-critical interpretation of Scripture.
4. A lack of philosophical reflection. (This, Stephenson claims, impeded them from critically develop and reflect on their own philosophical presuppositions.)
5. An ignorance of patristic, medieval, and modern theological concerns.

The Pentecostal evangelist, Bennet F. Lawrence (Oliverio:19) wrote in 1916, in the early years of the Pentecostal movement that,

The older denominations have a past which is their own in a peculiar sense; they can trace the beginnings of their Church and the course of its history subsequent to its foundation. The time between the beginning and the present has been sufficient to establish precedent, create habit, formulate custom. In this way they have become possessed of a two-fold inheritance, a two-fold guide of action, a two-fold criterion of doctrine – the New Testament and the church position. The Pentecostal movement has no such history; it leaps the intervening years crying, “Back to Pentecost”. In the minds of these honest hearted thinking men and women, this work of God is immediately connected with the work of God in New Testament days.

Pentecostal Theology did not fall from heaven. The absence of a strong systematic theology did, however, lead to various strains of theological and philosophical thought being brought into Pentecostalism as people from every possible denomination and from every corner of the world were converted to Pentecostalism. What made it worse is that there was, and still is to some extent, an aversion to theological training in some Pentecostal circles.

Pentecostals, who were interested in theology, consequently leaned strongly on established theologians from slightly different theological persuasions. The influence of Calvinism and Arminianism is, therefore, apparent in especially the early Pentecostal theologians' writings when their blind following of prominent Calvinist or Arminian theologians caused them to betray a strictly Pentecostal ethos.

Pentecostals admit that many aspects of their theological paradigm have been inherited from the Bible believing, root churches from which the Movement originally developed. Pentecostal theology has developed from the roots of mainly Arminianism that in itself stems from the rich tradition and history of the Reformation, and it was therefore, also in its development, subject to some of the influences of Calvinism.

Theological paradigms are, however, influenced by experiences. Theological paradigms comprise of beliefs, assumptions, and experiences that are mutually informative and interdependent on one another. Beliefs guide assumptions and the interpretation of experiences, but experiences can also alter assumptions and beliefs. Jacobsen (2006:5) correctly holds that it is not the uniqueness of the experience *per se* that gives Pentecostal theology its distinction, but it is how Pentecostals interpret, categorise and formulate their theology with regards to these experiences. He holds that, "Religious experience can be extraordinarily powerful, but religious experience does not produce a movement. A movement requires words to define what it stands for and words to describe itself to others".

What really sets Pentecostal theology apart from Calvinism and Arminianism, theology is that it is a theology of encounter. It is based on a person's experience of encounter with God through His manifested presence, the Scriptural revelation of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the experience of regeneration, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Pentecostal theology therefore has the apologetic task to explain the encounter with God, the experience and empowerment of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the manifested presence and power of God, and how Pentecostals view themselves theologically in terms of Christ as Saviour, Baptiser, Healer, and soon coming King.

5.1.2 The restoration of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit to the Church

Hayford (Duffield and van Cleave, 1987:ix) contends that, "What God did through Luther in recovering the message of salvation, and did through Wesley in recovering the message of holy life and service, He did through the early Pentecostal revival in recovering the dynamism of the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit to the Church." Pentecostalism is, therefore, not merely a phenomenon that had its origin at the turn of the 19th century, but must be seen as an integral part of God's work of restoration of truth to the Church, as the Body of Christ in accordance to the model of the New Testament Church of Acts. Wyckoff (, 1995:454) asserts that, "Pentecostals believe that recovery of the doctrine and experience of being baptised in the Holy Spirit is comparable to the Reformation's recovery of the doctrine of justification by faith."

Most Pentecostals would still argue that the foundation of Pentecostalism (and for Pentecostal theology) was laid in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost when 120 disciples were baptised in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues. Anderson (2004:2) holds that "The Early Church was a community of the Holy Spirit, and the freedom of expression and spontaneity may not have been very different from that of many Pentecostal and Charismatic churches today". He further contends (2004:2) that phenomena such as prophesy, healing, and speaking in tongues that can be viewed as distinctive of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, were common occurrences in the New Testament Church.

The Christians of the first century mostly lost their zeal for God and therewith also the outworking of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit operating in their lives. This is apparent from Scriptures such as Rev. 2:4 (EMTV) "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love", and the fact that the Church lost its former power. Anderson (2004:19), however, holds that, "throughout the two thousand year history of Christianity there have been reports of charismata and other phenomena associated with the emergence of Pentecostalism in the earlier twentieth century" and that, "the Church Fathers never suggested that the gifts of the Spirit had ceased".

Möller (1955:54) refers to several of the church fathers who wrote about the gifts and operation of the Holy Spirit, and in particular, the speaking in other tongues. Some of the Church fathers he refers to are:

- Irenaeus (115 – 202 AC)... "Net so het ons ook verskillende broeders in die kerk gehoor wat profetiese gawes besit, en wat deur die Gees in allerhande tale praat." [*Likewise did*

we also hear various brothers in the church who possess prophetic gifts, and who through the Spirit, spoke in many different languages.”]

- Tertulian (160 – 220)... “Laat hom profete voortbring wie nie deur menslike wysheid maar deur die Gees van God spreek, dinge aangaande die toekoms voorspel en geheimenisse van die hart openbaar; laat hom ‘n psalm, ‘n gesig of gebed lewer maar laat dit net deur die Gees in ekstase wees, dit is, in ‘n verrukking; en laat hom bewys of hy enige uitleg van tale ontvang het.” [*“Let him bring forth prophets who speak not by human wisdom but through the Spirit of God, who predict things regarding the future and reveal the secrets of the heart; let him offer a psalm, a vision or prayer, but let it only be through the Spirit in ecstasy, it is in a rapture of senses; and let him prove if he has received any interpretation of tongues”*]
- Justin Martyr... “Daar is onder ons profetiese gawes, selfs op hierdie oomblik. U kan by ons vroue sowel as mans sien wie gawes van die Gees van God het.” [*“There is among us prophetic gifts, even at this very moment. You can see with us women as well as men who possess the gifts of the Spirit of God.”*]
- Ciprian [middle of third century]... “Benewens gesigte in die nag en selfs in die dag, was onskuldige kinders onder ons gevul met die Heilige Gees; en in ekstase het hulle gesien, gehoor, en gepraat aangaande die dinge wat God ons graag vermaan en leer.” [*“Apart from visions by night and even by day, innocent children among us were filled with the Holy Spirit; and they saw, spoke, and heard about the things which God readily admonishes and teaches us.”*]
- Augustine (353-430) ... “Ons maak nog soos wat die apostels gedoen het toe hulle hande op die Samaritane gelê het en die Heilige Gees op hulle afgebid het. Dit word verwag dat bekeerlinge in nuwe tale sal praat.” [*“We still follow the habit of the apostles as when they laid hands on the Samaritans and prayed the Spirit came down on them. It is expected that new converts must speak in tongues.”*]

Pentecostalism encompasses much more than the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Fawcett (personal communication October 14, 2014) asserts that “As a committed life-long Pentecostal, I have a problem identifying with the concept that Pentecostals are merely an updated version of evangelicals...” He contends that, Pentecostalism cannot be defined as Evangelical truth with the addition of the baptism of the Holy Spirit simply because the Church of Jesus Christ was not founded until the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and that the disciples, even after their salvation experience, were powerless until their enduement of power at Pentecost.

The Church of God can therefore not claim to have the fullness of what God intended the Church without the spiritual power and manifestation of the Holy Spirit. There are more characteristics of Pentecostalism that are shared with the Church of Acts than churches who only hold to evangelical truth (without the manifestations of the Holy Spirit). Some of these characteristics are glossalalia, the various gifts of the Holy Spirit to the church, and the motivation and empowerment of the laity to minister. Evangelical Churches should, therefore, rather be described as those who lost something of what God intended for the Church, then saying that Pentecostalism is an “ad-on” to what is considered evangelical truth.

The experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit does not only enable the recipient of this gift to speak in tongues (glossalalia), but it also transforms the person from the inside out. It truly is “power from on high”, a divine enablement that gives a Spirit filled believer “a more intense revelation of who Christ is and a new found boldness to witness” (F.P. Möller, personal communication June 6, 2015).

The Great Commission was given to the disciples (and the Church as the body of Christ) with the condition that they wait for the baptism of the Holy Spirit before they attempt to fulfil the Great Commission. Acts 1:4,8 (KJV) states,

And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. (8) But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Attempting to fulfil the Great Commission without the baptism of the Holy Spirit, therefore, leaves one not fully equipped for the task.

The teaching on the gifts of the Holy Spirit are not only incorporated in Pentecostal theology, but the practice of these gifts are still evident in many Pentecostal Churches. The manifestation of the Holy Spirit was a daily occurrence in the New Testament Church. In present day Pentecost (apart from the practice of glossalalia), the manifestation of the Holy Spirit is experienced more sporadically. Fawcett (personal communication October 14, 2014) holds that, “Present day Pentecost has not yet been fully restored to that experienced in the Early Church. I believe that we must understand and present the Scriptures in the authentic context rather than in the still developing context of partially restored Pentecostalism”.

5.1.3 The origin of Pentecostal Theology

The development of the Pentecostal movement as we know it today was profoundly influenced by the revivals at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, and these revivals resulted from the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. These revivals occurred in various mainline denominations with various traditions.

Much of the basic tenets of Pentecostalism, its theology, and many of the traditions are not specifically distinctive to Pentecostalism, but are shared with the evangelical churches from which the current movement of Pentecostalism developed (Bond in Clark, Lederle, et al, 1989:134). Since these churches or groups of believers, were mostly Arminian in their beliefs, Pentecostalism tends to be more disposed to Arminian theology than to Calvinism.

The core doctrines of Pentecostal theology were inherited from mainly four different traditions namely, the Wesleyan Holiness tradition, Radical Evangelicalism and American Revivalist tradition, the Keswick movement and the coalition of pre-millennialists (Oliverio, 2012:19).

John Wesley published a book called, *A Short Account of Christian Perfection* in 1760, which encouraged his followers to seek a second work of grace, which, subsequent to conversion, would “deliver one from the defect in one’s moral nature that prompts sinful behaviour” (McGee, 1995:15).

The Holiness movement was established when Wesley’s followers spread his teachings in the United States of America. The Holiness movement in turn, produced writers such as Phoebe Palmer, who wrote *The Promise of the Father* in 1859, and a man called William Arthur who wrote the book *Tongues of Fire* in 1856. There were two prominent revivals in the nineteenth century, one in England under the ministry of Edwin Irving in 1830, and another in the south of India under the ministry of J.C. Acroolappen in 1860, where speaking in tongues and prophesy were evidenced (McGee, 1995:15).

It was at the end of the nineteenth century that, according to McGee (1995:15), “the Holiness movement had become preoccupied with the ‘Pentecostal Reformation of Wesleyan doctrine’ and the four themes of the full gospel⁴⁰. The notion of the overcoming of sin was developed due to the strong Methodist-Holiness influence over the Lutheran concept of simultaneously being sinner and saint. A therapeutic, rather than a forensic paradigm of salvation was therefore advocate (Oliverio, 2012: 23).

⁴⁰ The themes of Christ the Savior, Baptizer (sanctifier), Healer, and coming King, were described as the ‘full gospel’ or ‘fourfold gospel’ (McGee, 1995:14).

Small Pentecostal groups, many that originated from plantation prayer grounds and some from the camp meetings of the American South eventually influenced and reshaped the religious, cultural, and social environment of North American cities. Individuals and small groups of believers served as missionaries and evangelists to promote and spread Pentecostalism worldwide. (Vondey, 2013:13)

Möller (1955:66) mentions that an article published in the *Kerkbode* in 1859 calls for members of the Dutch Reformed Church to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit over South Africa. This is an indication that revival was imminent. The economic decline of 1857 – 1858 caused many people in America, to lose their jobs. Panic and desperation caused people to turn to God and public prayer meetings were the order of the day. Möller (1955:66) quotes Keet who describes how adults and children alike were overwhelmed with a sense of seriousness, a feeling of condemnation and an earnest desire for salvation. The emotional tension experienced by these people was so severe, that they were unable to work for days and some were even unable to eat. The Holy Spirit was poured out in an unprecedented way, and up to 50 000 people came to salvation per day.

Möller (1975:15) holds that Charles Parham, who gave his students at the Bethel Bible College in Topeka an assignment on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, concluded from their research that, “while there were different things occurred (sic) when the Pentecostal (sic) blessing fell, the indisputable proof on each occasion was that they spake with other tongues”. Möller (1975:16) contends that this exegetical conclusion precipitated the Pentecostal movement and made it possible. Kay (2009:57) holds that, “Parham gave to Pentecostalism a distinctive stance on speaking with tongues. He explicitly associated speaking with tongues with the Pentecostal baptism and, by this means, removed imprecision from the terminology.”

Kay (2009:57, 228) holds that although Frank Sandford equated the baptism of the Holy Spirit with glossalalia, before Parham, the term “baptism in the Holy Spirit” was metaphorically applied to any spiritual experience. Parham taught that speaking in tongues was the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The manifestation of the Holy Spirit, first in Topeka Kansas, and then at Azusa Street, in Los Angeles, California, resulted in an awakening at the turn of the 20th century that affects the Church worldwide (Hayford in Duffield and Van Cleave, 1987: ix).

Van der Vyver, Coetzee and Buys (1975:44) hold that the phenomenon of people speaking in tongues was seen as a “second” Pentecost, and was, and still is, severely criticised by some who assert that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was poured out, universally, to the Church in Acts 2, and never again.

Van der Vyver, Coetzee and Buys (1975:44) hold that many organisations such as the Christian Strivers Union, Christian Students Association, the Oxford Group, and the like, sprung up at this time of revival experienced in the early 1900’s. They also quote Keet, (specifically with regards to the Oxford group) who asserts that, many people including himself had experienced a tremendous blessing through what they did; the movement spread to over forty countries and that hundreds of thousands newly committed their lives to God, resulting in a new relationship to others.

Keet is criticised by Van der Vyver, Coetzee and Buys (1975:44, in saying that if a professor of theology expresses these sentiments, what effect would he have on his students, and what effect would the students have on the assemblies to whom they will minister? They criticise him for having elements of Methodism, in wanting people to repent. Van der Vyver, Coetzee and Buys (1975:81) also criticise the work of the Christian Students Association stating that these workers very easily bring children under the impression that repentance is an act of the will. This criticism portrays their Calvinist theological perception and also explains the reason why Calvinism has, in some circles, been criticised as being anti-evangelistic.

Hodges (1977:95) holds that, “since God commands all men everywhere to repent, we are obligated to preach repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as the means of salvation to the nominal Christian as well as to the pagan (Acts 20:21; 17:30)”. He further holds that nominal Christians (those who have not experienced a spiritual new birth), are generally attached to churches where, “The member who is baptized as an infant and partakes of the sacrament is considered thereby to be a Christian, even though in experience he may know nothing of the witness of God’s Spirit to his heart, the blessing of sins forgiven, and the new life in Christ.” He (1977:95) correctly concludes, that in these instances, “the church is substituted for Christ as the dispenser of salvation”.

The crisis for those who did repent and experience “the witness of God’s Spirit to his heart, the blessing of sins forgiven, and the new life in Christ”, is identified and described by Hodges (1977:95) when he asserts that, “a ‘church’ that has no power to bring souls to the personal knowledge of salvation is also unable to care for such souls when they are reached by other means”.

With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as a world-wide phenomenon came Pentecostal Theology. Necessarily and logically, in terms of the apologetic need for the explanation of the experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the gifts and the ministry of the lay people were empowered by these gifts.

5.2 WHAT IS DISTINCTIVE ABOUT PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY?

Pentecostals have a unique experiential approach to salvation that stems from its conception in times of revival (Parker 2014:313). It follows that there is also an emphasis on the manifested presence and power of God, the gifts, and manifestations of the Holy Spirit. The very real presence of God and a personal encounter with God and an experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit directly influences Pentecostal theology, soteriology, and the interpretation of doctrine of election.

The American revivalist tradition advocated the importance of conversion that was instant and immediate. A penitent sinner needed to confess his sins, and ask God for mercy. A sinner would then, on account of his faith and confession instantaneously be born again, and be transformed from a hell-deserving sinner to a saint (Jacobsen, 2006:6)

5.2.1 The classification of Pentecostalism

Anderson (2004:10), in his attempt to identify the distinctiveness of Pentecostalism, holds that “Pentecostals have identified themselves by so many paradigms that diversity itself becomes a primary defining characteristic of Pentecostal and Charismatic identity”. He does

however mention Hollenweger⁴¹ who distinguished three versions of Pentecostalism, namely: “Classical Pentecostals”; “the Charismatic renewal movement” and “Pentecostal or Pentecostal-like independent churches” (2004:13). Dyer (2011:1) distinguishes three groups as well, but prefers to classify Pentecostalism as “classical”, “Charismatic renewal movements” and “newer independent movements” or “neo-Pentecostal”. She defines classical Pentecostalism (which is the focus of this study) as applying to groups “which contain reference to Pentecostal phenomena in their founding documents”.

Since Pentecostal theology mainly originated from the “Pentecostal Reformation” of the Wesleyan doctrine (McGee, 1995:15), Pentecostalism generally leans toward Arminianism, rather than to Calvinism, in the sense that it is also evangelical. Synan (1981:39) holds that the Pentecostal movement has mainly been shaped by three distinct spiritual Reformations, namely the Lutheran, Wesleyan, and Pentecostal (A Reformation to rival the movements of a Luther or a Wesley). Pentecostal theology is, according to Synan (1981:39) also influenced by “Luther’s doctrine of justification by faith as the sine qua non of the evangelical faith, and holds that, the “new birth” is the conversion experience that admits the believer into the family of God”.

Synan (1981:40) further contends that, the baptism with the Holy Spirit, with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues, is “the threshold through which” the believer enters the life of the Spirit and the New Testament Christianity is restored. He is correct in asserting that the believer enters the life of the Spirit through the baptism of the Spirit, but this is not the be all and end all of New Testament Christianity. Life in the Spirit comprises of far more than speaking in tongues.

A person who is baptized in the Holy Spirit, and endued with power from on high, still needs to learn how to use and develop the gifts of the Spirit. Paul exhorts the young Corinthian church in Cor. 12:31; 14:1; and 14:39 to strive for the “better” gifts and especially to prophesy, while not neglecting glossalalia. This proves that whoever is baptized in the Holy Spirit is not immediately capable to exercise all of the gifts of the spirit. Apart from being baptized in the Spirit, every Christian also needs to “...grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...” (2 Pet. 3:18 EMTV).

⁴¹ Walter Hollenweger is described by Anderson as the founding father of academic research in Pentecostalism (Anderson, 2004:13)

5.2.2 The character of Pentecostal theology

Vondeg (2013:17) holds that modern day Pentecostalism has become a global phenomenon due to the staggering increase in numbers of Pentecostal believers worldwide, large camp meetings, national revivals, and mega churches. There is a homogeneity among Pentecostal believers that allows for the term “Pentecostal” to be used for all varieties within the movement globally. Vondeg (2013:17) contends that there are certain characteristics that identify Classical Pentecostalism worldwide, such as:

1. Revivalism – Part of the global temperament of Classical Pentecostalism is the performance and maintenance of original manifestations of a revival.
2. Generic appeal - The appeal to, and association with all social classes.
3. A significant involvement in missions – Sparked by its revivalist and eschatological ideals, missions is a prerogative for Pentecostals that is practiced globally with a sense of urgency and pragmatism.
4. A multicultural and multiracial character – Some of the success of the global expansion of Pentecostalism is attributed to its “rootedness in African American liturgy as well as the camp meeting culture of the South” and the international engagement in civil rights movements.
5. A catalyst for change – Classical Pentecostalism serves as a catalyst for change in “worship, liturgical practices, and particularly the kinaesthetic and spiritual elements of Christian life”. The typical Pentecostal practises of “dancing, jumping, waving, clapping, shouting, and swaying, express not merely the particular spirituality of a group but have come to represent a broadly accepted and replicated understanding of Christian worship in interaction with God and one another”.

Smith and Young (Smith, 2010: [iv]) hold that Pentecostals have been working “internally” for the past fifty years, in order to articulate a distinctive Pentecostal Theology. They hold that the new generation of Pentecostal theologians are increasingly gaining attention of those outside of Pentecostal circles and are “engaging in theological and cultural analysis of a variety of issues from a Pentecostal perspective...”, and that this generation is, “engaged in contributing to and even impacting the conversations of the wider theological academy”.

Vondeg (2013:18) contends that, “Classical Pentecostalism combines a focus on conversion and revival with a sense of urgency and pragmatism that ultimately has made it the most significant global missionary movement in the twentieth century.” He holds that, the church of the Reformation did less evangelistic work during the 200 years of its existence than what the

Pentecostal movement accomplished in 20 years. Theological formalism and the commitment to studying the Scriptures did not have the same effect as the Church ablaze with power from on high.

Kremer (2010:73) holds that the Pentecostal movement “having embraced the fullness of the Holy Spirit...effectively ministers from a revelation based approach like the Ephesian Church.” He (2010:64) asserts that the Lord Jesus Christ gave power to His Church in only one way, and that is through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and that the effect of this power is evident through the many exploits of Pentecostals in the last Century. He (2010:64) gives the following statistics about the development of Pentecostalism:

- In the 1900's just after the Asuza Street Revival, there were very few Pentecostal Christians on the earth.
- In 1970 during the Charismatic Movement, there were 74 million.
- In 1996, just 26 years later, there were 475 million.
- In 2000 there are an estimated 550 million.
- Pentecostal Christians conduct largest (sic) evangelistic campaigns in the history of the world with numbers of people raging into the millions at a time.
- Pentecostal Christians operate the largest TV/radio programs in the world.
- Pentecostals have the fastest number of newly planted churches.
- Pentecostal Christians have the fastest rate of membership in the world.
- Pentecostal Christians have the largest churches in the world, one with over 800 000 members.
- Pentecostal Christians have the most consistent proof of signs, wonders and miracles.

Coulter (Kay, 2009:258), in an attempt to describe the distinctiveness of Pentecostal theology, contends that it is “not any individual doctrine per se, but the entirety of those doctrines and their interaction with one another”. Kay (2009:258) asserts that,

It is not that Pentecostals hold different beliefs from others, but that they configure these beliefs to form a new normative pattern. Indeed, the interaction between Scripture, revelation and experience of the Spirit leads Pentecostals into new territory. It allows them to take the view that they are being “led by the Spirit” (Rom. 8:14) into new understandings. In a more radical continuation of this motion, it is possible to argue that Pentecostals could and should take a view of the canonical Scriptures that would distinguish them very sharply from other evangelical Christians.

5.2.3 The baptism of the Holy Spirit

Donald (Möller, 1975:2) contends that, If there is one thing that is distinctly characteristic of Pentecostalism, it is the belief that “the outward evidences that accompanied the baptism in the Holy Spirit in primitive Christian experiences, can be, should be, and are repeated up to date. Möller (1975:2) further holds that Pentecostals teach that Spirit baptism with the

evidence of speaking in other tongues is a definite experience that follows regeneration as it is documented in Scriptures such as Acts 2:4; 10:44-46; 19:8; and 1 Kor. 14.

Kay (2009:229) correctly asserts that Pentecostals make a distinction between the sign of tongues and the gift of tongues. Burke (2013:41) teaches with regard to the gift of tongues, that it “is exercised by a Spirit-filled individual when the Holy Spirit gives him a message in tongues”, and distinguishes it from the sign of tongues (glossalalia), which he says, “is the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit’s empowerment in a person’s life”.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is, however, so much more than just speaking in tongues. It enables those who are baptised to operate in a new spiritual dimension, attuned to the Spirit of God, hearing the “voice” of the Spirit, and acting on the promptings of the Spirit. Duffield and Van Cleave (1987:304) hold that, “Christ’s finished work makes provision for the fullness of the Spirit beyond regeneration, of which believers may, or may not, avail themselves.” They contend (1987:304) that, while the greatest promise to the world is the offer of Salvation in Christ (John 3:16), the greatest promise to the Church is found in Acts 1:8, namely that, “ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you...”

For those who have not yet experienced the blessing of the power of God flowing through them, being guided by the Spirit, and allowing themselves to operate in the supernatural, the phenomena of Pentecost may seem as strange as it was for the people of Jerusalem more than 2000 years ago. Van der Vyver, Coetzee and Buys (1975:43, 44) quotes Keet who describes the working of the Holy Spirit in the revival in Ireland asserting that,

Gedurende deze diensten...luister het volk niet alleen, maar weende. Zij riepen: ‘Amen! Amen!’ En van tijd tot tijd viel de een naar de ander neder, verslagen door een gevoel hunner zonden. Zij werden na de kerk gedragen, welke aldus een hospitaal werd, waarin de neêrgevelden warden ontvanger, die achterevolgens daarin gedragen warden. Ik ging naar de kerk, en daar zag ik het vreemdste toneel, dat ik ooit aanschouwde. Acht of tien van hen de neêrgeveld waren, waren hier en daar op die banken, omgeven van vrienden, de voor hen baden en gepaste gesangen zongen, en hen vermaanden. Die neêrgevelden, zijn sommige op die kniën, sommige uitgestrekt, allen schreewen, weenen, bidden wanhopende of juichende; het is eene geestelike verwarring, die men niet beschrijven kan. Ten zelfde tijde zingen de zamenvergadering een lied, en daarna bid de leraar, de niet op de kanzel is, nog zelfs zich gewend heft naar de kudde, in hoogte, luide stem, als wil hij den hemel geweld aandoen.

[During these services ... the people did not only listen, but [they] wept. They cried: "Amen! Amen!" And from time to time one after the other would fall down, devastated by their conviction of sin. They were being carried to the church, as to a hospital, where those who fell down were being received. I went to church, and I saw the strangest scene that I had ever seen. Eight or ten of them who had fallen down were on the benches, surrounded by friends, who were praying for them and sang appropriate songs, and exhorted them. Some of those who fell down were on their knees, some were stretched out [on the floor], and all of them were either shouting, weeping, praying despairingly, or rejoicing; it was an indescribable spiritual confusion. The assembly were singing a song at the same time, and then the pastor would

pray, whilst not being in the pulpit, yet while still facing the congregation, in a high pitched, loud voice, as if he intended to do violence to heaven.]

What some may experience, from the outside, as being “eene geestelike verwarring” (a spiritual confusion), others experience as the power of God, that can in an instant, permanently transform their lives. For those “lead by the Spirit”, there is order, but it is not orchestrated by a liturgist, a master of ceremonies, or a set programme. Sherill (1970:17) describes something of that order when relating to his first experience in a Pentecostal Church, when he says that, “There was an indefinable bond, an almost palpable concord between the separate human beings in that room. The order was a living organic thing, not a response to rules or the direction of a chairman, but to some inner urging, like the cells of a body working together.” One can hardly find a better definition of the body of Christ quickened by the Holy Spirit and operating through its various members in unison.

Experience, and especially the experience of being in the presence of God, is vital to Pentecostal theology and contributes to a Pentecostal worldview. Pentecostals cannot interpret the Scripture, write theology, or attend a service, without the expectancy of the manifestation of the presence of God. One cannot understand an experience intellectually, no matter how well it is described. One needs to *experience* the experience. This view to spiritual reality also naturally contributes to the doctrine of soteriology, and specifically with regards to the doctrine of election, as a *conscious*, volitional response to God’s gracious call, and *the experience* of regeneration, forgiveness of sins and justification by grace.

5.2.4 The operation of the Holy Spirit in a service

Kay (2009:59) holds that “Pentecostalism is revivalistic”, and that Pentecostalism normalised what would otherwise be described as unusual behaviour that occurred during revivals, such as ministry by laity, ministry by women and mixed-race meetings at times and in places where it would normally not have been acceptable. He (2009:59) elaborates on what he calls “revivalism” by describing specific revivalistic behaviour (normalised by Pentecostalism), such as that, “Church services may be prolonged indefinitely. People may, within the church services, behave unpredictably by standing up to pray without warning, sing, speak, and in other ways participate.”

5.2.5 Divine Healing

Although the gift of healing is but one of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit, Anderson (2004:30) it includes “prayer for divine healing” as another characteristic of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. Plüss (2011:305) hold that, while Calvin “regarded any supernatural manifestation of the Spirit as a bonus only given to the earliest church”, Pentecostals believe that healing is available to the church as it was in the Early Church, and that it is based on the atonement. Pentecostals base this belief on Scripture such as Isaiah 53:3-5 as quoted by Peter in 1 Peter 2:24, which emphasise that Jesus paid for our sins and sicknesses on the cross.

This is but one of the aspects of theology that does not specifically relate to the doctrine of election, but it demonstrates the importance that Pentecostals hold for the interaction of God with His children and the immediacy of the presence of God in their daily lives. Calvinism holds that God’s actions can not be influenced by what man does or says, since it would effect the sovereignty of God. Pentecostals believe that because God is sovereign; He answers prayer, intervenes in circumstances, heals the sick, comforts the broken hearted, saves the lost, baptises men, woman and children with the Holy Spirit, and interacts with believers on a daily basis.

5.2.6 The role of the Holy Spirit in salvation

Vondey (2013:74) elaborates on the role of the Holy Spirit in salvation as a distinctive of Pentecostal theology by asserting that, according to Pentecostal theology, Christ is present with the believer only by the Holy Spirit. He (2013:75) asserts that, “the Holy Spirit represents for most Pentecostals an experiential entrance point to the narrative of salvation”. It is only by a spiritual response that a person is able to enter into the presence of God. He holds that, “As Calvary represents a window for Christ to the salvation of the world, Pentecost is seen as the door for Christians to enter the anointed presence of Christ.”

Möller, (1997:92) describes this interaction of the Holy Spirit by asserting that, knowing God means, “to know God who is Spirit through ourselves as spirit...What we do say, is that He, of Whom, through Whom, and to Whom we exist, can never be seen or known disengaged from our own spirit.”

Sherill (1970:115) shares advice he received from a Baptist minister, who said, “If you really want to experience what Pentecost is all about, don’t concentrate on the tongues, but step through the door and meet the Holy Spirit.” Speaking in tongues is a manifestation of a much deeper experience. It is not the experience. Paul states in 1Cor. 14:22 (KJV) “Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not...” Ervin (1968:55) explains this Scripture by asserting that,

When the Apostolic community spoke in tongues, ‘as the Spirit gave them utterance,’ on the day of Pentecost, they were speaking supernaturally languages which they have never learned. To them it was tongues, but to the bystanders who heard and understood them speaking in their dialects, they did not hear tongues, they heard prophesy.

This very simple explanation of 1 Cor. 14:22 shows the importance that Pentecostals hold to the gifts of the Spirit such as prophesy and reiterates the importance of interpreting this message of prophesy to correspond to the written Word of God. It was by the divine revelation of the Holy Spirit that Peter linked this event to the prophesy of Joel, in Joel chapter 2.

Peter in his preaching and interpretation of this event led 3000 people to Christ. There was the convicting work of the Spirit, the drawing of the Spirit, but also the empowerment of the Holy Spirit or unction which enabled Peter to forcefully defend what we now refer to as the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

5.2.7 The unction of the Holy Spirit

“Unction” in Pentecostal terminology, means the divine influence and enablement of the Holy Spirit, and “the anointing” of the Holy Spirit. The anointing of the Holy Spirit is a crucial element of Pentecostalism for the preaching of the gospel, but also in a hermeneutical sense of interpreting Scripture, and consequently, the constructing of theological paradigms within Pentecostal theology.

In relating the crucial importance of unction to the effective preaching of the gospel, Ravenhill (1970:vi) quotes McIntyre who asserts that, “Before the great revival in Gallneukirchen broke out, Martin Boos spent hours and days and often nights in lonely agonies of intercession. Afterwards, when he preached, his words were as flame, and the hearts of people as grass.” He also accentuates the need for unction when he says (1970:8), that, “Present-day preaching, with its pale interpretation of divine truths, causes us to mistake action for unction, commotion for creation, and rattles for revivals”.

Plüss (2011:305) holds that, “People acquainted with Pentecostal beliefs and practice sometimes claim that Pentecostals are those who do everything with the Holy Spirit.” This is especially applicable in reference to Christian ministry in the Body of Christ. In illustrating the dependence of a Pentecostal preacher on the unction of the Holy Spirit, Fawcett (1996:55) teaches that,

When preaching, be responsive to the Holy Spirit and flexible enough should He want you to say or do something that you have not prepared for. Preparation is vitally important, and the Holy Spirit will actively help you prepare. However, there is a sense in which the preparation is not complete until you have preached the message. A preacher who is rigidly bound to his notes cannot be sensitive to the gentle movings of the Holy Spirit in the actual service.

5.2.8 Spontaneous worship

Pentecostals are well known for spending much time and emphasis on praise and worship. Plüss (Kay and Dyer, 2011:308) holds that it is an expression that God is sovereign and worthy of all praise. He asserts that, “Christians from historic churches have been drawn to the fact that Pentecostals could spend a large amount of time praising God simply for who he is, without attaching petitions or qualifiers”. It is further emphasised by the gift of praying to God in other tongues (1 Cor. 14:2, 14; Rom. 8:26). Plüss (Kay and Dyer, 2011:308) contends that, “Praising God is a fundamentally Pentecostal thing to do, for on the day of Pentecost the Jews in Jerusalem were hearing those upon whom the Spirit of God had descended declaring the wonderful works of God (Acts 2:11).” The baptism of the Holy Spirit enables a believer to enter into a dimension of worship that was not possible before.

5.2.9 A mandate for the ministry of reconciliation

Regeneration bears an implication for the individual ministry of each person; – It gives the believer a mandate for the ministry of reconciliation. “Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation” (2Cor. 5:17-18 KJV). This mandate is further accentuated by the baptism of the Holy Spirit as the empowerment to witness, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Act 1:8 EMTV).

Moore (Martin, 2013:12) holds that the Pentecostal paradigm that the Spirit is poured out on all flesh gives rise to the belief that all believers must be a Christ-like witness to the world, be a bearer of the gospel and be able to interpret the Scripture for themselves. There is then also the corporate experience of the congregation of believers, where often times, the manifested presence of God is experienced (Matt. 18:20). Moore (Martin, 2013:13) holds that, “Here the Holy Spirit speaks as nowhere else, bestowing and blending gifts among all the members in order to make manifest God’s Word in the edification of the whole body (1 Corinthians 12:14; Ephesians 4; Romans 12).”

Parker (2014:113) holds that although Pentecostalism has strong pneumatological and experiential elements, “all Pentecostals understood that it was God in Christ who was saving and reconciling the world unto himself and would affirm the traditional Christian vision of a God who both loves mercy and seeks justice”. It is exactly this belief, with the conviction that they are empowered by the Spirit of God and commissioned to the ministry of reconciliation, that Pentecostals believe that it is the responsibility and duty of every believer to engage in the execution of the great commission.

5.3 PENTECOSTAL HERMENEUTICS

5.3.1 The development of Pentecostal hermeneutics

Since Pentecostalism, as we know it today, is still relatively young in comparison with other more established theological perspectives, many people still view it as a movement rather than an institutionalized religion (Parker, 2014:311). Kay (2009:221) holds that, early Pentecostal theology was “a shared, narrative, popular, oral form of theology based on the

believer's 'walk with God'", and it was greatly influenced by individual preachers who "tangled with the text of Scripture, absorbed it until they knew great chunks of it by heart, ...justified their sermons and actions by reference to particular verses and came to acquire expertise in the meaning of complicated Pauline passages." These men were instrumental in writing constitutional documents, which lent particular nuances to their doctrine.

5.3.2 A distinctive Pentecostal Hermeneutic

The fact that Pentecostals "live out" their theology, rather than referring to ancient creeds, lends to it a much different character than that of a more structured theology such as Calvinism. Calvinist theologians tend to lean strongly on the confessionals of their doctrine and ancient creeds to define their experiences. Pentecostals use their experiences in the light of Scripture, to define their theology. Pentecostal theology, because it is a "living theology" must correspond with Scripture *and* make sense of everyday experiences.

Early Pentecostals sought to restore pure religion by crossing the divide of the propositional theology of conservative Protestantism and the reality of their experience of encounter. Their theological beliefs had to be grounded in their own experience and beliefs as well as the authority of Scripture. Oliverio (2012:34) writes that, "While experience could confirm or disconfirm hypotheses about Scripture, Scripture itself could not be disconfirmed. Thus the doctrinal hypotheses needed to be revised, and they were by early Pentecostals"

Kay (2009:223) holds that while "Christianity in the 1700s had put God firmly in heaven", who as a "watchmaker" wound the world up as a clock to run down according a predetermined plan, Pentecostalism have the Holy Spirit breaking into today's world. God is not only seen as a transcendent being in heaven, but also as a being who is "active in the life of the believer and present by the Holy Spirit" through the manifestation of miracles and Holy Spirit gifts. Davies (Martin, 2013:252) asserts that, "Pentecostalism requires a God on the loose, involving himself with the fine details of our earthly existence and actively transforming lives" and that, Pentecostals prefer to "interpret Scripture by encounter rather than exegesis".

Earlier Pentecostal theologians did, therefore, not begin by writing a structured systematic theology according to the traditional format such as the existence of God. They rather engaged themselves with answering questions that related to the understanding and

explanation of their experiences, especially in the light of the experiences of the Early Church in the book of Acts (Parker, 2014:311).

