CHAPTER 4

BIBLICAL AND HISTORICAL SPIRITUALITY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter 3, the research context was described and interpreted and questions were formulated. In this chapter, the normative Christian text, that is, the Scriptures and Christian traditions will bring in a framework that can be used to look at the current praxis. This is Don Browning's next movement of practical theology: that is, a movement from descriptive theology and its formation of questions back to historical theology with the question of "What do the normative texts that are already part of our effective history really imply for our praxis as honestly as possible?" (Browning 1991:49). It is to understand what the text and the tradition say in the present context. To be precise, I will present biblical and historical dimensions of spirituality with a view to understanding the spirituality of Kenyan pastors. Schneiders (1998:3) says that the scriptures and the history of Christianity "supply the positive data of Christian religious experience as well as its norm and hermeneutical context."

4.2 BIBLICAL SPIRITUALITY

The term "spirituality" encompasses both Christian and non-Christian spiritualities. Christian spirituality treats specifically "Christian" spirituality as seen in chapter one, and it is essentially biblical. Bowe (2003:11) contends:

> In some sense, for a Christian, all spirituality is fundamentally *biblical.* The life of faith of Christians has been and continues to be inspired and nourished by the encounter with the God mediated by the Scriptures….In short, our faith, our spirituality, is *biblical* because through the Scriptures we are schooled in the ways of the biblical God.

Schneiders (2002: 134-136) distinguishes three meanings of the biblical spirituality. The first is biblical spirituality as the "spiritualities that come to expression in the Bible and witness to patterns of relationship with God that

instruct and encourage our own religious experience." Schneiders (2002:135) explains:

> We find in the Bible a variety of biblical spiritualities: the dialogical spirituality of the deuteronomistic tradition in which God intervenes directly and participates in Israel's history, the profoundly Christocentric spirituality of Paul, the contemplative Jesus-centred spirituality of John, the ecclesiastical spirituality of the pastorals, the apocalyptic spirituality of Revelation. In the Psalms we find expressed in prayer and poetry the full range of Old Testament spiritualities that have been practiced by Christians in the light of the mystery of Christ.

The second meaning of biblical spirituality is "a pattern of Christian life deeply imbued with the spirituality(ies) of the Bible and the third meaning as "a transformative process of personal and communal engagement with the biblical text." These second and third meanings of biblical spirituality are rather contemporary expressions of biblical spirituality. In this chapter I will focus on the first meaning of biblical spirituality, that is, the spiritualities that come to be expressed in the Bible which instruct our own religious experience.

Regarding the transformative process of biblical spirituality, Donahue (2006:83-85), following Schneiders, argues for a faithful reading of the text in its original context and turning to appropriation and transformation based on the contemporary hermeneutic theory of Georg Gadamar and Paul Ricoeur. According to Ricoeur, the process of interpretation starts with a "naïve grasping of the meaning of the text as a whole" moving to the explanation of the text through the historical-critical method, culminating in a "second naiveté" (Schneiders' term), that is, an informed explanation of the text. However, the meaning of the text is not limited to the intention of the original author but engenders a new self-understanding through the process of appropriation in a dialectical relationship between authorial intention and subsequent meaning. Schneiders (2002:137-141) claims that true transformation is delayed until a faith community responds to the preached word and liturgy and is committed to transformative action. Therefore, Biblical

spirituality is focused on descriptive studies of biblical texts, issues of hermeneutics and appropriation, and furthermore transformation.

4.2.1 Old Testament spirituality

It may be the case that historical traditions of spiritual life and theological treatises serve as a focal point of Christian spirituality, but omitting the Old Testament is a serious mistake. The Old Testament is an essence of and a rich source for Christian spirituality. But technically speaking, it is impossible to talk about *the* Old Testament spirituality because of the multiplicity and diversity portrayed in the Old Testament. It is rather correct to talk about Old Testament *spiritualities.*

It is beyond the scope of this research to describe various spiritualities of the Old Testament's figures, authors, and books, so I would rather discuss "the spirituality which is informed and nourished by the Old Testament." The focus of this kind of spirituality would be on the Old Testament's contribution to a sound spirituality today (Jones, Wainright, & Yarnold 1986:48), which is more relevant to this research. A point that needs to be made is the importance of Jewish perspective on the Old Testament. Stevens and Green (2005:52) say, "The fact that the Christian Bible includes texts which originated within and are still shared by the Jewish community is massively significant."

4.2.1.1   The Old Testament canon

In Old Testament study the term "canon" refers to the list of books that constitutes the scriptural corpus of literature for both Jewish and Christian communities of faith as normative and regulative. The Hebrew canon is organised into three distinct elements: the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings. The Torah, the Five Books of Moses, received the highest scriptural authority in Jewish tradition and, derivatively, in Christian tradition as well; the Prophets, divided into the Former Prophets (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings) and the Latter Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve Minor Prophets) have less authority than the Torah; the Writings, which include a more or less miscellaneous collection of eleven books, possess much less canonical authority (Brueggemann 2003:1-5).

Claiming the unity of the Hebrew Bible, Freedman (1991:1-39) claims a view that the text from Genesis to 2 Kings (except Ruth), that is, the Torah and the Former Prophets, constitutes the Primary History of ancient Israel that formed the imagination and fidelity of Judaism. Freedman (1991:39) says the following:

> The purpose of the author/editor was to show how God created Israel to be his people and then formally sealed the relationship through a covenant that was concluded between them at Sinai/Horeb, mediated by Moses, and summarized or epitomized in the Decalogue. Israel's subsequent history could be told in terms of its successive violations of the commandments—one by one, book by book, until Israel ran out of options and possibilities and was destroyed as a nation, and its people taken into captivity.

This Primary Narrative, as Brueggemann (2003:15-16) calls it, offers an imaginative portrayal of Israel's memory that runs from the creation of the world (Gn 1) to the exile of Israel in Babylon (2 Ki 25). It is the story of heaven and earth culminating in the deportation of Jerusalem to a foreign land. Despite distinctive literary development and different theological judgment, Brueggemann contends that the pre-land Torah and the land narrative of the Former Prophets are intimately connected. Brueggemann (2003:102) claims as follows:

> In canonical perspective, we may say that the Torah is the articulation—in narrative and in commandment—of the norms of faith and obedience commensurate with the rule of YHWH. The prophetic canon is a literature that articulates Israel's faith and practice in the rough and tumble of historical reality. The prophetic canon is an exercise in rereading the history of Israel and the history of the world according to the gifts and requirements of the God of the Torah. The simple sequence of "Torah prophets" is a given of the canon….[T]here is a likelihood that the 'Former Prophets' draws its theological perspective from Deuteronomy and is thus shaped by Torah literature. In the 'Latter Prophets,' however, the critical reality is very different.

Regarding the Prophets, the four books of the Former Prophets narrate the details of the recurring disobedience of Israel culminating in land loss, and the Latter Prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve—move beyond

land loss. Except the Twelve, also known as the Minor Prophets by Christians, the three scrolls of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, share the common theme of judgment and restoration. The pervasive themes of the Twelve are warning and judgment in the beginning and hope and restoration in the end (Brueggemann 2003:264-267).

The Third Canon, the Writings, requires flexibility and the highest interpretive imagination (Brueggemann 2003:272). It is because of its diverse nature, as Morgan (1990:71) says:

> When the hermeneutics used by the writings in their use of Torah and Prophets are surveyed, we are unable to find one particular approach to Torah and Prophets that is shared by all and able to win the day. All post-exilic communities are concerned to determine how best to live faithfully in difficult times, but such a common goal does not suggest one way to view Torah and Prophets theologically, socially, or otherwise. Yet, all these textual traditions take the authority of the central texts seriously. In the final analysis, when viewed *together,* it is only this that the Writings share.

Thus, the Writings are in dialogue with the Torah and the Prophets from their historical and cultural contexts as Morgan (1990:113) attests, "The Writings are the result of a dialogue between the written scripture of early Judaism and the needs of different communities attempting to understand the actions and will of the God of Israel."

4.2.1.2   Themes of the Old Testament spirituality
The following themes provide a skeleton picture of the Old Testament spirituality, which is based on the Torah but extends to the Prophets and the Writings.

4.2.1.2.1 Creation
Bavinck (2004:406) says the following about creation in *Reformed Dogmatics*:

> *The doctrine of creation, affirming the distinction between the Creator and his creature, is the starting point of true religion. There is no existence apart from God, and the Creator can only be known truly through revelation….This creation is*

properly said to be ex nihilo, *"out of nothing," thus preserving the distinction of the world in its dependence on God. The Triune God is the author of creation rather than any intermediary. The outgoing works of God are indivisible though it is appropriate to distinguish an economy of tasks in the Godhead so that the Father is spoken of as the first cause, the Son as the one by whom all things are created, and the Holy Spirit as the immanent cause of life and movement in the universe….The creation proceeds* from *the Father* through *the Son and* in *the Spirit….The purpose and goal of creation is to be found solely in God's will and glory….A doctrine of creation is one of the foundational building blocks of a biblical and Christian worldview. Creation is neither to be deified nor despoiled but as the "theatre of God's glory" to be delighted in and used in a stewardly manner. It is God's* good *creation.*

(a) Creation as the basis of spirituality. The Old Testament declares that God is the source of all that exists. Bavinck (1999:24) says, "The realization of the council of God begins with creation. Creation is the initial act and foundation of all divine revelation and therefore the foundation of all religious and ethical life as well." He continues that creation is divided into a spiritual and a material realm, into heaven and earth, into things in heaven and things on earth, things visible and things invisible, that the spiritual world is in communion with the visible world, and that the deepest cause of all things do not lie within the circle of visible things (Bavinck 1999:61-66). A Jewish notion of creation is somewhat different from the Reformed position. Kushner (2001:10), a Jewish rabbi, states, "It is not accidental…that classical Hebrew lacks such a distinction [between the material world and the realm of the spirit]. For Jewish spirituality, there is only one world that is simultaneously material *and* spiritual."

(b) Creation by the triune God. Christian spirituality is Trinitarian spirituality. In creation it is also evident that creation is the work of the triune God. The Scriptures attribute the act of creation to God exclusively (Gn 1:11; Is 40:12f; 44:24; 45:12; Job 9:5-10; 38:2f). Furthermore, Christian theology unanimously attributes the work of creation to all three persons of the Trinity. God created all things through the Son (Ps 33:6; Pr 8:22; Jn 1:3; 5:17; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:15-17; Heb 1:3) and through the Spirit (Gn 1:2; Ps 33:6; Job 26:13; 33:4; Ps 104:30; Is 40:13; Lk 1:35). The Son and the Spirit are not the secondary

forces but independent agents who fulfilled the work of creation with the Father (Bavinck 1999: 40).

(c) Goals of creation. At the centre of creation is the love of God, which makes it possible to understand such subsequent themes as covenant, prophecy, wisdom, and eschatology of the Old Testament. The creation story tells us that human beings are the supreme objects of God's love when the loving God created them (Harper 2000:314). While Christian theologians explain creation as an act of God's love and goodness, Bavinck (1999:53) claims that the Scripture takes another position and points to a higher goal that God created man after his image for his glory (Gn 1:26; Is 43:7) and that the nature proclaims his praise (Ps 19:1). Bavinck continues:

> [T]he Reformed tradition made the honor of God the fundamental principle of all doctrine and conduct, of dogmatics and morality, of the family, society, and the state, of science and art. Nowhere was this principle of the glory of God more universally applied than among the confessors of the Reformed religion.

Regarding the narrative of Genesis 1:26-28 that describes how human beings have been created in the image and likeness of God and thus share the divine stamp, Bowe (2003:37) claims:

> The fact that Genesis 1:27 explicitly defines *adam* as 'male and female' means that our contemporary claims about the mutual dignity of women and men in their capacity to image God are entirely correct and faithful to the biblical revelation. Moreover, this affirmation of human dignity, male and female, is essential to the very fabric of creation itself and its enduring permanence.

Created in the image of God, humanity also is unique. Harper (2000:316) explains the uniqueness of creation as follows:

> The uniqueness of self and the preciousness of personality are indispensable elements of Old Testament spirituality. This view of life forms the basis for contrasts between the Israelites and pagan culture. It stands behind the ethical-behavioural allowances and prohibitions of the Law. It is the foundation of

> the prophetic call to justice and mercy for even the 'least' persons in a society

In the creation story, there is an essential relationship factor between God and humans. This relationship and intimacy with God, however, does not violate the mystery of God or the autonomy of man (Jones et al 1986:56-57). In his sovereignty God also commanded humans to have dominion over the whole creation (Gn 1:28). Therefore, created in the image of God, human beings have the capacity to relate not only to God but also to others and to all other creation. All these relationships are characterised by love, respect, and service, and in interpersonal relations morality, fairness, and concern (Harper 2000:317). Bowe (2003:41) claims, "*Our* well-being deepens as we learn to reverence the rest of creation and to treat all others with the profound respect due to them as creatures, like us, fashioned in the image of God."

In the creation narrative, therefore, there are both unity and diversity. Heaven and earth, man and animal, and Creator and creature need to be distinguished from each other. And yet there is a superlative unity in this diversity. He who created all things in accordance to his wisdom upholds and governs them all, and all things pursue the Creator in their respective manner. All parts are connected and influence each other even ethically (Bavinck 1999:56).

Harper (2000:318), with emphasis on the unity of creation, summarises creation as one of the main Old Testament spiritualities:

> Old Testament spirituality as revealed in creation is that amazing and awesome mixture of allowance and accountability, liberty and limitation, freedom, and fidelity. Thus our very creation becomes a major element of our spirituality. Such a spirituality saves us from any notions of dualism. Such a spirituality clearly reveals the value and sacredness of life. Through what we might call a spirituality of creation, we see our interconnected-ness, mutual dependency, and moral responsibility. And we recognise that true life is not being swept along by some kind of cosmic energy, but rather is being sustained by an intimate relationship with a personal God.

4.2.1.2.2 Covenant

The creator God, who made persons in the image of God, is not satisfied with general relationship. Through the introduction of covenant, the divine-human relationship is intensified and particularised (Harper 2000:318). Whereas a contract is an agreement to exchange goods or services upon certain terms, a covenant is not about *doing* so much as *being* (Stevens & Green 2003:58).

The Hebrew word for covenant is *berit.* It is the word that captures the heart of Israel's religious beliefs. Covenants of various kinds existed in the ancient Near East. Some were made between equal partners and others were made between unequal partners, such as those treaties common among the ancient Hittites. The lord promised to protect the vassals, who in turn pledged loyalty to their lord. This type of covenant may have become a model for Israelites' covenant with YHWH (Bowe 2003:70). When Israel arrived in Sinai after the Exodus, the complex tradition of covenant and commands begins. In Exodus 19-24 the proclamation of commands by YHWH is followed by the oath of allegiance to YHWH by Israel thereby binding Israel to YHWH in obedience (Brueggemann 2003:61).

Arguing for the covenantal theme of the Old Testament, Bowe (2003:70) continues:

> It was at Sinai that God sealed this relationship and established an everlasting covenant with them….Built into the literary structure of the Pentateuch, this covenantal theme applies not only to the encounter between God and Moses at Sinai. It also provides the framework and the theological basis for understanding God's earlier promises made with Noah (Gn 9:8-17) and with Abraham (Gn 12:1-3, 15:5-7, 15:18-21, 17), as well as the continuing reinterpretation of covenant traditions with David in the period of the monarchy and with those who would rearticulate covenant theology in succeeding generations.

 (a) Bonding with God. The covenant between God and man reveals a bonding between God and those who entered into the covenant: "I will be their God and they will be my people" (Ex 6:6-7; Lv 26:12). This bonding that began in Gn 9:16 with Noah continues with the patriarchs and reaches its

climax with the nation Israel. Closeness and intimacy are the hallmarks and various covenantal images are presented in the Old Testament: Shekinah glory in the Tabernacle, intimacy between husband and wife as analogous between God and Israel, and a child nursed at a mother's breast (Harper 2000:318). One thing that is noteworthy is the God who says "the whole earth is mine" (Ex 19:5) is the same covenant-making God who takes Israel as his own. Brueggemann (2003:65) says, "This 'scandal of particularity' is decisive for faith in the Old Testament."

However, this covenantal bonding is never automatic and guaranteed. Individuals such as Samson and Samuel and the whole nation experience the absence of God (Jones et al 1986:51-52). The closeness and intimacy must be guarded and maintained with vigilance. Brueggemann (1995:157-158) lists three appropriate human responsive actions.

> In response to the One who makes all things new, a faithful human action is *hope*: to live in sure and certain confidence of promises, to function each day trusting that God's promises and purposes will not fail….In response to the One who speaks, faithful human action is to *listen*…to concede that we are subjects to Another who legitimately addresses us by name and tells us who we are….In response to the God who holds fast to us, who holds us accountable and responsible, faithful human action involves *obedient answering*. Obedient answering consists in action that may be summarized as the doing of justice and righteousness, loyalty and graciousness.

Talking about the prophets' passion for justice and righteousness, Heschel (1969:210) says justice and rightesousness are what maintain the covenant:

> Justice as an interpersonal relationship, involving a claim and a responsibility, a right and a duty, applies, according to the Bible, to both God and man. In its fundamental meaning, *mishpat* refers to all actions which contribute to maintaining the covenant, namely, the true relation between man and man, and between God and man.

(b) Redefining human life. God's act does not end with covenant making but extends to keeping the covenant. As a result of a covenant relationship with God, human life is redefined. Israel received their identity, personhood, and

being from YHWH who held fast to the covenant. They are in a new context of promise and claim, of surprise and amazement (Brueggemann 1995:156, 164). As a covenant people, therefore, Israel had enough faith content and experience to render any movement toward other unnecessary religions. Seifert (1981:16) puts the position of Israel in perspective, "Going to other world religions for decisively different insights is like carrying a lantern to a neighbour's house to borrow a match. We already have the essential fire in our own keeping." What is crucial to understand though, is as God's covenant people Israel had to be engaged in mission. Harper (2003:319) explains this perspective by saying, "The goal has been to incorporate as many as possible into the covenant community. Thus, to be in covenant is to be reaching out."

Brueggemann (1995:162) comments about missional life eloquently:

> Because God is God, there are purposes to which we belong that are larger than our purposes (Isa 55:6-9). Or viewed another way, the Bible never holds to the notion that we exist as prepurpose persons and then may choose a purpose in life. On the contrary, our being called into being as persons already is decisive for our humanness. Biblical anthropology is from the beginning *missional.* Biblical faith asserts that being grounded in this other One who has purposes that are not our purposes characterizes our existence as missional, that is, as claimed for and defined by the One who gives us life. The metaphor of covenant thus poses the central reality of our life in terms of vocation. Vocation means we are called by this One, who in calling us to *be* calls us to *service.*

However, Israel was satisfied with their faith content and did not fulfil their mission imperative thereby God opening up the New Covenant with the Christian church (Harper 2000:319).

(c) Blessing and cursing. The primary intent of the covenant was to ensure blessing upon Israel. Curses are the result of disobedience, Israel's breaking of the covenant relationship. The ruptured relationship between God and human is restored through Israel's acceptance of the covenant and living it out, which results in blessings upon them (Harper 2000:320-321). Brueggemann (1995:163-164) talks about "dangerous freedom" of covenant parties, humans

and God. God claims the freedom to act without stricture, and the community of faith also has freedom. Neither is free to exercise freedom that does not take the other into account. Covenant reality indicates living by faith in the Other who made the covenant. Covenantal people live on the edge.

> Covenantal people always live at the edge of the curse with real dangers and threats. Covenanted people always live at the brink of blessing, where the break of surprise and gift is about to come. Faith means to place ourselves in that vortex where life is granted, received, and risked.

> (Brueggemann 1995:165)

4.2.1.2.3 Community

The Old Testament spirituality treats community as an authentic expression of spirituality. Both the law and the prophets are for the sake of people. There was no such thing as a private spiritual advancement. The patriarchs, judges, prophets, kings, and priests were all for the people. There was no understanding of faith and life apart from the community. Jews are the people who were grounded in the revelation of one God as one nation under one standard (Harper 2000:321-322). Kushner (2001:34) says about the Jewish:

> Upon waking in the morning and upon retiring each night, Jews recite the passage form Deuteronomy 6:4 known as the *Shema*: 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.' In so doing, they not only proclaim that God is one; they remind themselves that everything and everyone is connected—that it's all One.

The emphasis on community puts forth some important aspects of spirituality. First, the identity as a Jew is formed in the community from the family outward to the entire nation, even to those living outside of national boundary. Secondly, this closely-knit community of the king, the priest, prophets, and people requires interdependence. A breakdown anywhere in the line causes the entire nation to suffer. Righteousness and holiness are not only personal characters but also interpersonal qualities in the community. In this community of mutual interdependence, immorality, injustice, and oppression cannot be tolerated to ensure God's blessing let alone the survival of

community. Thirdly, therefore God raises up judges, priests, kings, and prophets at various times to reveal his will and to sustain the community of his people. Without discernment and will to carry out the will of God, Israel's community is destroyed (Harper 2000:321-322).

The psalms of the Old Testament also emphasise corporate character. Barton (1986:48-49) says:

> A great many psalms and prayers are plainly corporate in character…where the speaker, in the first person plural, must be the congregation at worship….[T]his individual is a personification of the community….[M]any of the psalms make much better sense if understood as 'cultic' or liturgical poetry, in which the 'I' who speaks is the voice of the congregation…than if they are treated as religious lyrics for use in private prayers.

The Old Testament teaches us of the necessity of community. There is no sound spirituality which leaves out community. Harper (2000:322) claims, "Community is an essential ingredient for every Christian, regardless of status, maturity, or experience. It is at one and the same time a provider of an essential element in spirituality, and a protector against excesses and pitfalls."

4.2.1.2.4 <u>The Presence of God</u>

Through creation and covenant relationships and in Israelite community God was present. Through the Law, Prophets, and wisdom tradition God was there. Barton (1986:56) says:

> The Torah sets out the terms on which God will be with his people; the histories show from concrete examples how his presence can be forfeited, and how gracious must be the God who never lets his absence from an unworthy people become permanent; the prophets look forward to the day when God will never be or even seem absent again; and the psalms reflect on all these aspects of presence and absence as they affect both the worshiping community and the individual at prayer. Many psalms speak of a sense of God's temporary absence, and of a hope for his reappearance.

A good example of his presence is found in the book of Exodus. The Israelite community experienced the presence of God in wilderness after the Exodus. The "Priestly tradition" that refers to a community of interpretation in ancient Israel was primarily concerned with practices of holiness and orderliness that make possible the habitation of YHWH in Israel. To them, hosting the Holy One in the Tabernacle is no small or casual matter, requiring the practice of symmetry, order, discipline, and beauty (Brueggemann 2003:65-66). Brueggemann (2003:66) contends that in our technological and pragmatic society the demanding reality of YHWH's holiness should not be neglected.

As God is present, he is also absent. Barton (1986:57) continues to argue that the God of the Old Testament is a hidden God:

> If even Moses could see only God's back, there was small hope that anyone else could see his face and live! For practical purposes, therefore, the God of the Old Testament is a hidden God, hidden not through any weakness or inadequacy, but because of his very glory and the unworthiness of his human creatures. Yet the God who is hidden from sight in the cloud of his own glory can be *known* by the person who does not seek to *see* him, but rather to obey his will: 'Thus says the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, whose name is holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also who is a contrite heart and humble spirit"' (Is 57:15).

Harper (2000:324) asserts the essentiality of the Old Testament to challenge us to a deeper intimacy with God and trust his absolute faithfulness as follows:

> In creation we are invited to the richness of the cosmos and the sacredness of life made in the image of God. Through the covenant we are encouraged to bond ourselves to the living God, which necessarily calls us into community with all other persons who have done the same. Thus formed, we are challenged to deepen our intimacy with God and to direct our energies toward the service of others.

4.2.1.3   Prophetic spirituality

This section examines the Hebrew canon called "the Latter Prophets." Christians call these books Major and Minor Prophets.

4.2.1.3.1 Who are the prophets

The prophets were people who had an encounter with the living God, so their influence and power were derived from their direct contact with God and the resultant insight. Their concern was mainly the present, not the distant future: present realities, the implications of present actions, and their consequences in the immediate future. They stood on the middle ground between God and the people—crying out to God on behalf of the people and pleading with the people on behalf of God. They also played an essential social function lending divine legitimisation to the dominant social-political group or challenging the status quo for social changes (Bowe 2003:83-85).

They were summoned by God to an irrevocable calling (Ezk 2:1-2, 3, 8); their lives were bathed in prayer (Dan 9:4-16); they had great courage to confront kings and queens and false prophets, risking their own lives (Isa 22:11-12; Ezk 34:1); they sometimes had honest doubts and complained to God (Jer 4:9-10) ; they were deeply disturbed by the sins of their day—mainly idolatry, immorality, and injustice. They were people of passion (Stevens & Green 2003:66). Heschel (1969:26), a Jewish scholar, looks into the heart of the prophet:

> The fundamental experience of the prophet is a fellowship with the feelings of God, a *sympathy with the divine pathos,* a communication with the divine consciousness which comes about through the prophet's reflection of, or participation in, the divine pathos. The typical prophetic state of mind is one of being taken up into the heart of the divine pathos….He lives not only his personal life, but also the life of God. The prophet hears God's voice and feels His heart. He tried to impart the pathos of the message together with its logos. As an imparter his soul overflows, speaking as he does out of the fullness of his sympathy.

4.2.1.3.2 Justice and righteousness

Prophets' hearts were aflame for justice and righteousness. The primary way to serve God for them was not in rituals but through justice, righteousness, and love (Stevens & Green 2003:68). Heschel (1969:210) describes justice as relational:

> Ancient Israel 'does not distinguish between right and duty,' and *mishpat,* the word for justice, denotes what a person may claim as well as what he is bound to do to others. In other words, it signifies, both *right* and *duty.* Justice is an interpersonal relationship, involving a claim and a responsibility….In its fundamental meaning, *mishpat* refers to all actions which contribute to maintaining the covenant, namely, the true relation between man and man, and between God and man.

Prophets are those who had breathless impatience with injustice and their ear perceived the silent sigh (Heschel 1969:4, 9). They were convinced that "the most minor violation of the covenant bond was an affront in the eyes of God" (Bowe 2003:85-86). Here Heschel (1969:210) quotes Johanus Pederson who says, "One constantly 'judges' in the daily life, because one must continually act so as to uphold the covenant, i.e., the whole of the common life of the community. Everything in which this kind of judging manifests itself is called *mishpat.*"

4.2.1.3.3 In love with God

Finally, they were in love with the people of God. Take Hosea for example. Hosea's marriage to Gomer is a proof of the incarnational medium through which he gave and received a message about covenant love. His love for his wife gave him a glimpse of the heart of God, and the unconditional love of God made him look into his own heart with sorrows of an impossible marriage. For Hosea, knowing God meant courting, betrothal, and the renewal of the marriage covenant, and the word used for this covenant love was *hesed* as in Hosea 6:6 says, "For I desire mercy [*hesed*], not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offering" (Stevens & Green 2003:68-69).

Bowe (2003:105) gives a clear description of the prophets of the Old Testament as follows:

> They were persons who had been touched by God in profoundly personal and intimate ways. They felt the coal sear their tongues (Isa 6:6), sensed God's hand touch their mouths (Jer 1:9), and felt the fire of God's word within them (Jer 20:9).

> They saw the world through God's eyes, felt its pain through God's heart, and challenged its abuses as if with God's mighty arm. Like YHWH, they could not be deaf to the cry of people in pain; their sensitivity to evil was raw and uncompromising. These were people who found the courage to hope beyond hope and who spent themselves to convey that hope in the face of despair. These were the poets and dreamers, the ones who could see beyond the surface of things into a deeper reality in the present and into a future time still to come. These were the faithful ones who endured affliction, distress, and persecution and who paid a heavy price for their courageous words.

4.2.1.4   Wisdom tradition

The books of the Bible called "the Writing" designate all the books of the Jewish Bible, not part of the "Law and the Prophets." In the Hebrew Bible they are (1) the three great poetic books of Psalms, Job, and Proverbs; (2) the "Five Scrolls" of Ruth, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, and the Song of Solomon; and (3) a revisionist historical corpus of 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah; and a single apocalyptic scroll, Daniel (Brueggemann 2003:5). The Protestant Bible, however, lists Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon as the Wisdom literature.

4.2.1.4.1 Blessing tradition

In these books, we find a tradition called the blessing tradition, in which God is viewed primarily as the source of blessing and providential care. In the blessing tradition, God does not intervene only at dramatic moments of crisis and need, but is always present in the midst of the world and sustains it, whereas in the saving tradition God acts in history to save and rescue people. The blessing tradition is fascinated with the pursuit of *wisdom* as a central emphasis and is therefore also called the wisdom tradition. Wisdom observes the world and carefully reflects on it to discern the harmony and order in it. It also pursues a practical and comprehensive ethic and behaviour consonant with its context (Bowe 2003:48-49, 109-110). The following discussion involves the Christian Wisdom books such as Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and Psalms.

4.2.1.4.2 The book of Proverbs

The book of Proverbs draws its sayings from all different sources to entertain, to instruct, and to edify. They inculcate virtues to live by such as diligence (Pr 10:4), humility (Pr 11:2) or truthfulness (Pr 12:20). The wise choose the right action among the competing ways and many possibilities of life. The wisdom of Proverbs divides the world between the "wise/righteous" and the "foolish/wicked." The wise show humility, self-discipline, generosity, hard work, and prudence, while the foolish are arrogant, undisciplined, selfish, lazy, and lack judgement. "In the daily rhythms of life each one must choose between the ways of the wise and the ways of the foolish. In choosing the wise path we choose the path of life" (Bowe 2003:114-115).

4.2.1.4.3 The book of Job

Job represents the gnawing questions of the postexilic period, especially the meaning of suffering by the righteous. The normal theological premise is that the good and righteous actions bring reward while sinful living brings punishment. But in the case of Job, this argument did not work. The righteous can suffer. But God did not answer Job's questions about the meaning of suffering. The only answer was the conviction that God cares for those who suffer and even visits them and stays with those who suffer. Job's teaching is not about *why* we suffer but about how we must relate to God in our suffering (Bowe 2003:115-117).

One of the lessons that Job learns is that the God he thought he knew is different from the God who had been watching over him all along. A new knowledge of God dawned on him. After all, the mystery of God is the mystery of silence and wisdom (Carney and Long 2005:723-724).

4.2.1.4.4 Ecclesiastes

In Ecclesiastes we hear a sceptical believer. The most repeated phrase of this book, "vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" is used thirty eight times tediously. The speaker recognises the "ambiguities and contradictions of human experience" (Bowe 2003:118). Nothing satisfies and nothing fulfils. Only when one has genuinely given up on everything, one can become a candidate for growth in

grace and is prepared to hear the end of the matter, which is "Fear God, and keep his commandments; for that is the whole duty of everyone" (Ec 12:13).

4.2.1.4.5 Song of Songs

Song of Songs gives us yet another element of wisdom in the Bible. It is the wisdom of love. Both Jewish and Christians interpreted the Song of Songs as the love between the Lord and the people of God or between Christ and the Church. According to Bowe (2003:119), "All scholars toady would agree that the author of the text did not write an allegory. He wrote a meditation, in erotic poetic language, celebrating the joy and ecstasy of heterosexual love." This actual, tangible, and passionate human love is a glimpse and reflection of the divine love (Bowe 2003:120). Longman III (2005:965) says basically the same thing, "The Song has a clear and obvious relevance to the divine-human relationship. Throughout the Bible, our relationship is likened to a marriage."

4.2.1.4.6 Psalms

Psalms reveals the Hebrew conviction that wisdom is prayer. Bowe (2003:122) says the following:

> Capturing the sentiments of both the individual and the collective soul of its people, the Hebrew Psalter reflects Israel's faith, her longing for God, her identity as God's own people. The Psalter constitutes a whole 'school of prayer,' so to speak, not in the sense merely of a collection of prayers to be said but, rather, as a *lesson in how to pray*, as an illustration of the many motifs, aspirations, fears, and hopes that can be employed by a community of faith. A full spectrum of the human condition is covered in these prayers.

Psalms are the "mirror" of life. They are the analogy of human experience. They let us gauge our own emotions and reactions through comparison with those of the psalmist and foster a more direct encounter with God (Endres 2002:149-150). Endres (2002:152) continues:

> [R]eading, hearing, meditating on, and praying with these texts enables people to clarify their own thoughts, feelings, and desires, and to learn how we may lay bare our desires before God, who desires life and not death. When we see our own

hearts reflected in the cursing psalms, a process of genuine
repentance and renewal can begin.