Their main concern was not centred around the existence of God since their experience of the power and presence of God made that question irrational. Instead of writing in a style of medieval scholasticism⁴² where preconceived ideas and philosophies were the basis of the formulation of doctrine, theirs were more apologetic, such as the preaching of Peter in Acts 2. They were apologetically explaining their experience in the light of Scripture, rather than philosophizing about it.

Kay (2009:224), therefore, correctly asserts that Pentecostalism sees “the church as a body of Christ in direct touch with the living God”, and as the “Spirit empowered agency for missionary work across the world to prepare the nations for the end of the age”. Pentecostals do not see the world as a place where the laws of physics mechanically play out and cause events while God is absent in heaven. They believe that God is actively sustaining the universe and able to circumvent the laws of physics at any time. Parker (2014:313) holds that, “Pentecostals live in a world populated by spiritual realities”. The Holy Spirit is for Pentecostals, not only a concept of the Godhead that needs to be intellectually acknowledged and confessed as part of a creed, but He is the very real third Person of the Godhead, manifested through the presence of God, and experienced by every believer.

This perception that Pentecostals have of a God active and involved in their everyday lives, can, therefore, never be reconciled to the deterministic character of higher Calvinism. Pentecostals see God as calling, urging, drawing, and speaking to them. There is a level of knowing the will of God intuitively through the Spirit. This intuition, or guidance of the Spirit, can be confirmed by Scripture. This means that when an individual reads a certain passage of Scripture, the Spirit-filled believer intuitively knows the will of God by applying that Scripture to a present situation. The concept of “being led by the Spirit” is therefore an integral reality for both ministers of the gospel and laity alike and plays a very significant role in Pentecostal hermeneutics. This is specifically evident in the doctrines of sanctification and

⁴² The term “scholasticism” is defined as “the elevation of rational conceptualization over historical action and logical relationships over personal relationships for the sake of the creation of a rational theological system” (Peterson and Williams, 2004: 94).

holiness, as it is believed that the manifested presence of God, or divine/human encounter, must bring about a spiritual transformation (Parker, 2014:314).

The interpretation of Scripture from a Pentecostal perspective has to align with the experience of the presence of God, prophesy, interpretation of tongues, dreams, visions, and spiritual perceptions. It cannot simply be a clinical literal translation of the Bible, without the possibility to apply that Scripture in daily circumstances. Vondey (2013:71) captures the need for a Pentecostal hermeneutic when he holds that,

Pentecostal theology is born out of the need to narrate the experiences of the salvific work of God in Christ and the Spirit and to do so in terms that do justice to their experiences rather than to official formulations of doctrine...Classical Pentecostalism is representative of the larger Pentecostal constituency that has found it difficult to present doctrinal formulations without adopting them from other traditions and without thereby sacrificing the distinctive experiences that identify them in distinction to those traditions...While the experience of God's saving work forms the motivation for Pentecostal theology, it is the Pentecostal worldview and spirituality that inform the articulation and structure of that theology.

Anderson (2004:226) in concurrence with Vondey's point above, holds that most Pentecostals read multiple meanings into the text of the Bible contingent on the meaning it has for the people rather than the meaning of the text in itself. He says that preachers often assign deeper significance to the text that "can only be perceived by the help of the Spirit" and asserts that "Pentecostal preaching throughout the world is illustrative of this principle, where narrative, illustration and testimony dominate the sermon content rather than esoteric and theoretical principles." He (2004:225) further holds that,

Pentecostals may have a concordistic approach in that they take the Bible as it is and look for common ground in real life situations. On finding these correspondences, they believe that God is speaking to them and can do the same things for them. The Bible therefore has immediacy and relevance to life experiences. Pentecostals focus on divine intervention in these daily life situations by constantly emphasising the miraculous and unusual happenings in the community of the local church.

A Biblical example of Pentecostal hermeneutics, that demonstrates Anderson's point above, is when the Apostle Peter applied the Scripture in Joel 2, as an apologetic defence and explanation of the event of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2.

Earlier Pentecostal theology was influenced by a hermeneutic, popularised by Wesley, that comprised of four elements namely, Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. Scripture was pre-critically interpreted through the grid of experience, tradition and rational deductive thinking (Kay, 2009:221, 222). Spiritual and allegorical interpretations and specifically the theological interpretations of the spiritual experiences are distinctive elements of Pentecostal

theology. Pentecostals do in some instances interpret the Bible in relation to historical events when Scripture itself does not provide clear guidance, but a good Pentecostal interpreter discriminates carefully between unsubstantiated testimony and verifiable facts (Stephenson, 2009:20).

Anderson (2004:227, 228) holds that the crucial question for Pentecostals, regarding their interpretation of the Bible, is, “How does the Bible relate to our daily experiences?” This leads to the fact that Pentecostals often “do not separate their understanding of the gospel from their personal experience of the events the Bible describes”. The key to Pentecostal hermeneutics lies in the concept of the Full Gospel” or Foursquare Gospel” model, which is “a Christological construct where Christ is centrally Saviour, Healer, Baptiser and Coming King”.

Davies (Martin, 2013:256) refers to Croatto’s hermeneutical analysis and concurs with Anderson in asserting that the fundamental questions that Pentecostals ask with regards to the interpretation of Scripture is, “What does it mean to me?” and “What should I do about it?”, and that it is less important to Pentecostals what the Scripture means in its original context. Davies (Martin, 2013:262) holds that,

For us, the application is vital in that it connects the text to “real world” issues and affords us the opportunity to read and appropriate it for transformative ends. As Gordon Anderson has observed, “Pentecost links rational discourse with powerful demonstrations and emotional responses. It moves preaching from the sterile pulpit and lecture hall of rationality and transforms it into prophetic witness in the very untidy arena and marketplace of street level experience.

Moore (Martin, 2013:11) lists and briefly describes four distinctive aspects of Pentecostal hermeneutics. He holds that a unique approach to interpreting the Scripture lies in the Pentecostal notion that,

1. “The Holy Spirit addresses us in ways that transcend human reason.”
2. “Experience is vital to truth.”
3. “The Spirit calls every individual believer to be a witness of the truth.”
4. “Knowledge of the truth is inseparable from active membership in the localised body of Christ.”

Moore (Martin, 2013:11, 12) elaborates on these points by saying that Pentecostals do not approach the Scripture solely from an objective perspective, but as the living Word of God. This approach accommodates emotion, reason, imagination, and logic, and the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in ways that man cannot “dictate, calculate, or program”. Oliverio (2012:355) holds that, “The experience of the presence of the Spirit functions as a guide for

Pentecostals in theological interpretation...Even as theological understanding is still human understanding, it can be graced by the Spirit who dwells within”.

Pentecostals hold that there is a vital link between knowledge and experience. Fawcett (1996:11) holds that, “When the Bible writers used the word ‘know’ they most often meant ‘to fully know in experience, to appreciate and to understand’”, and Burke (1998:27) contends that “Many have experienced the power of Christ to save them from sin and also to heal their bodies. Such testimonies illustrate the reality of God’s power in the world today.”

5.3.3 A distinctive Pentecostal soteriological paradigm

Early Pentecostal theology consisted of the Holiness theology, plus the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit (McGee, 1995:17). This fact is confirmed by Studebaker (2003:248-253), when he asserts that Pentecostal Theologians adopted the soteriological paradigms of Protestant Scholasticism inherited from Reformed revivalism and Wesleyan soteriology.

This conglomeration of theories caused certain inconsistencies. Studebaker (2003:17) correctly argues that these theologies are “unsuitable for a robust pneumatological soteriology” and that Protestant scholasticism is diametrically opposed to the heart of Pentecostal soteriology since in Protestant scholastic soteriology, “the functional configuration of Christ and the Spirit entails a subordination of pneumatology to Christology.” Studebaker, therefore, rightfully contends that there is a need for a distinctive Pentecostal soteriological paradigm and further illustrates this point when he asserts that,

This subordination is clear in the two central paradigms of Protestant scholastic soteriology and the role assigned to the Spirit in the *ordo salutis*. The first paradigm is the objective-subjective. This is based on the distinction that justification constitutes the objective side of salvation and sanctification involves the subjective side, that is, what happens in the experience of the human subject. The second paradigm is the achiever-applier. This derives from the portrayal of Christ as the achiever of redemption and the Holy Spirit as the agent for its application. The Spirit’s inconspicuous role in the *ordo salutis* is symptomatic of the objective-subjective and achiever-applier paradigms.

Studebaker (2003:250) holds that Justification is primarily associated with the work of Christ, while Sanctification, which can be seen as the subjective transformation of the believer, is primarily associated with the work of the Spirit. While Protestant Scholasticism does not

separate justification and sanctification, it makes a distinction between these doctrines in order to preserve the notion of salvation by grace alone.

The paradigm of forensic justification, therefore, causes Protestant scholasticism to subordinate the subjective aspect of salvation (sanctification) to the objective aspect of salvation (justification). Fowler (1998:83) warns that viewing the work of Christ in salvation as an absolutely objective act, diminishes the ontological dynamic of the grace of God to a “doctrinal, theological, or epistemological concept”.

Many Pentecostal theologians are still strongly influenced by Calvinism and, follow the protestant scholastic paradigm by subordinating the work of the Spirit to the work of Christ (Studebaker, 2003:250). Another consequence of the Protestant scholastic paradigm is that the work of the Holy Spirit is reduced to applying the benefits of divine grace, achieved by Christ, to the life of the believer. Pearlman (1995:222) proves Studebaker’s point, and falls into this trap when he asserts that, “the outward aspect of grace is provided by the atoning work of Christ; the inward aspect is the work of the Holy Spirit”.

It is for this reason not an acceptable model for Pentecostal theology, and a model of redemptive soteriology is, therefore, more appropriate.

5.3.4 A model of redemptive soteriology

Studebaker (2003:267 - 269) proposes a model of *redemptive soteriology*. This model does not assign pre-eminence to either Christology or Pneumatology and, therefore, serves Pentecostal theology well, in that it synthesizes Pneumatology with Christology. While the historical events of the death and resurrection of Christ are still objectively viewed, he holds that this work is completed in the power of the Spirit who then “reproduces that work in the believer”. He further holds that,

redemptive soteriology affirms two key premises that unfetter the Spirit from a subordinate role in soteriology. First, the work of Christ and the Spirit are united in the provision of redemption. Second, God’s act of justifying the believer recreates in the believer the redemptive work of Christ: death to sin (cross), new life (resurrection), and restoration to fellowship with the triune God (ascension). Since the redemptive work of Christ is accomplished in and through the Spirit, so also, human justification is accomplished in and through the Spirit. Redemptive soteriology, therefore, interprets justification as a Christological and Pneumatological act of God. Since the

work of the Spirit is integral to Christ's redemptive work and the actualization of that work in the believer. The Spirit's role is not merely instrumental, but it is essential to the process of justification. Redemptive soteriology asserts that the gift of the Spirit is the essence of salvation. Thus, salvation is inherently pneumatological. However, salvation is also inherently Christological. It is so because the Spirit recreates in the believer the redemption of humanity achieved in Christ's life, death, resurrection and ascension. Salvation consists of the redemption of human life through the Spirit after the manner of Christ's life, death, resurrection and ascension. Thus, a redemptive soteriology conceives the work of Christ and the Spirit as constitutive of the entire soteriological process.

Möller (1997:94) accentuates the role of the Holy Spirit in salvation as he holds that we cannot know God as an object, a "‘something’ or ‘Somebody’" existing next to us in time and space, and that, "We only know God and become aware of Him through the Holy Spirit...in other words, to know God who is Spirit through ourselves as spirit" and that, "We know Him because He, as the eternal Spirit, establishes a relationship with us, making us a living spirit."

Vondey (2013:73) holds that "the full-gospel motif is centred on the person of Jesus" and that it is the biblical picture of Jesus, dominating Pentecostal doctrinal formulations, who "makes possible the appropriation and participation in the redeemed life. Pentecostal doctrine in this sense is both a confession that Jesus saves, baptizes, heals, sanctifies, and returns and that Jesus is the saviour, baptizer, healer, sanctifier, and soon coming king." The Christ-centeredness of Pentecostal theology applies to every aspect of Pentecostal doctrine, and therefore, also to the doctrine of election.

The historical background to Pentecostalism serves to show that Pentecostal theology has evolved over a period of time, but with a very strong association to the Church of Acts. It is also evident from the history of Pentecostalism that the doctrines held by classical Pentecostals have been influenced and are still being influenced by both Calvinist and Arminian theologians. Pentecostal theology speaks to current generations of believers. It addresses the need for a personal Saviour, present in their everyday lives and circumstances. Our actions, circumstances and trials are not simply determined by a God who stands aloof to the sufferings and troubles of His children (because it is for His glory). Pentecostals believe that "...God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1 KJV).

5.3.5 Approaching the doctrine of election from a Pentecostal perspective

No theology can be created in a vacuum or be completely sterile from the environment, worldview and historical perspectives that form the basis of the thinking of the theologians that perpetuate its doctrines. There are several factors that play a crucial role with regards to a pre-understanding of the Scriptures regarding election. The historical background and theological perspectives of Pentecostalism and classical Pentecostal theology that are discussed above helps us to understand the way Pentecostals think about election.

These factors must be kept in mind while the Pentecostal perspective on the five points of election (TULIP) are discussed and contrasted with the Calvinistic and Arminian viewpoints in the following section.

5.4 A FIVE POINT MODEL OF THE PENTECOSTAL DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

The Calvinist expression of the doctrine of Election, as it relates to the “TULIP” acronym, and the Arminian counter argument of the same, have been evaluated and discussed in the previous chapters. The Pentecostal expression of this doctrine is now evaluated and compared with the Calvinist and Arminian viewpoints.

5.4.1 “T” - Total Depravity (versus) Free will or human ability

The table below gives an abbreviated description of what Calvinist and Arminians believe with regards to the doctrine of Total Depravity which is synonymous with the “T” in TULIP. Several sub points are discussed in order to further explore the distinctions between what Calvinists, Arminians, and Pentecostals believe.:

TOTAL DEPRAVITY v/s HUMAN ABILITY	
CALVINISM Steele & Thomas (1963:16) holds that, Because of the Fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the gospel.	ARMINIANISM Peterson and Williams (2004:164) quotes Wesley as he describes man's sinful state in saying that, ‘...for allowing that all souls of men are dead in sin by nature, this excuses none, seeing that there is no man that is in a state of mere nature; there is no man, unless he has quenched the Spirit, that is wholly void of the grace of God. No man living is entirely destitute of what

			is vulgarly called 'natural conscience.' Olson (October 28, 2014) describes "total depravity" to mean "that there is no spiritual good useful for salvation and developing a strong relationship with God in any person born of Adam's race (except Christ) that is not a super-added gift of God", and that, "even the spiritually dead possess the formal image of God, and 2) supernatural grace heals that deadness so that sinners can at least make a decision to repent and trust in God and Christ or not".
I	The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt.	I	Steele & Thomas (1963:16) holds that, Although human nature was seriously affected by the Fall, man has not been left in a state of total spiritual helplessness. God graciously enables every sinner to repent and believe, but He does so in such a manner as not to interfere with man's freedom.
II	His will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature, therefore, he will not-indeed he cannot choose good over evil in the spiritual realm.	II	Each sinner possesses a free will, and his eternal destiny depends on how he uses it. Man's freedom consists of his ability to choose good over evil in spiritual matters; his will is not totally enslaved by his sinful nature.
III	Consequently it takes much more than the Spirit's assistance to bring a sinner to Christ-it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature.	III	The sinner has the power [God's prevenient grace, that enables the sinner] to either cooperate with God's Spirit and be regenerated or resist God's grace and perish. Olson (October 28, 2014) describes total depravity as, "being totally helpless spiritually, left to oneself, without prevenient grace".
IV	Faith is not something that man contributes to salvation but is itself a part of God's gift of salvation - it is God's gift to the sinner, not the sinner's gift to God.	IV	The lost sinner needs the Spirit's assistance, but he does not have to be regenerated by the Spirit before he can believe, for faith is man's act and precedes the new birth. Faith is the sinner's gift to God; it is man's contribution to salvation.

(Table 3)

5.4.1.1 Original sin and the subsequent depravity of humanity

Depravity⁴³ of the human nature is an inescapable and uncontested result of the Fall. Van 't Slot (2014:9) holds that, "Man found out the hard way that knowing good and evil did not make him happier, because this knowledge is not neutral. From the moment that man got to know sin, he was hooked". Sin had a devastating effect on Adam, his direct family, and his entire progeny. It severed the relationship between man and God and brought man into condemnation (Rom. 3:23).

⁴³ The term, "depravity" in the context of Pentecostal theology, means a bias toward sin with which every child born in the bloodline of Adam inherits. Olson (October 28, 2014) rightly describes total depravity as, "being totally helpless spiritually [instead of being spiritually dead], left to oneself, without prevenient grace".

Pentecostals affirm total depravity and describe total depravity as spiritual helplessness apart from God's grace, as do Calvinists and Arminians, although some of the implications drawn from these statements are slightly different. This is evident from the writing of theologians such as Burke and Caram below.

Burke (2013:46) asserts that, "The natural man is by nature sinful [biased toward sin], because of the Fall" and Caram (2004:81) holds that, "Man is born with a rebellious, revolting, obstinate nature", and he (2004:87) describes the effects of the Fall in saying that, "seeds of conflict and destruction were sown into Eve and Adam when they submitted to the wiles of the devil. All these seeds have been passed on to Adam's race, and potentially they all lie in our bosom. Some are more active than others, and some are dormant."

Möller (1997:22) correctly describes the Pentecostal interpretation of this doctrine, asserting that, "This sinful state does not only apply to the essence (spirit) of human existence, but extends to the body and soul" and describes the consequences of sin in saying that, "Man not only finds himself in a wrong relationship with God, but that, psychosomatically, he also bears the consequences of sin to such an extent that it becomes hereditary. Thus the consequences of sin become a hereditary taint." This "hereditary taint" is carried over from one generation to the rest, irrespective of the parents' spiritual condition. Depravity of nature is an inescapable and unavoidable consequence of being born human.

5.4.1.2 The characteristics of the fallen nature of man

God sovereignly and freely chose to create man in His image as a moral agent in a specific relationship with Himself. He made this clear by giving man the opportunity to serve Him from man's own volition.

Man through a deliberate, premeditated act of voluntary disobedience, defied God's instruction and ate from the fruit of the tree of "knowledge of good and evil". The first human sin took place when Satan tempted Eve in the very same way that people are tempted today. Bailey (1997:12) correctly asserts that, "We choose to say 'yes' or 'no' to temptation; therefore, the root of the problem is our own sinful nature. By the grace of God, we must choose not to yield to sin but rather to righteousness (Rom. 6:19)".

The characteristics of the fallen nature of man are described by Alexander (1836:2) who says that the Fall effectively distorted and marred the moral image of God in man and that the mind of man once illuminated by divine truth, had been darkened by sin and unholy selfish appetites and indulgences focused on gratifying the desires of the flesh. The alienation from God caused man to focus his passions inwardly, and to voluntarily choose to be self-centred and self-indulgent rather than seeking to honour God.

Alexander may not have considered himself to be a Pentecostal, but what he says above makes perfect sense from a Pentecostal perspective. While describing the fallen nature of man, he leaves room for voluntary choice and human responsibility. While Pentecostals agree with Calvinists that an unconverted sinner is indeed dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God, and that his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt, they also agree with Arminianists that man still has a responsibility to answer and react to the call of salvation. Pentecostals further hold that, man can only react to the call of God when aided by the grace of God and under the conviction and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Möller (1997:23), from a classical Pentecostal perspective explains the effect of the depravity of the human nature by asserting that,

When we refer to the sinful human nature, it does not mean that sin has been concretised...sin is not something that has an independent existence; rather, it is a quality in the shape of a destructive force that reveals itself through existing things. It is a case whereby human nature has been defiled to such an extent by the working of sin that whenever human nature is activated to any behaviour – be it as a desire, an attitude, a feeling or a deed – that behaviour inevitably has a sinful quality. This sinful nature not only carries the traces of evil, but is also the agency through which sin is revealed. When Paul speaks of the law of sin that imprisons him (Rom. 7:24, 26), he refers to the set tracks which sin has established in his human nature, and in which his behaviour is trapped and determined. When he speaks of “the sin that dwells in me” (Rom 7:17, 20), it should be understood as the law of sin that occupies “his bodily members” (Rom. 7:23).

Möller (1997:23) eloquently conveys the hopelessness of fallen mankind when he describes the bondage of sin as set tracks of sinful behaviour which have been established in a person’s nature. This susceptibility to the entanglement of sin, or falling back into the established habits of sin, or set tracks, continues to haunt every person, even after regeneration.

The author of Hebrews speaks about the entanglement of sin in Hebrews 12:1⁴⁴, and commands his hearers to throw off the sin that so easily entangles us. This means that sin only influences our behaviour as far as we succumb to its influence and that our sinful acts are not determined as Calvinism teaches⁴⁵. If it was the case, there would be no choice involved and consequently no accountability for those sinful acts.

The Pentecostal interpretation of the term “total depravity” in terms of its implication for Salvation is, however, quite different as what is understood from a Calvinist or Arminian paradigm. Duffield and Van Cleave (1987:233), in agreement with Burke (2013:46), Caram (2004:81), Möller (1997:22), and Crabb (1977:100) hold, with regard to the fallen state of man’s nature, that, “While we say there is nothing that a man can do to regenerate himself, there is something that he must do to obtain the regenerating work of God in his own life...a) Believing the message of the gospel...b) Accepting Jesus Christ as Savior.” This would not be possible if the sinner had no ability to choose.

Möller (1997:85) supports this view, but adds that man’s right response to God is only possible because God took the initiative to provide salvation for man and because “man’s will reaches out to God because God enables him to do so through the Holy Spirit”. It is, therefore, not natural for a sinner to reach out to God. There needs to be a divine intervention such as the preaching of the Word of God, the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and prevenient grace, in order for a sinner to reach out to God. This divide that sin caused can only be crossed by the Mediator between man and God, Jesus Christ. Man is saved by the grace of God when he is under the conviction and empowered of the Holy Spirit and chooses to savingly believe the gospel.

Pentecostals, therefore, answer the question from those under the conviction of the Holy Spirit asking, “What shall we do?” in the same way as Peter answered in the question posed in Acts 2:38 “...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” This implies a voluntary action as crucially important in the appropriation of God’s free gift of salvation.

⁴⁴ Heb 12:1 (ISV) “Therefore, having so vast a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, and throwing off everything that hinders us and especially the sin that so easily entangles us, let us keep running with endurance the race set before us.”

⁴⁵ Palmer (2010: 131) holds that, “...all things-unbelief and sin included-proceeds from God’s eternal decree..”

We can conclude that Pentecostals believe that we are born with a sin-biased nature resulting directly from Adam's sin of disobedience to God, the first human sin, also known as original sin. We are not born with sin, but with a constant force in our human nature, a law, a principle, that creates in us a bias toward sin (Rom. 7:21⁴⁶).

5.4.1.3 The guilt and accountability relating to original sin

Pentecostals make a distinction between "original sin" and "actual sin". Pearlman (1995:135) asserts that, "Adam, as the father of the race passed on to his descendents a tendency or bias to sin" Ps. 51:5. This spiritual and moral handicap under which all men are born, total depravity, is one of the results of original sin. The acts of sin that follow during the age of accountability are known as "actual sin".

Pentecostals must part ways with Calvinists and Arminians on the issue of "imparted, or inherited guilt". Arminians believe that Christ's death on the cross provides a universal remedy for the guilt of inherited sin so that it is not imputed to infants for Christ's sake (Olson, 2006:33), and Calvinists believe that infants are still responsible for Adam's (original) sin (Boettner, 1975:14). This is one of the unique aspects of Pentecostal theology, that classical Pentecostals in general reject the notion that Adam's actual sin is imputed to his progeny.

This corrupted human nature or depravity of the nature of man, according to the classical Pentecostal perspective, does not imply guilt, for guilt is dependent on responsibility, and we cannot be held accountable for something that took place before we were born. It only means that we are born with a sin-biased nature (Sequeira, 2002). A baby is therefore born *with* a sinful nature (a nature that is biased toward sin) but (the person) is born *without* being personally accountable for (Adam's) sin.

It is unfortunate that some of the earlier Pentecostal theologians such as Duffield and Van Cleave (1987:164), fell into the error of Augustine when they assert that "the whole human race was in Adam, their natural head, when he sinned" even though they admit that the Bible nowhere teaches that "a son or grandson is considered guilty of the individual son or sins of

⁴⁶ Rom. 7:20 (EMTV) "But if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I *who* am doing it, but the sin dwelling in me."

his parents and will thus be judicially or eternally punished". Evans (1971:132) also subscribes to the Augustinian theory of imputed sin. These are actual discrepancies among Pentecostal theologians that indicate the influence of pre-Protestant scholasticism that needs to be weeded out of classical Pentecostal theology.

Pentecostal theologians such as Möller (1997:23), correctly rejects the notion to ascribe Adam's guilt to his progeny, on the basis that we are not accountable for Adam's sin, even though that act transformed human nature so much that it "cannot but produce evil and sin (Jer. 4:22, 17:9)". Williams (1953b:143) agrees with this view when he holds that, "Man is born depraved (with corrupt tendencies) but not sinful. Guilt begins with moral action".

Morrel (2012:[69]) correctly states that "When Paul said by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, he was saying that Adam is the occasion, not cause, of our choice to be sinners." We are not sinners because Adam sinned, we become sinners when we give in to the sin-biased nature we inherited from Adam, and become sinners on account of our personal sinful deeds.

Möller (1997:55) correctly holds that, "no man is guilty and damned before God simply because he is descended from Adam and inherited the taint of sin". Classical Pentecostal theology must, therefore, state that, we believe that while we suffer the *consequences* of the Fall in terms of inheriting a depraved nature, we do not share the *guilt* of Adam's sin.

5.4.1.4 Human responsibility in Salvation

From the discussion of the historical development of Pentecostal theology, it is clear that Pentecostals are evangelical, which means that they are responsible to God to lead others to salvation and hold that faith and repentance are prerequisites for salvation. Pentecostals also emphasise the responsibility of man with regards to the appropriation of salvation. Pentecostals consequently teach that faith and repentance precedes regeneration in a logical sequence.

Competency of will, human responsibility with regards to responding to the gospel, the drawing grace of God, and the preached Word of God, are key elements of the Pentecostal understanding of the doctrine of election. Plüss (2011:309) hold that the Methodist influence

on early Pentecostals led to their propagation of “justification by faith as a synergy between a person’s willingness to repent from sin and God’s sovereign grace accepting this move due to the work of Jesus Christ”.

It is therefore understandable that Railey and Aker (1995:50) hold that, “Most Pentecostals tend toward the Arminian system of theology, seeing the necessity for response to the gospel and to the Holy Spirit on the part of the individual.” Pentecostals believe that the achievement of salvation is a work of God from the beginning to the end. Man is, however, involved in the appropriation of this gift, without in any way or means contributing to the gift itself. Pecota (1995:364) accurately and succinctly describes the operation of faith in saying that, “Faith...is man’s response. Faith is made possible by God, but the faith, the believing, is not God’s but man’s. Faith is not a work but an outstretched hand that reaches out to accept God’s gift of salvation”.

Steele & Thomas (1963:16) correctly assert that, Arminians believe⁴⁷ that, “Although human nature was seriously affected by the Fall, man has not been left in a state of total spiritual helplessness. [and that] God graciously enables every sinner to repent and believe, but He does so in such a manner as not to interfere with man’s [libertarian] freedom.” In other words, man’s choice is not determined by God. Pentecostals agree with Arminians on this point and hold that repentance *is not* a gift which is given to some, and withheld from others (Duffield & van Cleave, 1983:137) which implies human responsibility in choosing to accept or reject God’s free offer of salvation.

Some people may refer to Heb. 12:17 where Esau could not find a place for repentance, in an attempt to prove that God withholds the opportunity to repent from the reprobates. This is an incorrect interpretation of Scripture, and it contradicts the witness of the Bible with regards to the character of God. The Bible teaches us in 2 Pet. 3:9 (EMTV) that, “The Lord ... is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”. Jamison, Fausset and Brown interprets Heb. 12:17 to mean that,

The *cause* is here put for the *effect*, “repentance” for the object which Esau aimed at in his so-called *repentance*, namely, *the change of his father’s determination* to give the chief blessing to Jacob. Had he *sought* real *repentance with tears* he would have *found* it (Mat. 7:7). But he did not find it because this was not what he sought. What proves his *tears* were not those of one

⁴⁷ Wiley, (1959:178) holds that, “Man is not guilty of inbred sin when he enters into the world. He becomes responsible for it only after having rejected the remedy provided by atoning blood. In this way he ratifies it as his own.”

seeking true repentance is, immediately after he was foiled in his desire, he resolved to murder Jacob! He shed tears, not for his sin, but for his suffering the penalty of his sin. His were tears of vain regret and remorse, not of repentance.

Crabb (1977:100) correctly holds that an unsaved person is not unable to choose or trust God, and that there is nothing wrong with his will or ability to choose, but contends that the problem is that, “his darkened understanding will not allow his will to make that choice. He does not need a strengthened will; he needs an enlightened mind, and that is the work of the Holy Spirit.”

Pentecostals hold in correspondence with Scripture, that, “...the saving grace of God has appeared to all men” (Tit 2:11 EMTV). Therefore, every person is enabled by the grace of God, and has the responsibility to repent and believe. Finney (1966:56) rightfully argues that, “If God requires you to do what you have no power to do, it is tyranny. And what God requires is on penalty of eternal death. He threatens an infinite penalty for not doing what you have no power to do, and so he is an infinite tyrant.” God would not expect us to do what we cannot do.

Williams (1953a:167,168) contends that, “the Holy Spirit has spoken to man in all generations, enlightening consciousness concerning what is right and what is wrong” and he holds that sin “warped the judgement of conscience, but has never erased its [consciousness] action”. There can be no responsibility without choice.

The ability and opportunity to choose necessarily implies that man is able to choose between right and wrong, and to sin. Adam had absolute freedom of choice, and he exercised his free will to choose wrongly. Man’s will is, however, governed by his act structure which is affected by the emotions, the mind, the spirit, or spiritual influences, the impulses of the body, and ultimately, his fallen nature. The intellect discerns what is good and submits that notion to the will (Venter, 1989:174). The intentions of the will, or the intentionality of the heart, which can better be described as the act structure of man, will be discussed at a later stage in this thesis).

Möller (1997:22) holds that the hereditary taint of sin on the human nature, “has an effect that no man has the ability or freedom to indemnify himself from sinful deeds. Such indemnity lies solely in the restoration of a complete relationship with God – something that man is unable to attain of his own accord. Only God can do that.”

What Möller says above corresponds in part to the Calvinist and Arminian interpretation, but he also includes the clause that man is not able to find salvation on “his own accord”. This implies a degree of human responsibility. Man cannot save himself, but he must *seek God* (Acts 17:27) and *respond* (Rev. 3:20; John 1:12; 1 Cor. 15:1; 2 Cor. 11:4) to God’s gracious call of salvation, which implies responsibility, and a certain measure of ability, to “choose life”, otherwise the invitation would be meaningless. Such was the choice that was set before Israel in Deut. 30:19.

5.4.1.5 The universal call to salvation and drawing by *resistible* grace

Jesus is explicitly clear in stating in John 6:44 (EMTV) that, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me should draw him...” Pentecostals, however, argue from the premise that God’s (prevenient) grace is universally revealed to all men on God’s initiative. He offers salvation freely for everyone who would freely come and accept His offer of salvation (1John 1:12). This premise is supported by the Scripture in John 12:32 (KJV), where Jesus says that, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me.”

Salvation comes from God. It is free. It is complete. It is available to everyone who believes (John 3:16). It is appropriated by faith. Faith is demonstrated through the act of repentance. Faith is not works, and works is not faith, but faith requires obedient action and is demonstrated through an action of the will (Jam. 2:17).

In direct contrast to Calvinism, that holds that man cannot in his unregenerate state seek after God, Pentecostals such as Williams (1953a:159,167) argue that, “Among all men, there is intuitively a knowledge that a Supreme Being exists, and a certain knowledge concerning right and wrong...such intuition is demonstrated when people groups without the revelation of the Bible instinctively seek divine help during trouble”. Williams, (1953a:159) also quotes Thomas who asserts that, “It is a mistake to suppose that we derive the idea of God from the Bible, for races who have never heard of the Bible possess a definite belief in a Supreme Being”

Man's inherent desire to worship does not mean that he can save himself, but his ignorance of the gospel does not indemnify him from eternal judgment. Möller (1997:22) contends that man has a responsibility to believe the gospel and to accept Jesus Christ as saviour in order to personally appropriate the complete free salvation that is provided in Christ. Salvation cannot be attained for someone else, or on behalf of anyone else by any ritual practised. The appropriation of personal salvation is solely contingent on the individual's faith in Christ.

If a man has the *responsibility* to believe, he must also possess the *ability* to accept Christ and believe. Finney (1966:56) correctly argues that,

Suppose God would call you to account, and require you to repent for not flying. By what process can he make you blame yourself for not flying, when you are conscious that you have no wings, and no power to fly? If he could cheat you into the belief that you had the power, and make you believe a lie, then you might repent. But what sort of way is that for God to take with his creatures?

5.4.1.6 Innocence of infants

Möller (1997:55) correctly contends that "The Bible knows no children's hell". There is no Scriptural justification for the damnation of infants who cannot possibly bear any responsibility for sin and it goes against every possible Scriptural understanding we have of God being just, righteous and good. The fact that we are born with a depraved nature as a direct consequence, or fruit, of Adam's sin does not mean that we are born "with" sin. There is a significant difference between the fruit of sin and sin itself. Depravity, or the fruit of sin, is not sin. Van den Brink ([2015?] ch. 5, [1]) correctly makes a distinction between inherited guilt (*erfschuld*) and inherited depravity (*erf-smet*). He holds that *erfschuld* (inherited guilt) is the sin of Adam which would (according to him) be accounted to us, and *erf-smet*, can be equated to the spiritual depravity of man's nature. We are not responsible for Adam's sin, but we have an inherited bias toward sin (depravity).³⁶

Morrell (2013:2) is also correct when he holds that Paul did not teach that Adam's sin was our sin or that we all sinned in Adam. He contends that, Paul taught that, "by one man sin entered into the world" (Rom. 5:12), indicating,

a numeric one, which would make no sense at all if all of mankind existed and acted in that sin. Paul referred to the original sin of Adam as "one man's offence" (Rom. 5:17), "the offence of one" (Rom. 5:18), and "one man's disobedience" (Rom. 5:19), not the offence of everyone or all mankind (2013:2).

Pollard (2013:435) asserts that, “a child is not born with a particular set of ethics or values, rather the innate predisposition for ethical judgment requires nurturing during infancy before it can be cognitively understood and practiced in maturity”. She (2013:435) further holds that, conceptualisation of what is “right” and “wrong” is contingent on the development of certain emotions during the first two years of the infant’s life, such as pride, shame and guilt. The brain has only developed sufficiently to understand moral issues, responsibility, and the implications of certain choices and behaviour by the age of seven or eight. Where there can be no responsibility, there can be no guilt.

Möller, (1997:71) with all classical Pentecostals, rejects the Augustine doctrine that infants and unborn children are assigned to everlasting damnation due to the sin of Adam, and that,

a little child, who is not responsible for the sins of his parents and ancestors, who has not even arrived at self consciousness, who knows absolutely nothing of good and evil and has never committed any wrong, is cast into the indescribable anguish of perdition. This would also apply to the unborn babies who died in their mother’s womb, but whose names never appeared on the list of predestination. The only consciousness and knowledge that they could ever attain would be that they are accursed because they exist and that it pleased God that they never be saved, but to suffer indescribable anguish forever. No, no demon, however cruel and sadistic, could conceive of or commit anything worse. It cries out indeed, blasphemes, against all righteousness as we encounter it in the Bible.

There is more than ample support from Scripture to what Möller above asserts. God has decisively spoken through the prophet Ezekiel in Eze. 18:20 (MKJV) saying that, “... The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, nor shall the father bear the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be on him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be on him. This is a universal truth. If it is true for every other son and every other father it also applies to Adam and his posterity.

5.4.2 “U” - Unconditional Election (*Versus Conditional Election*)

The views of Calvinists and Arminians with regards to the conditionality of election are indicated in this table below. Following this table, is a discussion of the Pentecostal view of the election.

UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION v/s CONDITIONAL ELECTION	
CALVINISM as described by Steele & Thomas (1963:16) God’s choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world rested solely in His own	ARMINIANISM as described by Steele & Thomas (1963:16)

	sovereign will.		
I	His choice of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response or obedience on their part, such as faith, repentance, etc.	I	God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world was based on His foreseeing that they would respond to His call.
II	On the contrary, God gives faith and repentance to each individual whom He selected.	II	He selected only those whom He knew would of themselves freely believe the gospel.
III	These acts are the result, not the cause of God's choice.	III	Election therefore was determined by or conditioned upon what man would do.
IV	Election therefore was not determined by or conditioned upon any virtuous quality or act foreseen in man.	IV	The faith which God foresaw and upon which He based His choice was not given to the sinner by God (it was not created by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit) but resulted solely from man's will.
V	Those whom God sovereignly elected He brings through the power of the Spirit to a willing acceptance of Christ.	V	It was left entirely up to man as to who would believe and therefore as to who would be elected unto salvation.
VI	Thus God's choice of the sinner, not the sinner's choice of Christ, in the ultimate cause of salvation	VI	God chose those whom He knew would, of their own free will, choose Christ. Thus the sinner's choice of Christ, not God's choice of the sinner, is the ultimate cause of salvation

(Table 4)

5.4.2.1 Election does not cause salvation or reprobation

The term “election” bears a different meaning to Pentecostals than what it means to Calvinists or Arminians. In Calvinism and Arminianism the term election is directly equal to salvation. In Calvinism, election causes salvation, and in Arminianism, salvation causes election. Pentecostals believe that election only applies to those who are in Christ, in other words, those who are already saved (Conner and Malmin, 1983:76).

Pentecostals, like Arminians, object to the doctrine of unconditional election in the way that it is promulgated by Calvinism. Möller (1997:67) holds that, “The doctrine that God preferred not to save some people is contrary to the explicit pronouncements of the Bible.” He quotes several Scriptures in support of his argument, such as:

- The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2Pet. 3:9 KJV).
- For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth (1Ti 2:3-4 KJV).
- Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? (Eze. 33:11 KJV).

Classical Pentecostals (should) also hold that both the Arminian model of election and the Calvinistic model are contrary to what Scripture teaches. There is a distinct difference between election as a sovereign act of God, and salvation that incorporates human

responsibility. Salvation is conditional upon human responsibility to answer God's call to salvation while the election of Christ in eternity is a matter between God the Father and God the Son, and it does not directly cause any man to be saved or reprobated.

5.4.2.2 Reprobation

The doctrine of (unconditional) reprobation, that is a direct result of unconditional election, is not only contested by Pentecostals and Arminians, but it is even objected to by some revisionist Calvinists. When a doctrine of unconditional election is promoted, the result is (whether you agree with it or not), *unconditional* reprobation. In other words, if Election of some to salvation is unconditional (as Calvinists believe), non-election or reprobation is also unconditional "in the same way".

Picking a puppy from a litter requires the same rational and mental exercise as not choosing the other puppies. You are just as responsible for picking (electing) one as for leaving (reprobating) the others. Reprobation, as described from a Pentecostal perspective, is not simply the "other side of the coin" of election. While election takes place in eternity in Christ, reprobation results when man wilfully rejects Jesus Christ as Saviour. Möller (1997:87) explains the term reprobation, in stating that man is, "reprobated and judged, not because he never had the opportunity to salvation, nor because God wants him to be doomed, but precisely because he got the opportunity to salvation, but rejected it." Chafer (1953:231) correctly holds that,

As certainly as the choice of evil on man's part becomes the ground of judgment which God does not share, so certainly the choice of good on the part of those who are saved is ever the ground of God's commendation and reward, and they will stand before Him eternally identified as those who by their own choice elected to walk with Him.

Reprobation in a Pentecostal paradigm does not relate to election in the same way as in the Calvinist or Arminian models of election. It is, therefore, not the result of election as in Calvinism, but it is the direct result of the rejection of salvation that is available in Christ and by Christ as the elect of God. In other words, reprobation constitutes the willful rejection of Christ as the elect of God.

The concept of Christ as the Elect of God is discussed in the last chapter of this thesis.

5.4.2.3 Foreknowledge (regarding election)

The term “foreknowledge” relates to the knowledge of God concerning certain events and human decisions as it is described from a human perspective, in time. God, who exists in immutability in eternity, is omniscient (He knows all things) in the present imperfect sense. The concept of “foreknowledge” only makes sense in terms of linear time, but God is outside of time although He may at times choose to act, and or interact, with man in time. In God's realm of “timelessness” the concept of foreknowledge is nonsensical and loses all significance. The concept of “foreknowledge” does, therefore, not exist in eternity, and does not apply to God. God does not “foreknow”. He simply knows because past, present and future are the same to Him and his “knowing” is implied in His omniscience.

Berkhof (1959:107) and other classical Calvinists claim that every human action is causally determined, and while maintaining compatibilistic freedom, man “chooses” in accordance with his prior motives and desires which makes God's foreknowledge certain. Calvinism maintains that God can only “foreknow” future events, because he has unconditionally determined those events (and human choices) in eternity. In other words, Calvinists see foreknowledge played out in linear chronological time as events predetermined by God (in eternity) continues to take place in time (in accordance to the divine decree). God, therefore, knows “the future” and every human “choice” precisely because He has determined it. Berkhof (1953:268) holds that, “Logically, election precedes the council of redemption, because the suretyship of Christ, like his atonement, is particular. If there were no preceding election, it would necessarily be universal”.

Pentecostals believe that God simply knows (not foreknows) what we are doing with our free choices, and that these choices are not determined by God, either directly or subjectively though causal determination (1986:73). In other words, Pentecostals reject the causality that Calvinists read into this concept of foreknowledge, as well as the significance that Arminians hold with regards to God's foreknowledge and their concept of election in anticipation of, and conditioned on man's choice.

5.4.2.4 The condition of faith, Sola Fide (by faith alone)

5.4.2.4.1 Faith as an essential condition for salvation

Möller stating the Pentecostal position, asserts that, “Faith is not the result of your salvation or your rebirth. The demand to believe does not pertain to the one who has already received salvation, but applies to the one who yearns after salvation” (1997:117). Calvinists’ perspective on faith³⁶ causes them to see faith as either “caused by God” – and therefore adding to God’s glory, or “appropriated by man” – causing man to save himself. Faith is neither a “work” (that can accomplish a task), or a “deed” that deserves merit. It is, however, a requirement for salvation.

Wiley⁴⁸ (1959:268) states that the Arminian view of faith (which in this case corresponds to the Pentecostal interpretation), asserting that, “Repentance leads immediately to saving faith, which is at once the condition and the instrument of salvation. Faith forms the connecting link between prevenient grace and the initial state of salvation.” He further holds (1959:269) that “Faith implies a previous knowledge of its object” and he (1959:270) quotes Clarke who holds that,

Without the grace or power to believe no man ever did or can believe; but with that power the act of faith is a man’s own. God never believes for any man, no more than He repents for him; the penitent through this grace enabling him, believes for himself: nor does he believe necessarily or impulsively when he has that power; the power to believe may be present long before it is exercised, else, why the solemn warnings with which we meet everywhere in the Word of God, and threatening against those that do not believe...Without the power no man can believe; with it, any man may.

Williams (1953b:207) quotes Zwingli who correctly describes the role of faith when he asserts that,

The Holy Spirit so moves man that he feels the Scriptures to be the truth, and thereby attains confidence in the grace of God. This is Faith. This movement thus begun in us by the Holy Spirit continues in such a way that good works follow faith...Christ’s redemptive act [propitiation] now becomes ours [application of salvation] through His relation to us – through our believing in Him. If we believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ, He is our propitiation, etc., then He is our entire perfection before God, our salvation, our payment and atonement. He who believes on Christ is accounted by God as righteous and has the forgiveness of sins. Because we believe in Him, God for His sake regards us as righteous. Faith is thus confidence in the Spirit of God. Christian faith is something that is felt in the soul.

⁴⁸ According to Peterson and Williams (2004:15), H. Orton Wiley’s *Christian Theology* became the modern standard work for Arminians in the early 1940’s and played a significant role in the development of Arminian theology.

Wiley (1959, 271) describes saving faith specifically as, “the act of man’s entire being under the influence of the Holy Spirit”, and Möller (1997:117) describes faith in relation to the New Covenant of grace by asserting that, “It is through faith that the beneficence of the covenant of grace, as wrought by the expiatory death of Jesus Christ, is realised in man.”

Salvation is, therefore, according to Pentecostal theology, solely by faith – and not by works, although faith is manifested in faithful actions.

5.4.2.4.2 Faith (that leads to salvation) is not a gift

A common misunderstanding regarding faith, (as discussed in the previous chapter), is the erroneous assumption that faith is a gift of God and that it is a result of divine causation. This interpretation is based on the incorrect interpretation of Eph.2:8⁴⁹ and leads to the notion (as held by Calvinism) that regeneration precedes repentance and faith.

As previously pointed out, Walls and Dongell (2004:56), Picirilli (2002:165), and Wuest (1961:451) concur that it is clear from the Greek text that the “gift” referred to in Eph.2:8 is salvation and not “faith” (as Calvinists would like us to believe) and that this gift (salvation) is appropriated by faith. While the Bible nowhere states that faith is a gift, it does in many places indicate that men are commanded to believe. Faith must either be a gift or command. Logic denies the possibility of it being both.

Möller (1997:117), in reiterating the Pentecostal understanding of faith, asserts that, “faith is not the result of your salvation or your rebirth. The demand to believe does not pertain to the one who has already received salvation, but applies to the one who yearns after salvation.” Some of these instances are: described in Acts 16:30, 31, when the keeper of the prison asks Paul what he must do to be saved, Paul answers him, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved...” and also in the following verses:

- Rom. 10:9 (KJV) “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”
- Rom. 10:14 (KJV) “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?”

⁴⁹ An exegesis on this Scripture is included in a previous chapter.

- 1Cor. 1:21 (KJV) "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."
- Gal. 3:22 (KJV) "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."
- 2Thess. 1:10 (KJV) "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."
- 1Tim. 1:16 (KJV) "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."
- 1Tim. 4:10 (KJV) "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."
- Heb. 10:39 (KJV) "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."
- Heb. 11:6 (KJV) "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Möller (1997:131) correctly contends that, "regeneration is a manifestation of salvation". In other words, regeneration is the result of, and not the condition for salvation. In highlighting the spiritual and experiential elements of conversion, Fee (1995:855) refers to Gal. 3:2-5, and contends that Paul did not ask whether the Galatians were saved or justified, but "Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?", and "have you experienced so many things [referring to the working of the Spirit] in vain?" and insists that "the crucial element to the experience of conversion is the cry of the Spirit to God as *Abba*", "For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again unto fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father'" (Rom 8:15 EMTV).

The "hearing of faith" (Gal.3.2) speaks of the appropriation of the gift of salvation by hearing (which implies understanding) and faith (which is only evidenced in the exercise thereof). In other words, salvation came to the Galatians when they heard the Word of God, understood it, and reacted by exercising their faith in the appropriation thereof. If this was the pattern in the New Testament Church, why would it be different now?

This view held by Pentecostals, that faith is a prerequisite for regeneration (and not the result), also makes it possible to present the gospel as a free offer of salvation (gift) to all who will believe (prerequisite).

5.4.2.4.3 Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God

If faith is not a gift, where then does it come from or how is it appropriated? The Bible teaches us that hearing the word is essential in obtaining faith. Rom. 10:17 (EMTV) says, "So then faith come by hearing, and hearing by the word of God". It is also described in Rom.

10:14 (EMTV) “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear apart from a preacher?”

Burke (2013:77) explains the importance of preaching the Word of God, saying that, “God’s Word is the sure foundation for our faith. This is why it must be preached, taught and explained until it enters as seed into the heart. As it enters, faith is conceived, just as good ground receives the seed.” The Word (the letter) is, however, dead without the inspiration of the Spirit of God (2 Cor. 3:6). Alexander (1836:4) holds that, “The Spirit operates by and through the Word. The Word derives all its power and penetrating energy from the Spirit. Without the omnipotence of God the Word would be as inefficient as clay and spittle to restore sight to the blind.”

Paul asks, “How shall they hear apart from a preacher?” (Rom. 10:14). There needs to be a “sower” of the seed of the gospel. Nee (1971:87) holds that, “God’s word is not simply doctrine or teaching. We need to hear something beyond what we hear physically. This extra hearing comes from God speaking to us.” God speaks to us through His Holy Spirit, makes the Word alive to our hearts and draws us to Christ. At this point, a person may choose to believe on Jesus Christ and be saved or decide to reject the Author of life and choose spiritual death.

Here Pentecostal theologians and determinists are faced with two very different questions. If God (causally) determined some (the reprobate) not to believe, determinists may be asked, “Why would a good God do that?” If men have the ability or possibility to choose, such as Pentecostals believe, then “Why would anyone choose not to accept Christ, salvation and everlasting life?”

Volition lies in the act structure of man. There are many factors that bear influence on the act structure, some that we can explain, and others that we will probably never understand.

5.4.2.4.4 Faith is not meritorious to salvation

With the awakening of the “Faith” movement in the 1970’s, there came a new focus and emphasis on faith in the Church at large. This restoration of the teaching on faith also led to several instances of spiritual abuse. Some people who received healing were praised for their faith, and others who were not healed were ridiculed for their lack of faith. The focus was in some instances diverted away from God, who is the Healer, towards the ability of a person who believes.

Plüss (2011:309) hold that, “the focus on conversion, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and in concrete matters such as divine healing, challenge Pentecostals to live with an attitude of faith that goes beyond intellectual assent to principles of faith”. He admonishes Pentecostals, on the other hand, not to interpret failure as a lack of faith, since this may lead to focus on merit or human achievement, and a diversion from the focus of faith in the accomplished work of Christ.

Faith is a prerequisite for salvation and not a consequence of it, as Calvinism suggests. Faith is also not meritorious to salvation. Pentecostal theologians Duffield and Van Cleave correctly hold that, “Men are not saved because they believe, but through believing”. Williams (1953:208,209) holds that, “He who through Christ by faith turns from anything in himself that might provide merit and takes Christ as his only merit.” Faith is thus a condition for salvation (and healing) but it has no merit in itself but to serve as a vehicle whereby salvation is freely received. Evans (1971:146) describes faith in saying that it is, “the consent of the will to the assent of the understanding”.

Pecota (1995:367) explains why faith is not meritorious, by saying that the New Testament always describes justification to be *dia pisteos* “through faith”, and never, *dia pistin* “on account of faith”. Grace is freely received by faith, and faith passively receives and actively uses what God freely gives (Pearlman, 1995:240).

5.4.2.5 The condition of repentance

5.4.2.5.1 Repentance is a condition for salvation

Faith (as a prerequisite for salvation) is not a gift but a command. As the first sin was committed through disobedience, so salvation comes when man acts in obedience to the command to repent and believe.

It is fairly obvious that repentance is a crucial aspect of salvation because of the emphasis that the Bible places on repenting. Evans (1971:143) correctly contends that, "Outside of repentance the prophets and apostles know no way of securing pardon. No sacrifices, nor religious ceremonies can secure it." Where Calvinists believe that "man is regenerated by absolute decree and then turns to God" (Wiley, 1959:274), Pentecostals believe that man must first turn to God (repent) and is then regenerated (Horton, 1995:50).

Evans (1971:143) is correct when he asserts that, "Repentance qualifies a man for a pardon, but it does not entitle him to it." Repentance is precipitated by a conviction of sin, an acknowledgement and detest of sinfulness, and the consciousness of the desperate need for a Saviour. The conviction of sin is the work of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁰ The Holy Spirit calls man to responsibility for either accepting Christ as Saviour, or to reject Christ, and by implication, the atonement wrought for him by Christ's substitutionary death for his sin; God's free gift of grace, and eternal life.

Ryrie (1988:75) gives a very apt description of the term "conviction" as it relates to repentance when he asserts that, "the convicting work of the Spirit is the placing of the truth of the gospel in a clear light before the unsaved person so he acknowledges it as truth whether or not he receives Christ as personal saviour."

5.4.2.5.2 Repentance is a command

It cannot be contested that repentance is a command given by God throughout the Old Testament prophets, and that it echoes through the New Testament from the preaching of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:2) and Jesus Himself (Mat 4:17) to the final message to churches in the book of Revelation. It demands to be obeyed by a positive human action.

⁵⁰ "And when He comes, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:" (John 16:8 EMTV).

A command is a lawful instruction that must be obeyed. The Bible says, “So then these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now He commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day in which He is going to judge the world in righteousness by a Man whom He appointed, having given proof to all, by raising Him from the dead” (Acts 17:30-31 EMTV).

If repentance was a gift, the word “command” would be void of any meaning in the context of repentance. The call to repentance from the preaching of every prophet in the Old Testament, John the Baptist, Jesus Christ and the Apostles, would then be senseless. Finney’s argument (1966:56), that God could not possibly hold you to account for not flying when you have neither wings nor the ability to fly, also applies to the command to repent. If repentance follows regeneration as Calvinism insists, God is holding us to account for not flying, whilst we do not have wings or the power to fly.

5.4.2.5.3 Repentance is an act of the will

Repentance is an act of the will. As pertaining to the intellect, repentance can be described as “a change of mind”. Repentance is both a noun and a verb. The one cannot be considered without the other. The New dictionary of Theology (Ferguson, Sinclair & Wright, 1988:581) defines repentance as “a moral act involving the turning of the whole person in spirit, mind, and will to consent and subjection to the will of God”.

It would be ridiculous to assume that the Old Testament Prophets, John the Baptist, Jesus himself, and His disciples after him, commanded people to repent, who did not have the ability to do so. Since man cannot turn to God without the conviction of the Holy Spirit and the drawing grace of God, it is safe to assume that these messages were not only inspired by God but were preached under the unction of the Holy Spirit. The prophets, John the Baptist, Jesus, and his disciples would surely not assume that the pure rhetoric of preaching would convince people to repent and turn to God.

An intellectual decision to “turn around” and repent, has no significance if a man is not willing and able to act on that decision. An intellectual understanding of the sinful condition of one’s soul, or the emotional experience remorse, cannot translate into true repentance without a volitional response. This response is demonstrated in a confession of sin, a forsaking of sin, and a turning to God (Evans, 1971:141). Pecota (1995:362) rightfully holds that while the New Testament use of the word *metanoeo* / *metanoia* places a significant emphasis on the concept of the volitional response of man in terms of will and intellect, it also bears the connotation of the turning of the entire person to God.

Alexander (1838:7) asserts that it is a common experience that conviction of sin precedes a change of heart, and that the justification and motivation for a change of heart is the sinful moral agent’s sensibility of his miserable condition that causes the inward desire to be delivered from it. This is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of man (John 16:8). He further describes the effect of conviction saying that,

it is agreed that mere legal convictions, however the conscience may be awakened, and the soul agitated with terror, are no evidences of a change of heart. And it is also agreed, that all regenerate persons are brought to a deep sense of the intrinsic evil of sin, and this leads them inevitably to the conclusion, that God would be just if he should inflict upon them the condign punishment which he has threatened in his word. Indeed, when the mind is spiritually enlightened to see something of the great evil of sin, the penitent soul cannot help taking the part of God against itself, and approving of its own condemnation.

Conviction of sin and remorse do not always translate in regeneration. Repentance (which precedes regeneration) is a volitional and actual response to prevenient grace. A positive response to the call of God is, therefore, required for the appropriation of the gracious, unmerited gift of salvation. Fawcett (personal communication November 13, 2015) holds that,

There is a very interesting parallel on this volitional issue illustrated in Hymn 587 by George Matheson, (1842-1906) “Make me a captive Lord, and then I shall be free. Force me to surrender up my sword, and I shall conqueror be...”.

This hymn is based on the theme of the bondservant that Paul uses in Rom. 1. This is the necessary element of “Holiness” that was encouraged in the Holiness Movement that became a cornerstone of Pentecostalism. So the argument is not predestination – like it or not, or absolute free will in Arminianism; It is the humble attitude of absolute trust in God and His will.

Our will that is in bondage to the sinful nature, becomes progressively freer to the extent that we surrender our will to the will of God.

5.4.2.5.4 Repentance does not merit salvation

Repentance is not an act that merits salvation, or contributes toward salvation. Repentance is simply an acknowledgement, under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, that we are lost and a turning to God, as Saviour, in our desperate need of salvation. Thiesen (1992:276) gives an excellent description of repentance when he asserts that, "We are not saved for repenting but if we repent. Repentance is not a satisfaction rendered to God, but a condition of the heart necessary before we can believe unto salvation".

The act of repentance does not save us - God does. We can however not be saved if we do not turn to God. Repentance does as much for salvation as the calling of a drowning man does to a life saver. If the life saver does not respond, the man will still drown. Although the act of repentance is a necessary condition for repentance, the work of salvation is the work of the Saviour, not the sinner. Pope (2014:4) therefore, correctly holds that, "It is the gracious mercy of God, demonstrated in the shed blood of Christ that pays the price necessary to merit forgiveness. God is the One who forgives—our duty is to obey."

5.4.2.6 The condition of relationship

Since Christ is the Elect of God, and men are elected in Christ, it follows that, salvation is, not 'something' which man receives, but "election and salvation is determined by the relationship in which man finds himself to Christ" (Möller, 1997:60). You are either in Christ (Col.3:3) or you are not. 1 John 5:11-12 (KJV) says that, "...God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. (12) He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." You are either saved, or you are not. There is no position of spiritual limbo in between these two conditions.

Van Genderen and Velema (2008:226) writing from a Reformed perspective, agrees that when we speak of election in Christ, predestination is no longer an abstract concept and that, "The expression 'in Christ' opens all stops of the gospel! ...The confession that God has chosen us in Christ from the foundation of the world is the confession of God's eternal love".

5.4.3 “L” - General Atonement (Versus Limited Atonement)

LIMITED ATONEMENT v/s GENERAL ATONEMENT			
	CALVINISM (Steele & Thomas,1963:16) Christ's redeeming work was intended to save the elect only and actually secured salvation for them.		ARMINIANISM (Steele & Thomas,1963:16).
I	His death was a substitutionary endurance of the penalty of sin in the place of certain specified sinners .	I	Christ's redeeming work made it possible for everyone to be saved but did not actually secure salvation of anyone.
II	In addition to putting away the sins of His people, Christ's redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation , including faith which unites them to Him.	II	Although Christ died for all men and for every man, only those who believe in Him are saved. His death enabled God to pardon sinners on the condition that they believe, but it did not actually put away anyone's sins.
III	The gift of faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died, thereby guaranteeing their salvation (Steele & Thomas, 1963:18).	III	Christ's redemption becomes effective only if man chooses to accept

(Table 5)

5.4.3.1 General Atonement

Jesus said, in John 12:32 (KJV) “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me”. Pentecostals believe with Arminians that when Jesus said “all men”, He actually meant “all men”, and not as Calvinists choose to interpret the “all” as “*some* men from *all* nations”. Chafer (1948:196) holds that according to limited redemptionists, it would seem as if Christ was defeated if people that he died for are not saved. This would indeed be the case if Christ's death was a guarantee of salvation, which it is not. He (1948:196) describes universal redemption in asserting that, “Christ becomes the surety of salvation when one believes. Christ's death is a finished transaction, the value of which God has not ever applied to any soul until that soul passes from death unto life. It is actual in its availability, but potential in its application.”

Peter, in 1Pet. 2:24 (ISV) holds that, “‘He [Christ] himself bore our sins’ in his body on the tree, so that we might die to those sins and live righteously. ‘By his wounds you have been healed’.” Salvation and healing are mentioned in the same context. Those who believe and hold to the doctrine of limited atonement argue that Christ's death is only efficient for the sins of the elect (in this context, those unconditionally chosen in eternity).

However, since these two statements (regarding healing and propitiation mentioned in 1Pet. 2:24) are equal in value, and one cannot be divorced from the other in terms of the context in which it is stated, the completed healing must also apply to the elect. In other words, if the elect are completely saved by the (limited) atonement, they must also be completely healed by the same token. If any of the elect are sick, it could be argued that some may also not be saved, unless “healing” is interpreted as being healed from sin.

Some people may have faith for salvation, but not for healing. It is not appropriated in the same way or by the same means, but the argument applies specifically to the need of appropriation and application of both salvation and healing. Both salvation and healing are fully provided for by the atonement, but neither of these are effectually *applied* to the individual, without it being *appropriated* by faith. There is a process between provision and application. It is the process of appropriation by faith.

This argument can be supported by 2Cor. 5:21 (EMTV) for it says, “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Christ was made sin, (past tense), so that we may become (in the future) – the righteousness of God. It indicates that the atonement provided the potential for justification. John 1:12 (EMTV) holds that, “...as many as received Him, He gave them the authority to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.” This Scripture demonstrates that faith gives access to salvation and that we must, then, choose to receive (or reject) Him. The condition for “becoming” a child of God, is “receiving” Him through faith. It also implies the possibility of not receiving Him, or in other words, rejecting Him (as the elect of God) and consequently, accepting or rejecting the opportunity of “becoming” a child of God.

5.4.3.2 A preachable gospel

If every event, action, and thought are unchangeably foreordained by God, there wouldn't be much sense in preaching the gospel at all. God, as the Unmoveable Mover, has already “rolled the dice”. There would be no sense in “responding” to the message of salvation if whatever comes to pass has already been foreordained.

Pentecostals, however, believe that man has an obligation to believe, and that he is saved, on condition that he, in faith, responds to God's free offer of salvation. Chafer (1948:196) holds that,

He [God] is justified in placing the whole world in a particular relation to himself that the gospel might be preached with all sincerity to all men, and that, on the human side, men might be without excuse, being judged, as they are, for their rejection of that which is offered unto them. Men of this dispensation are condemned for their unbelief. This is expressly declared in John 3:18 and implied in John 16:7-11, in which latter context the Spirit is seen in His work of convicting the world of but one sin, namely, that "they believe not on me".

Plüss (2011:302) hold that Pentecostal preaching, as it pertains to the proclamation of the gospel, is focussed on "God's graceful forgiveness in Jesus Christ and on the acceptance of God's invitation". A person is saved and freely justified by the grace of God (Rom 3:24), but a sinner is required to come to God in faith in order to make the free gift of God's forgiveness his own.

Pecota (1995:363) hold that, "In the New Testament the verb *pisteuō*, 'I believe, trust' and the noun *pistis*, 'faith,' occur about 480 times...it functions as a technical term, used almost exclusively to refer to an unqualified trust in, obedience to, and dependence on God."

Möller (1997:55) refers to Scriptures such as, 2 Cor. 5:19 "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" KJV), and others such as, Col. 1:20⁵¹, and Rom. 5:10⁵². He (1997:55) asserts that "God did not reconcile Himself in Christ only with some elect, but with all of mankind, even those who have lived and those who will still live". Pentecostals subscribe to the same statement as Arminians who hold that man is not universally saved by the atonement, but the provision for the salvation of all men is universally secured in Christ. Pearlman (1995:222) describes the conditions for salvation in saying that,

"Turning from sin and turning to God are the conditions and preparations for salvation. Strictly speaking, there is no merit to repentance and faith; for all that is necessary for salvation has already been done for the penitent. By repentance the penitent removes the obstacle to the receiving of the gift; by faith he accepts the gift. But though repentance and faith are obligatory, because commanded, the helping influence of the Holy Spirit is implied."

⁵¹ Col. 1:20 (EMTV) "and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on the earth or things in the heavens, having made peace through the blood of His cross."

⁵² Rom. 5:10 (EMTV) "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

Pentecostals agree with Calvinists that man cannot save himself, but, unlike Calvinists, believe that anyone can be saved. Hankins (2011:100) gives a strong argument for the importance of preaching the gospel so that all may hear with the hope that some will respond to the call of God and be saved as he holds that,

Humankind's history is broken; its destiny is death; its context darkness; its reality is rebellion. This sinfulness has put us out of fellowship with God and under the verdict of eternal separation (Rom. 6.23). Through the person and work of Christ, which is proclaimed through the gospel, God reaches out His hand of "first love," providing a ground of salvation to which any one can respond in faith. If people do not hear and respond to this gospel, they will not be saved. So, we preach the gospel broadly, regularly, and passionately. We offer an invitation every time we preach because we believe every unbeliever, no matter how sinful and broken, can respond, and no matter how moral and self-righteous, must respond (Rev. 3:20).

5.4.4 "I" - Irresistible Grace *versus* Resistible Grace

IRRESISTIBLE GRACE v/s RESISTIBLE GRACE			
	CALVINISM (Steele & Thomas,1963:16)		ARMINIANISM (Steele & Thomas,1963:16).
I	In addition to the outward general call to salvation which is made to everyone who hears the gospel, the Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call which inevitably brings them to salvation.	I	The Spirit calls inwardly all those who are called outwardly by the Gospel invitation; He does all that He can to bring every sinner to salvation.
II	The external call (which is made to all without distinction) can be, and often is, rejected; whereas the internal call (which is made only to the elect) cannot be rejected; it always results in conversion.	II	But inasmuch as man is free, he can successfully resist the Spirit's call.
III	By means of this special call the Spirit irresistibly draws sinner to Christ.	III	The Holy Spirit can only draw to Christ those who allow Him to have His way with them.
I V	He is not limited in His work of applying salvation by man's will, nor is He dependant on man's cooperation for success.	IV	The Spirit cannot regenerate the sinner until he believes; faith (which is man's contribution) precedes and makes possible the new birth. Thus, man's free will limits the Spirit in the application of Christ's saving work.

V	The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ.	V	Until the sinner responds, the Spirit cannot give life.
VI	God's grace, therefore, is invincible; it never fails to result in the salvation of those to whom it is extended.	VI	God's grace, therefore, is not invincible; it can be, and often is, resisted and thwarted by man.

(Table 6)

5.4.4.1 The universal revelation of God's (prevenient, resistible) grace

Williams (1953b:206) describes grace as, "that desire on the part of God for man's salvation, His willingness to save *all who* accept the redemption provided through the [universal] atonement provided by our Lord Jesus Christ" . Man cannot choose God without the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and being drawn by the grace of God. The grace of God is, however, revealed to all men (Tit. 2:11), which implies that all men, enabled by the supernatural drawing grace of God, have the responsibility to choose to accept, *or reject* God's free gift of salvation.

It is important to note that the well known Scripture of John 3:16, must be interpreted in the context in which it is written. This verse must be read in the context of the illustration of the brass snake of Moses (Num. 21:8-9) illustrated in John 3:14⁵³. Those who "chose" to look at the brass snake were healed. Salvation is universally provided by Christ's proprietary death on the cross, but it is individually appropriated by (an act of) faith. Salvation is freely supplied to "whosoever will" believe.

Burke (2013:71) uses the illustration of the brass snake of Numbers 21 to describe human responsibility specifically in relation to the appropriation of salvation. He holds that the "manna" that Israel rejected was a type of Christ, that despising the manna meant despising Christ and rejecting salvation as God's gift to man. He further holds that this rejection of Christ through unbelief, is the sin described in John 16:8-9; which says: "And when he [the Holy Spirit] is come, He will reprove [convict] the world of sin because they believe not on me".

⁵³ Joh 3:14 (KJV) "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up."

Burke (2013:71) continues to make certain correlations between the brass snake of Numbers 21, and the cross of Christ. He correctly holds that while both the snake, as remedy for Israel's malady, and the atonement of Christ are both universal in accomplishment, it is limited in application, and conditional on faith.

Burke's interpretation corresponds to what is implied by John 3:15 and 16, from the context of the preceding verses, where Christ places the analogy of the brass snake in direct comparison with His redeeming work on the cross. Burke, therefore, rightly argues that just as the brass snake was there for everyone to see, and *would choose* to look at the snake, some still died. Christ's atonement is likewise universal in its provision but has limited application to only those who *choose to believe*.

The brass snake of Numbers 21 compared with the atonement of Christ

Brass snake of Numbers 21		Atonement of Christ	
It was provided for all	Num. 21:9	It was provided for all	John 3:16
They had to believe	Num. 21:8	We have to believe	Acts 16:31
They had to look away from their own condition and look at the snake to live	Num. 21:8	We need to look to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith	Heb. 12:2

(Table 7)

Möller (1997:123) holds that "The call to man to believe is accompanied by the grace which enables him to believe". This truth is confirmed by the apostle Paul in Tit 2:11 where he asserts that, "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (KJV). Clarke (E-sword, 2012) correctly comments on this verse, saying that,

as the light and heat of the sun are denied to no nation nor individual, so the grace of the Lord Jesus, this also shines out upon all; and God designs that all mankind shall be as equally benefited by it in reference to their souls, as they are in respect to their bodies by the sun that shines in the firmament of heaven.

Möller (1997:85) is correct when he asserts that God not only seeks man and calls him to repentance, but that, "He also gave his Holy Spirit to work in the heart of man and enlighten it, thus making it possible for man to achieve redemption". Alexander (1836:6) correctly contends that there can be no repentance without the knowledge of truth and conviction of the Holy Spirit, which he describes as, "the light which shows the holiness and extent of the law and the evil of sin". He also correctly contends that the conviction of the Holy Spirit is concomitant with the preaching of the gospel and the impression of the truth of scripture on the minds of men. Paul writes in Romans 10:14 (MKJV) "how then shall they call on him in

whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without preaching?"

Alexander (1836:6) describes how prevenient grace operates through the combined working of the Holy Spirit and the revelation of truth from the Word of God, when he says that,

We can conceive of a preparation of the heart to receive the truth before it is known, as in fact the knowledge of the truth is acquired very gradually. Thus we can conceive of a divine agency on the heart of a heathen, by which he would be disposed to receive the truth as soon as it should be made known. Such a divine influence does probably prepare the way for the success of the gospel; but where the word is never sent, there we have no evidence that the Spirit exerts his renovating influence on the minds of men.

Alexander (1836:6) is correct to say that, "there can be no repentance without the knowledge of truth and conviction of the Holy Spirit", and that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to convict the sinner of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8). This work of the Holy Spirit, "to prepare the way for the success of the gospel", applies to all men. There are many other ways in which God can reveal Himself to man other than the preached message of the gospel. The revelation through nature alone is enough for people to know God or to attract the wrath of God, and be judged guilty of rejecting this knowledge (Rom. 1:20)⁵⁴.

5.4.4.2 The work of the Holy Spirit with regards to the revelation of God's grace

Vondey (2013:75) asserts that, "the Holy Spirit represents for most Pentecostals an experiential entrance point to the narrative of salvation". Jenny (1995:413) contends that where there is no conviction of sin and no sense of guilt, there is no possibility of repentance and forgiveness, and holds that, "Salvation can only begin once an individual has been convicted of personal sin...The Holy Spirit is the one who brings conviction. The conviction of sin is the first stage in the sanctification of the individual and the only one that does not require one's consent." He (1995:413) further holds that, convicting the world of sin is part of the Holy Spirit's ministry among the unconverted. The work of the Holy Spirit is directed to all men, but it can be resisted (Acts 7:51) and rejected (1 Tim 4:2).

⁵⁴ Rom 1:20 (EMTV) "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things made, both His eternal power and Divinity, so that they are without excuse."

Finney (1966:88) describes the effect of conviction in saying that, as long as a sinner sees any virtue in his own sufferings, tears or mental agony, he will not receive Christ. But when he comes under conviction of sin and receives Christ, “he sinks down as lost and condemned-as in fact a dead person, unless redeemed by Christ”.

Finney describes a person under conviction of sin, as *seeing* himself or herself as “a dead person”. Calvinism claims that a person is “dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God” (Steele & Thomas, 1963:16) and, therefore, implies that an unconverted person cannot see himself or herself, as dead. Seeing oneself as dead in sin implies that a person is aware of the state of his or her soul as being lost and in need of salvation. One must be *alive*, to see oneself as dead. A “dead” person cannot be convicted of sin.

Calvinism therefore denies the possibility of conviction of sin before regeneration while Pentecostals believe that conviction of sin by the Holy Spirit precipitates repentance and conversion.

5.4.4.3 A “free will” response to the drawing grace of God’s Holy Spirit

A “free will” response does not mean that there are no contending factors influencing a choice of action. It does not mean that choice is easy. Important choices are always difficult to make. It is difficult because the choices we make have certain implications. It is difficult because making a decision demands that we take responsibility for the outcome of that choice. It is difficult because we never fully comprehend the depth and the detail of these implications simply because we do not know the future. It is, however, considered “free choice” as long as there are certain options to choose from. It is free when these choices are not predetermined or coerced.

If any choice would be determined by some external factor, it ceases to be “a choice”. If a person cannot control or influence an outcome, and there is no possibility of a decisive action to be taken, the outcome is not a choice but it is a “consequence” of a choice that is already made (by somebody else). Even a choice made at gunpoint, in fear, pain, or under torture, is still free choice as long as we have an opportunity to influence the outcome. We cannot possibly bear any responsibility or own any guilt for choices that are made on our behalf.

Many have chosen to be tortured and even to die rather than to deny Christ. These choices were not easy, but they were free.

As in the Garden of Eden, directly after the Fall, God called out to man in his sin, and that call necessitated a response from man. Möller (1998:19) contends that God's revelation implicates the same obligation on man to respond to this grace, but he adds that "it does not mean that man is of himself capable of replying in the correct manner...He can only react correctly if God grants him grace to do so". Tucker (1994:12) holds that, "Unless God moves to manifest Himself to us in some way, we find it impossible to come to repentance". Man does, however, not relinquish his will, even when he submits his will to God through a conscious act of repentance and he, therefore, always remains a reasoning entity (Möller, 1997:85).

Pecota (1995:360) holds that, "God is love and the very nature of love implies that it can be resisted or rejected. By its very nature love is vulnerable. It does no disservice to His magnificent greatness or His sovereignty to believe that we can refuse His love and grace which genuinely seeks to draw all people to himself." Caram (2004:122) holds that, "In order to find salvation, God's grace must draw a person, yet, man's will must respond...He can always say no."