Psalmists reveal every human emotion so honestly in the form of prayer that
readers get shocked. Human meanness, spite, vengeance, and violence are
the indications of both intensity of prayer and human sinfulness (Bowe
2003:122-123). In this way, psalms help people articulate their own
experiences and move toward deeper self-knowledge in relationship with God
(Endres 2002:151). Nasuti (2001:80-81) calls this "expressive function of the
psalms."

Brueggemann (1995:108) discusses lament psalms that lament and complain
against articulate religious problems:

> The lament makes an assertion about God: that this
> dangerous, available God matters in *every dimension of life.*
> Where God's dangerous availability is lost because we fail to
> carry on our part of the difficult conversation, where God's
> vulnerability and passion are removed from our speech, we
> are consigned to anxiety and despair, and the world as we
> now have it becomes absoloutized….A God who must always
> be praised and never assaulted correlates with a development
> of "False Self" and an uncritical status quo. But a God who is
> available in assault correlates with the emergence of genuine
> self and the development of serious justice.

The perspectives of psalms are both anthropo-centred and Christ-centred.
Many early Christians understood Christ's life through reflection on particular
psalms, and the gospel writers found significant religious patterns in such
psalms as Psalms 22, 31, and 69 and considered them as prophetic pointers
to Jesus' life and ministry. These Christ-centred approaches to psalms "allow
the language of a mediator to stand as analog, Jesus Christ, who prays a
psalm or is 'prophesied' in a psalm" while human centred approaches
"establish suggestive connections between language addressed to God and
our experience" (Endres 2002:152-154).

Biblical wisdom is a gift from God, and it begins with the fear of God. There is
also a deep humility associated with biblical wisdom, the kind Job

experienced in the presence of the creator God. If we are truly wise, we get to know who we are before God. The wisdom tradition brings us to life fully lived and leads us to find God right in its midst (Bowe 2003:124-125).

4.2.1.5   Summary of Old Testament spirituality

- **Spirituality of creation**: Creation as an act of the Triune God for his glory is the basis of the Old Testament spirituality. The essential relationship between God and man is revealed in the creation narrative.

- **Covenant relations**: Bonding, closeness, and intimacy are the hallmarks of covenant. Justice and righteousness maintain the covenant. As a condition of blessing and cursing, the covenant must be guarded with vigilance, and the privilege of the covenant relationship requires the human party to reach out.

- **Community**: There is no sound spirituality without community.

- **Pervasive presence of God**: From creation through the covenant relationships in Israelite community, God was present. His presence is evident in the Law, Prophets, and wisdom tradition, that is, in the whole Old Testament.

- **Prophetic spirituality**: Prophets, in love with God, experienced the divine pathos. They lived not only their own lives but also the life of God. They were aflame for justice and righteousness, which involve right and duty in a relational context.

- **Blessing tradition**: As opposed to the saving tradition, the blessing tradition, also called the wisdom tradition, is fascinated with the pursuit of wisdom as a central emphasis. Biblical wisdom leads us to find God in our midst and live our life to the fullest.

4.2.2 New Testament spirituality

As was the case with the Old Testament spirituality, there is no single New Testament spirituality. Nevertheless, there is one central undeniable theme that runs through the whole New Testament: the historical Jesus. Thurston defines the New Testament spirituality as "what the early Christians did to put

into practice what they believed….It was what they did to respond to a world filled with the presence of God and the risen Christ" (Thurston 1993:3). The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus required responses, and the New Testament spirituality is the people's responses to what God was doing in Jesus the Christ (Thurston 2005:58). In this sense, New Testament spirituality is decisively *Christological* (Saunders 2002:155).

Another important characteristic of New Testament spirituality is its *communal* character. Saunders says (2002:158), "Early Christian spirituality was conceived, nurtured, and realized within the body of Christ." The Spirit was given to edify the body of Christ as Zizioulas (1985:27) contends, "When the Spirit blows the result is never to create good individual Christians but members of a community. This became fundamental for Christian spirituality in the New Testament and was in direct line with the Old Testament mentality." This communal character of spirituality was in large part due to the influence of the Mediterranean way of life (Malina 1996:64).

The third crucial characteristic of New Testament spirituality is the *eschatological* perspective. Saunders (2002:158-159) says:

> Eschatological materials and perspectives pervade the New Testament. The authors articulate the sense that they are living in the last days, when God breaks into the world to inaugurate a 'new creation,' in order to cultivate within their audiences alternative ways of seeing reality-transformed imagination. Whether it be Jesus' proclamation of the reign of God, miracles and healings, Paul's talk of Spirit and new creation, expectations of Jesus' parousia, reports of resurrection, the anticipation of a last judgment, or the claim that God's power has come to definitive expression in the cross of Jesus, we are dealing with eschatological imagination….The eschatological dimensions of spiritual formation in the New Testament….provided Christians with the means to resist the particular worldviews and practices of the cultures in which they lived. By envisioning the end of all that is taken for granted and presumed stable, the eschatological perspectives at work in New Testament spirituality served to 'undermine the cultural system that masquerades as common sense.'

After all, according to Downey (1997:46),

> Christian spirituality is rooted in the person of Jesus Christ
> and his work, especially revealed in the scriptures, specifically
> the New Testament….They [individuals and groups] lived the
> gospel differently because certain values and ideals which it
> discloses are perceived as more central than others in the
> task of self-transcendence and personal integration.

I will present gospel spirituality first and then Pauline spirituality.

4.2.2.1   Gospels

There is one Jesus and four gospels, which are testimonies of faith in Christ. The gospels are remembrances and imaginative expressions of profound encounters with the Son of God to mediate him to others as the basis for faith, repentance, and new life. The main element of gospel spirituality is testimony to a decisive revelation of the divine in time, space, and person. This testimony is mediated through the experience of the first followers of Jesus in the form of compelling narrative in the gospels (Barton 2005:608).

4.2.2.1.1 Matthean spirituality

As the first of the New Testament, the book of Matthew is fundamentally biblical and traditional in its shape and texture. Old Testament spiritualities continue in Matthew in regards to divine presence, covenantal morality, wholehearted devotion to the one true God, love of neighbour, coming of God in judgment to reward the righteous and to punish the disobedient, etc. The book of Matthew is thoroughly indebted to the Old Testament and Judaism. However, there is discontinuity with the tradition no matter how precious it is. In Matthew Jesus is the Son of God in whom the promise of God to Israel has been fulfilled and completed. The life of Jesus fulfils the scripture (Mt 1:23; 2:6, 15, 18, 23), and the death of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins ushers in a new covenant (Mt 26:28). Matthean spirituality is christocentric and eschatological as well: following Jesus, doing his commandments, responding to God's presence in Jesus, and living the life of the kingdom of heaven as Christ's disciple in the church characterise Matthean spirituality (Barton 1992:33-34). A further description of Matthean spirituality is as follows.

(a) A sense of divine presence. In Matthew, from the beginning to the end, the presence of God is evident: genealogy, the conception of Jesus, Jesus' baptism, authoritative teaching and working of miracles, transfiguration, death and resurrection. Jesus was *Immanuel* (God with us). In this sense, Matthean spirituality is both theocentric and christocentric. God was identified as the heavenly father and Jesus as the divine Son (Barton 1992:10-12; Barton 2005).

(b) Stress on both interiority and practical spirituality. For Matthew, right motivation and moral action is of primary importance. Rituals are of secondary importance (Mt 23:23). Being perfect (Mt 5:48) requires interiority, which provides foundation for righteous practices and actions. Righteousness (*dikaiosune)* in Matthew is not just a matter of knowing what is right but of doing it as well (3:14; 5:6, 10, 20; 6:1, 33; 21:32). The righteous acts of almsgiving, prayer, and fasting should not be merely to meet the eyes of people but should be genuine. Based on strong interiority, a life of practical spirituality identifies a true follower of Jesus in Matthew. Then the heavenly father will provide the disciple so aligned with God with daily material needs (Barton 1992:20-25; Bowe 2003:140-141).

(c) Vision of the church. Of all four evangelists only Matthew uses the term *ekklesia* to describe Gods' people (Mt 16:18; 18:17). This indicates the importance of corporate characteristic of Matthean spirituality. The people of God are referred to as "brother" and brotherly love and forgiveness are expected (Mt 18:21-1, 23-35). The church as a new community of faith is to "make disciples" of all nations (Mt 28:18-20), and it is the embodiment and reflection of the coming kingdom of heaven (Barton 1992:27-28; Bowe 2003:141).

4.2.2.1.2 Marcan spirituality

The gospel of Mark consists of "the death of Jesus" (Peterson 2000:331). Barton (1992:63) says, "Marcan spirituality is *a dark, strenuous spirituality.* It is a story of passion from beginning to end." For the first eight chapters Jesus is alive and does mighty acts of God: healing, working miracles, casting out

demons, and challenging religious leaders. However, in the middle of chapter eight the tone changes.

> In the middle of section the reader sees that this illusion is to be shattered. The figure of power is to be handed over to people who kill him. Yet, even this illusion is to be shattered, for the brokenness of the cross is itself broken by the message, 'He is risen.' And yet the final illusion is shattered. 'Risen' does not mean a return in power and presence to the community. The community must continue to struggle with illusions (with false christs, false messiahs) until they finally 'see' him (13:26; 16:7).

> (Donahue1978:385)

In Mk 8:27-10:52, three passion predictions (Mk 8:31-33; 9:30-32; 10:32-34) appear interspersed with Jesus' teaching about "taking up the cross" (Mk 8:34), "true greatness" (Mk 9:34), and the "cost of discipleship" (Mk 10:35-45). These three chapters are the turning point in the book of Mark (Bowe 2003:134). The second half of Mark is dominated by talk of death. As Jesus heads straight for Jerusalem, urgency, gravity, and destination characterise the narrative. "No incident in his life is told with this much detail. There can hardly be any question about the intent of St Mark: the plot and emphasis and meaning of Jesus is his death" (Peterson 2000:332). Christian spirituality is, for Mark, *cruciform*: "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it" (Mk 8:34-35). Barton (1992:49) contends, "This is *the* most important aspect of Marcan spirituality."

Bowe (2003:136) says of the implication of Marcan spirituality well:

> Mark's gospel story challenges its readers to embrace the cross as the way of discipleship today. It does not invite us to impose suffering and hardship *on others* in the name of some skewed piety or false sense of sanctity, but it does call on us freely to embrace the cross *ourselves* and to place ourselves in solidarity with all those who suffer. It asks us to renounce every form of domination and power, every kind of violence and abuse against others….The message of Mark's gospel pronounces a scathing critique on all structures of oppressive

power: economic, political, social, ecclesiastical, and personal. Instead, the Jesus of Mark's gospel is the holy and compassionate one whose heart is moved with pity on all who are in need and for whom he gave his life.

4.2.2.1.3 Lucan spirituality

The two-volume work of Luke-Acts is the story of Jesus and Christian origin rooted in Israel for the salvation of the world. From the beginning to the end of both volumes the overshadowing presence of the Spirit with powerful manifestations characterise Lucan spirituality. God is present in the person of his Son Jesus and is present in power at the end of the age as the Holy Spirit (Barton 1992:71-73). The following are the distinctive aspects of Lucan spirituality.

(a) Joy. One of the most prominent features of Lucan spirituality is joy. Morrice (1984:91), who examined the subject of joy in the New Testament says, "It is St Luke's Gospel that is *par excellence* 'the Gospel of Joy.'" "Lucan spirituality is about the joyful acknowledgment of the universal salvation made possible by the dawning of the age of the eschatological Spirit with the coming of the Messiah" (Barton 2005:610). The first two chapters of Luke testify the joy expressed in response to God's grace manifested in two birth stories. In the parables of Luke 15 joy is the recurring theme over the lost sheep, coin, and the found son. The gospel ends with the tone of joy when the disciples return to Jerusalem after Jesus' ascension (Lk 24:52-53). So the joyous mood frames the whole gospel. Barton says explicitly, "Whereas a disciple in Matthew is a learner in the school of Jesus, and in Mark one who follows Jesus 'on the way' in fear and trembling, in Luke a disciple is a joyous, spirit-inspired, recipient of salvation" (Barton 2005:610).

(b) Repentance and conversion. Repentance and conversion are also distinct characteristics of Lucan spirituality. Beck (1989:11) points out, "For Luke, 'repentance and forgiveness' together sum up the Christian good news." Jesus left with these words "that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations" (Lk 24:47), and in the book of Acts the call to repentance for forgiveness of sins is a constant refrain (Ac 2:38; 3:19;

5:31; 8:22). Besides repentance, the conversion theme is also prominent in Luke-Acts. The only occurrence of *epistrophe* (conversion) comes in Acts 15:13, and the majority of uses of *epistrepsein* (to convert, to turn around) appear in Luke-Acts. The summons to "turn around" is typically dominant in Acts (Barton 1992:78). Repentance and conversion indicate a change of heart and life oriented to Jesus and the kingdom of God (Barton 2005:610).

(c) Prayer. Prayer stands out in Luke as one of its main features. Luke depicts Jesus as a person of prayer and takes pains to teach us prayer through the example of Jesus.

> All the gospel writers mention prayer, of course, but Luke gives us such wonderful tidbits as: '[Jesus] would withdraw to deserted places and pray' (5:16); 'At daybreak he departed and went into a deserted place' (4:42); 'He went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God' (6:12); and 'Jesus was praying alone, with only the disciples near him' (9:18).

> (Pura 2005:1879)

Jesus also teaches his disciples the importance of persistent prayer in two parables (11:5-8; 18:1-8). Luke portrays Jesus as a person of prayer, having habitual and deep communion with God, and setting an example of prayer for his disciples is "indelible part of Luke's gospel narrative" (Barton 1992:90). Prayer is also a characteristic of the apostolic church in Acts. Pura (2005:1880) observes again, "Even a cursory reading of Acts indicates that…prayer and personal worship have a prominent place in the lives of the first Christians." The apostles and the leaders of the church were people of prayer (Ac 3:1; 8:15—Peter and John; 6:4—the twelve; 7:59-60—Stephen; 10:9—Peter; 16:25—Paul and Silas; 20:36—Paul and the Ephesian elders).

(d) Public spirituality. Lucan spirituality is public in that the grace of God is unrestricted. It reaches out to the Gentiles, to the uttermost part of the earth (Ac 13:47; 26:17-18). The gospel is not only for all the people of Israel (Lk 2:10; 3:18, 21; 6:17; 7:1, 29; 8:47; 9:13; 18:43; 19:47-48) but also for the Gentiles (Ac 2:5-12; 8:26-40; 10:1-48). The gospel requires believers to set

the captives free, to heal the blind, and to rescue the oppressed (Lk 4:18). Believers are not to hoard wealth but to share it with the poor (Lk 6:24-26; 12:13; 16:19-31). Hospitality should be extended to neighbours (Lk 10:29-37) and even to sinners and tax-collectors (15:1-2) (Barton 1992:97-102).

4.2.2.1.4 Johannine spirituality

In the fourth gospel, Jesus is presented as the word of God who was made flesh, the fully adequate expression of God (Schneiders 2005c:386). Here it is made crystal clear what they have said differently and sometimes hesitantly about Jesus in the previous three synoptic gospels: Jesus as God incarnate who reveals God and the way to God uniquely. Thus Johannine spirituality is *thoroughly Christocentric* (Barton 1992:113, 118).

(a) Revelation of the divine glory. In John, "salvation is presented not in terms of expiatory or substitutionary sacrifice but in terms of revelation….[T]he death of Jesus is not kenosis but a glorification, the absolute manifestation of the very being of God as love" (Schneiders 2005c:386). Barton (1992:114) says:

> Fundamentally, there is revelation of the divine glory, a call to believe, a way to go which leads to God, the offer of deliverance from darkness into light and from death to life, and a basis for assurance. In other words, John's gospel provides clear and authoritative answers to questions about God, the world, life and death, truth and goodness, and salvation and judgment.

All of Jesus' words and actions reveal something about the mystery and the glory of God (Bowe 2003:145).

(b) Personal and corporate spirituality. The fourth gospel has to do with persons in their relationship with God and with one another. The revelation comes in a personal, incarnate form (1:14, 18), and it requires a personal, incarnated response. As the Son, Jesus comes from the Father, abides in the Father, and seeks to do the work of the Father. The relationship between the Son and the Father is unique in its intensity and reciprocity. This unique relationship brings persons into the relationship with God as children of God

(1:12) and heirs of eternal life (3:16). In John there are narratives of personal encounters of people with Jesus: Jesus and Nicodemus (ch 3), Jesus and the Samaritan woman (ch 4), Jesus and the lame man (ch 5), Jesus and the blind man (ch 9), Jesus and his own (chs 13-17), and Jesus and Pilate (18:28-19:16). These personal encounters strongly convey the sense that "believing Jesus is an inescapably personal matter requiring individual decision for or against him" (Barton 1992:114-116). Dunn (1984:13) says the following about the personal characteristic of Johannine spirituality, "John seems to understand Christianity as much more an individual affair, the immediacy of the disciple's relationship with Christ through the Spirit who constitutes Christ's continuing presence in the believer (John 14:15-20; 1 John 3:24)."

One thing that is noteworthy about believing Jesus is observed by Schneiders (2005c:386):

> [T]he evangelist created a grammatical construction of the verb that is peculiar to this Gospel, 'to believe *into* Jesus' rather than simply 'to believe in'. The preposition (*eis*) with the accusative case suggests a progressive entrance into and growth in the relationship. Jesus says, 'If you remain [or continue] in my word you are truly my disciples' (8:31). Believing, in other words, is not notional or intellectual but relational.

However, the spirituality of the fourth gospel is not only personal but also corporate. The gospel is proclaimed for the world (3:16), and the new society thus formed includes Jews, Samaritans, and Greeks. The metaphors used in the book of John also have a strong corporate sense: the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep (10:11, 15) and the vine and the branches (ch 15). The commandment of Jesus to love *one another* is also striking compared to Jesus' command to love your enemies in the synoptic gospels (Barton 1992:116-117).

(c) Mystical spirituality. Johannine spirituality is mystical spirituality in which presence, mutual indwelling, and union predominate rather than dogma or ethics. "Union with Jesus is the source of intimate knowledge of God and strength to live as the body of Jesus in the world" (Schneiders 2005c:387).

Jesus is the fulfilment of our longing as bread of life (6:35, 51), light of the world (8:12; 9:5), gate for the sheep (10:7, 9), the good shepherd (10:11, 14), the resurrection and the life (11:25), the way, the truth, and the life (14:6), and the true vine (15:1, 5) (Bowe 2003:146).

(d) Charismatic spirituality. Barton (1992:130) explains, "Belief in the power of the eschatological Spirit and experiences of the presence of the Spirit in the life of the church are a very important feature of Johannine Christianity." Jesus is the one who baptises with the Holy Spirit (1:33; 3:34). Individuals are born of the Spirit (3:5-15); the Spirit abides in the believer forever as another helper (14:16); and the Spirit reveals the truth and knowledge to believers (14:26; 16:12-15). Schneider (2005:387) says, "The source of life in John is the *Spirit* rather than the observance of rules or the practice of rituals."

(e) Ambivalent attitude towards the world. In John, the world is viewed in pessimistic and dualistic terms, especially in the second half of the gospel which shows the negative attitude of mankind to revelation (1:10; 7:7; 14:17, 22, 27, 39; 15:18-27; 16:8, 20, 33; 17:6, 9, 14-26) (Barton 1992:122). Nonetheless, "the world into which he comes is also the scene of the saving mission of Jesus (1:9f; 3:17, 19; 6:14; 8:26; 10:36; 12:46; 16:28; 17:13, 18; 18:20, 37), and his mission to the world is grounded in the love of God for the world (3:16)" (Barrett 1978:161). Furthermore, withdrawal from the world is opposed explicitly (17:15): "I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one." Johannine spirituality prepares believers to live with the tensions of ambivalence to bear witness to the world (Barton 1992:122).

4.2.2.2   Pauline spirituality

Pauline spirituality is based on his profound experience of the Risen Christ. The mystical union between the believer and Christ is made possible through the outpouring of the Spirit. His experience of freedom in Christ and the future hope characterise Pauline spirituality.

4.2.2.2.1 <u>Life in the Spirit</u>

Pauline spirituality is strongly pneumatological. "The Spirit's activities so widely permeated the apostle's thought that there is hardly any aspect of Christian experience outside of the sphere of the Spirit" (Dockery 2000:340). The basic assumption of Paul's theology is that all believers are possessors of the Spirit and that "no-one can respond to the claims of Christ without being activated and indwelt by the Holy Spirit" (Guthrie 1981:551).

Persons are regenerated through the work of the Holy Spirit and they cry out "Abba Father" (Rm 8:14-17). They are guided and illumined by the Spirit, who leads them to the deepest understanding of God (1 Cor 2:13). The renewal of the mind (Rm 12:2) is achieved through the Spirit, and he causes the believer to walk in the Spirit in opposition to the sinful nature of the flesh (Rm 8:4). The believer bears fruits of the Spirit (Gl 5:22-23) and is encouraged to be filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18). The Spirit is utterly indispensable for Christian living (Dockery 2000:342).

4.2.2.2.2 <u>Corporate spirituality</u>

The Spirit is also given to and for the community for the common good (1 Cor 12:7). "To drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor 12:13), denoting the baptism of the Spirit, shows the basic solidarity of all Christians in the Spirit (Guthrie 1981:563). "It is the Spirit who binds Christians together and enables them to be of the same mind" (Guthrie 1981:562). Bowe (2003:158) says:

> Christian identity is a corporate identity and there is no such thing as 'an *individual Christian'*….To be a Christian is to be a member of the body of Christ. Paul's insistence on the corporate character of the body and his exhortations to communal living are key to his preaching of the gospel and to the way he responded to almost every pastoral question.

Deidun (2005:480) says the same thing that "Paul's spirituality has its context in the community of believers and was never individualistic." Dockery (2000:348) asserts:

> An evangelical spirituality must develop its shape form the Pauline guidelines so that the pneumatic experience is neither

totally individualistic, nor is it an out-of-control experience lacking norms or parameters. Instead, an evangelical spirituality must focus upon the corporate experience among the believers that stresses worship, mutual commitment and dependency, transparency and authenticity, responsible freedom and loving obedience.

4.2.2.2.3 Christ crucified and risen

Another important aspect of Pauline spirituality is Christ crucified and risen. The risen Christ is precisely the crucified one. Paul does not make a distinction either between his experience of crucified and risen Christ and his experience of the Spirit. The risen Christ is the life-giving Spirit (Deidun 2005:479). All who are baptised into Christ are baptised into his death and buried with him (Rm 6:4). Then the risen Christ empowers them to walk in newness of life, and they are alive to God in Christ Jesus (Rm 6:5-11). Death, resurrection, and exaltation are the examples to follow not only for Paul but also for all Christians (Phlp 3:7-17). When the believer dies to Christ, he or she becomes a slave to Christ and is freed from the power of sin and the law by the life-giving Spirit (Rm 8:1-2). Paul's enigmatic phrase "in Christ" refers to the field of divine power of Christ which permeates and governs the lives of believers (Deidun 2005:480). Dockery (2000:344) says it well:

> As that death was an historical event, so also the incorporation of believers in that death is historical. In other words when Christ died on the cross, all who were to be incorporated in him also died. This implies that when a person puts faith in Christ, he or she is at once identified with a death that has already happened. The identification with death is necessary before there can be a participation in the risen life of Christ, which is life in the Spirit.

4.2.2.2.4 Creative tension in the spiritual life

In Pauline epistles there are tensions which make spiritual life balanced and vibrant.

(a) Visionaries and pragmatists. Bowe (2003:166) talks about two groups of people in Israel's postexilic community:

> On the one hand, there were the prophetic visionaries, such as Third Isaiah and Zechariah, whose creative religious imagination envisioned a future time of Gods' inclusive blessings poured out on all. And on the other hand were so-called pragmatists, the scribal leaders such as Ezra and Nehemiah who saw the future of the people linked to their strict living of Torah, their avoidance of intermarriage, and their more restrictive policies of Jewish communal solidarity in the midst of alien world.

This distinction between the visionary and the pragmatic tendencies also existed in the late New Testament period. The letter to Colossians demonstrates the visionary tendency in chapter one by praising the cosmic Christ (Col 1:15-16, 19-20). The letter to Ephesians also reveals this cosmic nature of God's plan of salvation (Eph 1:3-4, 5-6, 9-10). On the other hand, the pragmatic perspective shows in the Pastoral Epistles where the "household codes" of appropriate behaviours of wives, children, and slaves and the regulations and qualifications for Christian ministers are laid down. There is a creative tension "between the voices of pragmatism, boundary maintenance, and social order on the one hand, and the voices of prophetic visionaries, boundary breakers, and imaginative risk takers, on the other" (Bowe 2003:166-169).

(b) Already/not yet. Spiritual life is characterised by the polarities of the already/not yet and indicative/imperative tension. While living in the Spirit as a new creation in Christ, believers still suffer in this age being conscious of their old selves in Adam. Their struggle with indwelling sin continues (Rm 7:14-25) and the flesh continues to wage war against the Spirit (Gl 5:16-21). The kingdom of God of the gospels is in their midst but not fully realised yet (Dockery 2000:346-347).

Pauline spirituality is eschatological spirituality based on the present life in Christ. The believer's perspective is futuristic looking ahead into the blessed future (1 Cor 7:29-31; 1 Th 4:13-18), yet is firmly grounded in the present world where Christian obligation to live a godly life is still present. The future consummation is balanced with a missionary task (1 Th 4:17; 1 Cor 9:23).

(c) Freedom and responsibility. Freedom in Christ comes with responsibility for the community where believers are situated. The basic principle of Christian living is that individual believers must exercise their freedom with love for the community (1 Cor 13:1-13). However, Paul does not condone asceticism (Col 2:20-23). He views ascetic approach to the Christian life as worldly since it appeals to human pride and achievement rather than trust in Christ and dependence on the Spirit. Paul sees his asceticism in sexual matters as a gift to enhance the gospel, and not for greater personal spiritual achievements.

4.2.2.3   Summary of New Testament spirituality

- **Christological spirituality**: The spirituality of the New Testament is fundamentally Christological. It is people's response to what God was doing in Jesus Christ.

- **Communal character**: Early Christian spirituality was conceived, nurtured, and formed within the body of Christ. The Church is a new community to make disciple of all nations. The Spirit was given to believers for the edification of the Church.

- **Eschatological dimension**: The eschatological dimension of the New Testament provided early Christians with the means to resist the particular worldviews and practices of the cultures in which they lived. Paul's spirituality is strongly eschatological based on the present life in Christ.

- **Matthean spirituality** is the continuation of the Old Testament spiritualities and Judaism. Divine presence is manifested in Jesus: Jesus is *Immanuel* (God with us). Interior motives and practical actions are emphasised in Matthew.

- **Markan spirituality** is *cruciform* spirituality which emphasises the dark, strenuous spirituality of Jesus' death.

- **Lucan spirituality** is characterised by overshadowing presence and the powerful manifestations of the Holy Spirit. In Luke the joyous mood frames the whole gospel. Repentance and forgiveness together with conversion sum up the Christian good news in Luke-

Acts. Prayer is emphasised in Luke with Jesus modelling prayer. The Gospel is not only for Jews but also for the Gentiles.

- **Johannine spirituality** is thoroughly Christocentric. As revelation of the divine glory, Jesus made encounters with individuals and proclaimed the good news to Jews, Samaritans, and Greeks. Taking an ambivalent attitude toward the world, John's gospel takes on mystical and Charismatic characters as well.

- **Pauline spirituality** is strongly pneumatological. There is hardly any aspect of Christian experience outside the realm of the Spirit. It is also corporate spirituality in that the Spirit was given to the body of Christ for common good. For Paul the risen Christ is the life-giving Spirit. "In Christ" refers to the field of divine power of Christ that governs the lives of believers. In Christian life, there is a creative tension between visionaries and pragmatists, already and not-yet, and freedom and responsibility.

4.3 Trinitarian spirituality

The doctrine of the Trinity is at the centre of Christian faith. Downey (1997:44) says, "The doctrine of the Trinity functions as the summary of Christian faith, expressing the central Christian conviction that the God who saves through Christ by the power of the Spirit lives eternally in a communion of persons, divine and human, in love." Downey (2005:624) contends that Trinitarian spirituality is "Informed by Scripture, the traditions of Christian spirituality, and the renaissance of interest in the doctrine of the Trinity and its implications for Christian spiritual life in the contemporary Church and world."

LaCugna (2000:274) explains how the focus of the Trinitarian doctrine has changed over time.

> It used to be that a new doctrine of the Trinity meant a new way to explain 'God's inner life,' that is, the relationship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit to one another….But now both Catholic and Protestant theologians who are working to revitalize the doctrine of the Trinity have shifted away from constructing theories about God's 'inner life.' Instead, by returning to the more concrete images and concepts of the

> Bible, liturgy and creeds, it has become clear that the original purpose of the doctrine was to explain the place of Christ in our salvation, the place of the Spirit in our sanctification…and in so doing to say something about the mystery of God's eternal being. By concentrating more on the mystery of *God with us, God for us,* and less on the nature of God by Godself, it is becoming possible once again for the doctrine of the Trinity to stand at the center of faith.

Thus, everything of God's economy—providence, redemption, and consummation—shapes the Trinitarian doctrine: "everything comes from God, is made known and redeemed through Jesus Christ, and is consummated by the power of the Holy Spirit" (LaCugna 2000:275).

The central theme of the Trinity is relationship: God's relationship with us and our relationship with one another (LaCugna 2000:275). This relational mystery or interpersonal communion of the Trinity is expressed in the use of the terms Father, Son, and Spirit which designate relationships with one another and believers. They denote the profoundly relational character of the divine mystery. The relationship of Father, Son, and Spirit as equal, mutual, and interdependent persons inevitably affects human relationships in all spheres bringing them to the equality, mutuality, and interdependence of the divine relationship (Downey 2005:625). Therefore, the Trinity implies first that God does not exist *except* Father, Son, Spirit, and that they exist in communion, that is, shared life. Not only that, the triune God has communion with all creatures in the universe. The whole universe is in communion with God as origin, sustaining ground, and the final goal. Every human being and creature thus are not solitary but in relationship with one another (LaCugna 2000:275-281). McIntosh (2005:181) says, "Trinitarian understanding of God is itself the expression of the *community's* [italics mine] ongoing spiritual life, its encounters with God through Christ in the Holy Spirit."

After all, Trinitarian rhythm of Christian spirituality is a believer's journey in the Spirit into freedom, love, and generosity of Jesus' relationship with the Father. The Holy Spirit fosters Christian spirituality by opening up within believers a

beginning of transformation towards an infinite sharing of the life of God (McIntosh 2005:179).

LaCugna (2000:281) says well about Trinitarian life:

> Living trinitarian faith thus has two meanings: faith that is alive, and living out one's faith. Faith in the God of Jesus Christ can come alive in the doctrine of the Trinity, provided that this doctrine flows out of the images and intuitions of faith. Living out this doctrine and this faith amount to living God's life with one another….God's life does not belong to God alone: God's life is shared with every creature. Living trinitarian faith entails living as Jesus Christ did: with total confidence in God; as a peaceful, merciful, healing, forgiving presence; praying and praising God constantly; welcoming the outcast and sinner. Living God's life means living according to the power and presence of the Holy Spirit—becoming holy and virtuous, and contributing to the unity of the Christian community and the harmony among all of God's creatures.

In practice of Trinitarian spirituality, believers are "*abba* worshipers," "disciples of Jesus," and the "temple of the Spirit" (Stevens & Green 2003:13-44). They are *abba* worshipers. The word *abba* expresses the intimacy and the permanence of the relationship into which believers have been introduced. It takes us to the heart of the gospel. It not only shows Jesus' unique filial relationship with God and his unparalleled intimacy with God, but also reveals his authority to draw believers into the same relationship. Believers are also disciples of Jesus Christ. Believers are known more as disciples than as Christians in the New Testament. The word "Christian" is used only three times, while the word "disciple" is used two hundred sixty-nine times. Stevens and Green (2003:19-20) say:

> To be Christian is simply to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Discipleship implies growth, nurture, education, deepening intimacy, shared goals and life-direction, all facets of relationship with a person….So relationship with Jesus is not the means to the end of our spirituality. Relationship with Jesus *is* Christian spirituality.