God would destroy the essence of man as a moral agent should He overpower man by means of automatic coercion, and that mercy or love, violently enforced on man loses all meaning and becomes a violation. While man's response to God's offer of salvation determines whether redemption is accomplished or not, this response, however necessary, does not mean that man can in any way contribute to his salvation. God affects salvation all by Himself, man only responds by accepting or rejecting God's Grace (Möller, 1997:85).

Culpepper (1966:133) in correspondence with Möller correctly asserts that, "If coercion had been God's method of saving man from sin, the cross would never have become a reality. Indeed, there would have been no need for redemption, for God would not have permitted human sin".

Pentecostals, therefore, believe that man is required to “willingly” respond to the “drawing grace” of God, meaning that while salvation is solely achieved through God’s initiative, the appropriation of salvation also depends on wilful, human cooperation. Culpepper (1966:133) gives a balanced view of God’s sovereignty and human freedom in saying that, “The cross of Christ is the biblical testimony that God acts in a way consistent with his own nature, demonstrating his love while respecting man’s freedom. Reconciliation not revenge is God’s objective. Self-sacrifice, not self assertion is his method”.

5.4.4.4 The appropriation of salvation by faith

We have already established in the previous chapter that faith *is not* a gift from God. Faith is simply man’s trusting response to God’s free and universal grace. Some choose to resist God’s grace and offer of salvation.

Faith is one of two essential elements for conversion that leads to salvation. The Bible says that “Abram believed the LORD, and it was credited to him as righteousness” (Gen 15:6 ISV). Faith is essential to salvation, and faith is essential to repentance which is the second prerequisite for salvation. Pecota (1995:362) holds that “one must trust to make the move to repent...When we believe, put our trust in God, we turn toward Him.” Finney (1966:89) correctly asserts that, “The very act of believing, receives Christ as just that influence that alone can wake up the mind to spiritual life. Your heart will not be broken, your doubts will not be cleared up, you will never die to the world, until you believe.”

Jenny (1995:415) describes the necessity of faith as a prerequisite for salvation, in asserting that salvation is appropriated by means of “the individual’s faith in the promises of God plus the cleansing power of the Spirit of God” (Acts 10:15; 11:9; Rom. 15:16; 1 Pet. 1:1-2). Some of the Reformers such as Luther and Zwingli also supported this view. Luther (Williams, 1953b:207) holds that “the righteousness of grace is infused by faith...Faith receives, love gives. Faith brings man to God; love brings God to man”, and Zwingli (Williams, 1953b: 207) asserts that, “Faith is confidence in the grace of God. It rests immovably, firmly, and undistractedly upon the mercy of God”.

Pecota (1995:360) correctly asserts that, “if we cannot resist God’s grace, then nonbelievers will perish, not because they would not respond but because they could not. God’s grace

would not be efficacious to them.” He (1995:360) also contends that, if man does not have the ability, opportunity, and responsibility to either accept or reject God’s grace, God would seem to be “a capricious sovereign who toys with His subjects... [rather than being] a God of love and grace” and that “His ‘whosoever will’ becomes a cruel game that has no equal, since God is the one who plays it”.

Jenny (1995:416) correctly contends that the difference between a Christian and an unconverted person is that, “the Christian has allowed God to sanctify him, [and] the non-Christian has not”. Jenny is saying by implication that a person can accept, or reject the grace of God, that it is God who saves, and that man cannot contribute anything to salvation. It is God’s desire to save every person, yet some will reject God’s love and will be eternally lost.

5.4.4.5 Personal Response

Man cannot save himself, and there is nothing that man can do to contribute toward his salvation. Man cannot even come to God, reach out for salvation and repent unless he is drawn by the Holy Spirit, and comes under the conviction of sin. Salvation is a gift from God. Man can only be saved by responding to God’s free offer of salvation. The initiative for salvation comes from God alone.

God does, however, require man to respond positively, volitionally and freely (in other words, not under coercion or causal determination) to this free offer of salvation. This personal response implies that God honours the decision of man as a moral agent, and He sovereignly chooses to give man the freedom, ability, *and responsibility*, to determine his own eternal destiny by making voluntary choices, even if this freedom can lead to his own demise.

Duffield and Van Cleave (1983:137) assert that, “With free choice there is of necessity the possibility of a wrong choice”. Just as the first human sin resulted from a voluntary act of disobedience, likewise, the acceptance *or rejection* of salvation, depends on the human element of choice: “But as many **as received** Him, He gave to them authority to become the children of God, to those who believe on His name” (John 1:12 MKJV).

The word translated as “received” (John 1:12)⁵⁵, is ελαβον, which Strong (n.d.:44) explains as: “A prolonged form of a primary verb, which is used only as an alternate in certain tenses; to take (in very many applications, literally and figuratively) probably objective or active, to get hold of”. This implies voluntary human action rather than coerced or determined action resulting from an impersonal divine decree. Man’s “yes” to God’s offer of salvation is aided by the Holy Spirit’s guidance and support.

Scripture is clear that man has always been confronted with choice with regards to salvation and obeying God. We have several examples where God confronted Israel with the opportunity, responsibility, and command to choose.

- “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live” (Deut. 30:19 KJV).
- “And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Jos. 24:15 KJV).

In both the above-mentioned Scriptures, the word “choose” (*bachar*), means: A primitive root-properly to try, that is, (by implication) select: - acceptable, appoint, root; choose (choice), excellent, join, be rather, require” (Strong, n.d.:19). Acts 13:48 says: “And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed” (Act 13:48 Webster). Gentiles who were not considered chosen (or elected by God), as was Israel, came to salvation by faith, indicating personal response. This is also interesting to see that Gentiles were “ordained” to eternal life. The Greek word τεταγμενοι (tetagmenoi), (Textus Receptus, E-sword) indicates assignment or disposition, it is not predestination, and should not be interpreted as such. Barnes (E-sword) holds, with regards to the word τεταγμενοι that,

It does not properly refer to an eternal decree, or directly to the doctrine of election - though that may be inferred from it; but it refers to their being then in fact disposed to embrace eternal life. They were then inclined by an influence from without themselves, or so disposed as to embrace eternal life. That this was done by the influence of the Holy Spirit is clear from all parts of the New Testament, Tit. 3:5-6; John 1:13. It was not a disposition or arrangement originating with themselves, but with God.

⁵⁵ “But as many as received Him, He gave them the authority to become children of God, to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12 EMTV).

Peter gives specific instructions in Acts 2:38 (EMTV), to those who *want to* be saved, saying, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Luke writes in Acts 2:41 (EMTV): "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added." Barnes, ([2012]:E-sword) comments on this reaction of those who heard Peter's message, in saying that, "The word rendered 'gladly' means 'freely, cheerfully, joyfully.' It implies that they did it without compulsion, and with joy." Barnes draws a logical conclusion from the text that the choice to accept God's gift of salvation was not predetermined or coerced.

Pearlman (1995:224) holds that "saving faith is an act of the entire personality, involving intellect, emotion, and will". Pentecostal theologians such as Pearlman emphasises the importance of faith in action or a faithful response to the call of God. Salvation is not appropriated through an intellectual understanding that Christ alone can save you. It is not appropriated through an emotional response. It has to be a volitional response, which means that both the intellect and emotions of man are involved in making a positive decision. It is a "heart" choice. It is a decision made from the act structure of man that also involves the spirit, body, and soul of man. It is not a passive choice, but a choice that implies active participation.

This notion is supported by Caram (2004:72) who holds that, "Even though Christ has provided full redemption for every problem in man, still we have the choice to appropriate what has been purchased or reject it". Chafer (1948:196) correctly contends that the person who rejects Christ and his redemption, by implication demands that the "transaction of Calvary" be reversed and that, that person himself retain that sin, in all its condemning power.

Chafer (1948:196) is correct when he holds that, while the redemption of mankind is universally sufficient for the salvation of the world, it is efficient only for those who appropriate salvation by wilfully choosing to accept Christ's free offer of salvation.

5.4.5 "P" - Conditional Perseverance (VS Perseverance of the Saints)

	CALVINISM (Steele & Thomas, 1963:19).		ARMINIANISM (Steele & Thomas, 1963:19).
I	All those who were chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Spirit are eternally saved. They are kept in faith by the power of Almighty God and thus persevere to the end.	I	Those who believe and are truly saved can lose their salvation by failing to keep up their faith, etc.

(Table 8)

5.4.5.1 Personal responsibility for perseverance

While assurance of salvation is a fundamental element of Pentecostal soteriology, it is constituted on a completely different premise from Calvinism's doctrine of unconditional perseverance. Although Calvinists may claim that the doctrine of perseverance is "unconditional", it is technically (from a Calvinist perspective) "conditional" on God's *unconditional* election.

The conditions for the Pentecostal doctrine of "conditional" perseverance, is that a person remains in relationship with Christ. Pentecostals believe that a Christian's perseverance in salvation is conditional upon a continued relationship with Jesus Christ. Möller (1997:108) rightfully holds that perseverance is not contingent upon faith and exertion, and contends that that erroneous premise leads to fear and uncertainty regarding eternal salvation. Duffield and Van Cleave (1987:258,259) concurs with Möller above, and elaborates by asserting that, "We are not saved because of our faith and obedience, nor are we kept saved by these. But it is faith and obedience that keeps us in fellowship with Christ Who is faithful to keep that which we have committed unto Him." This Pentecostal view of assurance of salvation is supported by Scripture, where Peter, in 1Peter 1:5 (KJV) gives us the assurance that we are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation..." We are not kept *by* faith, but *through* faith, *by* the power of God.

While we may be enjoying assurance of salvation, Caram (2004:72) cautions that, "Neglecting our redemption is just as serious as rejecting it". He herewith implies that salvation can be lost. The author of Hebrews confirms this solemn warning when he asserts in Hebrews 2:1 and 3 (EMTV) that, "...we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away." and asks, (3) "how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation..."

Pecota (1995:369) describes the Pentecostal doctrine of perseverance by saying that, “perseverance refers to the ongoing operation of the Holy Spirit through which the work of God begun in our hearts will be carried on to completion (Phil. 1:6)”, but that not everyone who professes faith in Christ is secure for eternity.

Perseverance is associated with certain promises and conditions:

- “Then he said to all of them, ‘If anyone wants to come with me, he must deny himself, pick up his cross every day, and follow me continually...’” (Luke 9:23 ISV).
- “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, ‘If ye continue in my word, [then] are ye my disciples indeed’” (John 8:31 KJV).
- “Confirming the souls of the disciples [and] exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Act 14:22 KJV).
- “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and [be] not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, [and] which was preached to every creature which is under heaven: whereof I Paul am made a minister” (Col. 1:23 KJV).
- “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” (I Tim. 4:16 KJV).
- “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses” (I Tim. 6:12 KJV).

The promises and the conditions in the above mentioned verses are a clear indication that salvation is “conditional” upon certain behaviours. If there are “*if*’s” in any sentence it proves by implication that there are “*if not*’s”. The conditions are not only linked to the promises, which could indicate reward, but the conditions are ultimately linked to salvation itself. These conditions can collectively be described as perseverance.

5.4.5.2 Biblical evidence for the security of the believer

It is possible to have assurance of salvation and still believe that a person can fall away from the faith, or “backslide” and lose his or her salvation. Just as there are many Scriptures that affirm the possibility of apostasy, there are several Scriptures that affirm the security of the believer. Some of these listed by Pecota (1995:370) are:

- John 6:38-40 – confirming that Jesus will not lose any given to Him by the Father
- John 10:27-30 – The sheep will never perish
- 1 John 5:18 – We are kept by Christ

- Rom. 8:35-39 – Nothing shall separate us from God's love

5.4.5.3 Biblical evidence for the possibility of apostasy

There are several Scriptures that affirm the possibility of apostasy, doom and final condemnation such as,

- Matt. 24:12-13 – The love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved
- John 15:6; Rom. 11:17-21; 1 Cor. 9:27 – Those who do not abide in Christ will be cut off
- Gal. 5:4 – We can be alienated from Christ and fall away from grace
- 1 Tim. 1:19 – some have shipwrecked their faith
- 1 Tim. 4:1 – Some will abandon the faith

An argument for the possibility of apostasy can be drawn from the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). In this parable, it is evident that “the prodigal son” was first and foremost “a son”. There is no uncertainty about his position in the house. He had the position of birthright and inheritance, thus, we could say that he, due to his position as a son, was saved when he was still in the house.

We learn from this parable that a person can lose his salvation, firstly because of his position from the “presence of the father” to the “presence of the pigs”. Secondly, while noting the anguish of the father for his prodigal son, and his longing desire to have him back home, the father did not go out searching for the son, (or as R.C. Sproul, and the Belgic Confession⁵⁶ would have it, drag him back home). The father waited until the son returned, and repented of his own volition (Luke 15:17, 21). Thirdly, although the father longed for his return, he considered him “dead”; “Because my son was dead and has come back to life...” (Luke 15:24 ISV). In spite of being “dead in trespasses and sin” he was still expected to get up from his position in the pigsty and take the long walk home. He first had to come home and repent, before he was restored as a son.

⁵⁶ The Belgic Confession, Article 16 holds that due to God's compassion, “He drags and saves from perdition those that He, in His eternal and immutable decree, elected in unmitigated clemency in Jesus Christ, our Lord, without taking their deeds into account in any way” (Möller, 1998: 62).

Old Testament saints knew that there was a possibility that they could fall away from faith and salvation. Moses was aware of the fact that one's name could be removed from the Book of Life: "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me... I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses. Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book" (Ex. 32:32-33 KJV). This Scripture proves in God's own words that He will blot out the names of those who sin against Him from the book of life. David was of the same conviction, 'Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous' (Psa. 69:28 KJV). David wrote in Psalm 51:11 (KJV) "Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me". David knew from experience that God could withdraw His Spirit from him, as God did with Saul (who was chosen / elected by God himself).

5.4.5.4 A Pentecostal doctrine of perseverance of the regenerate

Article 6 of the 5th point (perseverance of the regenerate) of the Canons of Dordt (Steele & Thomas, [1619] 1963: *COD* :5:6), titled, "God's Saving Intervention", reads that,

For God, who is rich in mercy, according to the unchangeable purpose of election does not take the Holy Spirit from his own completely, even when they fall grievously. Neither does God let them fall down so far that they forfeit the grace of adoption and the state of justification, or commit the sin which leads to death (the sin against the Holy Spirit), and plunge themselves, entirely forsaken by God, into eternal ruin.

Pentecostals disagree with this statement. Duffield and Van Cleave hold that: "There is no promise in the Bible that God will keep the man who wilfully turns away from the provisions of salvation which Christ has made" (1987:257). The Scriptures are clear on the fact that someone who was once saved can fall away, backslide, and be eternally lost. The writer of Hebrews renders a very serious and explicit warning in Heb. 10:26 (KJV) saying that, "... if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins".

Barnes (2012) explains the concept of "willful sin" in Heb. 10:26, saying that, "It is not to be construed here strictly, or metaphysically, for all sin is voluntary, or is committed willingly, but must refer to a deliberate act, where a man means to abandon his religion, and to turn away from God." He further holds concerning Heb. 6:6 that, "The sacrifice made for sin by the Redeemer is never to be repeated, and if that is deliberately rejected, the soul must be lost." Denny (1895:80) concurs with Barnes, and holds that, "There are of course, degrees of sin, and the worst of all, which makes restoration impossible, is the deliberate rejection of what

Christ has brought us". It is clear from a face value reading of this passage, that there is firstly an offer of salvation, and secondly, that that offer of salvation can be rejected.

The writer of Hebrews also writes this solemn warning under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, saying:

For [it is] impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance-, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put [him] to an open shame (Heb. 6:4-6 KJV).

The above-mentioned phrase, "partaking of the Holy Ghost", emphasises the fact that these people were truly saved, since those who are truly saved are sealed with the Holy Spirit. Paul, in Ephesians 1:13 (KJV) holds that, "In whom ye also [trusted], after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise". It shows that, although the seal of the Holy Spirit confirms our assurance of salvation, that it is not a guarantee that we cannot lose our salvation.

Möller (1997:108) correctly holds that the premise of persevering to the end, *due to your own faith and exertion*, leaves the Christian with the same uncertainty as the Calvinist premise of unconditional election in that a person can only know whether they are saved in the end. Bonke (1991:12) contends that, "Any doctrine which leaves you guessing about your soul's salvation is completely out of harmony with the New Testament". Bonke, in support of his statement above, quotes Acts 17:31 "God...hath given assurance unto all men in that He raised Him [Jesus] from the dead". It is therefore important to point out that Pentecostals believe that a person must have assurance of salvation, but that this assurance is conditional upon the relationship in which the believer stands with Christ (Möller, 1997:108).

When a person is born again, they have an experience of

1. overwhelming peace,
2. of freedom from the bondage of sin and guilt, and
3. the love of God that floods their souls (Retief, 1951:79).

This experience serves as confirmation and assurance of salvation. We have continued assurance right now. Our assurance of salvation lies therein that, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom 8:16 KJV). It stands upon the

testimony of the Word of God that, "...he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6 KJV), and John 10:28 (KJV) that says, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand."

Duffield and Van Cleave (1987:257) describe the perseverance of the regenerate by quoting Moody's literal translation of John 10:27-28 "My Sheep keep on hearing my voice and I keep on knowing them, and they follow me and I give them eternal life...." Moody holds that, "the verbs are present linear, indicating continuous action by the sheep and by the shepherd, not the punctiliar fallacy of the past tense." The crucial difference of interpretation of this Scripture between a Calvinist and a Pentecostal perspective lies therein that Pentecostals believe that "the sheep" in this verse, have a choice, and can at any given time "choose" not to persevere, while Calvinists believe that God sovereignly determined His sheep to persevere.

Plüss (2011:300) correctly holds that while Pentecostals believe that they are saved by faith, and that "being saved by faith means trusting God", this trust must not be confused with a self confident reliance on a decision that was made to follow Christ. He holds that Pentecostals "understand faith as a continuing development in a believer's life, a process whose goal is sanctification". This notion is exemplified in Philippians 2:12-13 where Paul instructs the Philippian believers to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, saying that it is God who works in them, "both to will and to work, for his good pleasure (ASV)".

Kay (2009:250,251) holds that, "Pentecostals accept that, while they may be justified and sanctified, they are still capable of sin and note that there is no expectation that sin will finally be removed from the church until the end of history." Fawcett (1996:9) confirms Kay's assertion when he refers to 1 John 5:18, "*We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not...*", and contends that this verse is incorrectly translated, which has lead to many falling into despair and even deeper sin. He holds that "What the Holy Spirit inspired John to write in the original language, meant, and is more correctly translated in the New International Version: 'We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin.'"

Perseverance depends both on the Christian's desire and effort to persevere, and also on God's grace to preserve him. One cannot be without the other. God will not keep those who do not wish to be kept, and man cannot persevere in his own strength alone. We are commanded to walk in the Spirit (Rom. 8:1, 4; Gal. 5:16). Walking in the Spirit implies a dependence on the Spirit, rather than our own strength. It is, however, also an act of obedience, a decision that flows from the will of man in submission to the will of God and lead by the Spirit of God.

5.5 THE PENTECOSTAL DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

Knowledge of the background, historical development, and hermeneutical presuppositions of Pentecostal theology are crucial to our understanding of the basic tenants of Pentecostal soteriology. It is the foundation and premise on which, and from which, the Pentecostal doctrine of election is developed and established.

The concept of free will, human responsibility and the sovereignty of God (as well as its interpretation and the implications of its interpretation) run as a very significant thread through the doctrine of salvation.

The understanding of "free will" and the degree of human responsibility in the appropriation of personal salvation leads to a particular interpretation and formulation of the doctrine of election. It also significantly influences our understanding and interpretation of almost every major doctrine of the Bible, our understanding of God, ourselves, and how we approach, theology as a subject.

Free will is not simply the ability to choose between good and evil, for that would require man to stand on neutral ground (without the influence of character, nature, desire, or coercion from any outside source). It does, however, presuppose that humans are responsible for the choices that they make, irrespective of the conditions or influences that affect that choice. The common (a-theological) understanding of the concept of free choice implies that human choice is not determined, pre-programmed, or caused (either circumstantial or otherwise) but it is an act of a moral agent that will one day give account for every choice, every deed, and every word spoken (Mat. 5:21-22).

5.5.1 The *ordo salutis*

Olson (October 30, 2014), aptly describes the “order of salvation” (*ordo salutis*⁵⁷), as “a symbolic time line for the purpose of distinguishing between the elements of salvation and identifying God’s action and ours in salvation”.

The *ordo salutis* is a product of theological construction and must accommodate the fact that how people come to salvation does not necessarily follow a limited or rigidly constructed order. God in His sovereignty cannot be limited to a theological construct if He wishes to save a person who comes to Him in faith. It is also near impossible to set out a specific, logical, sequence of events regarding salvation since as Möller (1997:97) correctly observes, “The aspects of salvation may also be likened to the different sides of a cube. No matter which of the six sides you look at, you are always faced with the whole cube.”

Olson (October 30, 2014), therefore, correctly holds that, “an order of salvation that is rigid, dogmatic, “carved in stone,” “one size fits all,” ignores the fact that Scripture itself nowhere gives us a clear order of salvation”. At the same time, he also argues in favour of having a specific theological construct of an *ordo salutis*, that, not having an order of salvation as a normative basis for preaching and teaching will “dumb salvation down” and promote “biblical illiteracy”.

The significance of having a (Pentecostal) *ordo salutis* as a theological construct is, therefore, fundamental to the paradigm of Pentecostal soteriology as a normative basis for preaching and teaching. While some Pentecostal Theologians, such as Möller, are not dogmatic about the specific sequence of the *ordo salutis*, it must be noted that there are distinct differences between a Pentecostal *ordo salutis* and what is proposed by Calvinism.

What is the sequence of events that would constitute a Pentecostal *ordo salutis*? Pentecostal theologian, Pecota (1995:359,360) holds that, “If one accepts the *ordo salutis* Calvinists

⁵⁷ The term *ordo salutis* or *order of salvation* dates from about 1737, and is attributed to Jacob Karpov, a Lutheran theologian, and refers to the logical, and not necessarily the chronological order, in which we experience the transformation from a sinful state to a state of complete salvation (Pecota, 1995: 354).

propose in which regeneration follows the calling but precedes repentance and faith, then certainly, grace is irresistible. One has already been born again.”

While there are some disagreements among Pentecostal theologians with regards to the specific order of salvation, we must conclude that in order for grace to be resistible, repentance and faith must *precede* regeneration. A Pentecostal *ordo salutis* must, therefore, as a minimum requirement, state that repentance and faith precede regeneration.

Both Pecota and Williams fulfil this requirement of placing repentance and faith before regeneration; Pecota (1995:355), however, follows Arminian theology when he describes the *ordo salutis* to be; “foreknowledge, election, predestination, calling, repentance, faith, regeneration, and the rest”. Williams (1953:243) includes conversion as a step that follows repentance, which he asserts is, “that act of man, brought about by the Holy Spirit and means of grace, whereby, having repented, or shown godly sorrow for sin, man turns from sin to God. It therefore results from repentance and leads to regeneration.”

5.5.2 A Pentecostal doctrine of regeneration

Pentecostals and other evangelical Christians believe that salvation is contingent on a supernatural transforming work of God’s grace, brought about by the Holy Spirit, on account of a person’s faith. Chafer (148:104) gives a riveting description of the new birth, in asserting that,

The new birth then, is not a mere remedy for human failures: it is a creation by divine generation, a constituting of believers inherent, innate, legitimate sons of God. The human mind cannot approach the comprehension of that which is involved in the immeasurable realities of an actual sonship relation to God, which makes the Christian an heir of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ (Rom:8:17).

This transforming work of God’s grace, is called “regeneration” and it is aptly described by A.H. Strong as “the expulsive power of new affection” (Olson, October 8, 2014). The important role of the Holy Spirit in the salvation of man is further explained by Culpepper (1966:136) who asserts that, “Though the atonement has its origin in the eternal purpose of God ... it does not result in salvation for man until the Holy Spirit uses it to evoke a response of repentance and faith, to unite the sinner to the Saviour...”

Ryrie (1988:76) correctly describes an aspect of regeneration as “God’s act of begetting eternal life in the one whom believes in Christ”. This statement presupposes that faith and repentance are conditions for, and precedes regeneration and repentance, and not *visa versa*.

Regeneration can also be described as “the decisive and instantaneous action of the Holy Spirit in which he re-creates the inner nature” (Pecota, 1995:365). This statement must be qualified in terms of the nature of, and the degree in which the immediate transformation is affected. Strong (Williams, 1953:240) describes regeneration as, “a union of the soul with Christ in which the human spirit, while possessing its own individuality and personal distinctness, is interpenetrated and energized by the spirit of Christ”. Strong, through this statement, gives an excellent description of how regeneration gives a person God’s divine life without ruling out the personality and uniqueness of man as a moral agent.

Regeneration is also referred to as the “New Birth, or the “born-again experience” It is essential to salvation, and it is something that only God can do. It is not simply a revival of a previous state of being, or a restoration of the state of man before the Fall. Evans (1968:152) correctly holds that, “Regeneration is not a natural forward step in man’s development; it is a supernatural act of God, it is a spiritual crisis. It is not evolution but involution - the communication of a new life”. Regeneration includes provisional sanctification, adoption, and justification and it is the only way of becoming a child of God. You are either born again, or you are not a Christian at all.

Wesley (Wiley, 1952:96) gives an accurate description of the effect of regeneration on the soul, when he asserts that,

Although the soul begins a new life at the hour of conversion, there remains not only the capacity for, but a tendency to, sin. The old Adam of active sin, of resistance to God and antagonism to holiness, is gone - buried with Christ by the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit. But the Adamic fall is more than the ordering of a life, and the new birth is more than a change from one set of motives to another. After we have passed from death unto life, we are conscious that there remains a diseased moral nature whose allies are flesh and blood; and though these are conquered, they are not annihilated by the change which makes us children of God.

Wesley’s description corresponds with what Pentecostals believe with regards to the implication of and the effect of regeneration.

5.5.2.1 The essence of regeneration

If we wish to accurately describe regeneration, we must identify what exactly is regenerated. It is in the context of the doctrine of regeneration, and more specifically to the notion of “*being regenerated*”, that a distinction must, therefore, be made between “*being spiritually dead*” (meaning “being lost, or being without salvation”), and “being spiritually dead” in the sense that “a person’s spirit is dead” and that one cannot respond to God’s grace without [first] being born again (and then be given the “gifts” of repentance and faith).

Calvinists (Steele & Thomas, 1963:16) believe that “a sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God” and that he needs to be regenerated before he can respond in faith to God and repent.

Berkouwer (1975:124) remarks with regards to the Reformers’ pessimistic perception of the total depravity of man, that, “the Reformation was generally accused of having a pessimistic view of man, of holding a view of total corruption which threatened man’s being man”. This is a valid objection to the theory that man’s spirit died.

Nee and Lee (1981:89) also hold that, man’s spirit died as a direct result of Adam’s sin. They hold that, “We know that Adam’s spirit died.” They then contradict themselves by saying that, “This does not mean that his spirit disappeared, but that his spirit lost fellowship with God; it lost its keen sense. When Adam’s spirit died it was still there but it was dead to God. Adam had lost the function of his spirit.”

There is no Scriptural evidence that Adam’s spirit died. Being spiritually dead, does not mean that your spirit died. A man’s spirit is an essential element of his constitution. If a person’s spirit dies, he ceases to exist as human. A man cannot live without a spirit in the same sense as that he cannot live without a body or a soul.

Adam’s spirit never died. Paul teaches in Rom. 8:10-11, that the *body* is dead because of sin (meaning that physical death is a direct result of the curse that followed Adam’s sin of disobedience). While we must be careful into draw a clear distinction between the spirit and

the soul of man, the body and the spirit are essentially two very different elements that must not be confused.

Gill ([2012]) correctly explains regeneration in the context of Rom.8:10, 11, to be applied to the soul of man (and not specifically the spirit of man) will be quickened to everlasting life, "by the [Holy] Spirit...not as an instrument, but as a coefficient cause with the Father and Son". He contends that with regards to Rom. 8:10⁵⁸, "...the soul of man is here meant...which is of a spiritual nature, immaterial and immortal..."

As far as the body is concerned, redemption is incomplete until it has passed through death, in consequence of Adam's sin. The quickening, or resurrection of the body of a believer (Rom.8:11) refers to the blessing of being resurrected to everlasting life with God, while in distinction, the body of an unbeliever, who will also be resurrected, would be quickened, or resurrected to eternal damnation.

5.5.2.2 Regeneration of "the new man" is preceded by the death of "the old man"

Duffield and Van Cleave (1987:230) remind us that the new birth is a spiritual resurrection that must be preceded by a spiritual death. You cannot be born "again" if you are already alive, and the man of sin, (mankind after the fall) is very much alive. He is constantly pursuing his own interests and selfish ambitions. Ryrie (1988:106), however, holds that the old nature must not only be defined in terms of the ability to do evil, since there are many things originating from the old nature which are not evil in themselves. He asserts that, "The all inclusive characteristic is that the old nature does that which leaves God out." We must die to self, and be transformed into the likeness of the Last Adam.

What is "spiritual death" and what is this "death of the old man"? The "death of the old man" is not the "death of the spirit of man" that resulted from the Fall; it is the death to the flesh, "the old man", and dying to sin, as described in Rom. 6:11 (KJV) "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord",

⁵⁸ Rom 8:10 (EMTV) "But if Christ is in you, the *body* indeed is dead because of sin, but the *spirit* is alive because of righteousness" (Emphasis mine)

and 2 Cor. 5:14b-15 (KJV) “if one died for all, then were all dead: And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again”, and also Rom. 6:6-8 (AMP),

⁶We know that our old (unrenewed) self was nailed to the cross with Him in order that [our] body [which is the instrument] of sin might be made ineffective *and* inactive for evil, that we might no longer be the slaves of sin. ⁷For when a man dies, he is freed (loosed, delivered) from [the power of] sin [among men]. ⁸Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.

Baptism is not regeneration and regeneration is not baptism, however, regeneration implies a dying to sin and a resurrection to God which is beautifully illustrated in the holy ordinance of baptism of believers by immersion as practiced by classical Pentecostals. This symbolism is described in Rom. 6:3-4 (EMTV):

Or do you not know that as many *of us* as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? (4) Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life.

5.5.2.3 Regeneration as partaking in the divine nature

Erasmus (1998:80) describes the doctrine of regeneration by saying that, “Regeneration is that divine operation whereby man becomes a partaker of the divine nature (II Peter 1:4), in other words, whereby man receives a new heart (Ezek. 36:26-27).” This statement introduces two concepts that may be seen as standing in opposition to each other.

“Partaking” or sharing in the divine nature does not necessarily mean that the old nature is being replaced but sketches a picture of a branch being grafted into Christ and partaking of “the root and fatness of the olive tree” (Rom 11:17 KJV). “Receiving a new heart”, on the other hand, can be understood as that the “old heart”, or depraved nature, is somehow “replaced”. This is not a correct understanding.

Möller (1997:132) accurately describes regeneration when he contends that, “It is not so much a matter of everlasting life being infused into us, but rather that we have been brought into everlasting life.” Everlasting life is not something that we can obtain in itself. Möller (1997: 132) assert that regeneration means that we are in Christ. Christ is the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25) and when we are in Christ, His life becomes our life (1 John 5:11, 12).

In other words, we do not receive a transplanted heart through regeneration but, our heart is transplanted from the kingdom of darkness, which was its source of life, to the kingdom of light, which now becomes its new source of (eternal) life. Col 1:13 (EMTV) holds that, “He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love”.

5.5.2.4 The significance of regeneration

If the will of man is still sinful, what is the significance of regeneration? Möller (1997:132) holds that the significance of regeneration lies in that a person who has been regenerated “has nothing old in him, [this means] no history of strife and sorrow...everything connected with sin and death is replaced by that which is connected with righteousness and everlasting life.” Regeneration refers, first and foremost, to an event of being “born again”. We have to be born as a child of God, which speaks of a radical transformation (Pecota, 1995:365). Möller is correct in saying that the person who is born again has nothing old in him, “all things have become new”; that is all things that pertain to guilt and sin. According to Möller (1997:131), “regeneration implies that we are created (Greek: *ktizô*) by God in Christ to a life that is pleasing to Him (Eph. 2:10)”. He holds that “The Bible also speaks of a new man (Greek: *kainos anthropos*, Eph. 4:24)”, and that regeneration implies, that “one has undergone an internal renewal”. The heart of man, however, while receiving a new source of life, is still the same heart. It retains the same weaknesses and bias to sin, it retains the same nature and habitual patterns of thinking. The act structure has not been renewed.

The answer to this renewal lies therein that the source of its life has been changed. The renewal of the heart of man, its thinking patterns, its frame of mind, and act structure, must be submitted to the influence of the Word of God, and the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Justification is instantaneous and cries out (with positional sanctification) that “the old things have passed away, all is made new!” (2 Cor. 5:17). This process of the renewing of the mind, however, is called “practical or experiential sanctification”. This process of transformation begins at regeneration, and continues until the day we die and we are delivered from the depraved Adamic nature (ultimate sanctification).

Finney (1966:94) describes the process of transformation of the will or act structure of man when he asserts that,

Voluntary beings cannot act contrary to their will. Men often desire what, on the whole they do not choose. The desires and the will are often opposed to each other. The conduct is governed on the choice not the desires. The desires may be inconsistent with the choice. In all cases the conduct follows the actual choice...Regeneration or conversion is a change in the choice...The regenerated or converted person chooses God's glory above everything else. He chooses it as the supreme object of affection...Before, he chose his own interest or happiness, as his supreme end. Now, he chooses God's service in preference to his own interest...The force of temptation may produce an occasional wrong choice, or even a succession of wrong choices, but his habitual course of action is right. The will, or choice, of a converted person is habitually right, and of course his conduct is so.

Möller (1997:85) holds that, "The reborn man's will is encompassed and incorporated by the will of God, but it is never replaced by it. That is why the child of God struggles to make decisions and can still will what is wrong (Rom. 7:5-26)".

A person that has not been regenerated does not know what it means to exist in righteousness, and being freed from the old man. Paul describes this experience in saying that, "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Col 2:13 KJV).

Möller (1997:132) correctly asserts that, Christ's death and resurrection is not merely something imputed to us, but every believer is personally involved in it." He further holds that, "Our unity with Christ in his death and resurrection finds expression in the unique event of regeneration. However, it also implies that in the future, the believer lives a life in which he constantly experiences the death and resurrection of Christ. It exists therein that man must renounce the old iniquitous human nature with all its carnal desires daily, be renewed in his Spirit, and put on the new man that was created according to God (Eph. 4:22-24; 2Cor. 4:16).

What distinguishes Christians from non-Christians is not the world in which they co-exist but the opposite choice directives from which they live. While Christians and non-Christians do the same kind of things, the different approaches to their actions are precipitated by their opposing directive orientations (Straus, 1990:11).

5.5.3 The Pentecostal doctrine of sanctification

Deist (1987:150) describes sanctification as, “Becoming more and more like Christ, living a life increasingly free of sin and evil”. This applies to sanctification, whether it is positional, experiential, or ultimate sanctification.

There are three distinct meanings of the word “sanctify” or “sanctification” in the Old Testament that should be observed. The first meaning of the word is to be set apart, consecrated or hallowed. This simply means that God meant for those people or things to be set apart for a very specific and special purpose. “Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, [both] of man and of beast: it [is] mine” (Exo. 13:2 KJVA).

The second meaning of the word, closely related to the first, is to wash or cleanse. This washing was a physical cleansing, but in most cases it also had a spiritual significance. “And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes” (Exo. 19:10 KJVA).

The third interpretation is simply a spiritual cleansing or consecration of both people and material things which this time is executed by God Himself: “And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office” (Ex. 29:44 KJV).

The term “sanctification” refers only to a spiritual washing and consecration. Firstly done by God (positional sanctification), then by man, living a holy life (practical or experiential sanctification), and thirdly, when the believer dies (ultimate sanctification).

The regenerate believer is transformed into the perfect image of God through three aspects of sanctification as set out in the following diagram by Horn (1980:86):

THE THREEFOLD ASPECT OF SANCTIFICATION		
Past	Present	Future
Positional standing: <i>(Positional sanctification)</i> Instantaneous gift (1Cor. 6:11 KJV) “And such	Experiential state: <i>(Practical or experiential sanctification)</i> Progressive task (2Cor. 3:18 KJV) “But we all,	Complete state: <i>(Ultimate sanctification)</i> Climactic (Jude 1:24 KJV) “Now unto

were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."	with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, [even] as by the Spirit of the Lord."	him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present [you] faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."

(Table 9)

5.5.3.1 Positional sanctification

Positional sanctification is a state of holiness or right standing of the regenerated saints before God which results directly from and is based upon the imputation of the righteousness and holiness of Christ. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1Cor. 1:30 KJV). The believers were called "saints". Paul also addresses the believers in Corinth as "saints": "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called [to be] saints..." (1 Cor. 1:2 KJV). The "to be" was not part of the original text, but was added by the translators. It is clear from the rest of the letter to the Corinthians, that they were far from perfect but positionally, holy. Paul calls them "blameless", but then goes on to blame them for a multitude of sins and shortcomings. This is a good illustration of positional sanctification; while they were not manifesting holiness in their practical living, they were justified and positionally sanctified through the perfect sacrifice of Christ on the cross (Duffield & Van Cleave, 1987:238,239). Thiesen (1992:290) correctly describes the concept of positional sanctification, asserting that,

Christ has been made unto the Christian, sanctification (I Cor. 1:30). It is not Christ plus sanctification-, Christ is the believer's sanctification. The believer is now complete in Him (Col. 2:10). He is an heir to the righteousness and holiness of Christ, these being imputed to him because of his relationship with Christ, not because of any work he may have done, or any merit he may have received. He stands before God, Christ-like (Rom. 8:29; I Cor. 1:30).

5.5.3.2 Practical or experiential sanctification

The Apostle James writes his epistle to believers, calling them brethren, but admonishes them as follows: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (Jam. 1:21 KJV). They were saved and had already been justified, sanctified, and were in a state of positional holiness, yet they needed to do certain things, specified by James, in order for their souls to be saved.

There is a definite distinction between positional sanctification and practical sanctification. Positional sanctification is a divine work that flows from justification, and can only be done by God, whereas practical sanctification, although still a divine work, requires human effort. Positional sanctification is instantaneous. Practical sanctification is a positive, progressive process that continues as long as you live. Duffield and van Cleave contend that: “A man is not considered holy because of the things he does not do. Virtue cannot be judged by the vices from which a person abstains. There must be a positive conformation to the image of Christ” (1987:239). The author of Hebrews admonishes us to:

- “lay aside every impediment, and the sin which so easily ensnares us” (Heb. 12:1 EMTV).
- “run with endurance the race that is set before us” (Heb. 12:1 EMTV).
- “looking unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith” (Heb. 12:2 EMTV).

“Laying aside sin” is a positive act which has to be accompanied by the daily process of “running the race”. Both of these actions imply human effort, while “looking unto Jesus” clearly indicates the believers dependence and reliance on Christ.

The fact that Christ is the “Author” and “Perfecter” of our faith indicates the futility of human effort without the reliance on Christ, but it does not by any means negate human responsibility. The fourth verse emphasises this fact: “You have not yet resisted to the point of bloodshed, struggling against sin” (Heb. 12:4 EMTV).

Paul commands the Colossians to: “put to death your worldly impulses: sexual sin, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry)” (Col 3:5 ISV). John Wesley's explanatory notes (E-sword, Col. 3:5) describe this process of putting to death as “slaying with a continued stroke”. In verse 8 the process used is described as the action of discarding a filthy robe: “But now you yourselves also put off [fig., cease from] all these [things]: anger, rage, malice, blasphemy [and] obscene language out of your mouth” (Col 3:8 ALT). Peter adds to this by saying, “Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings” (1 Pet. 2:1 KJV).

Horne (1980:80, 81) describes practical sanctification as follows:

Sanctification can be viewed as vivification and mortification. Sanctification, as a principle, is a holy, living principle, infused by regeneration. From this quickening (vivification) there flows forth a living by faith in Christ, walking in newness of life, living soberly, righteously and godly.

Sanctification does not mean the abolition of the body of sin in regenerate and sanctified persons. Though the saints do not live in sin, it still lives in them and sometimes it becomes

very active and powerful. What is meant here (mortification) is the weakening of the power of sin and a putting to death of the deeds of the body so that a course of sin is not persisted in. For this the Spirit of God and His Grace are necessary (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5).

Progressive sanctification is the constant unending struggle between the spirit and the flesh, the old nature and the new. A mature Christian is not someone who has overcome sin, but one who through perseverance has learned to judge wrong from right: “but solid food belongs to full-grown men, who, on account of habit, have their senses exercised for distinguishing both good and evil” (Heb. 5:14 Darby). It is a daily walk with God that produces a deepened relationship and the experience of constantly being led by the Spirit of God.

Scripture support for progressive sanctification:

(2Cor. 7:1 KJV) “Having therefore these promises. dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

(Eph. 4:22-24 KJV) “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind: And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

(Rom. 6:12-13 KJV) “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof Neither yield ye your members [as] instruments of unrighteousness unto sin.- but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members [as] instruments of righteousness unto God.”

5.5.3.3 Ultimate sanctification

We have been saved from the guilt and penalty of sin through justification, and the power of sin, through regeneration, but we can only be saved from the presence of sin when we die in Christ, or when Christ returns and we are ultimately transformed to be like Him (1 John 3:2; 1 Cor. 15:51-53).

5.5.3.4 Perfectionism – the Achilles heel of Pentecostal theology

If there is a weakness in Pentecostal theology, if we should be so bold as to identify an Achilles heel, it is the unattainable plateau of perfectionism. The notion of perfectionism lies submerged in the Pentecostal understanding of sanctification, and results from a notion that God not only imputes righteousness (positional sanctification) but also “infuses or imparts” righteousness (ultimate sanctification) to one who believes (Parker, 2014:313). This is a fruit

of a poisonous doctrine that has led to the emotional defeat and the spiritual demise of many well-intentioned believers, striving to live a life of perfect holiness.

Ericson (2001:980) describes sanctification as, “a continuation of what has begun in regeneration, when a newness of life was conferred upon and instilled within the believer. In particular, sanctification is the Holy Spirit’s allying to the believer the work done by Jesus Christ.”

Kärkkäinen (Courey, 2013:257) asserts that, Pentecostalism has as a recurring motif and key signature, “an ideal of victorious Christian living, an intensive faith expectation, and an emphasis on spiritual power to overcome problems in one’s life. The attitude of overcoming is characteristic to Pentecostal and charismatic preaching.” Courey (2013:285) holds that the notion of perfectionism runs like a thin line through [two-point] Pentecostal theology and that Pentecostalism articulates a “doctrine of sanctification nurtured by the ‘Finished Work’ teachings of William Durham⁵⁹”. Courey contends that while some Pentecostal theologians hold to a Wesleyan model of Christian perfection, others embrace the Keswick-like ideal of victorious Christian life⁶⁰. In spite of what theologians choose to believe or which doctrine they would defend or promote, there is still an influence of Durham’s teaching that prevailed in many Pentecostal churches.

This failure to identify and eradicate this erroneous teaching is largely due to the fact that Pentecostals are still, in many instances, averse to proper academic training and the study of theology. This lack of training results in pastors who are not able to correctly discern doctrine and underlying implications of the doctrines that they teach. What they propagate depends in many cases on what they have been taught, (by other pastors who did not study themselves) or by what they hear on Christian radio and television broadcastings. Pastors who have not studied theology (or not enough theology) may feed the congregation “fish” but are not able

⁵⁹ The Finished Work controversy of 1910 was the first major schism in the emergent Pentecostal movement. It pitted the Wesleyan notion of entire sanctification against a less definitive and more gradual appropriation of holiness. William Durham insisted that all the benefits of salvation, including sanctification, flowed from the finished work of Christ on Calvary’s cross and were fully the believer’s at regeneration, although they must be appropriated progressively. The controversy led to the emergence of three-step Holiness Pentecostal denominations (the Church of God, Cleveland, TN; the Pentecostal Holiness Church; and the Church of God in Christ) and two-step, Finished Work denominations (the Assemblies of God and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada) For Durham, receiving Christ meant receiving justification and sanctification at once. [Durham held that] ‘Identification with Jesus Christ Saves and Sanctifies’ (Courey, 2013: 257, 262).

⁶⁰ ‘Wesleyanism taught that the soul itself was delivered from sin in sanctification, while Keswick taught that the believer was not made holy because sin remained in the heart, but that one could live a victorious life over sin’. One view perceives sanctification primarily as an eradication of the sin nature, the other as a suppression of it.

to take out the “bones”, and they are often unable to understand why their congregation becomes maladjusted due to their imbalanced and often confusing, dogma.

Courey (2013:262) holds that, Keswick’s suppressionist sanctification with “themes of union with Christ, surrender, and death to self” resonated well among early Pentecostals and was also promoted by speakers such as A.B. Simpson, who held that,

It is Christ Himself who lives inside and who is big enough to crowd out and keep out the little ‘I’ ... He is able not only for sin, sorrow and sickness, but He is able for you and me-able so to be our very life, that moment by moment we shall be conscious that He in us fills us with Himself and conquers the before ... It is almost the same thing, but another way of saying it, that the baptism and indwelling of the Holy Ghost within us will deliver and keep us from the power of self.

Durham (Jacobsen 2006:87) asserts that the true meaning of salvation can only be realized when salvation “means that all the old man, or old nature, which was sinful and depraved and which was the very thing in us that was condemned, is crucified with Christ.” Durham called his position the “finished work at Calvary”. He believed the Atonement served both for salvation and sanctification.

Evidence of the influence of Durham’s teaching can be seen in the assertion of certain theologians such as Burke (2013:55), who holds that, “As the sunlight drives away darkness, so God’s presence in our hearts drives away the desire for evil”, and Erasmus (1998:82) who asserts that, “when a person, through regeneration, receives the divine nature and submits to the Holy Spirit, the victory over sin, flesh and the temptations of the world, comes naturally (Gal. 5:16-18)”. Both of the above statements, however ambitious it may sound, is totally unrealistic for any human being this side of eternity. Sin began in the presence of God when Lucifer who radiated with the glory of God’s presence, became proud and rebellious (1 Tim. 3:6; Isa. 14:13-14). The desire for evil is not “driven away”, and victory over temptation and sin definitely does not come naturally. This was a constant struggle for Paul, and will be constant struggle for every Christian until the day we die.

Some Pentecostals who held to Durham’s view, over time, adopted the view that sanctification is not instantaneous but that it is a process that is appropriated in time (Goff, 1998).

Pecota (1995:368) describes the criticism of Calvinists toward Wesleyan Arminians as a caricature, when Calvinists suggest that Wesleyan Arminians believe that “any sin they

commit jeopardizes their salvation so that they 'fall in and out of' being saved each time they sin..." Durham, from a rigorous notion of holiness did, however, teach that "instead of God's destroying our human nature, He expects us to control it", and that Christians had to return to God as *unsaved sinners* when they sinned (Courey, 2013:262). Durham (Friesen, 2013:86) contends that,

If, through our weakness, we get from under the precious Blood, one or even more times, after conversion, it is necessary for us to humble ourselves before God and get back; but we can only approach Him, as at the first, through the precious Blood of Christ, as one who has sinned, and not as a justified person.

It is this teaching of Durham that deprived, and still deprives many Pentecostals of assurance of salvation. Goff (April 1, 1998) holds that by 1915 more or less 50% of all American Pentecostals held to Durham's interpretation of sanctification, and at present, most American Pentecostals hold to his views. According to Courey (2013:262),

Pentecostalism appears to say with other Christian traditions that the believer is restored to a state of *posse non peccare* (able not to sin). But, by its ambiguity on the matter, it resists adjudicating on the question of whether the sanctified believer is also *non posse peccare* (not able to sin) and therefore liable to the loss of salvation in the event of sin (*à la* Durham), or conversely also *posse peccare* (able to sin), yet still retaining salvation. And if the latter, at what point is salvation in danger?

Corey (2013, 262), correctly holds that, "the Spirit-filled believer lives with the anticipation of victory over temptation and sin, but the harsh experience of reality threatens her with defeat, unless she can redefine sin in ways that she remains unaware of the intransigence of human brokenness".

The apostle John answered this question in 1 John 1:8, when he said that, "If we claim that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us." It is therefore not correct to believe that we can attain a state of absolute sinlessness or a state of *non posse peccare* (not able to sin). However, John also wrote in 1 John 1:7 (EMTV) that, "...if we are walking in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin". In other words, we do not lose our salvation while we are in a state of being sanctified since we, who are in constant fellowship with the Holy Spirit, are kept by the power of God (1 Peter 1:5) in spite of the overwhelming effect of a depraved human nature. The writer of Hebrews, in Hebrews 2:2,3 however, solemnly warns us that we can lose our salvation if we drift away from Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Duffield and van Cleave (1987:240) are correct in their assertion that, “The carnal nature, the flesh, never becomes sanctified...The flesh in the most saintly person is the same flesh that is in the worst of sinners”, and that, “The flesh cannot be overcome by **eradication**. It will always be there as long as we are in this earthly body. Neither can it be overcome by **suppression**.... The victory is seen to be only through **identification** - with Christ.”

They (1987, 241) correctly describe the perfectness of a Christian by saying that the word “perfect”, “implies growth in spiritual stature, not sinless perfection” and that “Sinless perfection and being wholly sanctified await the coming of the Lord Jesus.”

Courey (2013:267) Holds that,

Among baptistic Pentecostals, though, even the so-called Reformed-leaning Assemblies of God, perfectionism has remained a doctrinal category. Until 1961, the original ‘Statement of Fundamental Truths’ (adopted in 1916) carried a statement on ‘Entire Sanctification’, though it steered from a second-work-of-grace position that Wesleyan churches had adopted. This was in keeping with Finished Work theology. As late as 1987, and again in a 1996 reprint, Stanley Horton could still cite former General Superintendent Ernest Swing Williams, who wrote in his systematic theology that the believer is empowered to live above sin and self-will. Horton asserts that the believer can live a life of victorious conquest over the temptation to sin by daily surrender. How far this differs in practical terms from holiness eradication, or Keswick suppression is unclear. What is clear, however, is that it is not a ‘static plateau of perfectionism’. Sanctification begun in this way is still an ongoing process of growth, understanding, and struggle.

Courey (2013:270) further describes Luther’s answer to a legalistic and fleshly approach of experimental sanctification, asserting that,

When ‘resting in Christ’ becomes a striving at effective reckoning, and complete renunciation, the irony of the mixed metaphor becomes palpable. Luther’s *theologia crucis* puts an end to all performance-driven aspirations for salvation. For Luther, a corollary of the cross is the notion of *simul justus et peccator*. The mystery of the gospel is that believers stand before God as simultaneously righteous and sinful. Their sanctification, according to Gerhard Forde, is simply the working out of this antinomy, or as he puts it so winsomely, sanctification is ‘the art of getting used to ... justification’.

Courey (2013:270) claims that Luther makes a specific distinction between grace (*gratia*, favor) and gift (*donum*) in his soteriology. He holds that, according to Luther, “Grace deals with God’s wrath by forensic righteousness, gift deals with human corruption by *renovatio*, the effective renewal of the sinner”. In this context, “grace” is equated with justification and “gift”, with sanctification. Courey quotes Luther (2013:270) where he, in his ‘Preface to Romans’, describes his understanding of grace.

Between grace and gift there is this difference. Grace actually means God’s favor, or the good will which in himself he bears toward us, by which he is disposed to give us Christ and to pour into us the Holy Spirit with his gifts ... The gifts and the Spirit increase in us every day, but they are not yet perfect since there remain in us the evil desires and sins that war against the Spirit, as he says in Romans 7:5ff. and Galatians 5:17, and the conflict between the seed of the

woman and the seed of the serpent, as foretold in Genesis 3:15. Nevertheless grace does so much that we are accounted completely righteous before God. For his grace is not divided or parceled out, as are the gifts, but takes us completely into favor for the sake of Christ our Intercessor and Mediator. And because of this, the gifts are begun in us.

Mannermaa's work can be utilized in understanding Luther's soteriology. The patristic doctrine of *theosis*, according to Mannermaa, holds that "(1) divine life has been manifested in Christ; (2) in the body of Christ, the church, humans participate in this life; and (3) as leaven permeates dough, humans become partakers in the divine nature (2 Pet. 1.4) thereby restoring the divine image" (Courey, 2013:271). Luther's theology on the doctrines of justification and sanctification, therefore, rests on the notion of "participation in Christ". According to Rybarczyk (Courey, 2013:271), there is an undeniable parallel between Pentecostal and orthodox understanding of sanctification, in the sense that "Orthodox teaching on *theosis* involves synergy between the Spirit's energy and the believer's energy."

Courey (2013, 271) makes an interesting comparison between "Luther's idea of union with Christ and the Keswick idea of victorious Christian living". He holds that Keswick advocates the believer's identification with Christ as the key for victorious living, and that Keswick holds that temptation can be resisted when a person totally submits to Christ by a constant, moment-by-moment surrender. Luther (Courey, 2013:271,272), while also considering the ontological union with Christ to be crucial, holds that "Everything is forgiven through grace, but as yet not everything is healed through the gift".

Corey (2013:272) holds that Luther, Applies "a therapeutic model of atonement rather than simply a forensic one" and asserts that that, "the Reformer recognizes the inherent weakness of the human constitution and takes a starkly realistic view of the situation. 'Sin is always present', he says, 'and the godly feel it'." He continues to explain Luther's view by saying that, Christians, aware of their weaknesses and shortcomings take refuge in Christ, and again quotes Luther, who holds that, "when the Law accuses and sin troubles, he looks to Christ; and when he has taken hold of Him *by faith, he has present with him* the Victor over the Law, sin, death, and the devil – the Victor whose rule over all these prevents them from harming him."

Corey (2013:272,273) contends that, there is a certain irony in the comparison of Luther's use the word "struggle", with Keswick's use of the word "surrender", in the sense that, Keswick's "surrender" turns out to be a battle, while Luther's "struggle" seems to be more of

a “passive strife”. Luther holds that a Christian, while having a refuge in Christ, will always have a struggle with sin. Keswick, on the other hand, offers the idea that faith in the completed work of Christ, saves us from struggle. For Corey (2013, 273), the paradox lies therein that, “Luther, in his talk of struggle, clearly affirms that Christians are saints “not by active holiness but by passive holiness”; while the power of Keswick is found in the Christian’s active participation in assuring that she lives in the full victory that is available to her.” Corey (2013, 273) holds that,

The Spirit of the cross prepares us for the reception of Christ as favour and gift. However, the *eschatologia crucis* turns the sanctification project upside down. The eschatological nature of sanctification is not so much that we are progressing to perfection, but rather that perfection is progressing toward us. Thus, sanctification is not the measure of our progress in grace, but grace’s progress in us. The coming kingdom is overwhelming sin within us by the very grace that justifies completely.

Corey (2013, 274) identifies the root of the problem of perfectionism is identified therein that, concepts such as, “victory, surrender, or consecration” are theologically interpreted within a paradigm of transformation. These concepts then become “tools of perfectionism” and leads to questions such as, “How total is my surrender? How absolute my victory? Have I consecrated myself enough? And if I have, how secure is my holiness, or how profound? Does it search the inner recesses of my own self-doubt?” Corey (2013:273,274) asserts that the answer to perfectionism lies therein that,

The crisis of expectation and experience can only be fully defeated when ‘Christ has become for us ... our righteousness, holiness, and redemption’ (1 Cor. 1.30). The postmodern ethos, with its moral relativism, its fragmented realities, and its own recurrent self-doubt, is suspicious of a spirituality that raises unattainable expectations and bears little patience with the harsh disappointment of failed experience. Sanctification defined in traditional terms no longer communicates, and triumphalist schemes of human perfection are laughable in our day. Luther’s theology of the cross, a paradigm approaching 500 years of age, dispenses with human perfectibility, and offers a model of sanctification that comes to terms with reality and inspires hope, and it does so retaining motifs familiar to the Pentecostal tradition.

Sanctification through Christ’s presence by faith is a predicate of the theology of the cross. This idea of ontological union with Christ implies first a ‘nihilization’ that destroys one’s ‘constant effort to make himself god and to justify himself’. An application of the theology of the cross to Pentecostalism calls for both a pneumatology of the cross and an eschatology of the cross. The same Spirit that led Jesus into the wilderness took him to the cross (‘who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God’ [Heb. 9.14]). He will do the same in Christ’s followers. In the kenotic categories of a *pneumatologia crucis*, this implies a self-emptying and a reduction of the self before the cross.

The ultimate goal in sanctification is that we will become like Christ who is the perfect Man, and THAT the Word of God will transform and renew our hearts and minds to the extent that “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30 EMTV). Our minds must be renewed so that we think like Christ. Our hearts must be renewed so that we can BE more like Christ.

Paul describes this goal for transformation (metamorphosis) as that, "...Christ may be seen living in you" (Gal 4:19 CEV). Möller (1997:85) holds that, "As man progressively relinquishes his own and sinful ideas and desires and subjects himself to the Spirit of God in him, and is lead by the Word of God, so he experiences the will of God being realised in his life and his will becomes like God's will." The transformation of man that Paul speaks of in 2 Cor. 3:18⁶¹, is the work of the Holy Spirit in man, in conjunction with the Word of God.

Möller is right when he says that, in order to know God's will, man must subject himself to the Spirit of God AND the Word of God. The Word of God can be understood with the mind, but is also made alive (illuminated) by the Spirit of God. This means that, apart from the fact that God communicates his will through His Spirit in man, to man's Spirit, God also speaks to man's Spirit (intuitively) and also to man's mind, intellectually, although even in this process, the interpretation of Scripture is also aided by the Holy Spirit. Nee (1977:Vol. II/89) correctly holds that,

A believer must recognise that the Holy Spirit alone comprehends the things of God - and that intuitively. He is the one Person Who can convey this knowledge to man. But for anyone to obtain such knowledge he must appropriate it through the proper means; namely, he must receive with his intuition what the Holy Spirit intuitively knows. The conjunction of these two intuitions enables man to apprehend the mind of God.

Nee (1977:Vol. II/89) identifies a mode of communication that accurately describes how the Spirit of God communicates with man. Pentecostals may express this inner knowing as "I feel that God says..." or "I perceive in my spirit..." This is not only the way that God speaks to man, (Spirit to Spirit), but this intuition is also the way that man connects with the spiritual realm (apart from God). Many claim to have a "sixth sense", which could be described as a faculty of the soul or the spirit. The body also reacts to certain perceived impulses such as "hair standing on end, etc. People generally speak of "feelings" or "premonitions" as an everyday occurrence.

These things are hard to describe and do not make part of this study, but it is a constant reminder of the reality of the spiritual dimension that we are consciously or sub-consciously engage on a daily basis. This interaction that we have with the spiritual realm or spiritual dimension is part and parcel of who or "what" we are as human beings. Although it may be considered unusual in a western society to acknowledge communication with, or from the

⁶¹ 2 Corinthians 3:18 "And all of us, as with unveiled face, [because we] continued to behold [in the Word of God] as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transfigured into His *very own* image in ever increasing splendor *and* from one degree of glory to another; [for this comes] from the Lord [Who is] the Spirit" (AMP).

spiritual realm (in contrast with African or eastern cultures), it is not uncommon even for unbelievers, although it may be described in slightly different terminology.

We say that God speaks to man through His Word, and specifically the “*rhema*” word or illuminated Word. Crabb (1977:108) holds that, “The Holy Spirit provides the resources for transformation through the normal mechanisms of the human personality. The Spirit brings to the receptive mind the truth of Scripture particularly suited for the immediate circumstances...” What Crabb calls the “normal mechanisms of the human personality” can better be described as “intuition”.

When God speaks to man, it is received in the spirit and understood with the mind. The manifested presence of God can be observed and experienced as a spiritual awareness, it may impact the emotions, but it can also be a physical awareness where a person’s body reacts to the presence of God. This physical reaction may vary in intensity and reaction. An example of the body’s reaction to the presence of God is observed in 1Ki 8:11, where the Scripture (KJV) says that “the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD.”

Man, therefore, experiences spiritual communication, not only in his spirit, but also in body and soul. This is evident through the revelation of God to those who did not know Him in Rom. 1:20⁶².

5.5.4 Adoption

Adoption refers to our placement as sons in the kingdom of God, and speaks of a restoration of relationship. It has the connotation of being co-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17), of spiritual

⁶² Rom 1:20 (EMTV) “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things made, both His eternal power and Divinity, so that they are without excuse.”

inheritance, authority, and a position of relationship from which we can call God our Father. It is the realisation of John 1:12; we have truly become children of God.

The doctrine of Adoption is strictly Pauline. It is only referred to five times in Scripture: It is applied to Israel as a nation (Rom. 9:4), it is mentioned in Romans 8:23 as the final or completed work at the second coming of Christ, and it is mentioned three times with regards to the present position, or state of the believer. Adoption literally means “the placing as a son”. Paul uses this judicial term to explain the rights, position and privileges of the Christian.

Chafer (1953:242,243) argues that the believer is free from tutors and governors, as the illustration applies to the law, but also stresses the responsibility of living as a *mature* son. It is important to note that this freedom carries with it a very real responsibility. “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty only [use] not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another” (Gal 5:13 KJV).

Since regeneration is the prerequisite for adoption, the results of adoption can also be seen as resulting from regeneration and or justification since these concepts are so closely related. Some theologians regard the doctrine of adoption as part of regeneration. Evans (1968:161) makes the following distinction: “Regeneration has to do with our change in nature; justification, with our change in standing; sanctification with our change in character; adoption with our change in position”.

Our change in position implies that we have freedom from the law and fear. - 'For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom 8:15 KJV). This freedom is a qualified freedom. It is not licentiousness but is a freedom of choice wherein the believer chooses to do God's will. Finney (1981:142,143) has the following insights regarding freedom from the law:

The liberty of the gospel does not consist in being freed from doing what the law requires, but in a man's being in such a state of mind that doing it is itself a pleasure instead of a burden. What is the difference between slavery and freedom? The slave serves because he is obliged to do so, the freeman serves from choice.

The Biblical concept of “adoption” is vastly different from the meaning that we would lend to the term today. We may understand adoption as taking a child from one family and accepting

this child into another family. Fromke (1998:150) holds that, “The Greek or Roman father, however, adopted none as a son but his own child. Birth made him a child; adoption gave him sonship.” Fromke (1998, 150,151) further describes the development from being born a child (*teknon*) to the time of adoption as a son (*huiiothesia*), as stages of growth, education, and discipline, and describes “sonship” as, “the full attainment of responsibility that comes to those who have arrived at maturity”.

5.5.5 Justification

Justification relates to our legal position and status with God. We are declared righteous by God on account of the expiation of Christ’s perfect sacrifice, applied to us, through regeneration. We are justified when we, by faith, identify ourselves with Christ. We no longer confess to be sinners, but now confess to be saints. We recon the old man to be buried with Christ, and in living a new life with Christ, we are freed from the power of sin. We must not misunderstand justification to mean that God declares the guilty to be just, but that He declares us just, because we are just, because we are righteous and we are righteous because Christ was made sin, precisely so that we could become the righteousness of God (Pecota, 1995:366).

CHAPTER 6

THE FORMULATION OF A PENTECOSTAL DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

6.1 INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 6

In this chapter the doctrine of election is formulated from a Pentecostal perspective, flowing from the evaluation of Pentecostal theology conducted in the previous chapter. While there are many variations of doctrine among Pentecostal theologians, there are also many similarities with regards to the expression and understanding of the aspects of this doctrine. The most common theories among several Pentecostal theologians have already been identified. The theories that best represents biblical truth, and that which serves Pentecostal theology best are used as a basis for the formulation of this model of election. For the most part, a Pentecostal doctrine of election has not been formulised, thus the importance of this study.

6.2 THE UNIQUE CHARACTER OF THE PENTECOSTAL MODEL OF ELECTION

Theologians have for centuries wrestled with the questions “Why are some people saved and others are not?”, and, if we accept on Biblical evidence that God desires to save all men (Eze.33:11; John 3:16, 17; 2Pet. 3:9)⁶³, why do some say “yes” to God’s offer of salvation, and others say “no”. Sproul (2012:18) rightly contends that, “...the question of how our free decisions correspond to God’s sovereign providence is one of the most excruciatingly difficult questions with which we struggle in theology”. Sproul, who writes from a Calvinistic perspective, and in the light of Calvinism’s view on the sovereignty of God, is adamant that God ordains everything that comes to pass, which includes human decisions. He (2012:12) Calvinists maintains that humans act freely, but only in accordance to God’s determining will, and that those who are predestined to be saved, have their desires so determined by God that they gladly come to Christ.

Pentecostals, on the other hand believe that human beings have a responsibility to make a decision for or against God that is not divinely determined. The Bible tells us why some people are saved and others are not saved. Jesus, in John 3:18 (EMTV) holds that, “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe has been condemned

⁶³ Eze. 33:11 (LITV) “Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord Jehovah, I do not have delight in the death of the wicked, except in the wicked turning from his way, and so to live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! For why will you die, O house of Israel?”; John 3:16-17 (EMTV) “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (17) For God did not send His Son into the world so that He might condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”; 2Pet. 3:9 (EMTV) “The Lord ... [is] not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God". In other words, a person is condemned on the grounds of his or her own choice to reject God's grace and refuses to believe in Jesus Christ.

It is not difficult to understand why some men say "yes" to God's offer of salvation, but why some would say "no", is shrouded in mystery. It seems so illogical that anyone could reject the love and grace of God, and yet Paul says in 1Cor. 1:18 (EMTV) "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." We can only conclude with Möller (1997:89) that, "it becomes impossible to avoid the fact that man's will is enslaved by sin".

A good theologian realises the limits of his understanding and must not revert to assumptions and philosophical ideas to formulate answers that are not supported by Scriptural evidence. While there are no contradictions in Scripture, there are several mysteries such as the origin of sin, and since the origin of sin remains a mystery to our finite minds, the reason why some men sinfully chooses darkness and sin above light and salvation (John 1:11) remains beyond our understanding. In this regard we must agree with Duffield and Van Cleave (1987:73) who hold that, "all divine truth is in a sense paradoxical to us" due to our limited vision and understanding of reality.

It is unfortunate that Pentecostals have in general avoided writing on the subject of election as a biblical doctrine. McDonald (2010:xii) correctly holds that,

When the "doctrine of election" is mentioned, it is very often the historic Reformed account that is automatically assumed: election as individual double predestination, in which God in his sovereignty has determined from all eternity to save some in Christ and to consign others to the consequences of their sins.

Earlier Pentecostal theologians such as Duffield and Van Cleave (1987:207) and even Pecota (1995:358), have with regards to the doctrine of election in general reverted to the Arminian model of election, while some avoid this subject entirely.

Pearlman (1995:270), for instance, briefly mentions the doctrine of election in relation to Calvinism and Arminianism without an attempt to offer a uniquely Pentecostal view. He then falls in the error of Arminianism when he says that, "God, because of his foreknowledge, foresaw those persons who would accept the gospel and stay saved, and predestined such

to a heavenly inheritance". Williams (1953:216) also skims over the doctrine of election, briefly refers to the election (and rejection) of Israel, and only mentions in passing that the Calvinistic doctrine of election holds Christ a mediate cause for salvation because of the implication that, "The elect are saved because elected, not because Christ died to save". Burke (2013:63-70) deals with the subject of salvation without even mentioning the doctrine of election.

6.2.1 The distinction between time and eternity

The terms "election" and "predestination" are mentioned in the same context when referred to by Calvinist theologians, and both these concepts are placed in eternity, playing out in time and "predestined" by an eternal decree, as if time follows eternity. In other words, Calvinism (and Arminianism), places eternity as "another time" before time in a linear line, which is incorrect. Calvinism claims that Election precedes salvation, and Arminianism claims that salvation precedes election. Both are wrong, simply because time and eternity do not follow one other.

The notion of "a decree of God" that regulates and determines everything that takes place in the dimension of time, is a premise built on medieval scholasticism that can simply not be justified or supported by Scripture. Such a decree impedes God's freedom to interact with creation in simple ways such as answering prayer, healing the sick, or having compassion with a repentant sinner. Möller (1997:67) holds about God that,

Whatever He is and does in himself, such as his work of eternal election, is not confined to a creature-time dimension with its cause and effect inevitability. That is why we cannot, and dare not, think of God as being restricted by a decree which had been proclaimed at a specific moment and which must now be executed with absolute punctuality.

The key to understanding this Pentecostal model of election, which can be described as the "*progressive Pentecostal model of election*", is to make a distinction between time and eternity. Time is encompassed in eternity, and "eternity" cannot, and must not be interpreted in terms of "time". Election takes place in eternity, while salvation is realised in time. Möller (1997:84) correctly criticises the models of election advocated by Calvinism and Arminianism on the grounds that, both these models place election within the same linear time as salvation. He holds that,

In reality salvation (which takes place in time) is contained in the election (which is eternal)...Election achieves its spatio-temporal goal in salvation, because salvation happens

to a specific person at a specific time (or during a time-slot) within this world. Since both election and salvation are in Christ, election implies salvation from God's point of view (eternity), while salvation implies election as it is actualised in man.

In describing the concept of "eternity", Möller (1997: 83) correctly contends that, eternity cannot be described as "an unlimited period of time prior to our time (cosmic time) but [it] is completely different to our linear concept of time". Time does not precede eternity or eternity, time. These concepts are best illustrated as two concentric circles (see figure 1 below) where "time" is encompassed by "eternity" (Möller, 1997:84).

Eternity and Time

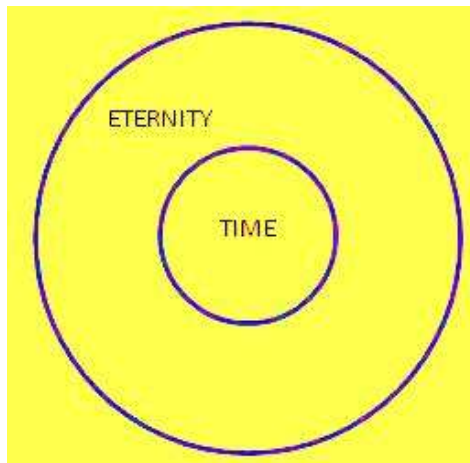


Fig.1.

Möller's criticism against both of these models is valid because he (1997:80) correctly holds that, "God in His eternal existence cannot be hitched to our spatio-temporal existence as if He exists in the same dimension as the creation". In making a deliberate distinction between the concepts of "time" and "eternity", Möller steps away from the Calvinist and Arminian models of election and has established a new paradigm for Pentecostal theology concerning the doctrine of election.

Man's election (and salvation) is realised in Christ. It is therefore impossible that a person can be "elected" (or be part of the elect), and not be in Christ. Man is either in a state of salvation or he is lost, either in Christ, or without salvation. There is no intermediate phase. Being elected thus implies that you are (already) in Christ. We are aligned to God through regeneration. We can only truly know God (who is Spirit) through His Holy Spirit who engages with our spirit. Man is thus spiritually reunited with God, and other saints in the body of Christ (Möller, 1997:93).

While we make a distinction regarding the relationship between time and eternity, it is a concept that transcends the human intellect. It is hard to conceptualise, impossible to properly describe, and yet, while the concept of eternity is beyond the scope of our experience and understanding, we realise that it is a reality in which God exists. Time is a

dimension created by God, and the Creator is not subject to His own creation (F.P. Möller, personal communication, October 28, 2015).

6.2.2 The conditions for election / salvation

Election, in the paradigm of Pentecostal theology, is not determined by a divine decree (as in Calvinism), and it does not depend on the will of man alone (as in Arminianism). Van Genderen and Velema (2008:223) rightly hold that “The concrete decree of election in Jesus Christ replaces the absolute decree that figures in the traditional decree of predestination”. While the involvement of the will of man in the appropriation of salvation implies human responsibility, salvation is provided on God’s initiative and affected by His grace alone. Man cannot contribute to his own salvation.

Election from a Calvinistic paradigm is rooted in the doctrine of God (theology) and salvation is a forensic act of God, determined by a divine decree. Christ, in the gospel of John (John 6:44 EMTV), states, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me should draw him...” In Calvinism, this drawing is irresistible and efficacious. In other words, it is the work of God, who monergistically brings a sinner to salvation while the sinner’s competency of will is then manipulated to conform, so that sinners, who are predestined to be saved, willingly answer the call of salvation, and say “yes” to God. The sinner only makes a conscious decision (to be saved) after regeneration, which implies that he is already saved at the time of making the decision. There is no experience of a crisis of the will to make a decision, no application or exercise of faith in the appropriation of salvation, no conviction of sin that leads to repentance.

According to Calvinism, election, which inevitably leads to salvation, is unconditional and salvation is therefore, according to Calvinism, not by faith, but rather by God’s arbitrary choice. Calvinism is partially successful in defending God’s sovereignty, but annihilates human will and responsibility.

In Arminianism, God’s election of some for salvation is based on the same philosophical paradigm as Calvinism (a divine decree). Arminianism correctly maintains that humans are responsible for rejecting or accepting Christ and salvation, but in the process, robs God of the sovereign decision of election. In contrast to Calvinism’s monergistic view of God’s

sovereignty, where human actions are determined by God (Packer, 1961:23)⁶⁴, the Arminian version of the decree of God implies that God's election of man unto salvation is contingent on human choice (Stewart, 1951:107)⁶⁵.

Pentecostals agree with Arminians that a sinner must, when aided by prevenient grace, make a willful decision to repent and believe as a prerequisite for salvation. The Pentecostal perspective on the dynamic relationship between the sovereignty of God and human responsibility logically reflects the heritage of its past. It has the expectancy and rich testimony of the experience of encounter with God. Pentecostals are not satisfied with an objective consideration of the God of creation from the pages of a historical manuscript, the formulations of an ancient creed, or the writings of the Church Fathers. Pentecostalism calls also for a spiritual encounter that touches not only the intellect, but also the soul, the spirit, and the emotions. This is found in the manifested presence of God that transcends the creeds of Christendom and the limits of human deliberations, in a moment where time and eternity meet in Christ, the Elect of God.