In the Old Testament, the Spirit is never indwelling in man himself. It comes on him from outside and is often used in empowering judges, kings, prophets, priests, etc. In the New Testament, Jesus was undoubtedly and uniquely man

of the Spirit. His life and ministry are characterised by the presence and empowering of the Holy Spirit, and he gave the Spirit to his disciples as he ascended to heaven. Believers have become the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16). Stevens and Green (2003:44) say, "Surely, the whole heartbeat of New Testament spirituality is that each of us is the temple where the Holy Spirit lives."

4.4   Historical spirituality

"Christian spirituality is necessarily related to the Christian tradition" (Downey 1997:54). Besides the Scriptures, the history of Christianity is another constitutive discipline that provides the resources, norms, and hermeneutical context of Christian spirituality (Schneiders 1998:3). Again, it is an impossible task to examine two thousand years of Christian spirituality here so it would suffice to examine five major historical spiritualities for the sake of this thesis: the patristic, medieval West, Eastern Orthodox, the Protestant, and Anglican.

4.4.1   The patristic period

The patristic period was the formative time for the fundamentals of Christian doctrine. Although there is disagreement, the Protestant tradition has tended to regard the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451 as an approximate end (Sheldrake 1995:45). This era can alternatively cover AD 100-AD 600, the era of the Roman Empire (Stewart 2005:73).

During this period, the early church first faced the challenge of explaining its relationship with Judaism from which Christianity originated. Biblical interpretation, especially that Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of the Scriptures, was an important issue. Christians claimed that Jesus was the awaited Messiah of the Old Testament and that the history of Israel culminated in the incarnation of God in Jesus. The formation of Christian canon was another critical issue. The precise contents of a Christian Bible were debated, and through various church councils the Christian canon was finalised. The Hellenistic Jewish version of the Bible called Septuagint was the basis of the Christian Old Testament, and apostolicity was the main criterion of the New Testament (Stewart 2005:73-74). Regarding the Old Testament canon, the

early church received from its Jewish heritage the concept of sacred Scriptures that it believed were the revelation of God and the prediction of the Christ event (McDonald 2007:208-209). McDonald (2007:421) also says about the canonisation process of the New Testament as follows:

> Ultimately, it appears that the writings that were accorded scriptural status were the ones that best conveyed the earliest Christian proclamation and that also best met the growing needs of local churches in the third and fourth centuries….The significance of the NT writings to the churches is shown by their widespread use in the life, teaching, and worship of those churches, and such use also contributed to their canonization.

4.4.1.1   Patristic theology

The doctrinal polemics of the early centuries were the general atmosphere of this period as the early Christian church worked out the central characteristics of its understanding of God, Christ, and redemption (Sheldrake 1995:47).

4.4.1.1.1 Monotheism, the Trinity, Christology

Monotheism and the Trinitarian concept of God were developed early. The early "Logos Christology" of Justin Martyr (AD 100-65), developed further by Origen (AD 185-254), preserved monotheism that God the Father has the primacy as the one who speaks the Word (*Logos*), the Son of God, who became flesh in Jesus Christ. Outlining a "grammar" of Christian prayer of a Trinitarian nature, Origen taught that prayer should always be addressed *to* God the Father, *through* the Son, and *in* the Holy Spirit. Basil of Caesarea (AD 330-79) and his friend Gregory of Nazianzus (AD 329-90), two great Cappadocian theologians, expanded the Trinitarian questioning further. Gregory based distinction among the persons of the Trinity upon their relationships to each other, rather than upon any essential difference between them, and managed to protect the unity of the Trinity (one God, indivisible) and the distinction of Father, Son, and Spirit within the Godhead (three persons, unconfused) (Stewart 2005:75).

The Arian controversy of the fourth century focused attention on the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. In the controversy of

Arius vs Athanasius, against more cautious Christology of Arius, the Council of Nicea (AD 325) adopted a bolder assertion of Athanasius of the Son's full and equal divinity in the doctrine of the *homousion*—the claim that the Son is of the same "being" (*ousios*) as the Father. In the fifth century, theological debate focused on the relationship between the divine and human natures in Christ. From this context, Marion devotion arose as some attributed to Mary the title "Mother of God" (*Theotokos*). To supporters of *Theotokos*, like Cyril (AD 378-444), bishop of Alexandria, it suggested the fundamental unity of the human and divine nature in Christ. In "Alexandrian" Christology Christ became a single person *from* two natures. It was the council of Chalcedon (AD 451) that affirmed Christ is "one person *in* two natures," which are united "without confusion, without change, without division, without separation" (Stewart 2005:75-76).

4.4.1.1.2 Biblical and pastoral theology

The unifying feature of the era was the Bible, and theology was biblical theology, that is, an exegetically-based interpretation of the Scriptures to produce a fuller understanding of Christian faith and a deepening of the Christian life in all dimensions. They viewed the Bible from the context of Christian life; their theology was involved in the life of the church; preaching was regarded as the action of the living word of God in the congregation. Thus, the theology of early Fathers was primarily pastoral (Sheldrake 1995:45-46).

Regarding episcopate, Ignatius of Antioch taught that the church is a community of believers gathered around a single local bishop (monoepiscopate), who is helped in his ministry by presbyters and deacons. Soon, his threefold ministry model of bishop, presbyter (later "priest"), and deacon became the norm for the Christian church and was extended in the next century to envision a communion of bishops who all claimed their continuity with the teaching of the apostles. Apostolicity was used not only to validate writings as Scripture but also to make bishops legitimate and authoritative interpreters of the tradition (Stewart 2005:74-75).

4.4.1.2   Liturgical celebration

Baptism and Eucharist were considered as initiation into the community and nurturing of faith. Baptism allowed believers to participate in the Eucharist, which was celebrated weekly on Sundays in obedience to Jesus' command at the Last Supper (Lk 22:19). The Eucharist became the typical form of Christian communal worship and soon became a distinct rite consisting of biblical readings, a kiss of peace, prayers, and the sharing of blessed bread and wine. Early Christians considered the Eucharist as a genuine reception of the body and blood of Jesus Christ in the form of bread and wine (Stewart 2005:77). For example, Justin Martyr (*First Apology* 66.2) said:

> For we do not receive these things as common bread nor common drink; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Savior having been incarnate by God's logos took both flesh and blood for our salvation, so also we have been taught that the food eucharistized through the word of prayer that is from Him…is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who became incarnate.

By the third and fourth centuries, the standard texts for the anaphora, central Eucharistic prayer, was in place characterised by Jewish prayer of thanksgiving, blessing, and petition, but gradually replaced by sacrificial language and symbolism of Christ's death and resurrection (Stewart 2005:79).

Throughout the latter half of the fourth century, the liturgy like meditation on the Scriptures became privileged means of contemplative exercise and ascent. For instance, the mystagogical and catechetical homilies of Cyril of Jerusalem (AD 315-86) and Ambrose of Milan (AD 339-97) presented liturgy as both a means of Christian catechesis and a spiritual exercise through which the soul perceives God and is transformed mysteriously. Thus the liturgical celebrations of the sacraments of baptism, the Eucharist, and ordination came to be regarded as unique occasions of *theosis* (deification) (Dysinger 2005:258).

4.4.1.3   Mysticism

The patristic period is characteristic of mystical theology, mystical exegesis, mystical prayer, and mystical contemplation. Sheldrake (1995:46) says:

> The patristic period, in the limited sense of the early Christian centuries, was a formative time both for the fundamentals of doctrine and for what has been called 'mystical theology'….Mystical theology aimed to provide a context for the direct apprehension of God who is revealed in Christ and within us as the Spirit….When we talk about the 'mystical theology' of this period, we must be careful not to confuse it with the later medieval fascination in the West with subjective experience or with the development of a detailed itinerary for the spiritual journey. Patristic 'mysticism' is neither abstract nor systematic. It refers to the personal life of the Christian who knows God as revealed in Christ by belonging to the fellowship of the 'mystery'. This means the mystery of Christ as expressed in the Bible and the liturgy as well as in personal Christian living.

For Origen (AD 185-254), "mysticism was an experience of the inner person and the spiritual senses, a deeper realisation of the mind's capacities rather than an ecstatic surpassing of them." He also encouraged personal and spiritual readings of the Bible. Following Origen, Evagrius of Pontus (AD 345-99), emphasised identifying distracting thoughts and taught pure or imageless prayer. He stressed the rational mind's self-realisation in prayer. However, Pseudo-Macarius from the late fourth-century emphasised the heart rather than mind and was emotionally *warm* compared to Evagrius. These two figures, Evagrius and Pseudo-Macarius were progenitors of later spiritual theologies. John Cassian's (AD 360-432) prayer, however, was both pure and imageless and marked by tears, a combination of Evagrius and Pseudo-Macarius. The synthesis of these two approaches to prayer proved to be of great importance for later development of prayer and spiritual experience (Stewart 2005:80-81).

Dionysius the Aereopagite, from the early sixth century, known as Pseudo-Dionysius, also wrote liturgical prayer which celebrated the apophatic divine darkness (mystical theology) and the radiantly kataphatic creation (the celestial and ecclesiastical hierarchies) (Dysinger 2005:258). To him the

liturgy was fundamental and central and was a means of drawing believers back to union with God. His symbolic interpretation of the liturgy began a significant tradition of liturgical commentary in the Byzantine world (Stewart 2005:82).

Augustine of Hippo (AD 354-430) was perhaps the most important person in Western theology, not only during the patristic period, but also during the next thousand years. A major influence on Augustine and his spiritual life was Neoplatonism in which he found a doctrine of the soul—through purification and contemplation it can rise to God—and also man's frailty and his need for some kind of assistance in search for God. The mystical ascent of the soul is a "movement of withdrawal from the world and into oneself, a movement that involves purification and the acquiring of the virtues, leading to contemplation of God" (Louth 1986:136). Augustine's spiritual theology was formed by two principle themes: the primacy of charity (love), both divine and human, and the insights into God's nature and the human search for God. To Augustine, God's presence is spiritual and can be sought by the rational mind, which is also immaterial and spiritual (Stewart 2005:83). Louth (1986:140) says about the significance of love in Augustine's theology, "Augustine sees the importance of love as preventing us from being 'content with the world's darkness which through habit has become pleasant.'" For Augustine, the dynamism of the Trinity is analogous to the intellectual faculties of recollection, contemplation, and love (Stewart 2005:83).

As seen in Augustine's writings, in the patristic period, mystical contemplation was combined with reason and exegesis. Sheldrake (1995:46) argues, "In patristic theology biblical exegesis, speculative reasoning, and mystical contemplation are fused into a synthesis." Biblical exegesis tended to be mystical. Dysinger (2005:257) says that Irenaeus of Lyons (AD 200), Clement of Alexandria (AD 215), and Origen (AD 185) applied middle and Neo-platonic notions of ethical purification (*katharsis*), contemplative vision (*theōria*), and mystical exegesis (*allegoria*) to the Christian Scriptures and to spiritual theology, and yielded methods of biblical interpretation and models of spiritual progress.

4.4.1.4   Martyrdom

After the elements of the New Testament, no other factor has had more lasting importance in constituting Christian spirituality than martyrdom. Up to the period of Constantine, the Church was illegal. Adherence to the Church meant the acceptance of the ban of ordinary society to the extent of direct threat to life and confiscation of possessions. The literature of martyrdom abounds. The Acts of the martyrs are the simple verbal records of official judgements. *Acts of St Justin and his companions, Acts of the martyrs of Scillium in Africa,* and *Preconsular acts of St Cyprian* are some examples. There are other theological writings inspired by martyrdom. *The epistles of St Ignatius of Antioch* and *the exhortations to martyrdom* are of that kind (Bouyer 1963:190-192). The spiritual writings of early Christians that mention prayer, the vision of God, and spiritual progress are also strongly coloured by the threat of persecution and possible martyrdom (Dysinger 2005:256-257). Stewart (2005:84) says of martyrs' faith:

> Their [martyrs'] commitment was to more than a lifestyle or philosophy. The Acts of ordinary men and women demonstrate that it was the courage of faith, not theological sophistication, that gave martyrs the strength to choose death rather than apostasy….A devotional consequence of persecution was the cult of the martyrs, which began in the form of honouring them in their burial places. In this practice lay the beginning of Christian veneration of saints.

The following document expresses the desire for martyrdom expressed powerfully in the *Epistle to the Romans* (Ign 4-7):

> I am writing to all the Churches and state emphatically to all that I die willingly for God, provided you do not interfere. I beg you, do not show me unseasonable kindness. Suffer me to be the food of wild beasts, which are the means of my making way to God. Gods' wheat I am, and by the teeth of wild beasts I am to be ground that I may prove Christ's pure bread. Better still, coax the wild beasts to become my tomb and to leave no part of my person behind: once I have fallen asleep, I do not wish to be a burden to anyone. Then only shall I be a genuine disciple of Jesus Christ when the world will not see even my body. Petition Christ in my behalf that through these instruments I may prove God's sacrifice….At last I am well on the way to being a disciple. May nothing *seen or unseen,*

fascinate me, so that I may happily make my way to Jesus Christ! Fire, cross, struggles with wild beasts, wrenching of bones, mangling of limbs, crunching of the whole body, cruel tortures inflicted by the devil—let them come upon me, provided only I make my way to Jesus Christ….Do not have Jesus Christ on your lips, and the world in your hearts. Give envy no place among you. And should I upon arrival plead for your intervention, do not listen to me. Rather, give heed to what I write to you….My Love [eros] has been crucified, and I am not on fire with the love of earthly things. But there is in me a *Living Water,* which is eloquent and within me says: "Come to the Father." I have no taste for corruptible food or for the delight of this life. *Bread of God* is what I desire; that is, the Flesh of Jesus Christ, *who was of the seed of David;* and for my drink I desire His blood, that is, incorruptible love [*agape*].

It is not death itself that martyrs sought, but it is Jesus Christ with whom they suffered (Bouyer 1963:199).

4.4.1.5   Asceticism

Martyrdom inspired other forms of Christian devotion. Asceticism is the sustained practice of physical and spiritual disciplines. It was a part of early Christian practice reflecting the ascetical orientation of some Jewish groups. It was not always clear to distinguish between unusual piety and elitist sectarianism. The latter are some groups or individuals who separated themselves from the larger church claiming perfection or true Christianity. They emphasised strict fasts, mandatory celibacy, and charismatic leadership. Such were Tatian's *Encratites* (from *enkrateia* or discipline) or the prophecy-oriented Montanists, and they made themselves an alternative church rather than a movement within the church. Ecclesial asceticism can be found in the *Sons and daughters of the covenant* of Syriac Christianity, who practiced celibacy in service to the church. In the fourth century, asceticism was formally integrated into the larger church through the emergence of monasticism and episcopal consecration of virgins. The apocryphal *Acts* and *Gospels* shed light on early Christian asceticism and illustrate the affinities between asceticism and martyrdom, the formative themes of monasticism (Stewart 2005:84-85).

4.4.1.6   Monasticism

The phenomenal success of monasticism in the fourth century was partly due to a popular desire to preserve the spirituality of the church of martyrs. Asceticism within and outside the church also provided a ground for monasticism. Both monks and nuns were new models of spiritual heroism, and their spiritual practices coupled with geographical remoteness reflected their rejection of worldly culture. It was in the monasteries that methods of liturgical and private prayers were formalised that used kataphatic (image-filled) psalmody and silent apophatic (imageless) self-offering alternatively. Antony (AD 251-356) is regarded as the greatest hero and model of monasticism (Dysinger 2005:257).

Stewart (2005:86) describes Antony as follows:

> Antony becomes the prototypical monk, renouncing an ordinary relationship with the world for the sake of another kind of relationship, and setting the normal issues of human existence against the backdrop of eternity and the vastness of the desert. Antony withdraws both geographically and psychologically, his ever-greater physical withdrawal echoing his deeper and deeper confrontation with himself and the 'demons' that oppress him. Antony's teaching on the psychodynamics of temptation echoes the tradition of discernment of spirits found as early as the *Shepherd of Hermas* and developed by Origen in book 3 of *On First Principles.*

The desert school of spirituality in fourth century Egypt emphasised rigorous self-examination in order to focus on God past the internal and external forces of subversion. This tradition was systematised by Evagrius of Pontus and passed on to John Cassian in the West and to Gregory the Great. The goal of the monastic movement was not so much moral regulation as freedom from emotional and psychological disturbances for unceasing prayer and love of God and neighbour. Unlike Antony, Pachomius (AD 292-346) abandoned solitude to form a community of monks that prayed, worked, and ate together in a very ordered and cloistered ascetic community. The two models of monasticism, solitary (anchoritic) and communal (cenobitic), found many adherents, and monasticism became "typical Christianity" in the East

dominating spiritual theology and liturgical development. It appeared in the West later (Stewart 2005:86-87).