Pentecostalism holds that there is a moment of encounter where creature meets Creator, man meets his Maker, and the revelation of God's infinite love and grace overwhelms the limitations of human understanding and floods the heart of man. It grants him the opportunity to wilfully and consciously appropriate eternal life, freely offered by God, by faith alone and by grace alone. This decision to choose Christ and be saved is formed in the act structure of man, in other words the emotions, intellect, and will are involved.

Our election to salvation in Christ is conditional upon our faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour. The elect are those who have accepted Christ as God's Elect. Barth (Berkhof, 1953:110) unlike most Calvinist theologians, places a very important emphasis on man's responsibility to believe and stresses the importance of faith with regards to election when he holds that,

the individual is not the object of election or reprobation, but rather the arena of election or reprobation. The two decisions meet within the same individual, but in such a way that seen from

⁶⁴ Packer (1961:23) asserts that, "Man is a responsible moral agent, though he is also divinely controlled; man is divinely controlled, though he is also a responsible moral agent..."

⁶⁵ Stewart (1951:107) holds that, "even where sin is regarded as an external force waiting to take advantage of human nature in its frailty...in the last resort man's is the choice, man's the responsibility, and man's the doom".

the human side, he is always elect...The ground of election is faith. The ground of reprobation is want of faith.

Some theologians such as McConnachie (Berkhof, 1953:100) unfortunately assume that, "Faith and unbelief are grounded in God". This false premise results in McConnachie's case, in his confusion when he says, "We stand at the gates of mystery." If he could see that faith is a voluntary but necessary human response to God's free gift of salvation, he would not have to contend with yet another unresolved mystery.

This view of election, where Christ is the Elect of God, and we are chosen by God in Christ, opposes the notion of predestination where election is an everlasting, abstract, sovereign decree. It also opposes the concept of election as generally held by Arminians who interpret election mainly as God's reaction to a decision of human volition (Möller, 1997:82, 83).

6.2.3 God's Foreknowledge

Duffield and Van Cleave (1987:207) makes a definite distinction between "foreknowledge" and "foreordaining", and say that "God in His foreknowledge looks ahead to events, much as we look back to them". In saying this, they again mistakenly place eternity and time in a linear line, but it does give us some understanding of how God sovereignty permits man to act as a moral agent.

As previously discussed, the concept of "foreknowledge" only makes some sense from the perspective of linear time, and it is nonsensical and insignificant from the perspective of eternity. From our limited perspective in time, we say that God "foreknows", but in reality, God simply "knows". For God, there is no future and no past, although He works with us (for a short time) in the realm of time. We can say that "time" is the "programme" in which God created us. The "beginning" (Gen. 1:1) was the beginning of time, and the end of time will come as promised in Rev. 10:6⁶⁶.

⁶⁶ Rev. 10:6 (MKJV) "and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created the heaven and the things in it, and the earth and the things in it, and the sea and the things in it, that there should no longer be time."

6.2.4 Salvation is by Grace alone

God calls us to salvation (a resistible call) on the grounds of His eternal election of Christ. Salvation is realised in time when man, whose will is not manipulated (or causally determined) by God, answers “yes” to the call of God who draws him to Christ. Election is not linked to human volition, but salvation is. Man, aided by divine grace, appropriates Christ’s work of reconciliation for himself, and salvation is realised in man, when he wilfully exercises his faith and identifies himself through faith in Christ (John 12:46). Man can, due to his depraved nature, only respond to God’s gracious offer of salvation through the enabling, drawing grace of God and the guidance and conviction of the Holy Spirit (John 6:44; John 16:8).

Man’s salvation is not achieved by means of a synergism between God and Man. Man cannot contribute to his own salvation. He needs a Savior. God’s grace is, however, not forced on man, since as Möller (1997:85) correctly points out, “Mercy and love that is violently enforced on man ceases to be mercy and love and becomes a violation”.

With this unique approach to the doctrine of election, we can finally break with Augustine’s doctrine of decrees that finds its roots in medieval scholasticism and that is intertwined in both the Calvinist and Arminian models of election.

6.2.5 The reconciliation of divine election and the doctrine of salvation by faith alone

Picirilly (2002:169) asks the penetrating question, “Is salvation by faith?” It seems to be a simple question that requires a simple answer, but the answer to that simple question is relative to the theological persuasion of the person to whom the question is addressed. In the context of Pentecostal theology the answer will be a loud and affirmative ‘Yes!’ However, when we turn to Calvinism or even Arminian theology, we may have other possible answers. Calvinism should really say that salvation, in terms of election, is first and foremost a result of God’s unconditional and, therefore, arbitrary choice. Arminianism should say that salvation

and particularly election, is mainly conditional upon human response to God's offer of salvation, which in turn, causes God to elect those (whom He foreknew) would choose Him.

Here is the dilemma; Calvinists, Arminians, and Pentecostals agree that the Bible teaches divine election and that the Bible also teaches that salvation is by faith (John 3:18⁶⁷), but both the Arminian model of election and the Calvinist model of election fails to accommodate both these truths.

Calvinism can consistently accommodate divine election, but not salvation by faith (because of the deterministic character of the divine decrees), and Arminianism can consistently accommodate salvation by faith, but fails in accommodating divine election (since in Arminianism, divine election is made contingent on human choice).

Olson (October 28, 2014) asserts that, "Calvinists typically describe total depravity as being totally dead spiritually" or that "The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God" (Steele & Thomas, 1963:16). From this premise, they argue that a dead man cannot choose to repent or answer the call of the gospel, not even with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and must, therefore, first be regenerated and given the "gift" of faith and repentance to be saved.

The Calvinist doctrine of election makes man a puppet of God, where every move thought and action are determined by God as the "Puppet Master". The Canons of Dordt (Steele & Thomas, [1619] 1963: COD1:17) teaches that, "His [God's] choice of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response or obedience on their part, such as faith, repentance, etc... On the contrary, God gives faith and repentance to each individual whom He selected." The regeneration (salvation) of a person is ultimately and unconditionally determined by God's eternal decree. In other words, God's election efficaciously causes salvation. Calvinism herewith implies that faith is not the only ground for man's salvation. It strips "faith" of any consequential meaning. Since Calvinism holds that man is first regenerated and then given the gift of faith, salvation is by implication, "to faith" rather than "by faith". (Picirilly, 2002:169).

⁶⁷ John 3:18 (LITV) "The *one* believing into Him is not condemned; but the one not believing has already been condemned, for he has not believed into the name of the only begotten Son of God."

In this sense, Calvinist theology seems to be problematic, and stands in stark contradiction with Scriptures such as 1 Cor. 1:21 (EMTV) "...God was well pleased, through the foolishness of our preaching, to save those that believe."; Acts 16:31 (EMTV) "And they said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, you and your household.'"; and Mark 16:16 (EMTV) "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that does not believe shall be condemned." Mark 16:16 does not only state that the sinner is saved by faith, but it also unflinchingly declares that the sinner is condemned if he does not believe.

Pentecostal theologian Möller (1997:93) holds that salvation implies that "man, by identifying himself in faith with Christ, participates in that which God intended for him in all eternity. He (1997:97) also contends that,

When the Bible refers to redemption or salvation, it does so in terms of either faith (John 3:16; Acts 16:31), or repentance (Acts 2:38), or rebirth (John 1:13; 3:3) or justification (Rom 8:30), or adoption (John 1:12). Where one of these is present, salvation, complete in all its aspects is assumed. It is, therefore, impossible that one can come to true faith and yet not be converted or reborn. Likewise, it is impossible to be reborn without being simultaneously being a righteous, faithful and repentant child of God.

In accordance with the witness of Scripture, we must agree that salvation is by faith. Pentecostal theology, therefore, teaches that salvation is by faith alone, (or more specifically, *dia pisteos* "through faith") as a condition for *the appropriation* of salvation. Salvation is never attained or appropriated, *dia pistin* "on account of faith", in other words, Christ remains the author and finisher of faith (Heb. 12:2), while only the *responsibility to believe* remains with man.

Picirilly (2002:167) gives a very good and accurate description of faith when he correctly holds that,

1. The capacity to believe is from God.
2. The possibility of believing is from God.
3. The content of belief-the gospel truth-is from God.
4. The persuasion of truth which one believes is from God.
5. The enabling of the individual is from God.

The believing itself can finally be done by no one other than the person who is called upon to believe the gospel, and that will to believe savingly is the individual's responsibility. In other words, although God enables us to believe, he does not believe on our behalf – we have to believe. The Bible clearly teaches that men are responsible for believing unto salvation (Rom 10:9).

Pentecostals such as Möller (1997:117) hold that salvation is affected through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and it exists in this faith, and contends that, “This faith is not the result of your salvation or your rebirth. The demand to believe does not pertain to the one who has already received salvation, but applies to the one who yearns after salvation. He (1997:118) further holds that, “Without faith, there is in fact, no redemption or salvation possible for the seeking sinner (Heb. 4:2).

Pentecostals agree with Picirilly (2002:167) that a believer has the responsibility to believe, but disagree with the Arminian model of election, since it is also fundamentally flawed, in that it makes God dependent upon the wiles of men. In Arminianism, God’s election of man depends on His foreknowledge of possible human decisions. Arminianism makes God’s election of man to salvation contingent on human choice, which really means that the sinner dictates by means of his decision, whom God “elects”. This is no election at all. If God’s decision to elect some to salvation and to pass others by is contingent upon his foreknowledge of what man does in time, it makes the Creator’s election of individuals to salvation a farce. As in the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, God is bound to a decree that forces Him to act in a certain way.

God’s election is not contingent on any involvement, any action, or any consent from man. In Calvinism man has no option. You are created either for heaven or for hell, determined by God’s unchangeable decree. Those that are elected are regenerated by irresistible grace, given faith and repentance, and are also predestined to persevere. This effectively means that salvation is not by faith but by divine decree.

In Calvinism, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ only bears consequence for those whom God determined to save. Since faith and repentance results from regeneration, there is by implication no human responsibility to believe or to repent. The message of the prophets through the ages for people to react to the gracious call of God to repent, and the preaching of the message of the cross, then seems irrelevant and strangely absurd if it only applies to those who are *already determined* to be saved. It also implies that God’s election of man to salvation (in linear time) would have to depend on His determination of human choice, which also means that salvation is not by faith.

Both the Arminian and the Calvinistic perspectives are problematic and unacceptable for Pentecostal Theology. It is only in the Pentecostal model of election that God's sovereignty stands without question or compromise while human beings remain responsible as moral agents created in the likeness and image of God, (albeit with a depraved nature). The Pentecostal model maintains God's sovereignty in His election of Christ as well as the doctrine of salvation by faith.

Pentecostals believe that, through the Fall, the divine moral image was marred in man, but not destroyed. There remains a certain sense of dignity, a fundamental moral conscience, and consciousness of self and of God in every human being, however distorted. The sinner is, however, spiritually helpless, self-centred and self-indulgent, and his understanding is darkened so that he cannot perceive divine realities apart from Divine grace. Any, and every sinner, when under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and aided by the resistible divine grace of God, is able to believe the gospel, place his faith in Jesus Christ, and be saved.

The act of faith is a human response to a divine command. Each sinner, under the conviction of, and aided by the Holy Spirit, is free to choose his eternal destiny; he either puts his faith in Christ as Saviour or rejects Christ, the elect of God, and faces eternal damnation. Faith does not contribute to salvation but it is instrumental in the appropriation of salvation. A sinner cannot be regenerated by the Spirit before he believes, for faith is a condition for regeneration and a primary and necessary requirement for salvation.

Hankins (2011:88-89), rejects both the Arminian and Calvinist model, and in agreement with Möller rightly describes the role of faith as central to salvation rather than the concept of election that from He holds that,

The Bible...does not speak of God's choice of certain individuals and not others for salvation. When the Bible does speak of the salvation of individuals, its central concept is "faith," never "election." Take away individual election, and the key components of Calvinism and Arminianism disappear. God does not elect individuals to salvation on the basis of His hidden councils, nor does He elect them on the basis of His foreknowledge of their future faith. Simply put, God does not "elect" *individuals* to salvation. He has elected an eschatological people whom He has determined to have for Himself. This group will be populated by individuals who have responded in faith to the gracious, free offer of the gospel. The group, "the Elect," is comprised of individuals who are "saved by faith," not "saved by election." This being the case, there is no longer any need for the theological maneuvering required to explain how God elects individuals without respect to their response (which evacuates the biblical concept of "faith" of all its meaning) or how He elects individuals based on foreseen faith (which evacuates the biblical concept of "election" of all its meaning).

6.2.6 The reconciliation of divine sovereignty, freedom, and responsibility

6.2.6.1 The sovereignty of God

Sproul (2012:18) holds that, “the question of how our free decisions correspond to God’s sovereign providence is one of the most excruciatingly difficult questions with which we struggle in theology”. We, as human beings, can only understand God’s sovereignty in terms of His dealings with His creatures. Calvinism is correct to say that God’s sovereignty means that His decisions and actions are not contingent on human choices or actions (Peterson and Williams, 2004:95, 96). Pearlman (1995:62-63), from a Pentecostal perspective, concurs with Peterson and Williams when he asserts that, “[God] has an absolute right to govern and dispose of His creatures as He pleases”.

It is, however, always important that our description of the sovereignty of God and its implications are not at odds with Scripture. We must always view God’s sovereignty in the light of His revelation to mankind in Scripture, and in the perspective of His revelation of Himself through the life of Jesus Christ.

In discussing the righteous character of God, Pearlman (1995:65) correctly holds that, “the Divine nature is the basis of God’s dealings with men. As He is, so He acts”. Pentecostal theology reconciles divine sovereignty with (libertarian) freedom⁶⁸ and responsibility. Pentecostals believe that, God in His sovereignty is the Subject, initiator, source, and power who enables man to say 'yes'. Why some say “no” is shrouded in mystery, but it affirms the blinding power of sin. Man’s “no” is related to the mystery of sin. The origin of sin remains a mystery to us, in that we do not believe that God created or ordained sin, and nor does He allow it, yet it is a reality that we must contend with on a daily basis. So is the mystery of man’s “no”.

⁶⁸ Libertarian freedom means that the choices that we make are ultimately “our” choices. It is not coerced⁶⁸ or caused by outside influences to the extent that we can abdicate our responsibility for these choices. Walls and Dongell (2004:99) base their argument for libertarian freedom on the following premises:

- The common experience of deliberation assumes that our choices are undetermined.
- It seems intuitively and immediately evident that many of our actions are up to us.
- We are morally responsible for our actions and moral responsibility requires freedom.

Walls and Dongell (2004:105) further asserts that Libertarian freedom is intrinsic to the very notion of moral responsibility. That is, a person cannot be held morally responsible for an act unless he or she was free to perform that act and free to refrain from it. This is a basic moral intuition, and we do not believe that there are any relevant moral convictions more basic than this one that could serve as a premise to prove it.

God in his sovereignty gives man the responsibility to say “yes”, but He does not determine his will to make that decision. Man is held accountable for his decision when he chooses (against God’s will) to say “no”, and he must therefore, bear the consequences.

Reichenbach (1986:105) describes the delicate relationship between God’s sovereignty and man’s competency of will, in saying that,

To be sovereign does not mean that everything that occurs accords with the will of the sovereign or that the sovereign can bring about anything he or she wants. The ability of the sovereign to determine the outcome, depends in part on the freedom granted to the governed. If those subject to the sovereign have freedom, then there are certain things that the sovereign cannot bring about. For example, the sovereign cannot make the subjects freely acknowledge his sovereignty. The sovereign can compel his subjects to bow in his presence, but he cannot compel them to bow freely. And the more freedom the sovereign grants his subjects, the less he can control their behaviour without withdrawing the very freedom he granted.

From a Pentecostal perspective, we can therefore say that God has absolute sovereignty, even more so as in Calvinism where He is restricted by a divine decree (Möller, 1997:67). God in His sovereignty, however, holds man as a moral agent and responsible for the choices he makes. Duffield and Van Cleave (1987:73) refer to the last sentence in Rev. 22:17 (KJV) “... And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely”, contending that, “This passage clearly says that the water of life is available to all on the basis of choice and human free will”. Barnes (2012: E-sword) in his commentary on Rev.22:17 holds that, “...salvation is free to all, and ...whosoever will may be saved”.

6.2.6.2 Human freedom (Competency of will), and responsibility

We can argue from a human perspective that man needs to have a reasonable measure of free will in order to be held accountable for his actions. This ability to make choices can also be described as man’s “competency of will”.

According to Finney (1966:94), man is “a free moral agent who possesses understanding, will and a conscience”, and that he, as a free moral agent, “can be lead to see the difference between right and wrong, so that his moral nature shall approve of what is right. Otherwise a sinner never can be brought under conviction.” If Calvinists were right, and man lost all moral ability or fundamental conscience, regeneration logically must precede repentance and faith.

Aquinas called this fundamental conscience, which he believed all men possessed, *synderesis*, and he understood this to be “the habitual and permanent consciousness of the fundamental moral principles: ‘love and do good’, ‘shun evil’, ‘respect human life and property’, ‘seek truth’, etc.”, which forms the foundation of moral life (Lewis, 2006:5). The implication of this belief is that man retains the knowledge of good and evil, the guilt of sin, the conviction of his conscience and the acute awareness of his fallen state and need of salvation.

Regeneration logically precedes repentance and faith if:

1. Man was unable to respond to the drawing of the Holy Spirit.
2. Man was not held responsible for rejecting Christ – (which is not the case).
3. Man’s salvation depended on an impersonal decree rather than a personal faith response to a *bona fide* offer of salvation.

While Scripture affirms the fact that we were once dead (spiritually) in trespasses and sin (Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13⁶⁹), there is no Scriptural support for the notion that Adam (and as a consequence, human kind) died spiritually *in the sense that* man’s spirit died, or became inactive. As already established in the previous chapter, spiritual death is not the cessation of the function of the human spirit, but rather, “the absence of the spiritual function of the life of God in the spirit of man” (Fowler, 1998:29).

Pentecostals agree with Arminians such as Olson (October 28, 2014) who correctly describes the state of the sinner as being “totally helpless spiritually, left to oneself, without prevenient grace”, but he still believes that “the image of God remains, however damaged, in every person”. This implies that there remains a certain sense of dignity, a fundamental moral conscience, and consciousness of self and of God in every human being, however distorted.

⁶⁹ Eph 2:1,5 (EMTV) “And you *He made alive*, being dead in transgressions and sins... (5) even when we were dead in transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)”; Col 2:13 (EMTV) “And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh...”.

Barth (CD II/2, 162) gives an unprecedented description of God's electing grace in asserting that, "When God of his own will raised up man to be a covenant member with himself, when from all eternity He elected to be one with man in Jesus Christ, He did it with a being which was not merely affected by evil but actually mastered by it". While affirming the helplessness and sinfulness of man, Barth (CD II/2, 179) brilliantly manages to bring the sovereignty of God into a compatibilism with human freedom by saying that,

The perfection of God's giving of Himself to man in the person of Jesus Christ consists in the fact that far from merely playing with man, far from merely moving or using him, far from merely dealing with him as an object, this self-giving sets man up as a subject, awakens him to genuine individuality and autonomy, frees him, makes him a king, so that in his rule, the kingly rule of God Himself attains form and revelation. How can there be any possible rivalry here, let alone usurpation? How can there be any conflict between theonomy and autonomy? How can God be jealous or man self assertive?

McCormack (2000:106) comments on Barth's description of the compatibilism between God's sovereignty and human freedom in saying that,

That divine sovereignty and human freedom are compatible realities, that they belong to such different planes of reality that they cannot possibly compete, is not something that can finally be demonstrated philosophically (by "philosophical compatibilism"). The demonstration of the truth of "compatibilism" is strictly theological. It is found in the history of Jesus' free obedience to the Father. "Omnipotence" may not be defined in the abstraction of the event in which God gives himself to rejection, judgement and wrath. By the same token, "human freedom" may not be defined in abstraction of Jesus' freedom for self-surrender to these realities for the sake of redeeming the whole of the human race.

Dooyeweerd (1969:190) describes the Fall of man and its consequence in asserting that,

The entire fall into sin can be summed up as a false illusion, that arose in the human heart, namely, that the human I has the same absolute existence as God Himself. This was a false insinuation of Satan to which man gave ear: "Ye shall be like God." This apostasy from the living God implied the spiritual death of man, since the human I is nothing in itself and can only live from the Word of God and in the love communion with its divine Creator. However, this original sin could not destroy the religious centre of human existence with its innate religious impulse to seek for its absolute origin. It could only lead this central impulsion in a false, apostate direction by diverting it to the temporal world...

The world wide phenomenon of religion in all its diverse forms testifies to the innate desire of man in search for God. In every culture, however remote or primitive, man is found to have some religious inclination. Dooyeweerd (1969:190, 192) is, therefore, correct so say that, "By seeking his God and himself in the temporal world, and by elevating a relative and dependent aspect of this world to the rank of the absolute, man fell prey to idolatry".

If man had no awareness of his fallen state and need of salvation, and he was left in a state of spiritual helplessness, he would not have searched for God, and would not, even in his state of being blinded by sin, have fallen prey to idolatry. We should also ask; “If man could not seek God, and was totally deaf, blind, and dead in sin, how could he then be held accountable for not being saved? Paul gives a strong argument in Rom 2:14-15 (EMTV) for the fact that man still has a moral consciousness in spite of his depraved nature where he writes,

for whenever Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things of the law, these, not having the law, are a law unto themselves, (15) who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience witnessing with *them*, and among themselves their thoughts accuse or even defend *them*.

Man is, therefore, not left in a state of moral ignorance but has a moral law, a morality as a creature created in God’s image (*synderesis*) with knowledge of good and evil. Pentecostals also believe that “the saving grace of God has appeared to all men” (Tit 2:11 EMTV) indiscriminately, and that all men can therefore be saved, when under the conviction of the Holy Spirit they choose to submit themselves to God and accept Christ as their personal Saviour.

There are various factors that work in on the act structure of man to influence every decision that is made, but these factors are not causal to the extent that it relieves man from his responsibility for his choices. Should a decision be governed solely by external causes, there can, logically, be no accountability.

Accountability can only be reckoned to a person to the degree that he or she was responsible for that specific action. If a person could not choose differently from what he did, and if choice, in a manner of speaking, was eliminated by external causes, it would mean that the external causes absolved the person of the accountability for the particular action. If a man would find himself in a situation where choice was eliminated by external factors, no human court would find this person accountable for his actions.

Legally speaking, man must be relatively free in order to be held accountable for his actions. His actions cannot be caused by external factors, and he must have an option and opportunity to act differently to what he does. For a person to be guilty of a crime, he must have committed an act (*actus reus*) that must be measurable, and must contain elements

such as planning and conspiracy (Matison Hess and Hess Ortmann, 2012:57). We could, therefore, in a court of law, never be found guilty for the sin of Adam.

The proof that an act was committed, however important, is in itself not enough to convict a person of a crime. Swales (2014, [1]) holds that,

the fact that a person has committed an act, which may be a crime, is not enough for conviction and criminal liability – the conduct of the person must be committed with a guilty mind. This requirement, otherwise expressed with the Latin term *mens rea*⁷⁰, or culpability, must be present before criminal liability is found. Essentially, the law seeks to determine whether an accused should be blamed for her conduct. Would it be fair to punish the accused? Could the accused have avoided the wrongdoing?

There are four different levels of *mens rea* namely: intention, knowledge, recklessness and negligence. Matison Hess and Hess Ortmann (2012:57) describe these four levels as follows:

1. Intentionality is where a person has a clear foresight of the consequences of an action and wants those consequences to occur.
2. Knowingly is where a person knows or should know that the results of his or her conduct are reasonably certain to occur.
3. Recklessly is where a person foresees that particular consequences may occur and proceeds with the given conduct, not caring whether those consequences actually occur or not.
4. Negligently occurs when a person does not actually foresee particular consequences of his or her actions, but a reasonable person in the same circumstances would foresee the consequences.

God, who is the most righteous Judge, holds man responsible for accepting or rejecting Christ. This simply means that, in spite of all the possible influences on any choice, man still has an obligation to choose what he believes is right, in any given situation. Arminians would call this libertarian freedom of choice.

This concept of freedom applies to our interpretation of moral behaviour and responsibility. What we interpret as morality or freedom, specifically from a Biblical perspective, cannot be too different from the general interpretation, otherwise the word loses its meaning. However, “freedom” as it is used in the context of theology, or as it is interpreted from a Biblical perspective, can be described as a “term of art”. A “term of art” is known in legal terms as a commonly used word that takes on an uncommon meaning when it is used in a specific context (Bergman & Berman, 2015:482).

⁷⁰ According to Bergman & Berman (2015:476) “Mens rea (mens-REE-a) is Latin for “guilty mind.” The *mens rea* concept expresses the belief that people should be punished (fined or imprisoned) only when they have acted with an intent or purpose that makes them morally blameworthy”.

Absolute freedom of the will cannot be reconciled to the image that we see in the Bible with regards to the bondage of the sinful human nature of man. Paul makes it clear in Rom. 7 that Human freedom, in a Biblical context, is not absolute freedom but that this impediment is no excuse for sin and that it does not resolve us from accountability of our thoughts and actions. He speaks of a “different” law in his being in conflict with his desire to do what he knows is right, and waging war against the law of his mind (Rom. 7:23).

Möller (personal communication November 12, 2015) holds that the Bible affirms the fact that man has competency of will, but not that man’s will is free. He correctly contends that “God alone is truly free, and he must determine what freedom means, not the theologian. If we determine what freedom is, and then apply it to God, we become prescriptive of how God should be - this is unacceptable!” (my translation). His view on human responsibility corresponds to what Finney (1966:94), and Olson (October 28, 2014) believe, in that the image of God remains as a moral compass in man, although it is damaged by the fall. Möller (personal communication November 12, 2015) contends that,

Morality goes deeper than decisions enabled by competency of will. It relates more with the fact that we are created in the image and likeness of God. This means among other things that some of God's characteristics (love, goodness, truth, etc.) are also present in every human being. It is like a "law" naturally ingrained in every human heart (Rom. 2:14), and therefore no one is really without excuse for his / her behaviour. You have, as the image of God, an inner sense of what is right. If you choose against what is right, it is probably a symptom of the brokenness of the image of God in you.

Salvation means that we as disfigured images of God, through spiritual growth are again progressively restored to the likeness to Christ into the image of God - Christ is the image of God (Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 4:4). Accountability does therefore not [in a Biblical sense] relate to "freedom of will," but the fact that we are created in the image of God (an animal has the ability to make choices, but it is not the image of God, and therefore not a moral creature).

We must not blame our wrong choices on the fall; that would be as irresponsible as to blame Adam for our personal sin. In saying that wrong choices are a symptom of the brokenness of Gods image in man, Möller, however, implies that a fully restored image of God in man would result is us choosing freely as God does, and that we would then make right choices.

6.2.7 Human responsibility to answer God’s call of salvation

Pecota (1995:358, 359) correctly asserts that, “the Bible does not say *what* God foreknew, it clearly refers to *whom* (Rom.8:23)”, and “the very word call implies a response, and if we respond to it, we [in time] become God’s elect”. It is in the response to the call of God where human responsibility with regards to the acceptance or rejection of Christ as Saviour, is actualised.

Pentecostal theology, influenced by the American revivalist tradition of its roots, expects a sinner to have an instant and immediate life-transforming experience with God. A sinner must, under the conviction of the Holy Spirit confess his sinful state, ask God’s forgiveness, and repent from his sinful life (Jacobsen, 2006:6). He is then, on account of his confession and faith, instantaneously born again in line with Romans 10:9-10 (EMTV) where Paul writes that, “... if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and you believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. (10) For with the heart one believes *resulting in* righteousness, and with the mouth one confesses, *resulting in* salvation”. Salvation is never the result of a person’s confession or the quotation or repeating of a phrase or Scripture verse. It is always coupled with faith, and it always remains a mystery how God can transform a person’s life, and bring peace to a troubled soul. Möller (personal communication November 12, 2015) holds that, “It is not our faith in the Bible that saves us but rather a work of God’s Spirit in which the Bible is often instrumental” (own translation).

Erasmus (1998:63) discusses the doctrine of election under the heading of ‘predestination’, and correctly holds that, “All who accept God’s plan become the ‘elect’ [in time] because they accept Christ, God’s Elect”. Those who “become” the elect in time are “already” elected in eternity.

Erasmus (1998:63), however, also confuses time and eternity when he asserts that, “There are many who are called by the Spirit but they do not accept the ‘invitation’ and therefore they cannot be elected”. When we say that election takes place in eternity, we should not speak of election in the future tense. Whatever happens in eternity can only be described in the present tense. Erasmus should rather have said that “many who are called by the Spirit do not accept the ‘invitation’ and therefore remain in their sin”, rather than to place “election” in “time”.

Calvinism, Arminianism, and Pentecostalism affirm the depravity of human nature. The implications of this doctrine differs for Arminians and Pentecostals, in that while they believe that man is dead in trespasses and sin, his will is not destroyed, and he still functions as a

moral agent. Pentecostals hold that the Fall did not eliminate man's will, but that his ability to correctly discern spiritual matters has been compromised. Möller (1997:93) contends that through the fall, "the unity between man as spirit and God's Spirit was destroyed. So man, in God's view plunged into darkness and death".

In Calvinism, and particularly with regards to the Calvinistic doctrine of salvation, there is no leeway to accommodate both the will of God (God's sovereignty) and the will of man (human responsibility), and these concepts continuously clash.

Pentecostals believe that a sinner has the *potential* to exercise his will to choose God, but that his selfish and depraved nature *impedes* him to do so. An unconverted person is blind, deaf, and dead to the spiritual things of God and of salvation. He can still exercise his will but he must be aided by the Spirit of God to choose God (Crabb,1977:100).

Man can, therefore, not choose God by his own volition and be saved. Man can, however, when aided by prevenient grace and drawn to Christ by the Holy Spirit, answer the call of salvation by the competency of his will, and appropriate salvation through repentance and faith in spite of his depraved nature.

Man either answers the call of salvation or hardens his heart, as described in Heb. 3:7-8 (EMTV) "Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says: 'Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness'". For every person, there is a "today". There is a specific moment of encounter, of the revelation of God to the heart of man. In that moment of grace an illumination of the Spirit of God, man can submit to the will of God, repent and believe, or reject God's offer of salvation. This offer of salvation is also illustrated in the words of Christ in Revelation 3:20 (EMTV) where He says, "Behold, I stand at the door and I am knocking. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, then I will come in to him and I will dine with him, and he with Me." It remains the prerogative of man to accept or reject, not only the message of the Gospel, but Christ himself as the Elect of God. God does not determine man's response to the call of salvation, or coerce man in making the fateful decision between eternal life and eternal damnation. The sinner under conviction of the Holy Spirit, and aided by divine grace, may choose to accept, or reject Christ, as personal Saviour. Man is responsible for his decision to accept or reject the offer of salvation. This is not simply a voluntary decision of man, and definitely not a result of a divine decree. Man is confronted with the obligation and responsibility of choice, and right from the

beginning of time, he suffers or enjoys the consequences of that choice. Möller (1997:126) correctly describes the responsibility of man in repentance by saying that remorse leads to repentance, and remorse means that a person has “come to some understanding and therefore repented. Understanding implies deliberation and choice, and “choice” in this context in turn implies responsibility.

The author of Hebrews in Heb. 10:28-29 (EMTV) describes the responsibility of the acceptance or rejection of Jesus Christ as Saviour, and the consequences of that choice in saying,

Anyone disregarding the law of Moses dies without compassion on *the testimony of two or three witnesses*. By how much worse punishment, do you think, will he be deemed worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, and has regarded as common the blood of the covenant, by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

Salvation is not contingent upon a divine decree, it is provided freely by the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross, but it must be appropriated by repentance and faith. Pentecostal theology, being a theology of encounter, advances the notion that man's salvation is actualized in an encounter with God, when he, enabled by divine grace, answers “yes” to the call of salvation. Möller (1997:100) asserts that, “True faith and conversion means to arrive at God himself”.

The conversion of Paul is in many ways an example of how man comes to repentance, although not in such dramatic terms. Man is like Paul, spiritually blind, until the light of the gospel and the conviction of the Holy Spirit calls him to a halt. In this encounter, the revelation of God's grace, the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man are at once revealed to the heart of man. Man is confronted with the unmistakable reality of who God is and stands at the crossroads of eternal life or eternal condemnation. This decision, to accept or reject Christ as his personal Saviour, involves his will and renders him accountable before God.

We can conclude that, while man's responsibility to choose or reject salvation was not terminated by the Fall, although the sinner's will is enslaved by his sinful nature, his actions are not determined or coerced by God. Man's ability to choose freely is impeded by his corrupted nature, and specifically in the degree to which he is bound and blinded by sin. Salvation is realised or lost in time when we, aided by the grace of God, choose to either

accept, or reject Christ as the Elect of God. Since Christ is the Elect of God, and men are elected in Christ, it follows that salvation is, therefore, not 'something' which man receives, but Someone. Salvation, and election are determined by the relationship man has with Christ (Möller, 1997:60).

6.3 DOOYEWEERD'S ACT STRUCTURE AS A PARADIGM FOR THE RECONCILIATION OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY WITH HUMAN FREEDOM

It is in the instant of encounter where Dooyeweerd's model of the act structure of man is helpful to reconcile man's uncoerced choice ("freedom") to accept or reject God's offer of salvation. Dooyeweerd's act structure also accommodates the current understanding of decision making, and it reconciles the convicting power of the Holy Spirit with Human freedom and responsibility.

6.3.1 The introduction to the act structure

Ideas have consequences. It is important when formulating or describing a doctrine from any perspective to seriously consider its possible consequences. If "competency of will" and human responsibility are described in a specific way with regards to the appropriation of salvation, in what way and to which degree does it affect choices and decisions with regards to election and regeneration? A consistent application may not prove the infallibility of a formulated doctrine, but it will reveal a very serious flaw in the construction of the theory if the formulation of this doctrine cannot be consistently described. It needs to be consistent with Biblical truth, and it should if correctly interpreted and described, be consistent with human experience.

One of the ways in which we can describe human experience with regards to the doctrine of election is by means of a philosophical model, such as Dooyeweerd's act structure. One of the objectives of this study is to describe the implications of a Pentecostal doctrine of election with regards to the act structure of man.

Dooyeweerd (1969, 88) is correct in his observation that the dichotomistic view of man, (body and soul) is inadequate as a model to explain the individuality of man, and how man

functions as a moral agent. We know this simply because certain parts of the New Testament⁷¹ indicate that man is a unity of body, soul, and spirit which Möller (personal communication January 7, 2015) rightfully describes as “three dimensions or ways of existence disclosed by being human”.

Dooyeweerd looked at man as a thinking and reasoning entity and developed the concept of “the act structure of man” in an attempt to better understand how man makes decisions. The act structure is one of four structures intertwined in the unity of man (Venter, 1972:32). The act structure consists of three aspects namely the knowing, the volitional and the imagination (Taljaard, 1976:181). The act structure can also be defined as the *intentionality* of the heart of man. It does not necessarily imply an action, but it lays the foundation for every act or deed and it is manifested in reality by a human action (Mulder, 1986:13). Dooyeweerd (1969, 88) holds that,

Mankind is not enclosed in a kingdom of individual beings...the human body, as the individual whole of man's temporal existence, shows a very complicated interlacement of different typical structures which are combined in a form totality, qualified by the so called act structure. It gives the human body its typical human character. But this act structure, though it functions in all of the modal aspects, lacks, as such, a typical qualifying function within the temporal sphere. It is the immediate temporal expression of the human I-ness, which transcends the cosmic temporal order. The reason is that human existence is not restricted to the temporal world and does not find its ultimate internal destination in the latter...The act structure is neither qualified by a logical nor by an ethical function. It is not even qualified in the faith aspect...the truth is that human acts with their threefold intentional direction (viz. The knowing, volitional and the imaginative directions), may assume the most different structures of individuality...This is why the traditional scholastic qualification of man as a rational ethical being is unacceptable, as is the metaphysical dichotomistic view of body and soul in which it is rooted.

Dooyeweerd's (1969, 88) assertion that the decisions we make is not only based on the fact that man is a “rational ethical being” is confirmed by recent neurological research with regards to the limbic system in the brain. The debate concerning competency of will and consciousness with regards to the initiation of voluntary action was traditionally limited to theology and philosophy. It was considered to be beyond the scope of scientific research. It has, however, recently become the subject of much empirical research and scientific study (Schlosser, 2014:345). Theoretical and methodological advances in neuroscience made it possible to investigate complex psychological functions such as conscious intentions and decision-making (Rigoni and Brass, 2013:5).

⁷¹ 1Th 5:23 (EMTV) says that, “Now *may* the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”.

Häusel (2014:3) contends that current neuroscientific research coupled and incorporated with evolutionary and psychological research discloses a fascinating insight into the pattern of human thought and actions. As indicated in the figures 2 and 3 below, current neuropsychological research proved that emotions play a central role in our decision making processes, rather than just the rational thought processes as what was previously assumed.

The role of emotions in the decision making process

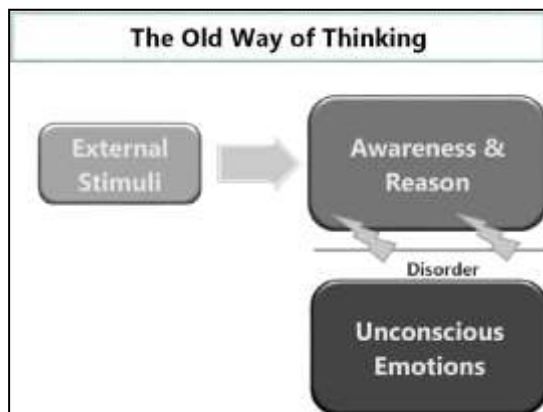


Fig. 2 (Häusel, 2014:3).

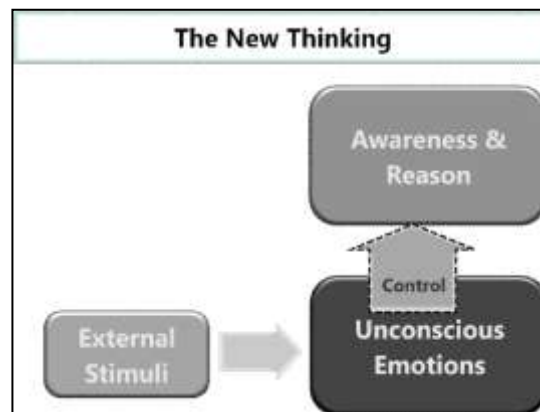
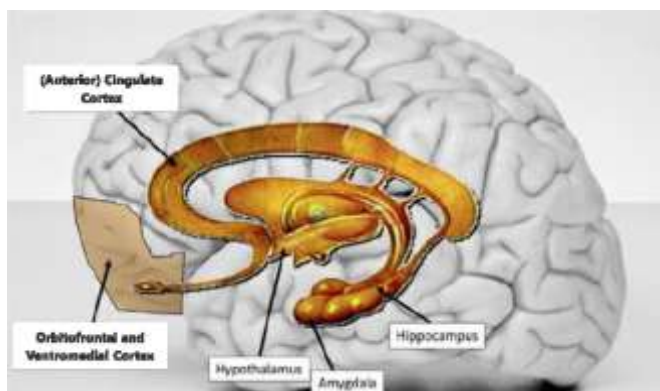


Fig. 3 (Häusel, 2014:4).

What is known in current research as the “New Unconscious” has now replaced the idea of a rational consciousness as the main influence on decision making (Häusel, 2014:4). Häusel identifies a physical centre in the brain (the limbic system) where sense is made of neurological impulses are translated into thoughts, and where decisions are formulated.

The Limbic system



The Limbic system (Figure 4) is a collective term for the brain structures that initiates and regulates emotions. It is made up of the amygdale, the hippocampus, cingulated gyrus, the hypothalamus, the orbitofrontal cortex and the nucleus accumbens.

Fig. 4 (Häusel, 2014:27).

The amygdala, specifically, but also in conjunction with the hypothalamus, hippocampus, basal ganglia, brain stem, and prefrontal cortex, plays a central role in processing outside stimuli and information into significant meaning. The evaluation of outside stimuli is

translated in the limbic system into electrical signals that are transmitted through chemical neurotransmission into emotions (Häusel, 2014:27-28).

With regards to decisions emotions and thoughts, it is impossible to precisely locate the “decision making centre” or act-structure in the limited anthropological model of the constitution of man as simply consisting of a body, soul and spirit. It is, in other words, impossible to say, in relation to this model, where decisions are made. We can, however, employ Dooyeweerd’s *act structure* to describe the mystery of the origin of and influences on human choices. Dooyeweerd’s act structure serves the study of decision making well, but as Sproul (2012:18) correctly says, “It is a human tendency to think we can solve a metaphysical mystery by putting a name to it or giving it a definition”. Although a philosophical model can help us structure our thoughts, it still does not answer any questions regarding where and how decisions are made.

In the consideration of the threefold constitution of man, the French philosopher, René Descartes (1596-1650) held that the mind is connected to the body through the pineal gland (Machuga, 2002:55). Descartes was correct in the sense that the pineal gland is part of the limbic system. While outside stimuli are translated in the limbic system into electrical signals that are transmitted through chemical neurotransmission into emotions, emotions are not actions. Emotions lead to intentions and intentions are turned into actions by voluntary decisions.

Neuropsychological research has shown that we do not consciously initiate our actions (Schlosser, 2014:245). Although a spontaneous voluntary act is unconsciously initiated, the final decision to act could still be consciously controlled during the 150 milliseconds or so remaining after the specific conscious intention appears (Libet, 1985: 529). Runyan (2014:134) explains human responsibility in the light of neuropsychological research, and holds that,

instead of revealing a sub-personal cause for all the relevant bodily, including neural, changes that occur when an individual is said to act, our neural observations are consistent with the view that we, as psychophysical agents (i.e. as a macro level entity who is the bearer of certain psychological and physical attributes), is a causal agent that bring about *certain* changes, for which there is no sufficient sub-personal cause, when they purposively act, deliberate, decide, or exercise their agency in other ways.

Kärkkäinen (2015: 360) therefore rightfully argues that, “Human persons cannot avoid the freedom to make and justify choices”. Freedom, in this sense, is described by Hefner (1989:175) who holds that, “Freedom refers to a condition of existence in which humans unavoidably face the necessity both of making choices and of constructing the stories that contextualise and hence justify those choices”. This implies that we do not simply act on instinct, or non-deliberate intensions and urges, but that we through competency of will make deliberate choices in our inner self for which we must be held accountable.

In the context of human responsibility in making decisions, we judge “freedom of choice” by the norm of libertarian freedom. The choice has to be relatively free, in order for a person to be responsible. In other words, freedom in this sense does not mean that there is an absence of influences, but that the choice of action is not determined by the said influences. F.P. Möller (Personal communication, April 17, 2014) makes a significant distinction between “choice” and “freedom to choose” when he asserts that,

The ability to make a choice is not an indication of freedom, the devil can also make choices. Free choice implies that we are able to make the right choices like God. To make a wrong choice is a sign of bondage. The more we become like God, the more our ability to make choices also becomes free.

Freedom described from this perspective means the ability to choose like Christ. This definition of freedom is problematic in terms of human responsibility, especially with regards to a person who is not yet born again (1Cor 2:14). Such a person is a slave to sin (John 8:34), and is dead in trespasses and sin (Eph. 2:1). He cannot choose like God, but must when aided by God’s grace to make an undetermined choice to be saved.

Man, from the inclinations of his sinful nature will not instinctively choose like Christ. We must therefore conclude that in terms of this definition of free choice, our choices are not free in that we can choose to do anything that we want to choose, even after regeneration. We must consciously choose to do what is right. This is only possible when we allow ourselves to be lead by the Spirit (Rom. 8:13-14), and we can only be lead by the Spirit *after* regeneration (1Cor 2:14-16).

6.3.2 The relationship between salvation, election and the act structure of man

The doctrine of election is embedded in the doctrine of salvation and cannot stand on its own apart from the context of soteriology. It is also true that the doctrine of election plays an integral part in the structure and understanding of a person's understanding of the doctrine of God, the doctrine of man, the doctrine of sin, and the doctrine of salvation. This implies that the Pentecostal interpretation of the doctrine of election must be understood in the context of Pentecostal theology as a whole.

The concept of the sovereignty of God and the degree of freedom of choice plays an integral part in the formulation of the doctrine of election. The intentionality of choice that is represented by Dooyeweerd's model of the act structure is employed to make sense of how choices are influenced and to what degree these choices can be considered to be free.

Searle (2007:10, 56) argues that we are rational agents on the grounds that we are able to explain and motivate our choices, and that these explanations do not include causally sufficient conditions. The fact that we are not only able to account for, but also give reasons for our actions (and volitions), presupposes "an entity, a rational agent, a self, or an ego-that acts in the gap..." We are only able to explain our actions due to a "first-person conscious experience of acting on reasons". Searle (2007, 56) rightfully contends that human rationality pre-supposes competency of will and the fact that we can act as rational, moral agents proves that at least some of our volitions and actions are not causally determined by antecedent conditions. Rigoni and Brass (2013:5) hold that,

The notion of free will seems to be rooted in virtually all human societies (Haggard 2008; Leotti et al. 2010; Sarkissian et al. 2010): people have the spontaneous feeling that they are agents, and that their behavior is caused by their own intentions. On the basis of the experience of being free agents people form the belief that they have free will and that they are ultimately responsible for their own actions (Baumeister 2008).

Dooyeweerd (1969:88) asserts that, "... human existence is not restricted to the temporal world and does not find its ultimate internal destination in the latter..." This not only implies a link from within the act structure of man that extends to an extra temporal world, but accommodates the fact that we as physical beings also have spiritual capabilities and are able to interact on a spiritual level.

Dooyeweerd's act structure is, therefore, such a valid description of the intentionality in our discussion. Dooyeweerd (1969:88) asserts that the "immediate temporal expression of the

human I-ness” which includes the ability to make willful decisions, “transcends the cosmic temporal order” meaning that the possibility of choice in the act structure of man is not limited to empirical, neurological, or intellectual influences. Machuga (2002:156) in concurrence, claim that

All brain states are subject to one of two types of causation-*per se* efficient causes or *per accidents* efficient causes. The *per se* efficient causes are ordered by the laws of nature and are fully open to scientific investigation. The *per accidents* efficient causes that permeate the workings of a normal brain, on the other hand, are not (by definition) subject to the ordering of natural laws but at least some of them are ordered by the intentional actions of the agent intellect. Considered by themselves, *per accidents* causes in the brain (like all *per accident* causation) fall beneath the threshold of scientific investigation. Considered as the carriers of intentionality, however *per accidents* causes (like the words on this page) transcends the threshold of scientific investigation.

Where Machuga (2002:156) describes *per accidents* causes as the carriers of intentionality, Dooyeweerd (Taljaard, 1976:181) describes the act structure as the arena wherein *per accident* causes manifests its influence on the intentions of the heart.

6.3.3 The temporal expression of the human I-ness

Dooyeweerd (1969, 88) identifies the inadequacy of the metaphysical dichotomistic view of body and soul to describe the “temporal expression of the human I-ness”. Man is, in this sense, a subjective reality that eludes all objective research and can, therefore, only be known and understood in terms of what his Creator says about him.

Schmul (nd.:23) uses a trichotomistic model in terms of being human. He holds that self consciousness is an attribute of the soul, world consciousness an attribute of the body, and God consciousness, an attribute of the regenerated spirit of man, and asserts that, “God created man with the ability to contact the material world, and to contact the eternal God, and yet be an identity, an I-hood.” This may however be an oversimplification of a very complex concept, simply because of all the different influences that work in on man as a holistic entity. We can easily differentiate between soul and spirit, body and spirit, or body and soul. There are, however, many ways where man functions holistically in such a way that it is not possible to isolate soul, spirit or body in regards to certain functions such as worship, discernment, and prayer. In such cases, we can only say with the writer of Hebrews, in Heb. 4:12 (EMTV) that, “...the word of God is living and effectual, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a

discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart". This Scripture attests to the unity of man and the near indivisibility of soul and spirit.

Möller (1997:94) holds that, "The new life in which we participate through salvation does not merely attest to a change that we have undergone or to an altered state in which we find ourselves. This life exists therein that Christ has, through the Spirit, become one with us". This implies that the life we now live is of a different quality than the life of an unregenerate man (Rom.6:4). Fowler (1998:80) describes this dynamic interactive relationship as the Christian, actively and volitionally, allows "the indwelling Christ to work through him". A regenerated man must, if he allows "the indwelling Christ" to work through him, make decisions differently than an unregenerate man. Dooyeweerd (1969:191) holds in this regard that regeneration is revealed "in the whole of our temporal life".

The "temporal expression of the human I-ness" which Dooyeweerd (1969, 88) contends, "transcends the cosmic temporal order" can, therefore, only be fully realised when we partake of eternal life through regeneration, become a new creature. Caram (2000:10) correctly holds that, "The mind is the instrument of analysis and logic. But the heart dictates to our mind what to muse upon". It is the heart of man that needs transformation. Jesus said in Mark 7:21-22 (EMTV) "For from within, out of the heart of men, come forth evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, arrogance, foolishness". The problem is in reality that we are not merely recreated spirits, - we are also soulish, emotional, and at times, insecure. If our bodies get sick, it influences how we feel, and how we cope with temptation. When we are tired and emotionally drained, we are more susceptible to temptations. We are holistic, trinitarian beings.

Möller (1997:132) holds that, "life in the Spirit" (communion with God, speaking in the Spirit, experiencing God's power, etc.) cannot be comprehended by an unregenerate man, and contends that it is only after regeneration, "when the darkness in him has disappeared and he acquires the ability to see...[that] he discovers that these things ought to be a natural part of his life".

6.3.4 The influence of the Holy Spirit on the act structure of man

The role and function of the spirit of a regenerated being also involves the interaction with the Spirit of God, and the communication of spiritual truth to the intellect and soul, which we need to take into account with regards to the act structure of man.

The principle of the influence of the Holy Spirit on the conscious decision making process, apart from the intellect and emotions, is evidenced in Acts 16:6-7 (EMTV) where it states that when Paul and Silas, "...had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit from speaking the word in Asia, having come to Mysia they attempted to go to Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them (*emphasis mine*).

Paul and Silas made an intellectual and volitional decision to preach in Asia, and then to go to Bithynia. They seem to have been committed but chose not to do what they had set out to do, since they were forbidden to preach in Asia and not permitted to go to Bithynia. They did not choose to do what they did because they "were causally determined" or simply because they were "caused" to act "according to *prior motives and desires*" as Berkhof (1959:107) would like us to believe. They acted volitionally in submission to the leading of the Holy Spirit. They chose to act on the promptings of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 7:6).

Acts 15:28 (EMTV) also refers to the involvement of the Holy Spirit in a decision made by the apostles, where Luke states that, "For it seemed best to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to put on you no greater burden except for these necessary things." From the context of this Scripture, it would seem that the decision that was made was not "forced" onto the counsel of Jerusalem by the Holy Spirit, and that it was not a decision dictated by God, but that the mandate agreed upon was concluded from an intellectual decision in conjunction with the leading of the Holy Spirit. This kind of agreement is also seen in Romans 8:16 (EMTV) where it states that "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God."

The communication of divine truths to the spirit of man transcends the human understanding. The Spirit intercedes on our behalf, and communicates and imparts divine truths to us in ways that supersede the human intellect and capability (Rom. 8:26⁷²). Through the Spirit we

⁷² Rom 8:26 (EMTV) "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with inexpressible groanings."

also speak things which we ourselves do not understand (1 Cor. 14:2⁷³) The choices made are, however, not only spiritually influenced or directed, but the Scriptures reveal that there is also a rationality in the decisions which indicate the involvement of the intellect.

Regenerated man is indeed a new creature, also a new kind of creature. Regenerated man has the ability to act on the unction of the Holy Spirit and to be convinced, to do things which to the mind or intellect of man, at times, makes very little sense. Being led by the Spirit or walking in the Spirit is not possible by simply following the course of logic. Overcoming the instincts of the fallen self-centred nature of man is only possible by relying in faith and obedience on the promptings of the Spirit of God working through the spirit of man, and affecting the heart and mind (act structure) of man. Nee (1977:66) asserts that, “Ordinarily the leading of the Spirit opposes what men call reasoning; however, to the person whose rational power has been renewed such reasoning works together with his spirit, thus his guidance seems perfectly logical to his reasoning.”

Dooyeweerd (1969, 88), in asserting that humans act with their threefold intentional direction (viz. The knowing, volitional and the imaginative directions), describe the decision making process of man from a philosophical perspective. The act structure is not the decision making centre of man, but it is where the intentions to act are formed. The impulses from the body, the soul, the intellect and the spiritual realm, are translated through the act structure from impulses into intentions.

The Bible teaches us that, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God” (Rom 8:14 EMTV). The concept of “led” by the Spirit must further be qualified as actions not being causally determined by efficient causes, and at the same time not be free in the contracausal, libertarian sense. These actions are wilful decisions to submit to the promptings of the Holy Spirit rather than the promptings of the flesh, or sinful nature. The wilful choices and decisions made by man, even when led by the Spirit are filtered through the act structure of man and are a reflection of a renewed or an unrenewed mind.

6.3.5 The will of man with regards to the act Structure

⁷³ 1Co 14:2 (EMTV) “For he who speaks in an *unknown* tongue speaks not to men, but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.”

The concept of the act structure, which includes the knowing, the volitional, and the imagination is significant as a concept model for understanding the decision making process of man. It is also has significant implications with regards to our understanding of the relationship of divine sovereignty and human responsibility as it impacts every decision that a person may take.

Nee (1977:Vol. II/79) holds that God's will is intellectually understood, and can volitionally be acted upon, but it is revealed in man's spirit, and he (1977:Vol. II/81) asserts that, "Everyone who walks intimately with God, enjoying secret communion and spiritual union, will receive God's revelation in his intuition and know unmistakably what he should do." The knowledge of what we should do, does not always translate in us doing that very thing. We may be sidetracked by our own sinful nature.

Murray (2002:172) however, rightly remarks that, "we despair of a life of devotion and perfect self-sacrifice by the fire of His love, guiding us into all His will and work by the leading of His blessed Spirit...As a result of this, few witness the greatness of His power toward us who believe."

Both Nee and Murray assume a position of libertarian freedom where the "will's" actions are events that "overrule" the normative choices of sinful nature. Machuga (2002:150), on the other hand, contends that "a person's character is not created by occasional 'contracausal choices.' Rather, it is created moment by moment through the whole of one's life." His view that corresponds to the concept of an "act structure" is further explained when he (2002:151) quotes Murdoch who asserts,

If we consider what the work of attention is like, how continuously it goes on, and how imperceptibly it builds up structures of value round about us we shall not be surprised that at crucial moments of choice most of the business of choosing is already over. This does not imply that we are not free, certainly not. But it implies that the exercise of our freedom is small piecemeal business that goes on all the time and not a grandiose leaping about unimpeded at important moments. The moral life on this [Aristotelian] view, is something that goes on continually, not something that is switched off in between the occurrence of explicit moral choices. What happens in between such choices is indeed what is crucial.

Searle (2007:42) describes that which happens in between explicit moral choices as "a gap" and asserts that, "In typical cases of deliberating and acting, there is in short, a gap, or a series of gaps, between the causes of each stage in the process of deliberating, deciding and acting, and the subsequent stages." He (2007:43) holds that what he calls a "gap" is "a

feature of our conscious voluntary activities”. He finds the concept of free will compelling and argues that “we cannot in practice act on the presupposition that it [free will] is an illusion, and states that “We cannot think away our free will”.

Murdoch (Machuga, 2002:150) describes the concept of an act structure without expressly identifying it by that name. She holds that choices are free, (not determined), but that the “structures of value” (not causal events) influence the intentionality of the will to make decisions.

The sinful nature cannot be ignored or simply controlled, but there are influences that can volitionally be avoided or disallowed. The Apostle Paul, in Rom. 12:2 (MKJV) writes, “ And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, in order to prove by you what is that good and pleasing and perfect will of God.” Barnes (E-sword, Rom. 12:2) asserts that while the word “mind” (νοῦς) properly denotes “intellect”, the meaning of the word in this context, means “understanding, will and affections”.

Paul could have said (in Romans 12:2), “Allow your *act structure* to be changed by the power of the God’s Word and the indwelling presence of His Holy Spirit so that you will continually make decisions that are conformable to the will of God.”

It is clear from Paul’s instruction that he assumes that his audience has the choice to be conformed *or not* to be conformed to the world, and to be renewed, *or not* to be renewed or transformed. Paul does not tell them to simply think differently, but to make choices that allows the right “structures of value” to influence their way of thinking.

Gill (e-sword, Rom. 12:2) holds that while the persons whom Paul addresses are already regenerated, and in this sense already transformed, they were instructed as was the Ephesian church, to be renewed in the “spirit of their minds” (Eph 4:23⁷⁴) through “attending to the spiritual exercises of religion, as reading, meditation, prayer, conference, the ministration of the word and ordinances, which is the reverse of conformity to the world”. This

⁷⁴ Eph 4:23 (MKJV) “and be renewed in the spirit of your mind.”

“renewing” of the mind is explained by Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown (e-sword, Eph. 4:23) asserting that, “the *Greek (ananeousthai)* implies ‘the continued renewal in the youth of the new man’”.

In 1 Samuel 10:6, we read about a transformation that took place in the life of Israel’s first king, Saul. It reads, (KJV) “And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.” This transformation is described by Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown (E-sword 1 Sam. 10:6) as that,

the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee — literally, “rush upon thee,” suddenly endowing thee with a capacity and disposition to act in a manner far superior to thy previous character and habits; and instead of the simplicity, ignorance, and sheepishness of a peasant, thou wilt display an energy, wisdom, and magnanimity worthy of a prince.

We learn the unfortunate truth in the life of Saul, that this condition of transformation was not maintained. Nee (1977:63,64) explains this regression in asserting that,

The reason the Christian’s mind is ineffective today is because it has not yet been renewed. Yet even once renewed, there is no guarantee that it may not again be harassed by the old mentality. If the Christian does not relentlessly oppose his traditional way of thinking he shall unconsciously turn back to it.

Crabb (1977:101) agrees with Nee and further emphasises human responsibility in exercising moral choice when he holds that, “The will is a real part of the human personality with the function of responsibly choosing to behave consistently with how the Bible teaches us to evaluate our world. And such choices are not always easy. It often involves teeth gritting effort to choose to behave as we should.” The author of Hebrews reprimands the young church of Jerusalem in Hebrews 12:4 (EMTV), saying “You have not yet resisted to the point of bloodshed, struggling against sin”.

Möller (personal communication January 7, 2015) holds that man can, as a spiritual being either choose to consciously submit himself to what has taken place in his spirit, due to his relationship with God and continue to live spiritually, or he could reject this experience and consciously distance himself from God. Insofar as this choice is not determined (causally or otherwise), it is “free”. It is, however, not exempt from the impulses of the flesh or, for that matter, the impulses of the Spirit of God.

The heart of man is man’s decisive instrument. This is evident from Scriptures such as, Acts 5:4c “Why have you purposed this thing in your heart? ...”, and Acts 7:39 “whom our fathers did not desire to be obedient, but they rejected *him* and returned in their heart back to Egypt”.

Lewis (2006:4) holds that, “The heart is the very seat of the morality of the person, the symbol of the inmost depth of the personality. All human conduct has its source in the decisions of the heart, where God’s word is heard.” He (2006:4) further contends that,

St. Paul especially developed the notion of conscience (*syneidesis*), using the categories derived from the Greek culture of his upbringing. In doing so, not only did he give us a definitive name for the reality expressed in the Old Testament and in the teachings of Jesus, but also spoke of the need to cultivate this living witness, advocate and judge in the human heart. In general Paul saw conscience not only as the practical judgment of the morality of a particular action but also as inner awareness of moral values necessarily presupposed as the foundation of such a judgment. In fact, Paul was more concerned with conscience as ‘awareness’ or ‘consciousness’ of moral value, although in the well-known passage in Romans 2:14f he describes both the nature and the functioning of conscience in all human persons. Of course, for Paul what was most important was Christian conscience, which he saw as intimately bound up with faith. For him there is a kind of identification between faith and conscience as consciousness of and capacity for living a new life in Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in the service of love.

The will of God must then be actively pursued. Regeneration does not mean that a person’s character is transformed. It means that he is saved, he is justified, positionally sanctified⁷⁵, and that the Holy Spirit now lives inside of him to guide him and lead him into all truth. It is a characteristic of the regenerate, that they are lead by the Spirit of God. Paul writes in Rom. 8:13-14 (ERV) “If you use your lives to do what your sinful selves want, you will die spiritually. But if you use the Spirit’s help to stop doing the wrong things you do with your body, you will have true life. (14) The true children of God are those who let God’s Spirit lead them”. Barnes (2012: E-sword) explains this verse by saying, “If you live to indulge your carnal propensities, you will sink to eternal death;” but that we must live through the Spirit, “by cherishing and cultivating his influences”.

Willard (2013:154) describes experiential sanctification as the process whereby the regenerate, in every aspect of their will, and specifically, “the ‘automatic’ inclinations and ‘readinesses’ of their body in action, the prevailing posture of their relations toward others” are transformed into the likeness of Christ. The “‘automatic’ inclinations and ‘readinesses’ of their body in action” refers to the limbic function or act structure where intentions are formulated. The act structure is “the immediate temporal expression of the human I-ness”. In other words, it is an expression of the personality and character of a person, and the measure into which our motives and desires are surrendered to the will of God.

Daane (1973:150-151) renders a profound explanation of what election really is when he writes that,

⁷⁵ Positional sanctification is a state of holiness or right standing of the regenerated saints before God, which results directly from, and is based upon the imputation of the righteousness and holiness of Christ.

Election in biblical thought is never a selection, a taking of this and a rejection of that out of multiple realities. To be sure, God began Israel with Abram from Ur of the Chaldees; and Jesus was born out of Israel according to the flesh; and the church emerged out of Jew and Gentile. But God brought life out of death. None of these was what it became through election. Election is always a creative act. In biblical thought, Israel, Christ and the church are not existing realities that God selectively chooses out of a number of extant Israels, Christs, or churches. Israel, Christ, and the church exist only because each is elected by God. They are created by the dynamics of election, for they are what they are only by virtue of their election. The church would not be the church apart from its election. It might be a social club or a community of shared religious views, but it would not be the church. Because election is always in this sense exclusive and unique, there is only one Israel, one Christ, and one church. If there were more than one of each, God's election would in each case be arbitrary, and God's election is never arbitrary. What God elects he creates, and he does so for a purpose. Consequently, the election of each is a call to service, a summons to be a co-laborer with God in the actualization of God's elective purpose and goal. For this reason all forms of God's election are profoundly historical and eschatological. The election of Israel was not an end in itself. The election of Christ was not an end in itself—hence his servant form and service. And the election of the church is not an end in itself, for it must preach the gospel to all nations and every creature, making known to the principalities and powers of the heavenly places God's eternal purpose in Christ, and provoking unbelieving Israel to such jealousy as will arouse its passion to repossess its inheritance, its election, its Christ.

6.4 A UNIQUE MODEL OF ELECTION FOR PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY

Election as a divine act of God must not be interpreted in terms of what we generally understand as “selecting” one or the other object from among others. The context of the use of the term has bearing on the meaning and more specifically, what is implied by being elected. The term election does not always apply to salvation, and it never applies to God selecting some of his creation for salvation and others for damnation. It has, in some instances, the connotation of a specific purpose such as service or position. Daane (1973:150-151) renders a profound explanation of what election really is when he writes that,

Election in biblical thought is never a selection, a taking of this and a rejection of that out of multiple realities. To be sure, God began Israel with Abram from Ur of the Chaldees; and Jesus was born out of Israel according to the flesh; and the church emerged out of Jew and Gentile. But God brought life out of death. None of these was what it became through election. Election is always a creative act. In biblical thought, Israel, Christ and the church are not existing realities that God selectively chooses out of a number of extant Israels, Christs, or churches. Israel, Christ, and the church exist only because each is elected by God. They are created by the dynamics of election, for they are what they are only by virtue of their election. The church would not be the church apart from its election. It might be a social club or a community of shared religious views, but it would not be the church. Because election is always in this sense exclusive and unique, there is only one Israel, one Christ, and one church. If there were more than one of each, God's election would in each case be arbitrary, and God's election is never arbitrary. What God elects he creates, and he does so for a purpose. Consequently, the election of each is a call to service, a summons to be a co-laborer with God in the actualization of God's elective purpose and goal. For this reason all forms of God's election are profoundly historical and eschatological. The election of Israel was not an end in itself. The election of Christ was not an end in itself—hence his servant form and service. And the election of the church is not an end in itself, for it must preach the gospel to all nations and every creature, making known to the principalities and powers of the heavenly places God's eternal purpose in Christ, and provoking unbelieving Israel to such jealousy as will arouse its passion to repossess its inheritance, its election, its Christ.

Daane, although being a Calvinist, gives us an explanation of election that corresponds to Barth's model of election in Christ, he avoids determinism and decretal theology, and still allows God to sovereignly elect all men to service. He further allows for the election to be universal, without it leading to a notion of universal salvation. This view allows the gospel to be preached to all men, and for faith to be a prerequisite for the appropriation of salvation.

6.4.1 The election of Israel

God's calling of Israel as a nation was for the purpose of providing the Saviour for all nations (Williams, 1953:214), and not specifically unto their salvation, since He also expected from them to believe in Him in order *to become* elected in terms of salvation. In other words, the election of Israel as a nation did not automatically constitute "salvation", although it was part of God's plan.

God's purpose for blessing Abraham and his seed cannot be seen in isolation as pertaining solely to the nation of Israel. God's promise to Abraham was fulfilled in more than one way, but specifically in terms of being a blessing to all nations (Gal. 3:5⁷⁶). The promise to Abraham that the Messiah would come out of his descendants implied that the nation of Israel would have been secured until this promise of God was fulfilled. Although Israel endured as a nation, all the Israelites whom Moses lead out of Egypt, apart from Joshua and Caleb, died in the wilderness because of their unbelief. This was in spite of the fact that they were the chosen nation (Heb. 3:16-19). God's blessing of Abraham and the nation of Israel must be understood in the context of the eternal purpose of God's plan of salvation for man and the fulfilment of the promise of Gen. 3:15.

God prepared the way for the Messiah through the elected nation of Israel. The Messiah, the Mediator between man and God, and the Lamb "slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8), would step from eternity into our world, at the right time. The blessing came to all nations as salvation made possible through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ as the "Lamb" who took away the sins of the world (John 1:29).

⁷⁶ Gal. 3:8 (KJV) "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."

The institution of the feast of the Passover, before God brought Israel out of Egypt as a nation, reflects the purpose of God's dealing with Israel. Salvation came *through* Israel, but not solely *for* Israel. Paul, in Gal. 3:16 (LITV), pertinently states that the blessing of Abraham was promised to Israel as a nation, but it was directed specifically to Christ; "But the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his Seed.⁷⁷ It does not say, and to seeds, as of many, but as of one, 'and to your Seed,' which is Christ". Other Scriptures that are applicable to Paul's statement are, Gen. 3:15; 21:12; 22:18, Rom. 9:6; and Heb. 11:18. McDonald (2010:107), therefore, correctly comments that,

The consequence of acknowledging Christ as Israel's representative Messiah is therefore that the boundaries of the elect people of God must be redrawn. It is those who through the Spirit by faith, "belong to"/are "in"/have "put on" Christ who alone belongs to the family that shares in the promises of Abraham".

6.4.2 Election for service

Many people were called, or elected for a specific task. We see the election of the Levites from all the other tribes of Israel as an example of people whom God elected for a particular calling or service (Deut. 18:1-5). They were the "chosen" *of the* "chosen". They were chosen from Israel, who was already the chosen nation of God. The Levites were specially chosen by God as the tribe to perform a specific priestly ministry.

Where Calvinism implies that God's unconditional election of a person guarantees that he will in the end be saved (election guarantees eternal security), the Levites' very special election for service, did not mean that they were unconditionally saved. They were no more immune to sin and corruption than all the other tribes of Israel, and some of these people, such as the sons of Eli lived godless lives, and died in their sinful state (1 Sam 3:13).

God also chose or "elected" certain men for service such as the Old Testament Prophets and Kings. Some who were chosen by God for a specific service, died in sin such as Saul (1 Ch.

⁷⁷ Gen. 22:18 (KJV) "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed..."

10:13⁷⁸), and Jehu (2 Kings 10:31⁷⁹). The twelve disciples (who were individually elected) were also chosen for a specific task, and yet, Judas was called ‘the son of perdition’ (John 17:12). God’s election for service does, therefore, also not guarantee salvation. Many who were called by God, and were mightily used by God, failed to persevere in faith and finally died in their sin (Heb. 6:4-6).

6.4.3 The unique character of the Pentecostal model of Election

Pentecostalism is synonymous with certain beliefs about the Holy Spirit, specifically the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues, the gifts, and a unique understanding and expectation of the manifested presence of God. Pentecostal theology, however, is Christocentric and is in essence Christological instead of Pneumatological. We say that Pentecostal theology is Christocentric, because Pentecostal theology is written from the hermeneutical paradigm of Christ being the Saviour, Healer, Baptiser with the Holy Spirit, and the soon coming King. Dooyeweerd (1969:191) is correct when he contends that,

It is only in Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word and Redeemer that the image of God has been restored in the religious centre of human nature. The redemption of Jesus Christ in its radical Biblical sense, means the rebirth of our *heart* and must reveal itself in the whole of our temporal life. And this Biblical self-knowledge implies that our whole world and life view must be reformed in a Christo-centric sense.

The doctrine of election, formulated from a Pentecostal perspective, must therefore be Christocentric. It must also be reconcilable to the character of God as revealed to us in Scripture. Pecota (1995:329) holds that, “the redemptive drama has its backdrop in the character of God and the nature of his human creation”. Apart from the dialogical interaction between the “authority of Scripture and the lived Pentecostal experience” (Oliverio, 2012:316), it also needs to embody and reflect the importance of encounter as a philosophical and hermeneutical principal of Pentecostal theology. It is finally also required that this doctrine of election must accommodate and reconcile the sovereignty of God and human responsibility.

⁷⁸ 1Ch 10:13 (KJV) “So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, *even* against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking *counsel* of *one that had* a familiar spirit, to enquire *of it*.”

⁷⁹ 2Ki 10:31 (KJV) “But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin.”

6.4.4 The Pentecostal doctrine of Election and Barth

From within the Reformed tradition of faith, Barth stands out with a unique perspective on election when he holds that Christ is the Elect of God. This concept is supported by Scripture (Eph. 1:4; 2Tim. 1:9) as well as the Reformed confessional statements of faith (*BCF*, [1561] 2016: article 16; *COD*, [1619] 2011: 1.7).

Van Genderen and Velema (2008:222) hold that, “Of all recent views on election, Barth’s is the most prominent and influential”. Barth agrees with the Reformed tradition, concerning the doctrine of election, that God’s sovereignty is not influenced or conditioned by human will or actions. Where his interpretation of this doctrine is different from the Reformed tradition, is that he believes that God is not impeded by an eternal decree and his freedom and ability is not constrained to interact with His creatures.

Barth criticizes the traditional Reformed interpretation of this doctrine by contending that, the absolute decree (*decretum absolutum*) makes the gospel unpreachable (O’ Neil: 2004:312). Biggar (2000:212) in commenting on the work of Barth, contends that, “The best way to grasp the driving convictions of someone’s thought is often to identify what he is thinking against. When understood as a response, assertions that initially appeared abstract and anaemic now acquire vital significance”. With this concept that Christ is the Elect of God, he steps away from the traditional premise of the absolute, eternal decree and eternal reprobation.

Barth interpreted Eph.1:4 to mean that we were chosen in Christ in eternity. Christ is God and man, and is both the subject and object of election. This interpretation of the doctrine of election is described as “self-election” or “self-determination” of God. God chose, and He chose all men in Christ (Carson, 1994:215). Carson (1994:216) comments on Barth’s interpretation of this verse saying that, “This either means absolute universalism, or the hesitant admission that some may opt out.” One can understand that Carson, from a perspective of limited atonement, has some difficulties with Barth’s views.

Since Barth approaches this doctrine from epistemological foundation of God’s revelation to ontology and from time to eternity, and not the other way around. There is, therefore, no place for an abstract philosophical idea of an absolute decree that governs actions and events in time. He believes that the will of God is demonstrated in the revelation of Jesus

Christ and that there is no revelation outside of Christ, and O' Neil (2004:312) is correct to say that, "there is no such thing as a will of God apart from the will of Christ".

Through the lenses of Pentecostal theology, it seems fairly simple since Pentecostals view the atonement and provision for salvation to be universal and the appropriation of salvation qualified by the prerequisite of repentance and faith. Möller (1997:82), in agreement with Barth contends that, "Election as an act of God must be seen first and foremost, as a form of His self-revelation through Jesus Christ". Möller (1997:82) elaborates on his argument that Christ is "the Elect of God" and asserts that, "In His Son, God ordained that we be accepted as His children, that is to say, that our status as children is realised through the status of Jesus as the Son".

While one would expect to see a stronger correlation between the Pentecostal model of election and Arminianism, than Calvinism, the Pentecostal model of election has more similarities with Barth, than with any Arminian theologian. Because Pentecostalism is still evolving and growing into its own shoes as a manner of speaking, some of the earlier writers of Pentecostal theology borrowed from Arminian theology, and sometimes even from Reformed theology in the construction of their arguments. A lot depended on the denominational roots and the subjective theological assumptions that were inherited from the denominational roots.

Webster (2000:1) holds that, "Barth is the most important Protestant theologian since Schleiermacher, and the extraordinary depth of his depiction of the Christian faith puts him in the company of a handful of thinkers in the classical Christian tradition". One of the significant aspects of Barth's doctrine of election that corresponds to that of Pentecostal theology lies in the assertion that the divine predestination is the election of Jesus Christ. O'Neil (2004:313,314) holds that,

This simple phrase, however, is at once a statement of divine ontology and an epistemological claim. First, it signifies that before election has a human referent it refers to God's eternal and unconditional act of self determination, in which he ordained himself to be God-for-humanity in the person and under the name of Jesus Christ. Election is firstly and primarily about God. In his eternal existence as the triune God, before the existence of any reality other than his own being, God determined that 'the goal and meaning of all His dealings with the as-yet non-existent universe should be the fact that in His Son He would be gracious towards man, uniting Himself with him.