When the persecutions and martyrdom ceased, it was monasticism that condensed the development of Christian spirituality. However, it should be remembered that the whole church did not become monastic. While monasticism was nurtured in the church, monasticism reciprocally left the teaching which became the common possessions of the whole church (Bouyer 1963:523-524).

4.4.1.7   Summary of the patristic period

- **Doctrinal polemics**: The early Christian church worked out the central characteristics of its understanding of God, Christ, and redemption, and developed monotheism, the Trinity, and Christology.
- **Biblical and pastoral theology**: The unifying feature of the era was the Bible. Its theology was an exegetically based interpretation of the Scriptures for fuller Christian faith and life. Theology was also pastoral involving the life of the Church.
- **Liturgical celebration**: The liturgical celebrations of the sacraments of baptism, the Eucharist, and ordination were regarded as unique occasions of *theosis* (deification).
- **Mysticism**: The patristic period is characteristic of mystical theology, mystical exegesis, mystical prayer, and mystical contemplation. Mystical biblical exegesis, speculative reasoning, and mystical contemplation are also fused into a synthesis.
- **Martyrdom**: The spiritual writings of early Christians that mention prayer, the vision of God, and spiritual progress are strongly coloured by the threat of persecution and possible martyrdom.
- **Asceticism**: Asceticism as the sustained practice of physical and spiritual disciplines was a part of early Christian practice and together with martyrdom provided the formative themes of monasticism.
- **Monasticism**: The goal of the monastic movement was not so much moral regulation as freedom from emotional and psychological disturbances for unceasing prayer and love of God and neighbour.

There are two models of monasticism, solitary (anchoritic) and communal (cenobitic). Monasticism became typical Christianity in the East.

4.4.2 The medieval West (AD 600-1450)

Medieval spirituality was formed in a social environment shaped by deep divisions in social rank, gender status, and wealth with a concentration of power and knowledge on a few. Holiness found its expression in a disciplined life of prayer, asceticism, loyalty to ecclesiastical authority, pastoral care of others, and the thorough keeping of liturgical hours. Medieval spirituality was in general public and communal being tied to a wider range of issues than personal growth. The medieval millennium can be divided into three developmental phases: early medieval (sixth through eleventh centuries); the second phase (eleventh to thirteenth centuries); late medieval (mid-thirteenth through early fifteenth centuries) (Wiethaus 2005:106-110).

4.4.2.1   Early medieval spirituality (sixth to eleventh centuries)

During this period, the patristic synthesis—biblical exegesis, speculative reasoning, and mystical contemplation—from the previous era continued to dominate (Sheldrake 1995:48). At the same time, the Roman Church's adaptation of Roman administrative structures and the steady influx of indigenous practices to Christian spirituality brought forth Western monasticism and the Roman Catholic Church. Two religious leaders of sixth century epitomise the medieval spirituality of this period: St Benedict of Nursia (AD 480-547), the founder of Benedictine monasticism and mysticism, and Pope St Gregory the Great (AD 540-604), a prolific writer, gifted administrator, and pastoral counsellor. Both men integrated Roman and local indigenous traditions and laid the foundation for the growth of medieval spirituality (Wiethaus 2005:110-111).

4.4.2.1.1 Benedictine spirituality

Benedict lived a monastic life and wrote his *Rule* to a fellow Christian who is seeking God in the context of monasticism. The Rule was written in the sixth-century monastery at Monte Cassino which was a lay institution where

Christians came to live a consecrated life without aspiring to sacred Orders. It was only centuries later that the clerical element in Benedictine monasteries became dominant.

(a) *Lectio divina.* One of the major themes of the Rule is *lectio divina,* a daily reading of the Scriptures with meditation and prayer. *Lectio* means "careful, reflective, frequent reading of scripture so that its meaning and application to our individual lives might penetrate to the heart and becomes a living, transforming reality in shaping our inner lives" (Benedict *Rule* 1-13). Daily reading of the Scripture is balanced with daily manual labour. "Idleness is the enemy of the soul. Therefore, all the community must be occupied at definite times in manual labor and at other times in *lectio divina*" (Benedict *Rule* 48.1).

(b) Obedience is another key theme in the Rule. Actually, it permeates the whole of the Rule. The prologue to the Rule says the following:

> It is not easy to accept and persevere in obedience, but it is the way to return to Christ, when you have strayed through the laxity and carelessness of disobedience. My words are addressed to you especially, whoever you may be, whatever your circumstances, who turn from the pursuit of your own self will and ask to enlist under Christ, who is Lord of all, by following him through taking to yourself that strong and blessed armor of *obedience* [italics mine] which he made his own on coming into our world
>
> (Benedict *Rule* Prologue.1)

An order from a superior must be obeyed without delaying for a moment, as though it came from God himself. Obedience is also rewarding if it is carried out in a way that is not fearful, nor slow, nor half-hearted, nor marred by murmuring (Benedict *Rule* 5.1-5.4). Spearritt (1986:153) says, "It is a hard saying to many modern ears, but there can be no doubt that total obedience is of the essence of Benedictine spirituality." "They cannot count even their bodies and their wills as their own" (Benedict *Rule* 33:1).

(c) Humility. This is another core of St Benedict's teachings contained in the *Twelve steps of humility* in the seventh chapter of the Rule. Wiethaus (2005:112) explains the twelve steps:

> Geared toward the harmonious cooperation of the monastic community and the liberation of the human spirit from the infantilising push and pull of human 'sins and vices'…the twelve steps of humility paradoxically invert the image of a fierce warrior in stressing absolute mastery over the self and its passions. The steps include fear of God, doing Gods' will at all times, obeying the abbot (as long as the abbot fulfils his responsibilities), patient endurance of suffering, regular confession, ungrudging acceptance of menial work, regarding oneself as lesser than all other monks, following the rule with attentiveness, embracing silence, avoiding laughter, and speaking only with gentleness; in short, conducting oneself with humility at all times.

This following of Christ in humility and obedience is not an ascetical imposition for monks and nuns, but it is the only way for the sinful creation to achieve the joy and fulfilment of Christ (Benedictine *Rule* 26).

(d) Silence. St Benedictine values silence and recommends it. Silence is an expression of humility, and by definition a monk is a disciple and should want to listen more than to speak. Silence characterise the monastery at all times, but especially at night and in all places (Spearritt 1986:154).

4.4.2.1.2 St Gregory

Wiethaus (2005:113) contends, "If St Benedict created the stable foundation of medieval monasteries, St Gregory the Great (AD 540-604) must be credited with bridging biblical and European cultures and forging the parameters of the multicultural encounter that defined early medieval spirituality." His structured reflection on Christian life and doctrine in a dialectic of presence and absence, faith and knowledge, dark and light bridges the gap between the patristic world and the Middle Ages. Almost all the later vocabulary of the West regarding the spiritual life has its origin in Gregory's integration of the vocabulary of Cassian and Augustine (Ward 1986a:278).

(a) *Dialogue.* Becoming a model for later hagiography, *Dialogue* of St Gregory attempted to demonstrate that the Italy of his own era was a second Holy Land filled with amazing wonder-workers evoking the patriarchs and prophets of the Bible. All four books of the Dialogue present paradigmatic Christian encounters with indigenous religious practices in narrative form and were widely read during the medieval times. For example, the *Life and miracles of St Benedict,* the second book of the *Dialogue,* was one of the most influential writings of the Middle Ages produced by St Gregory's monastic interests (Wiethaus 2005:113). Gregory (*Dialogue* 2.35) describes Benedict at prayer:

> Long before the night office began, the man of God was standing at his window, where he watched and prayed while the rest were still asleep. In the dead of night he suddenly beheld a flood of light shining down from above more brilliant than the sun, and with it every trace of darkness cleared away. Another remarkable sight followed….[T]he whole world was gathered up before his eyes in what appeared to be single ray of light.

(b) The two lives: active and contemplative. St Gregory (quoted by Leclercq, Vandenbroucke, & Bouyer 1968:10) describes the active life and contemplative life as follows:

> The active life consists in giving bread to the hungry, in teaching wisdom to him who knows it not, in bringing the wanderer back to the right way, in recalling one's neighbour to the path of humility from that of pride, in giving to each what he needs, in providing for those who are committed to our care. In the contemplative life, however, while maintaining with his whole heart the love of God and his neighbour, a man is at rest (*quiescere*) from exterior works, cleaving by desire to his Maker alone, so that, having no wish for action and treading underfoot all preoccupations, his soul is on fire with longing to see the face of his creator.

Leclercq et al (1968:10-11) explains that although the impression that St Gregory gives is that the active life is for the salvation of others by our labours and the contemplative for our own salvation through the work of prayer, the two lives are two kinds of activity, asceticism and prayer, that are complementary, and both activities have their place in each life. In reality, the

two lives are only two forms of the same charity. That is, both are our means of union with God. Referring to the two lives, Wiethaus (1986:113) says:

> Mirroring his own active life, St Gregory stressed the complementary function of action and contemplation. He taught prayer and the meditative reading of Scripture eventually allow the soul to experience divine presence, which in turn prepares and strengthens the soul for the active life.

(c) Continuous conversion. Ward (1986a:279) claims that St Gregory presented one of the main themes of Western spirituality: the continual conversion of the soul throughout life. The whole life of a believer is gradually freed from the bonds of earth and gets to see all things in the light of God in perspective, but the full union with him is fulfilled after death.

> The soul illumined by the light of God, sees its own weakness and what is contrary to God in itself and continues more ardently the process of repentance, in a dialectic of self-knowledge and the knowledge of God by love. The teaching permeated the monastic Middle Ages in the West, giving both theology and vocabulary to barbarian Christians for them to use and to develop.

(Ward 1986a:280)

4.4.2.2   High Middle Ages (eleventh to thirteenth centuries)

The demands of an increasing urban educated population increased the need for literacy and instruction coupled with concerns for Christian unity and integrity (Wiethaus 2005:114). The High Middle Ages is characteristic of contemplative textual spirituality and the mendicant movement.

4.4.2.2.1 Contemplative textual spirituality

The eleventh century to thirteenth century saw an enormously analytical attentiveness to processes of contemplative reading, writing, and textual exegesis. This contemplative text-driven spirituality found its expression first in monasteries, soon expanded to cathedral school and universities, and then entered the world of laity. It was also the period of the Twelfth-century renaissance.

(a) Monastic reform. The distinctiveness of this era is a monasticisation of spirituality throughout the church in which ascetic spirituality of the monks became the norm for the devout Christians, especially for the clergy. Poverty, solitude, silence, fasting, and manual work without many of the established structures of monastic houses characterise this reform movement. The movement took two forms: hermits living in solitude, and groups of monks living together in corporate solitude. The most successful group was the Cistercians who wished to follow the *Rule of St Benedict* to the last dot. St Bernard of Clairvaux was the dominant spiritual influence in Europe at this time. (Ward 1986b:285-287).

Bernard's central theme was his specific concern with the analysis of the soul in its relationship with God. His mystical theology of love and knowledge established a school of spirituality of lasting influence. He followed Augustine and Gregory the Great to begin a psychological exploration of the soul, an inner pilgrimage through which the believer could experience the love of God. In his treatise *On the love of God,* Bernard analyses this process with four degrees of love: a carnal love of self, a mercenary love of God for what he gives to that self, a filial love of God out of duty, and a wedded love of God in which the soul loves God for himself and itself. In the commentary to the Song of Songs, Bernard makes the pursuit of love the sole aim of the monk. However, the main emphasis of Bernard is action as the fruit and overflow of the intimacy of the soul with God (Ward 1986b:287-288).

> The man who is wise, therefore, will see his life as more like a reservoir than a canal. The canal simultaneously pours out what it receives; the reservoir retains the water till it is filled, then discharges the overflow without loss to itself….Today there are many in the church who act like canal, the reservoirs are far too rare (*Song of songs* 1970 18.3).

Ward (1986b:291) summarises this period as follows:

> The changes in monastic spirituality in this period were of profound importance for the devotional life of Europe. Many of those concerned with reform in the Church in this period were also monks of the new orders or under their influence, and saw monastic life as the ideal Christian way. This led to the

monasticisation of Christian spirituality….The contact of monastic spirituality with a wider circle than the monks themselves…led to a greater vigour in the art of prayer, and produced some of the most beautiful devotional works of the Middle Ages.

(b) Twelfth-century renaissance. The twelfth century intellectual renaissance was different from the Renaissance of three centuries later. While the Renaissance was to break with the genius of the Middle Ages in almost every sphere, the twelfth century renaissance was to carry on the monastic and patristic culture. In the eleventh century, the monasteries were the only centres of Christian thoughts. As it is said, "the abbeys remained the repositories of the great Christian ideas." However, in the twelfth century, although the monasteries were still strong in intellectual life, theologians and thinkers began to appear outside of them, criticising the monks as mere classifiers and copiers. These new scholars read and studied the Scriptures with the view of the mind rather than the heart. They aimed at theological interpretation and literal exegesis. This renaissance was a foreshadow of the Renaissance that destroyed the Church's monopoly of intellectual life a few centuries later (Leclercq et all 1968:223-225).

During this period, textual spirituality expanded beyond the monasteries to cathedral schools and newly founded universities. The so-called Victorine School of contemplative thought made efforts to systematise and classify religious experiences in light of the Bible with divine and human love at the centre of creation. Some representatives of this academic and textual spirituality are Hugh of St Victor (AD 1100-1141), his student Richard of St Victor, Peter Abelard (AD 1079-1142), and his highly educated wife Heloise (AD 1102-64) (Wiethaus 2005:115). Leclercq and et all (1968:242) claim that the scholastic method of theological research was a new one and foreshadowed the divorce between theology (now definitely science) and mysticism (spiritual life).

(c) Lay spirituality. Textual spirituality also entered the world of the laity, and the laity produced spiritual writings in vernaculars. Women became active in

monastic and lay settings as well despite their minority status in the society. Their writings were accepted as authentic (Wiethaus 2005:116). Sheldrake (1995:72), however, contends that although the monasticism of the Rule of St Benedict, the desire for the apostolic life of poverty, mendicancy, and preaching attracted large numbers of the laity, the new spiritual movement was in part a reaction against increasing clerical domination of official church life and piety. The lay movement in this era was eventually challenged and by the early fourteenth century was effectively condemned. Those groups that were labelled "heretical" were the Waldensians and the Cathars, who maintained a critical distance from the church authority and developed an independent leadership structure (Wiethaus 2005:116-117).

4.4.2.2.2 <u>Mendicant movement</u>

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, the sources of Christianity—the Bible and the Fathers—were being read anew due to the system and techniques developed in the previous century. There were also passionate efforts towards the pure ideal of the Gospel (Leclercq 1968:283). In such an atmosphere the mendicant movement was an attempt to break free from the dominance of the monastic elite in spirituality. It was a move from the stability and separation of the cloister into an itinerant way of life of crusade and preaching (Sheldrake 1995:66). The Franciscan Order founded by St Francis of Assisi (AD 1181-1226) and the Dominican Order founded by St Dominic de Guzman (AD 1170-1221) are seen as attempts to channel within the institutional church the evangelistic aspirations which were driven underground in the previous century (Tugwell 1986a:295). Unlike other contemporary "heretic" spiritual movements, the mendicant movement was accepted by the church through the formal recognition of the way of the life of the friars (Sheldrake 1995:74).

(a) The Dominicans. From the beginning, Dominican spirituality was dominated by a concern to be useful to the souls of the neighbour. The primacy of the apostolic job of preaching relativised the normal conventional practices of piety such as prayer, reading, liturgy, and sacraments. In the apostolic life, poverty was adopted as an essential ingredient. Dominic himself

urged his brethren to make even their convents mendicant too. The Dominican Order taught their friars to trust in God rather than to earn their living since large estates or regular paid work would interfere with their work. Perhaps the most important element of the Dominican Order was study. For example, Dominic himself took his first followers to theology classes in Toulouse and sent them to universities in Paris and Bologna. During the thirteenth century study replaced the traditional practice of manual labour of the monks. The Dominicans also had a pragmatic attitude to piety. Poverty, chastity, and obedience were not values in their own right but means to an end, perfect charity (Tugwell 1986b:296-298)

St Thomas Aquinas (AD 1225-74), a Dominican, saw contemplation as the goal of human life and the vision of God as the final fulfilment. But the "contemplation" in Thomas and other Dominicans is not a process of mystical abstraction but ordinary human thought maturing into wisdom through mental discipline and study. St Albert, teacher of St Thomas, and St Thomas regarded the union of our intellect with God as our final union with God (Tugwell 1986b:298-299).

(b) The Franciscans. Modelling an uncompromising return to apostolic simplicity and devotion, St Francis (AD 1181-1226) lived a life of extreme poverty and in strict obedience to the words of Christ. He went around the world preaching the gospel, tending lepers, writing the rule of living, and always praying. To Francis the sufferings of Christ were ever present with him (Moorman 1986:302-303). His prayer on La Verna reveals his longing for the passion of Christ. He prayed in this way:

> 'My Lord Jesus Christ, I pray You to grant me two graces before I die: the first is that during life I may feel in my soul and in my body, as much as possible, that pain which You, dear Jesus, sustained in the hour of Your most bitter Passion. The second is that I may feel in my heart, as much as possible, that excessive love with which You, O Son of God, were inflamed in willingly enduring such suffering for us sinners.' And remaining for a long time in that prayer, he understood that God would grant it to him, and that it would

soon be conceded to him to feel those things as much as is possible for a mere creature.

(Habig 1991:1448)

Francis' spirituality can be summed up as his total obedience to Christ, his prayer at all times, his desire to suffer with Christ, and his love of nature. Thomas of Celano says of his prayer habit:

> [H]is safest haven was prayer; not prayer of a single moment, or idle or presumptuous prayer, but prayer of long duration, full of devotion, serene in humility. If he began late, he would scarcely finish before morning. Walking, sitting, eating, or drinking, he was always intent upon prayer. He would go alone to pray at night in churches abandoned and located in deserted places, where under the protection of divine grace, he overcame many fears and many disturbances of mind.

(Habig 1991:288)

St Francis worked closely with a female companion, St Clare of Assisi (AD 1194-1253), as in the case of St Benedict and St Scholastica. Clare founded the female branch of the order called the Poor Ladies or Poor Clares. The friars looked after the needs of fellow-sisters, both temporal and spiritual. The Order grew rapidly, and by AD 1300 there were about four hundred houses (Moorman 1986:303-304). For Clare, poverty was the door to contemplation of Jesus since he himself was poor and served the poor. She resisted the continuous pressure to loosen the poverty of the Order (Holt 2005:90).

The human Christ, the Word made flesh, the attachment of Christ to earthly things, and the sharing in the sufferings and joy of Christ are the characteristics of Franciscan spirituality (Moorman 1986:308).

(c) The Third orders. The Franciscan third order called *Apostoli* was added to Franciscan spirituality and became a powerful stimulus for those not called to the life of religious orders. This lay spirituality—not connected with monks and friars—spread and contributed to Franciscan mysticism seriously (Moorman 1986:307). This so-called "third order" lay movement produced extraordinary teachers who gave oral and written instructions.   These

movements flourished either as attachments to the ecclesiastical network or independent movements around charismatic teachers and miracle-workers. The proliferation of these autonomous spiritual movements was curbed by the church authority beginning with the Fourth Lateran Council in AD 1215. The church also implemented the clerical reform, improvement of education, and a stronger emphasis on church rites, especially the Eucharist in an effort to create a unified Christian spirituality. Social problems also prompted the establishment of the Christian lay organisations that took care of orphans, the destitute, chronically ill, and prostitutes. Women's groups, such as the Beguines, were actively caring for the sick and the dying. "Beguine" is a loosely defined term designating religious lay communities of women in Northern Europe, who shared their income and adhered to a common rule of life without supervision of an established order. (Wiethaus 2005:117).

4.4.2.3   Late Middle Ages (Thirteenth to fifteenth centuries)

Late Middle Ages was an era of penitential and apocalyptic themes. Devastating plagues, climatic changes and famines, the Hundred Years War, and a deep institutional crisis of the papacy challenged Christians so much that they reacted with either extremity or calmness. The flagellant movement, the most extreme form of mortification of one's own flesh by whipping it with various instruments, originated in Umbria in AD 1260s because of a sense of imminent social and economic doom. Flagellants led anti-Jewish violence condemning Jewish communities for the plague epidemic. After the second outbreak of the flagellant movement, it was declared heretical by the church. Artistic expressions were also dismal, depicting hyper-realistic images of a tortured Christ on the cross and the re-enactments of the so-called Dance of Death in which a skeleton, that is, Death, leads a group of victims from all walks of life in a round dance. In England, Christian communities also produced liturgical plays with a focus on Christ's suffering and the Last judgement (Wiethaus 2005:118).

4.4.2.3.1 Medieval mysticism

The late Middle Ages saw the continuous development and systematisation of mysticism that diverged into two streams: intellectual and philosophical on

one hand, and affective on the other hand. It was also a division between university trained scholars and lay people.

(a) Meister Eckhart (AD 1260-1328). The Dominican theologian, Eckhart, was a scholar, administrator, preacher, and director of souls. He represents intellectual mysticism. Smith and Davies (1986:317-318) say about Eckhart:

> Eckhart's doctrine is essentially mystical, concerned with the possible union between the human soul and God. Eckhart knew that this possibility rests upon the grace of God, freely given; but he maintained that it also rests upon something within the soul itself, its intrinsic similarity or analogical likeness to God. He sometimes stressed this likeness so much that he seemed to obliterate the distinction between creature and Creator….The soul, which can be satisfied only by the transcendent God, mirrors his transcendence by never resting in any finite object.

The lack of distinction between God and the soul in mystical union, which was Neo-Platonistic pantheism, caused him to be accused of heresy (Holt 2005:91). The proliferation of heresies in Cologne at that time, the rivalry between Dominicans and Franciscans, and the bold, easily misinterpreted vocabulary of German language he used for preaching must have worked against him as well (Smith & Davies1986:316).

(b) Jan van Ruysbroeck (AD 1293-1381). Ruysbroeck drew the two major strands of mysticism, the affective and the intellectual (Holt 2005:93). In his main work, *The spiritual espousals,* Ruysbroeck divides the spiritual path into three stages: the active life of virtue and obedience to the Church, the life of yearning for God or interior life, and the life of contemplation of God. According to him, the true union with God already occurs in the second stage, though intermittently. In this second stage, the inward person may know God without mediation (Davies 1986:322; Holt 2005:93). Holiness in unity, for him, means the discarding of multiplicity or all things opposed to union with the One. It is approaching God with a bare mind. It also means abandoning one's will to God's will and aligning all of one's affection to God without clinging to anything in the world. Finally, it means dying to oneself, "melting" and flowing

into God (Holt 2005:94). Ruysbroeck (1985:146) says of the contemplative life:

> Few persons can attain this divine contemplation because of their own incapacity and because of the hidden, mysterious nature of the light in which one contemplates….[A]ll words and all that can be learned or understood in a creaturely manner are alien to and far beneath the truth which I mean. However, a person who is united with God and enlightened in this truth can understand the truth through itself. To comprehend and understands God as he is in himself, above and beyond all likenesses, is to be God with God, without intermediary or any element of otherness which could constitute an obstacle or impediment

Regarding where he stands, Davies (1986:323) says that linguistically and culturally Ruysbroeck belongs to the *devotio moderna* but that his concern with contemplation and union with God draw him into the Eckharitan school.

(c) English mystics. From the years AD 1000 to 1500 a considerable amount of mystical writings have survived. The four are outstanding: Richard Rolle, the anonymous author of *The Cloud of unknowing,* Walter Hilton, and Julian of Norwich. All of them wrote with directness and purpose to help their readers with basic spirituality. Their writing also reflects rich personal testimony and experiential religion and gives a sound introduction to the devotional life (Wolters 1986:329-330).

The Cloud of unknowing, one of the finest spiritual treatises in the fourteenth century is reminiscent of fourteenth-century mysticism. When going to God, what counts is love, not knowledge (Leclercq, Vandenbroucke, & Bouyer 1968:421). The Cloud was deeply affected by the mystical theology of Pseudo-Dionysius. According to Dionysius or Pseudo-Dionysius (after the sixteenth century), God is described in negative terms because he is infinitely more than human postulation. Human language is limited and cannot be used to describe God accurately. Therefore, the Cloud says that God is incomprehensible to our intellect but by love he may be gotten (Wolters 1986:333).

> It is my wish to leave everything that I can think of and choose for my love the thing I cannot think. Because he can certainly be loved, but not thought. Therefore, though it is good at times to think of the kindness and worthiness of God in particular, and though this is a light and a part of contemplation, nevertheless, it must be cast down and covered over with a cloud of forgetting. You are to step above it stalwartly but lovingly, and with a devout, pleasing, impulsive love strive to pierce that darkness above you. You are to smite upon that thick cloud of unknowing with a sharp dart of longing love.

> (*The cloud of unknowing* ch 6)

Julian of Norwich's (AD 1353-1416) *Showings* accounts her ecstatic vision, sixteen of them. She wrote two accounts of the event, the shorter version and twenty years later the longer version. The longer version of her vision is a comprehensive record of her spirituality with full theological insights. Her greatest emphasis was on the immense love of God for his creation and the human soul. The love of God is expressed the most in the cross and passion of Christ (Wolters 1986:336). She writes about the revelation of love of the blessed Trinity in the eighty-sixth chapter of the longer version of her visions:

> And from the time that it was revealed, I desired many times to know in what was our Lord's meaning. And fifteen years after and more, I was answered in spiritual understanding, and it was said: what, do you wish to know your Lord's meaning in this thing? Know it well, love was his meaning. Who reveals it to you? Love. What did he reveal to you? Love. Why does he reveal it to you? For love. Remain in this, and you will know more of the same. But you will never know different, without end. So I was taught that love is our Lord's meaning. And I saw very certainly in this and in everything that before God made us he loved us, which love was never abated and never will be. And in this love he has done all his works, and in this love he has made all things profitable to us, and in this love our life is everlasting. In our creation we had beginning, but the love in which he created us was in him from without beginning. In this love we have our beginning, and all this shall we see in God without end.

> (Julian of Norwich ch 86)

(d) *Devotio Moderna.* The *Devotio Moderna* was a movement that eschewed their concern with contemplation and speculative theology and stressed

simple piety and asceticism. Originating from Gerard Groot, the movement developed through collaboration between lay people and clergy. The unfaithfulness of the monks and the other religious to their vocation, the greediness and incontinence of the clergy, and false mystics tinged with pantheism, led Groot to a realistic conception of spiritual life: conversion of heart, virtue, the endurance of trials, the apostolate, and eternal salvation. For Groot, contemplation was not an intellectual aspect but a practice with the perfection of charity. In practicing virtues, there is no other way than the imitation of the manhood of Christ (Davies 1986:324; Leclercq et all 1968:429-430).

Among the most representative of the *Devotio Moderna* is the *Imitation of Christ,* the work of Thomas à Kempis (AD 1379-1471). Composed of four books, the *Imitation* stresses the interior life and the Eucharist. After the extreme speculation and intellectualism of the era, the church needed to return to the absolute primacy of love, to a simple conformity to Christ, and to a more realistic view and demands of Christian life. According to Thomas, learning is not enough. An uncompromising renunciation of the world is needed. At the centre is the uplifting power of love (Davies 1986:324; Leclercq at all 1968:439). Thomas says:

> If you would understand Christ's words fully and taste them truly, you must strive to form your whole life after His pattern….If you knew the whole Bible by heart, and the sayings of all the philosophers what would all that profit you without the love of God and His grace?

> (*Imitation* 1.1)

> Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing wider, nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller or better in heaven or in earth; for love is born of God, and cannot rest but in God, above all created things….Love is submissive and obedient to superiors; in its own eyes mean and contemptible, towards God devout and thankful; always trusting and hoping in Him, even when it does not taste the savour of God's sweetness; for there is no living in love without some sorrow. Whosoever is not ready to suffer all things, and to stand resigned to the will of his Beloved, he is not worthy to be called a lover. A lover must willingly embrace all that is hard

and bitter for the sake of his Beloved, and never suffer himself
to be turned away from Him by any obstacle whatsoever.

(*Imitation* 3.5)

4.4.2.4   Summary of the medieval West

The medieval millennium was the era of forming a common European spiritual tradition. Vastly different belief systems from various indigenous European traditions, Judaism, and the Mediterranean cultures all forged into Christian spirituality gradually with creative reinterpretation of biblical and patristic traditions. The bold spiritual movements of the medieval West offer rich resources and challenges: a wide spectrum of recorded mystical experiences, radical poverty, and a profound acceptance of suffering and death (Wiethaus 2005:120). According to Sheldrake (1995:49-51, 67-83), the historian, the medieval spirituality can be summed up as follows:

- **Monastic and clerical spirituality**. Monastic spirituality, though challenged during the thirteenth century, dominated the church. The priorities of clerical over lay and majority over minority were characteristic of this time. Lay spirituality emerged but was challenged by the official church authorities, and the acceptance of significant lay movements was not until several centuries later. The mendicant movement, however, found acceptance through the formal recognition of the lifestyle of the friars, especially the Franciscans.

- **Contemplative, textual, devotional development**. The monastic-contemplative approach to spirituality with its effort to transcend time and place marked the early and middle medieval times. In the twelfth-century renaissance, new intellectual and textual content of spirituality was also developed. The growth of mystical, devotional spirituality was the most significant development of the late medieval time with its emphasis on the popular need for the specific—for sacred places and objects. Germany especially was so notable for the proliferation of devotion spirituality and anticlericalism that they accepted the Reformation readily.

- **Subjective mysticism**. Medieval mysticism saw a shift from the objective mystery of Christ in the earlier era to the subjective, experiential, and mystical experience, and this is partly due to the influence of Pseudo-Dionysius. Interest in individuals and subjective feelings drew the attention of medievalists.

- **Radical spirituality**. Dissent, marginalisation, and radical spirituality were also characteristics of the medieval spirituality. The increasing emphasis on orthodoxy and orthopraxis defined by the institutional church and enforced by secular powers provoked the tendency to heretical beliefs and anticlericalism. Marginalised groups developed a substratum of apocalyptic and spiritual poverty movements along with the disadvantaged classes. From the eleventh century onwards, the increasing emphasis on untrammelled poverty, reading the Bible, preaching, and individual spiritual experience were the characters of radical spirituality, whereas the church tended to emphasise law, finance, and government.

- **Division of spirituality from theology**. The period of spiritual, literary, and artistic creativity of the twelfth-century renaissance divided a theologically sophisticated mainstream and popular fervour even more. It was a division of knowledge and affectivity, spirituality from theology. By the end of the Middle Ages, the interior and personal spiritual life moved to a marginal position in relation to culture as a whole.

- **Women spirituality**. Although the number of religious women and female preachers was growing, by the mid-medieval times the clerical status of women and their exercise of spiritual leadership decreased. On a certain level women had greater opportunities for religious roles in the society by the late thirteenth century. However, they were more effectively excluded from the exercise of authority or active ministry than the previous century.

4.4.3 Eastern Orthodox

Based on the traditions of Greek theology and the ecumenical councils up to AD 787, the Eastern Church developed distinctive emphases that differed from those of the West. Its basic theology was strongly Trinitarian based on the early councils. According to Eastern Orthodox, "God is not a monad, but a triad, a mystery of communion in which each Self or hypostasis of the Trinity remains itself even as it exists wholly in the Other" (Wesche 1999:41).

4.4.3.1   Theosis

The nature and aim of Eastern Orthodox spirituality can be summed up as in the patristic principle that God became human without ceasing to be God so that humanity might become God without ceasing to be human. The term *theosis* or *deification* summarises the second half of the principle—God became human that humanity might become God—and signifies the soteriological consequence of the incarnation for humanity. This union with God (Jn 17:21) is possible to obtain when one learns to die in the mystery of Christ, and it is the goal of *theosis.* The *theosis* heals the separation from God, unites believers with God, and liberates them from death through the work of the Spirit of Christ. *Theosis* is a nuptial mystery in which God and humanity become one as bridegroom and bride (Wesche 1999:29-32). Wesche (1999:32) says about the substance of *theosis* as follows:

> The significance of the evangelical proclamation that 'the Logos became flesh and dwelt among us' lies in the claim that by his incarnation, the Logos has made himself one with the world; by his ascension he has made the world one with heaven; and in pouring out his Spirit on all flesh, he has filled all things with the properties of divinity, the treasures of heaven, that is to say, with the light and life, the wisdom and power of God. Mortality is filled with immortality, corruption with incorruption, darkness with light, ignorance with *gnosis,* nature with Spirit, earth with heaven.