On this point, Pentecostal Theology must be distinguished from both Arminianism and Calvinism in that Pentecostals reject the scholastic abstract notion of the “decrees of God”. Pentecostals believe that election is a sovereign act of God in eternity. It is “God's eternal and unconditional act of self determination, in which he ordained himself to be God-for-humanity in the person and under the name of Jesus Christ” O’Neil (2004:313). With Barth, Pentecostals hold that Christ is the Elect of God. Christ is the One whom God loves and in whom He is well pleased (Mat. 3:7). Christ is unconditionally elected by God in eternity. Man’s election can only be understood in terms of the election of Christ. God elected (*exelecato*) us in Christ (Eph. 1:4) (Möller, 1997:82).

Van Genderen and Velema (2008:223) hold that, “Those who reject the classical doctrine of predestination usually defend man’s freedom to choose...But according to Barth it is not a question of God and man jointly deciding”. Barth herewith retains the Biblical concept of a sovereign election in eternity. Since election is an act performed by God in eternity, we should not attempt to describe it in terms of our understanding in time. Möller, (1997:80) holds that, “God in his external existence and council cannot summarily be hitched to our spatio-temporal existence as if He exists in the same dimension as the creation”. Eternity is not a “time” before time, a dimension that encompasses time. O’Neil (2004:314) quotes McCormac who contends that, “If election is an eternal decision, then it has never not taken place”. O’Neil (2004:314) further holds that,

The material content of Barth's doctrine is further disclosed in this same phrase: 'the divine predestination is the election of Jesus Christ.' In this assertion Barth intends that the genitive be understood as both subjective and objective: that is, Jesus Christ is both the Subject and the Object of election, both Elector and Elected, the electing God and the elected person. These two activities are not to be seen as equivalent, however. It is as the Son of the Father, and in unity with both the Father and the Spirit as the one triune God, that Jesus Christ is electing God, while as the elect person, he alone of Barth asserts that as elected man He does not stand alongside the rest of the elect, but before and above them as the One who is originally and properly the Elect. From the very beginning (from eternity itself), there are no other elect together with or apart from Him, but, as Eph. 1:4 tells us, only 'in' Him .. .' In Him' means in His person, in His will, in His own divine choice, in the basic decision of God which He fulfils over against every man.

6.4.5 Jesus Christ as the Elect of God

When we speak of Christ as the Elect of God, and our election in him, election in this sense of the word specifically pertains to salvation. In terms of being elected for salvation, it is important to take note that Jesus Christ is the One whom God elected. He is the Elect of God and we are elected in Him. De Smit (2014:[2]) asserts that “He is the *axis mundi*, the centre of God’s redemptive acts.” He is the One in Whom the Father is well pleased (Mat. 3:17; 12:8). Election is not based on or in by any means dependent on any merit that can be ascribed to man.

There are several other Scriptures that confirm the fact that Christ is the Elect of God such as Isa. 42:1 (LITV) that reads, “Behold My Servant; I will uphold Him; My Elect *in whom* My soul delights! ...” It is conformed in Mat.12:17-21⁸⁰ that Isaiah was speaking about Christ. In the New Testament we read that the rulers of the Jews understood that Christ, as the Messiah, was the Elect of God when they said in Luke 23:35 (LITV) “... let Him save Himself, if this One is the Christ, the Elect of God”.

It is from the context of these Scriptures that we must interpret Scriptures such as Ephesians 1:3-14, where the expression “in Christ”, appears twelve times. Ephesians 1:4-5; 2:8 (NIV), which is certainly one of the most important Scriptures concerning the doctrine of election speaks specifically of our election “in Christ”, and states that,

For he chose us *in him* before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will....For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and it is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God (Emphasis mine).

Möller (1997:83), as Pentecostal theologian, in concurrence with Barth, holds that “As one of the Divine Trinity, Christ is not only the Elect of God, but also the One who elects us (John 13:8; 15:16). Even more than that, He is the One through whom election is actualized. By this we do not mean to say that Christ stands in the service of the election, because in so doing, we would again revert to an abstract concept of election”.

6.4.6 Election and predestination

⁸⁰ Mat 12:17-21 (LITV) “So that might be fulfilled that spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, (18) “Behold My Child whom I chose, My Beloved, in whom My soul has delighted! I will put My Spirit on Him, and He will declare judgment to the nations. (19) He will not strive nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. (20) A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench, until He bring forth judgment to victory.” (21) “And the nations will hope in His name.”

Erasmus (1998:63) correctly describes the relationship between predestination and election by saying that, “Sometimes election is conditional, sometimes it is unconditional. Predestination is always unconditional. So, only when election is unconditional, can it really be synonymous with predestination”. He (1998:63) is also correct when he holds that, “Scripture does not support the idea that man is predestined to be saved, only that the saved are predestined to be conformed to Christ’s image (likeness) – Rom. 8:29-34”. Erasmus also implies that Scripture does not support the idea that some men are predestined to be reprobated. Predestination applies only to those who are already saved, in that they already are living by faith, and are predestined to become like Christ.

Möller (1997:82,83) with regards to our election in Christ, holds that “God’s election of man should not be seen as something abstract (decision, decree, plan, scheme, etc.) which must then be given substance in practice...We are elect in Christ just as we are also righteous, holy, and beloved in Him”. This means that Pentecostals part ways with Arminians and Calvinists in that Pentecostals, though this perspective break with the doctrine of predestination (as an eternal and everlasting decree). Pentecostals also distances themselves from the Arminian notion that couples election with the human will. Both the Arminian and Calvinistic approach employs an abstract concept of the election.

6.4.7 A model of redemptive soteriology applied

Pentecostals employ a model of *redemptive soteriology*. This means that, in Pentecostal theology, the Father, the Son and The Holy Spirit are involved in the salvation of man. The Spirit is not subordinate to Christ in the achievement of salvation. The redemptive work of Christ is achieved in and through the Spirit. Justification is therefore, a Christological and pneumatological act of God. From a redemptive soteriological perspective, “the gift of the Spirit is the essence of salvation”. The work of Christ and the Spirit is constitutive to the entire process of salvation (Studebaker, 2003:267 - 269).

Christ as the Elect of God is also the electing God. He is the way to salvation. Pentecostals believe that “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” John 3:16 (EMTV). Pentecostals also believe that Christ is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6), that He is the door of salvation and that the door is wide open. This does not in any way constitute universal

salvation, but it is available for whosoever will believe. While salvation is freely offered in Christ through grace alone, it can be appropriated by faith alone. Man cannot contribute to his salvation in any way. Faith is not meritorious, and it is not salvific, but is the condition for regeneration and a primary and necessary prerequisite for the appropriation and application of God's free provision of salvation. Faith is the outstretched hand of a beggar, it is the answer to the invitation, it is the opening of the door (Rev. 3:20).

6.4.8 The condition of faith

Pentecostals place a high premium on faith as a prerequisite for salvation, where Calvinists believe faith is a gift that follows regeneration. Pentecostals say that God loves the whole world and saves whosoever will *believe* in Him (John 3:16). Calvinists, according to the Westminster Confession article 3.2-3.5; (Walls and Dongel, 2004:121) hold that, "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death..." According to Calvinism, only those who are predestined to everlasting life are given the gift of faith.

Pentecostals link salvation to God's love for the world, rather than an unconditional election and selection of some to be saved for God's glory. The sacrifice of Christ's atoning death is a demonstration of His love rather than mainly serving the purpose of being a demonstration of God's glory. Paul, in Rom. 5:8 holds that God, "...demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." The term "election" is linked to love in four places namely,

- 1 Thess. 1:4 – "We know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you."
- Col. 3:12 – "As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved."
- Eph. 1:4-5 – "For he chose us in him before the creation of the world...in love he predestined us to be adopted..."
- 2 Thess. 2:13 – "We ought always to thank God for you brothers dearly loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you..."

The Calvinistic doctrine of predestination is totally at odds with the self-revelation of God through the incarnation of Jesus Christ and the witness of Scripture. In Calvinism, the desire of God to save all men (Eze.33:11; John 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 3:9)⁸¹ is compromised by the

⁸¹ Eze. 33:11 (LITV) "Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord Jehovah, I do not have delight in the death of the wicked, except in the wicked turning from his way, and so to live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! For why will you die, O house of Israel?"; John 3:16-17 (EMTV) "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not

doctrines of (double) predestination, unconditional election (and reprobation). Calvin (Inst. III, 21, 5) describes the doctrine of predestination by saying that,

By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death.

Unconditional election from the Calvinist perspective only means that there were no humanly influenced conditions. When Calvinists state that they believe in unconditional election, but say that God's choice of certain individuals rested in God's sovereign will, they make the condition for salvation "God's will". If there is "will" involved, there should be a reason, for if there is no reason, then the choice remains arbitrary.

Since God's election is an act of love, as demonstrated from the above Scriptures, it is not an arbitrary choice of God that would save some and exclude others, *also* loved by God (Pecota, 1995:356, 357). Pearlman (1995:270) correctly holds that, "The Scriptures do teach a predestination, but not that God predestinates some to eternal life and some to eternal suffering. He predestinates 'who so ever will' to be saved, and that plan is wide enough to include everybody who really wants to be saved".

In Arminianism, the sovereignty of God suffers when His "choice" to elect some for salvation is contingent on the wiles and decisions of men.

The model of election as held by Pentecostals, accommodates the sovereignty of God and His desire to save all men, as well as, man's opportunity to accept God's offer of salvation or to reject salvation by deliberately refusing to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be condemned to spending eternity without God. We can say this on the grounds of Scriptures such as John 16:8-9 (EMTV) where Jesus spoke about the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, saying, "And when He comes, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me". This Scripture refers to the rejection of Christ as the Messiah by the Jews, but it also has a more general connotation and also refers to the unbelief of the gentiles. Jesus, in giving the Great Commission to his disciples to

perish but have everlasting life. (17) For God did not send His Son into the world so that He might condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."; 2Pet. 3:9 (EMTV) "The Lord ... [is] not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

preach the gospel to all nations, also stated in Mark 16:16 (EMTV), “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that does not believe shall be condemned”.

Paul, in Romans 1:18-20, contends that the wrath of God is revealed to *all men* who, even with only the witness of nature did not believe in Him and are therefore without excuse. In other words, men are condemned not by divine decree, but by deliberately refusing to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

6.4.9 Elected in Christ

All spiritual blessings are found in Christ. One must therefore be “in Christ” to share in the spiritual blessing of salvation. We have been chosen “in Him” and predestined “in Him”. Christ is Himself the impelling, moving, and meritorious cause of election (Williams, 1953:216), and there is, in terms of salvation, no election outside or apart from Christ. The Bible is, in terms of salvation, not acquainted with a group of people who are already elected but not yet in Christ as implied by Calvinism. Pentecostal theologians Duffield and Van Cleave (1987:207) correctly hold that election is, “‘in Christ Jesus’, because He alone could provide the righteousness which man needed”, and “Having chosen his own ‘in Christ’, God was not looking at man in himself, but as he is in Christ. Those who were [are] chosen are those who were [are] in Christ.”

Duffield and Van Cleave (1987:208) are also correct to say that, “Those who are in Christ are [were] sinners who have believed in the redeeming blood of Christ, through which they have been united with Him as members of His body”, and “It is not man’s non-election that leads to eternal ruin; it is his sin and failure to accept Jesus Christ.

We must conclude that, we receive salvation through Jesus Christ, who is the Elect of God, which in turn, points to our election in Him. McDonald (2010:107) is correct to assert that, “elect”, where salvation is concerned, can only be those who are “already” in Christ, and that the idea that somebody can be part of the “elect” or be “elected”, and not be in Christ, is foreign to what the Bible teaches. In other words, Pentecostal theology rejects Calvinism’s viewpoint that someone may be elected without being saved. Election and salvation is determined by the relationship in which man finds himself to Christ. This is our focus in

embracing a Pentecostal model of election. To be elected means to be in the elected One, namely Christ.

Christ is the True Vine and we are elected by Him, to be in Him John 15:16 (EMTV) holds that, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain...” The question that we need to ask ourselves is not whether we are elected or not, but what is our relationship with Christ.

Möller (1997:83) holds that the Bible does not say, “‘strive so you can be elected’ or ‘Preach the gospel to people because there might be some hearing you who are elect.’” He holds that, “Election is, in the first instance, a matter concluded between God and his Son, and through his Son it also affects man. It is after all, through his Son that we attain salvation, which in turn points to election in Him”.

Being in Christ constitutes assurance of salvation, but the warning to persevere is also given in the same chapter, as Jesus warned in John 15:6 (EMTV) “If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out like a branch and dries up; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned.”

6.4.10 Responsibility to persevere

While Calvinists believe that it is God who unconditionally causes the regenerate to persevere, Pentecostals believe that the responsibility lies with man, and that a man can lose his salvation. As previously mentioned, Calvinists believe that man perseveres “on the condition” that he is elected. Unconditional election only means that there are no conditions that man can, or needs to fulfil, with regards to his own perseverance.

Pentecostals believe that assurance of salvation lies in Christ, and that they are kept by the power of God in Christ, as long as they remain in fellowship and relationship with Christ. Perseverance does not depend on faith or obedience, but it is through faith and obedience that we remain in fellowship and relationship with Christ. The danger of drifting away from Christ and neglecting salvation is very real as illustrated in Heb. 2:1,3, but the Scriptures affirm that we are kept by the power of God (1 Pet. 1:5).

It is important to note that just as man is not saved against his will, he is also not kept in salvation against his will. It is the will of God that all be saved (1 Tim. 2:4; John 3:16), yet some are not saved, and some that have been saved lose their salvation. They who received spiritual sight through regeneration can again be blinded by the deception of Satan and his evil forces. In the same way that man can resist the grace of God, and God's gracious call to salvation, he can choose to reject Christ, Christianity and salvation, turn his back on God and be eternally lost. Heb. 6:4-6 (EMTV) holds,

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and became partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and *the* powerful deeds of the age to come, and having fallen away, to renew *them* again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and hold Him up to contempt.

Clarke (2012: E-sword) comments on vs. 4 that, "The design of these solemn words is evidently, First, to show the Hebrews that apostasy from the highest degrees of grace was possible; and that those who were highest in the favor of God might sin against him, lose it, and perish everlastingly". He then continues with regards to verse 6,

If they shall fall away - Και παραπεσοντας And having fallen away. I can express my own mind on this translation nearly in the words of Dr. Macknight: "The participles φωτισθεντας, who were enlightened, γευσσαμενους, have tasted, and γενηθεντας, were made partakers, being aorists, are properly rendered by our translators in the past time; wherefore, παραπεσοντας, being an aorist, ought likewise to have been translated in the past time, Have fallen away. Nevertheless, our translators, following Beza, who without any authority from ancient MSS. has inserted in his version the word *si*, if, have rendered this clause, If they fall away, that this text might not appear to contradict the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. But as no translator should take upon him to add to or alter the Scriptures, for the sake of any favourite doctrine, I have translated παραπεσοντας in the past time, have fallen away, according to the true import of the word, as standing in connection with the other aorists in the preceding verses."

Dr. Macknight was a Calvinist, and he was a thorough scholar and an honest man; but, professing to give a translation of the epistle, he consulted not his creed but his candour. Had our translators, who were excellent and learned men, leaned less to their own peculiar creed in the present authorized version, the Church of Christ in this country would not have been agitated and torn as it has been with polemical divinity.

It appears from this, whatever sentiment may gain or lose by it, that there is a fearful possibility of falling away from the grace of God; and if this scripture did not say so, there are many that do say so. And were there no scripture express on this subject, the nature of the present state of man, which is a state of probation or trial, must necessarily imply it. Let him who most assuredly standeth, take heed lest he fall.

Scripture that confirms the warning of Heb. 6: 4-6, in Eze. 18:24 (LITV) where Ezekiel states,

But when the righteous turns from his righteousness and does injustice, according to all the abominations that the wicked do, he does, shall he live? All his righteousness that he has

done shall not be remembered in his treason that he has betrayed, and in his sin that he has sinned, in them he shall die.

Clarke (2014: E-sword) correctly comments,

Can a man who was once holy and pure fall away so as to perish everlastingly? Yes. For God says, "If he turn away from his righteousness;" not his self-righteousness, the gloss of theologians: for God never speaks of turning away from that, for, in his eyes, that is a nonentity ...O, how awful a termination of a life once distinguished for righteousness and true holiness! So then, God himself informs us that a righteous man may not only fall foully, but fall finally. But to such righteous persons the devil will ever preach, "Ye shall not surely die; ye shall be as God."

Perseverance in salvation is conditional upon a continued relationship with Jesus Christ. Someone who was once saved can fall away, backslide, and be eternally lost (John 15:5-6).

6.4.11 Can the hypothesis be proved?

The hypothesis stated in the beginning of this study suggests that a Pentecostal doctrine of election can be developed by evaluating the Arminian and Calvinistic interpretations, and appreciating the fact that elements of truth are found in both, a Christocentric paradigm reconciling the sovereignty of God and human responsibility can be established.

At the end of this study, after we have evaluated both the Calvinistic and Arminian interpretations of the doctrine of election, we can conclude that the hypothesis is credible and true in consideration of the following:

We agree with Calvinism, that God is the Subject and Initiator of election (element of truth), but Calvinism is problematic in that it does not accommodate the notion of human volition that implies responsibility and accountability about which the Bible is very clear (Rom. 14:12; 1 Pet. 4:5). Pfeffinger, in his development of Melancthon's theology was correct in his observation that man cannot be completely passive with regards to conversion and that there is a cause within man to react differently to the call of the gospel (Berkouwer, 1979:34).

Calvinism is problematic in its assumption that a person can exist in a state of being elected, but not yet saved. It also tends to restrict God's loving involvement with His children to an eternal decree which determines every action and decision of God and his creatures.

Arminianism rightly recognizes man as a moral being with responsibility and accountability for his choices (element of truth). This view is problematic in that it infringes on the sovereignty of God in implying that God's action, specifically with regards to the election, is dictated by human free will implying that man is free and God is restricted. Calvin is correct in objecting to the notion that the prescience of God was conditional to election (*Inst.* III, xxi, 5).

Calvinism and Arminianism both place election within time and describes eternity as a "time before time". Both the Arminian and the Calvinistic views are problematic, in that Arminianism places salvation before election, and Calvinism places election before salvation. What God does in the dimension of eternity cannot be defined in terms of the dimension of time, with its inevitable notion of cause and effect. Möller (1997:80) is correct to assert that, "God in his eternal existence and council cannot summarily be hitched to our spatio-temporal existence as if he exists in the same dimension as the creation". Both Calvinism and Arminianism also attempt to explain why some say "no" to God. While it is not revealed to us in Scripture we can conclude that the rejection of God's plan of salvation is a revelation of sin, and its blinding and binding power.

Pentecostals holding a Christocentric paradigm of election agree with Barth that Christ is the Elect of God. Election can only be understood as it is revealed in Scripture in terms of God's election of Christ and not a decretal scheme that stems from scholastic theology. To be elected means to be in Christ, and it is through Christ as the elect of God that we too become elect (Eph. 1:4). It is, therefore, not possible to first be elected and then to come to salvation (Calvinism) or visa versa (Arminianism). The Bible does not give us any indication of a group of people who are elected for salvation but not yet saved. In the Christocentric paradigm of Pentecostal theology, Christ is both the Subject and Object of God's eternal election.

Assurance of salvation is a very important aspect of Pentecostal theology, and this assurance is found in man's relationship with Christ, and not in a scheme of theology (1 John. 5:12). Möller (1997:93) correctly holds that, "salvation implies that man, by identifying in faith with Christ, participates in that which God intended for him in all eternity". The witness of the Holy Spirit confirms assurance of salvation to the hearts of the regenerated saints (Rom. 8:16). Salvation and perseverance are dependent on a continuous relationship with Christ as the Source of eternal life. Outside of and apart from Christ there is no salvation

and no perseverance. Salvation and perseverance are forfeited when the relationship with Christ is severed.

6.4.12 The main characteristics of the proposed Pentecostal model of Election

In summary we can then say that our Pentecostal model of election has specific characteristics and is in many ways different from Calvinism and Arminianism as proposed in the following statements:

- a. Election is, in the first instance, a matter concluded between God and his Son, and through his Son it also affects man. It is after all, through his Son that we attain salvation, which in turn points to election in Him.
- b. By observing Christ, we understand who and what God prefers. God's electing will is not something obscure to man but it is revealed in Christ as the Elect of God. To be elected means to be "in Christ". It is not possible to be elected, yet not be in Christ.
- c. Predestination according to the eternal decree of God (Calvinism) is rejected, as well as the idea that election is conditioned on the prescience of God (Arminianism).
- d. The foundation of election lies therein that God loves man in Christ. What God is for man, He is through Jesus Christ.
- e. In Christ as the Elect of God we are accepted as God's children, - our status as children is realised in the status of Jesus as the Son.
- f. The model of election as held by this proposal, accommodates the sovereignty and goodness of God and His desire to save all men, as well as the responsibility of man to either receive God's gift of salvation by faith, or to reject it.
- g. It allows for the gospel to be preached to all men as a *bona fide* offer of salvation.
- h. All who accept God's eternal plan of election receive salvation [in time] when they accept Christ, "God's Elect".
- i. Because election exists with God in eternity, salvation neither precedes election (Arminianism) nor follows election (Calvinism).
- j. In contrast to Calvinist theologians such as Bavinck (1908:421), Van Genderen and Velema (1992:216), Berkouwer (1955:155), and Berkhof (1953:114) Pentecostal theologians contend that God in Christ is the eternal Subject, Initiator and Object of election, and that He, with regards to the election, cannot be prescribed according to man's decisions and actions (Arminianism).
- k. With regards to salvation (actualised in time); It is God who enables man to be his fellow worker in this regard (Phil. 2:12) while the initial act of salvation does not emanate from man, but from God.

- l. God who created man as a willing being, does not put man's will aside when He calls him to salvation, but demands that he should believe in Him and repent from sin.
- m. It affirms that no man can of his own accord appropriate salvation; he can only accept God's grace when there is a working of the Holy Spirit in his heart enabling him.
- n. Why some men choose to reject the offered salvation is illogical and inexplicable. Here we are confronted with the mystery of sin.
- o. Assurance of salvation lies in Christ and not in man's own faith and exertion.
- p. It is possible to reject already received salvation, but why it happens we do not know.
- q. Believers are kept by the power of God in Christ, as long as they remain in fellowship and relationship with Christ. The foundation of perseverance is God himself, and is related to the believer's continual relationship with Him.

6.4.13 Conclusion

The story of salvation is revealed through God's revelation to us in Genesis. God's promise of redemption is found in Gen. 3:15⁸². Scofield (2012:E-sword) holds that, "The chain of references which begins here includes the promises and prophecies concerning Christ which were fulfilled in His birth and works at His first advent."

The story of salvation did however, not end with the history of Christ's life on earth. It is a partial fulfilment of God's plan of salvation manifested in time. Salvation is an ongoing story, a story in which we all have a role to play. We are commanded to be witnesses of the grace of God. We must proclaim it so that all may hear it. We have a promise that Christ will be with us to the end of the world (Mat. 28:20) until the final manifestation of salvation when the redemption of our bodies will take place (Rom. 8:23). Regenerated man, through the process of progressive sanctification willingly submits his thoughts, desires, and ambitions to the will of God – man's will is engaged in the process. The regenerate continues to struggle with sinful thoughts and desires, which means that the sinful and corrupted nature has not been replaced by a new nature. We have an eager expectation that we shall one day be freed from this body of sin. Redeemed from the flesh, we will be like Christ - this is our future and our hope (Tit 1:2; 2:13).

⁸² Gen 3:15 (MKJV) "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He will bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."

Fowler (1998:184) holds that, “The extent of our capability for appreciation and expression of the divine life is developed in the present. As we are “being saved” (1 Cor. 1:18), being “filled with the Spirit” (Eph.5:18), and “growing in the grace of the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18). We are living the story of salvation, and it is being realised in us and through us as we yield ourselves to Christ, and are being transformed into His image. Wuest gives an accurate translation of Ephesians 2:7-10,

For by the grace have you been saved in time passed completely, through faith, with the result that your salvation persists through present time; and this [salvation] is not from you as a source; of God it is the gift, not from a source of works, in order that no one might boast; for we are His handiwork, created in Christ Jesus with the view to good works which God prepared beforehand in order that within this sphere we may order our behaviour. (Wuest, 1961:451)

In holding to the ecumenical-Pentecostal hermeneutical paradigm⁸³ as intimated in chapter one, the *Progressive Classical Pentecostal* model of election is summarised and evaluated in relation to the TULIP system. The Tulip system serves as context for the evaluation of the Calvinistic and Arminian models of election in earlier chapters of this thesis. The conclusion of this research, which promised to formulate a Pentecostal doctrine of election is condensed in appendix A, as what can be seen as the “five points of Pentecostalism”.

Dooyeweerd’s act structure serves Pentecostal Theology well as a philosophical model to describe human responsibility and the concept of “free will” in relation to God’s sovereignty. Recent neuroscientific research challenges many of our preconceived ideas with regards to the area of free choices but it confirms the fact that our choices are not predetermined and that we will one day give account to God for our choice to either accept or reject salvation in Christ as the Elect of God.

7 List of References

⁸³ The ecumenical-Pentecostal Hermeneutic seeks to “interpret God, themselves and their world in relation to other theologies coming from the wider Christian *oikumene*, yet still as Pentecostals...and to theologically contribute a Pentecostal voice to the broader world of Christian theology” (Oliverio, 2012:251).

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APPENDIX A

THE PENTECOSTAL DOCTRINE OF ELECTION FORMULATED AND COMPARED WITH THE FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM AND ARMINIANISM
TOTAL DEPRAVITY v/s HUMAN ABILITY

	CALVINISM (Steele & Thomas, 1963:16) Because of the Fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the gospel.	ARMINIANISM (Steele & Thomas, 1963:16).	PENTECOSTALISM Man cannot choose God by his own volition and be saved. Man can, however, when aided by prevenient grace and drawn to Christ by the Holy Spirit, answer the call of salvation by the competency of his will, and appropriate salvation through repentance and faith in spite of his depraved nature.
I	The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt.	Although human nature was seriously affected by the Fall, man has not been left in a state of total spiritual helplessness. God graciously enables every sinner to repent and believe, but He does so in such a manner as not to interfere with man's freedom.	Through the Fall, the divine moral image was marred in man, but not destroyed. There remains a certain sense of dignity, a fundamental moral conscience, and consciousness of self and of God in every human being however distorted. Any, and every sinner, when under the conviction of the Holy Spirit and aided by the resistible divine grace of God, is able to believe the gospel, place his faith in Jesus Christ, and be saved.
II	His will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature, therefore, he will not-indeed he cannot choose good over evil in the spiritual realm.	Each sinner possesses a free will, and his eternal destiny depends on how he uses it. Man's freedom consists of his ability to choose good over evil in spiritual matters; his will is not enslaved by his sinful nature.	The sinner is spiritually helpless, self-centred and self-indulgent and his understanding is darkened so that he cannot perceive divine realities apart from Divine grace. Man is, however, confronted with the obligation and responsibility of choice, and right from the beginning of time, he suffers or enjoys the consequences of that choice.
III	Consequently it takes much more than the Spirit's assistance to bring a sinner to Christ-it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature.	The sinner has the power to either cooperate with God's Spirit and be regenerated or resist God's grace and perish.	A sinner's will is not enslaved by his sinful nature and freedom of choice was not terminated by the Fall. His actions are not determined or coerced by God. Man chooses as freely as Adam did, but he chooses wrongly, because of his corrupted nature.
IV	IV. Faith is not something that man contributes to salvation but is itself a part of God's gift of salvation - it is God's gift to the sinner, not the sinner's gift to God.	The lost sinner needs the Spirit's assistance, but he does not have to be regenerated by the Spirit before he can believe, for faith is man's act and precedes the new birth. Faith is the sinner's gift to God; it is man's contribution to salvation	Faith is not meritorious and it is not salvific, but it is the condition for regeneration and a primary and necessary prerequisite for the appropriation of God's free provision of salvation. Faith is the outstretched hand of a beggar, it is the answer to the invitation, it is the opening of the door (Rev. 3:20). A sinner can, therefore, not be regenerated by the Spirit before he believes, for faith is a condition for regeneration and a primary and necessary prerequisite for salvation.

UNCONDITIONAL v/s CONDITIONAL ELECTION			
	CALVINISM (Steele & Thomas, 1963:16) God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world rested solely in His own sovereign will.	ARMINIANISM (Steele & Thomas, 1963:16).	PENTECOSTALISM Election, from a Biblical perspective, is always a creative act. It is never a selection, a taking of this and a rejection of that out of multiple realities. God in Christ is the eternal Subject, Initiator and Object of election, and cannot be prescribed according to man's decisions and actions. The foundation of election lies therein that God loves man in Christ. What God is for man, He is through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is Himself the Elect of God. The initial act of salvation does not emanate from man, but from God.
I	His choice of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response or obedience on their part, such as faith, repentance, etc.	God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world was based on His foreseeing that they would respond to His call.	Because the origin of election exists in eternity, salvation neither precedes election (Arminianism) nor follows election (Calvinism). Election is, in the first instance, a matter concluded between God and his Son, and through his Son it also affects man. We attain salvation through Him, which in turn points to us being elected in Him.
II	On the contrary, God gives faith and repentance to each individual whom He selected.	He selected only those whom He knew would of themselves freely believe the gospel.	The act of faith is a human response to a divine command. Each sinner, under the conviction of, and aided by the Holy Spirit, is free to choose his eternal destiny; he either puts his faith in Christ as Saviour or reject Christ, the Elect of God, and faces eternal damnation. Christ's redemptive act of propitiation becomes ours through our relation to Him through faith. While God makes faith possible, it is still man's responsibility to believe. It is God who enables man to be his fellow worker in this regard.
III	These acts are the result, not the cause of God's choice.	Election therefore was determined by or conditioned upon what man would do.	Election and salvation is realised or lost in time when we choose to either accept, or reject Christ as the Elect of God. Since Christ is the Elect of God, and all men are elected in Christ, it follows that, Salvation is, therefore, not 'something' which man receives, but Someone. Salvation, and election are determined by the relationship man finds himself to Christ.
IV	Election therefore was not determined by or conditioned upon any virtuous quality or act foreseen in man.	The faith which God foresaw and upon which He based His choice was not given to the sinner by God (it was not created by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit) but	While salvation is conditional to, and appropriated by faith, faith is in itself not meritorious. Justification by faith is in the New Testament described as <i>dia pisteos</i> "through faith" and never, <i>dia pistin</i> "on account of faith". Salvation, as a gift from God is,

		resulted solely from man's will.	therefore, freely received <i>through</i> faith.
V	Those whom God sovereignly elected He brings through the power of the Spirit to a willing acceptance of Christ.	It was left entirely up to man as to who would believe and therefore as to who would be elected unto salvation.	God does not determine man's response to the call of salvation or coerce man in making the fateful decision between eternal life and eternal damnation. The sinner under conviction of the Holy Spirit, and aided by divine grace, freely chooses to accept or reject Christ as personal Saviour.
VI	Thus God's choice of the sinner, not the sinner's choice of Christ, in the ultimate cause of salvation.	God chose those whom He knew would, of their own free will, choose Christ. Thus the sinner's choice of Christ, not God's choice of the sinner, is the ultimate cause of salvation	Salvation does not simply result from God's election of the sinner. Salvation is made possible by the universal atonement of the sacrificial death of Christ by grace alone, and efficiently appropriated through faith alone by who so ever will respond in faith to the offer of salvation in Christ as the Elect of God. The Bible clearly teaches that men are responsible for believing unto salvation.
LIMITED ATONEMENT v/s UNLIMITED ATONEMENT			
	CALVINISM (Steele & Thomas, 1963:16) Christ's redeeming work was intended to save the elect only and actually secured salvation for them.	ARMINIANISM (Steele & Thomas, 1963:16).	PENTECOSTALISM Christ's atonement is universal in its provision, but it does not in any way constitute universal salvation, since it is limited in its application to those who <i>choose to</i> believe.
I	His death was a substitutionary endurance of the penalty of sin in the place of certain specified sinners .	Christ's redeeming work made it possible for everyone to be saved but did not actually secure salvation of anyone.	Christ's atonement is a completed transaction. It is a perfect work to provisionally provide salvation for the whole world, but conditionally limited to those who willingly accept Christ as their personal Saviour.
II	In addition to putting away the sins of His people, Christ's redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation , including faith which unites them to Him.	Although Christ died for all men and for every man, only those who believe in Him are saved. His death enabled God to pardon sinners on the condition that they believe, but it did not actually put away anyone's sins.	Christ died for all men and for every man. Salvation is in its provision sufficiently available to all, but efficiently limited in its application to those who believe. All who accept God's eternal plan of election receive salvation [in time] because they accept Christ, "God's Elect".
III	The gift of faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died, thereby guaranteeing their salvation (Steele & Thomas, 1963:18).	Christ's redemption becomes effective only if man chooses to accept	The act of faith (as a prerequisite for salvation) is not a gift, but a command. As the first sin was committed through disobedience, so salvation comes when man (aided by divine grace) acts in obedience to the command to repent and believe. A model of <i>redemptive soteriology</i> is employed which implies that, the Father, the Son and The Holy Spirit are involved in the salvation of man. The Spirit is not

			subordinate to Christ in the achievement of salvation and the redemptive work of Christ is achieved in and through the Spirit. Justification is therefore, a Christological and pneumatological act of God.
IRRESISTIBLE GRACE v/s RESISTIBLE GRACE			
	CALVINISM (Steele & Thomas,1963:16)	ARMINIANISM (Steele & Thomas,1963:16).	PENTECOSTALISM
I	In addition to the outward general call to salvation which is made to everyone who hears the gospel, the Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call which inevitably brings them to salvation.	The Spirit calls inwardly all those who are outwardly by the Gospel invitation; He does all that He can to bring every sinner to salvation.	The saving grace of God is extended to all men. But some, even under conviction of the Holy Spirit, and drawn by the grace of God, still choose to resist the grace of God and reject the offer of salvation.
II	The external call (which is made to all without distinction) can be, and often is, rejected; whereas the internal call (which is made only to the elect) cannot be rejected; it always results in conversion.	But inasmuch as man is free, he can successfully resist the Spirit's call.	God in His sovereignty is the Subject, initiator, source, and power who enables man to say 'yes'. Why some say "no" is shrouded in mystery, but it affirms the blinding power of sin. Man's "no" is related to the mystery of sin. The tragedy of the incarnation is that Christ, the Logos of God and the Light of men, is rejected by some, but its purpose is realised in those who believe in His Name and become children of God.
III	By means of this special call the Spirit irresistibly draws sinner to Christ.	The Holy Spirit can only draw to Christ those who allow Him to have His way with them.	Man's choice, as a moral agent, is not determined or coerced by God. Man's salvation is conditioned upon his acceptance or rejection of the offer of salvation, not on God's (unconditional) election of man. If it was based on God's choice, all would be saved since it is not the will of God that any should perish.
IV	He is not limited in His work of applying salvation by man's will, nor is He dependant on man's cooperation for success.	The Spirit cannot regenerate the sinner until he believes; faith (which is man's contribution) precedes and makes possible the new birth. Thus, man's free will limits the Spirit in the application of Christ's saving work.	God, as loving Creator, sovereignly placed the whole world in a particular relation to Himself in order for the gospel to be preached as a free invitation to all men. God in his sovereignty gives man the responsibility to say "yes", but He does not determine his will to make that decision. Man is held accountable for his decision when he chooses (against God's will) to say "no", and he must therefore, bear the consequences.
V	The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ.	Until the sinner responds, the Spirit cannot give life.	It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convict man of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement. It is not the work of the Spirit to forcibly cause men to believe. Our sovereign, loving Creator

			desires that men respond to Him in love and not by compulsion. Salvation is, therefore, a personal choice for which we are held accountable.
VI	God's grace, therefore, is invincible; it never fails to result in the salvation of those to whom it is extended	God's grace, therefore, is not invincible; it can be, and often is, resisted and thwarted by man	God does not save anyone without their consent. If grace was invincible, it would cease to be grace. The provision for salvation is solely achieved through God's initiative, but the appropriation of salvation requires a wilful human response of faith and repentance to the "drawing grace" of God. It is possible to reject salvation, but why it happens we do not know – it is a revelation of sin.
UNCONDITIONAL PERSEVERANCE v/s CONDITIONAL PERSEVERANCE			
	CALVINISM (Steele & Thomas,1963:16)	ARMINIANISM (Steele & Thomas,1963:16)	PENTECOSTALISM
I	All those who were chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Spirit are eternally saved. They are kept in faith by the power of Almighty God and thus persevere to the end (Steele & Thomas, 1963:19)	Those who believe and are truly saved can lose their salvation by failing to keep up their faith, etc.	Assurance of salvation lies in Christ and not in man's own faith and exertion or in a one-time event. Perseverance in salvation is conditional upon a continued relationship with Jesus Christ. Someone who was once saved can fall away, backslide, and be eternally lost.