4.4.3.2   Jesus Prayer

The "Jesus Prayer" emerged between the fifth and the eighth centuries deeply influencing the Christian East. It is the remembrance or invocation of the name of Jesus with frequent repetition. The standard form is "Lord Jesus

Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me" with many other variations. The four main elements of the Jesus Prayer are as follows:

(1) Devotion to the Holy name 'Jesus', which is felt to act in a semi-sacramental way as a source of power and grace.
(2) The appeal for divine mercy, accompanied by a keen sense of compunction and inward grief (*penthos*).
(3) The discipline of frequent repetition.
(4) The quest for inner silence or stillness (*hésuchia*), that is to say, for imageless, non-discursive prayer.

(Ware 1986a:176)

In the second half of the fifth century, St Diadochus, Bishop of Photice in northern Greece, was a decisive catalyst of the Jesus Prayer. He was influenced both by Evagrius and by Macarian Homilies: understanding of prayer as the putting away of thoughts from Evagrius and an affective emphasis upon the spiritual senses, feelings, and conscious experiences from the Homilies. The invocation of Jesus, therefore, reaches out beyond language into silence and intuitive awareness, and it also leads to a feeling of warmth in the heart. Between the fifth and the eighth centuries, the Jesus Prayer came to be recognised as a spiritual way and by the fourteenth century it became frequent in the Byzantine and Slav world (Ware 1986a:177-184).

4.4.3.3   Icon

From AD 726 until AD 843, the Eastern Church struggled with the Iconoclast controversy. The use of icons in the church's worship was formally endorsed in AD 787 (the seventh Ecumenical Council), but the definitive restoration of icons to the church was not until AD 843. The dispute was about the legitimacy and the veneration of icons. Iconoclasts (icon-smashers) argued that worship should be restricted to the mind alone, whereas iconodules (icon-venerators) claimed that the making of icons is in some way a divine work (Ware 1986b:196).

To the Eastern Orthodox the icon is not a mere piece of decoration but a part of liturgy. It is a channel of grace, a point of meeting, and a means of communion. Through the icons of the Mother of God (*theotokos*), the angels,

and the saints, the church walls become windows to eternity. The Orthodox home also becomes "heaven on earth" when lamps are lit, incense is offered, and the family prayers are said before an icon corner or shelf. Through the liturgical function of the icon, Orthodox Christians experience God not only as truth and love, but also as beauty (Ware 1986b:197-198).

4.4.3.4   Apophatic and cataphatic

Two different spiritual paths have been identified in believers' approach to God: apophatic and cataphatic. Apophatic stresses silence, darkness, passivity, and the absence of imagery, whereas cataphatic emphasises images and the positive evaluation of creation or human relationships as contexts for the self-revelation of God. Thus cataphatic theology is interested in God's movement outward or self-manifestation in the cosmos, Scripture, and liturgy, and apophatic theology is concerned with the inward movements to God in the process of denial. These two ways are not mutually exclusive but intricately linked (Sheldrake 1995:199-206).

In regards to methods of prayer, the apophatic way is understood as still, imageless, or even truly contemplative prayer, and the cataphatic way attempts to imagine God using one's imagination and emotions (Holt 2005:75). In the Eastern Orthodox tradition, cataphatic prayer employed the imagination, poetry, music, symbols, and ritual gestures. Praying to the holy icons was a cataphatic way of prayer. On the other hand, apophatic prayer, expressed in the practice of the Jesus Prayer, transcended images and discursive thoughts as commended by Gregory of Nyssa, Evarius, Dionysius and Maximus (Ware 1986b:198). These two different approaches were used in the West as well.

4.4.3.5   Synergy

The word "synergy" (cooperation) was coined by Clement of Alexandria to express the workings of two energies: grace and human will. The idea of synergy has represented the doctrine of the Orthodox Church in these matters. It is first expressed in asceticism and mysticism. The ascetical life is a life in which virtues resulting from human effort, although accompanied by grace, prevail, whereas the mystical life is a life in which the gifts of the Holy Spirit

dominates over human efforts. In other words, in mysticism, infused virtues lead acquired ones. The Greek Fathers distinguished between the "acting" of man and "acted upon." Generally, the spiritual life is a synthesis of the ascetical and mystical life with love as perfection (The essentials of Orthodox spirituality 2000:109-111)

Contemplation is the state believers reach as a result of quieting their souls and the "prayer of simplicity." It is both acquired and infused. It is acquired if the acts of contemplation are of human efforts and infused if divine grace produces it. Infused contemplation leads to the mystical life, the culmination of contemplation. Thus contemplation and mystical union are identified with Christian perfection, which is love (The essentials of Orthodox spirituality 2000:111-114).

An Eastern theologian, Gregory Palamas (AD 1296-1359), a defender of *hesuchia* (stillness), stated that union with God is primarily by God's grace but that the vision of God cannot be attained in this life without hard work. There should be synergy, cooperation between divine grace and human will (Holt 2005:83-84).

4.4.3.6   The holy mysteries of God

The mystery *(mystērion)* of the Orthodox Church is the sacrament of the Latin Church. The mystery, as means of grace, has such an important place in the Orthodox Church that it may be called a "mystic" Church. The Orthodox Church fears familiarity and wants a mystery to remain as a mystery. The three essential mysteries that lead to God are baptism, chrisma (confirmation by unction), and Eucharist, and they are in an ascending order. As the very texture of spiritual life, the baptismal, Pentecostal, and Paschal graces are the realties beyond the signs (*The essential* 2000:114-120).

> The call to baptism is the invitation of Christ...to the Eucharistic wedding feast. This is a call to be united to the death of Christ (see Rom 6:3) and so to pass over to the eschatological marriage feast, the eucharist. In the eschaton, that is, on the shores lying on the other side of the waters of death, one partakes of the divine nature (2 Pet 1:4), this is the

body and blood of Christ, in a never ending celebration of life in the Spirit of Christ....As one becomes ever more mindful of the movement from baptism to eucharist taking place in one's own interior depths, and as one becomes ever more adept at separating one's true self from the snares of egoism and worldly attachments, one learns how to overcome the world in Christ, and to live the life of Christ's eschatological heavenly kingdom in the world....In the transformation of the Eucharistic gifts, the Logos becomes one with the communicants, deifies them, and sends them out into the world—this is the mystery of Pentecost—to be the salt of the earth, bearing witness, in the process of their own transformation in the way of the cross, to the mystery of Christ as the mystery of *theosis*: union with God in divine love.

(Wesche 1999:36-43)

4.4.3.7   Summary of Eastern Orthodox spirituality

- **Theosis**: The aim of Eastern Orthodox spirituality is theosis—God became human so that humanity might become God. Theosis is a nuptial mystery in which God and humanity become one as bridegroom and bride.

- **Jesus Prayer**: Having emerged between the fifth and the eighth centuries, Jesus Prayer deeply influenced the Christian East. It is the remembrance or invocation of the name of Jesus with frequent repetition. The standard form is "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me."

- **Icon**: To the Eastern Orthodox the icon is not a mere piece of decoration but a part of liturgy. It is a channel of grace, a point of meeting, and a means of communion. Through the liturgical function of the icon, Orthodox Christians experience God not only as truth and love but also as beauty.

- **Synergy**: There should be cooperation between divine grace and human will. The spiritual life is a synthesis of the ascetical (human effort) and mystical (gifts of the Holy Spirit) life with love as perfection.

- **Spirituality of the mystery**: The mystery, as means of grace, has such an important place in the Orthodox Church that it may be called a "mystic" Church. The three essential mysteries that lead to God are

baptism, chrisma (confirmation by unction), and Eucharist, and they are in an ascending order.

4.4.4 Protestant spirituality

It is hard to define Protestant and Catholic spirituality in single dimensional terms since these two traditions have developed since the Reformation, and both of them appreciate the plurality of the interpretation and practices of both traditions. Nonetheless, the following can be said as distinct but not exclusive characteristics of Protestant and Catholic spirituality. Primarily, the Protestant spirituality emphasises sole dependence on God, God's word, and eschatological hope. Images or ritual forms that get in the way of the Word of God are questioned, and the expounding of the Scripture and meditation on the Word requires a response of faith. The central task of the Christian is to receive the Word, and ethical purity replaces ritual purity. The Catholic spirituality, however, involves concrete, sacramental instruments as mediation of the gospel message. Rituals actualise our relationship with God, and the sacraments fulfil the proclamation of the Word. Both ethical and ritual purity are the expressions of the presence of God. Secondly, the Catholic spirituality emphasised the unity of the community, images, and mysticism. If the Middle Ages were more concerned with a system of mediation through the Church, sacraments, and the intercession of saints, the Protestant Reformation adopted the immediacy of communion with God. Thirdly, while Catholic spirituality maintained a double standard by which the highest kind of spirituality is found in religious communities with a total focus on God and a detachment from worldly concerns, Protestantism favoured a single standard of holiness based on justification by faith rejecting the "works-righteousness" of monasticism (Sheldrake 1995:206-210).

4.4.4.1   Reformation spirituality

The fundamental mark of Reformation spirituality is the principle of divine monergism, that God initiates and accomplishes everything in the work of salvation. The two vital elements of the Reformation spirituality are the depravity of human will and the unconditional love of God (Sheldrake 1995:210). Sheldrake (1995:210-211) continues:

> In light of God's sovereign initiative, the theological bases for Reformation spirituality, as opposed to traditional Catholic spirituality, may be reduced to four classical slogans: *grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone and Scripture alone* [Italics mine]. These, it has been argued, are stronger than merely alternative emphases because the Reformers believed that humans were quite incapable through sin of even *desiring* to be reconciled. God, therefore, completely overrides corrupt human will in order to redeem….The 'God emphasis' of the Reformers therefore completely reverses the conventional ideas of spirituality whereby the soul seeks God, ascends to the spiritual plane and the sinner can and must strive to come to God. On the contrary, God alone seeks, strives and descends to us.

Tripp (1986a:342) lists the following as the determinative of Reformation spirituality: the view of individual salvation as the prime purpose of the Incarnation; an all-pervasive sense of personal and corporate sin; a terrible urgency in the awareness of moral responsibility, especially in association with a preoccupation with personal eschatology. All these elements are based on the humanity of Jesus, specifically his sufferings.

Luther's emphasis on justification and Calvin's intensive treatment of sanctification are also two hallmarks of Reformation spirituality. Lovelace (2000:215-217) says that it was the absence of justification as a theological category in pre-Reformation spirituality that made Reformers react against western Catholic spirituality. Luther felt that the spirituality of all Catholics was affected by this justification gap since they believed they were justified in the process of being sanctified. They were unaware of the imputed righteousness of Christ.

4.4.4.2   Lutheran spirituality

In AD 1517, Martin Luther (AD 1483-1545), an Augustinian monk, posted ninety-five theses for debate at the University of Wittenberg. He taught that grace is free and cannot be earned by works or merits since Jesus Christ merited all the grace needed for justification on the cross. Thus, Christians can only trust in God's promise of justification and respond to God in gratitude (Raitt 2005:124).

4.4.4.2.1 The Word

For Luther, the scriptural Word is both outward and inward, an external sign
and inner experience. The *Logos* is the inner Word, God himself, but for us to
understand and absorb it, the Word must assume concrete shape and come
in flesh. That concrete external Word is Christ. Christ is God's external Word
to man (Hoffman 2000:128). When a sinner trusts in Christ, "the absorption of
the Word makes the soul a sharer in everything that belongs to the Word"
(Luther quoted by Tripp 1986b:345). Only the Word communicates the Spirit,
and only through the Holy Spirit can God's Word open up to a person
(Hoffman 2000:128-129). Luther emphasised preaching on the Scripture,
putting the liturgy in the vernacular and translating the entire Bible into
German all as ways to enhance an encounter with the Word of God (Hanson
2005:416).

4.4.4.2.2 Mystical Christ

Luther used such expressions as "the mystical Christ," "mystical incarnation,"
"mystical theology," and "mystical eyes" when he depicted life in God. He
quoted Bernard of Clairvaux that "mystical theology" is "experimental and
experiential." For Luther, mystical theology was experience of God (Hoffman
2000:127). Hoffman (2000:127-128) continues to say of the mystical theology
of Luther:

> It is the inner, spiritual side of Christian faith. It is what prayer
> leads to. It is the awesome and joyful knowledge, beyond
> purely rational knowledge, that God is present. It is heart
> rather than head, but never the one without the
> other….Luther's frequent use of the adjective 'invisible' points
> to his trusting knowledge that faith always moves into
> dimensions not approachable by reason and logic but
> available to inner experience. Like the mystics, he assumes
> the reality of a supernatural or supernormal realm….[M]ystical
> knowledge *was* part of Luther's spirituality, but it was not free-
> floating; it was rooted in the justifying *kerygma* of Scripture.

Faith is also an "experiential knowledge" for Luther since "faith causes the
heart to be carried away to dwell in things that are invisible." Christ is
historical in that he walked on the earth, but this historical Jesus is at the
same time mystical Christ as the cosmic Lord and mystical Presence. This

double understanding of Christ being both historical and mystical has another important dimension in relation to believers. While Orthodox Lutheran dogmaticians speak of the Christ-*for*-us as the basis of faith, Lutheran pietists emphasise Christ-*in*-us. These two sides of the gospel proclamation, the Christ-for-us of Lutheran orthodoxy and the Christ-in-us of Lutheran pietism are both found in Luther. Luther advocated both the justifying for-you and the sanctifying in-you in his theology. Faith as both historical and inner realities are interlocked for Luther and should never be separated (Hoffman 2000:123-131). Luther's spirituality is Christ-centred faith: union with Christ received by faith (Lovelace 2000:216-217).

4.4.4.2.3 Sacraments

The saving power of God in Christ is present in the Church, not only through the Word, but also through the sacraments. Luther recognised only two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper, although he taught that private confession should continue. He emphasised that baptism is significant lifelong since the Christian is to die to sin and rise to new life daily. Weekly Lord's Supper was the norm in Wittenberg, and in the Lord's Supper Christ's body and blood are believed to be present in, with, and under the bread and wine (Hanson 2005:416). "In Luther's spirituality the word is never separated from the sacraments but is embodied in baptism and the Lord's Supper" (Krey & Krey 2007:183).

4.4.4.2.4 Alternative model to ascent

Luther had serious reservations about monasticism and the ascent model of the Christian life, such as Moses' ascent up Mount Sinai to meet God face to face. For Luther, there are no purgatory, pilgrimages, shrines, and relics that all smack of works-righteousness. The grace of God was viewed as primarily forgiveness, utter dependence on God for salvation, and the equal holiness of service, all of which were basically shaped by Paul's imagery of dying and rising with Christ daily (Hanson 2005:416; Raitt 2005:125).

4.4.4.2.5 Priesthood of all believers and vocations

Luther taught that the function of priests is to go to God, pray for others, and teach them about God. Every believer has such priestly responsibilities although ordained pastors should preside over the public worship service of the Church. Against the notion of vocation as the call to a holier life as a priest or member of a religious order, Luther said God calls people to serve others through their constructive social roles as family members, workers, or civil leaders. The service of a simple farmer is as holy as that of a priest. Luther thus undercut some of the traditional rationale for a special religious life and elevated the significance of ordinary daily life (Hanson 2005:416). For Luther, celibacy is a work and contrary to God's command to increase and multiply. Luther himself married a former nun and urged other religious people to follow his example (Raitt 2005:124).

4.4.4.2.6 Moral life

The ethical and the spiritual are interconnected. For Luther, the moral life is rooted in the mysterious presence of the Cosmic Lord. This inner union of believers with Christ—the mystical element in justification by faith—is the foundation of moral life. The spiritual communion with Christ brings forth active service in life and the doing of justice. In the world, true Christians play a central moral role since Christ is always present with believers in invisible, but real and powerful ways (Hoffman 2000:133). Luther (Hoffman 2000:133-134) says about the moral role of believers through prayers:

> This is a paradox: Christians look like 'poor beggars,' but…it is because of Christians and their prayers and actions that 'power, honor and goods' exist among people. The unrepenting world does not understand this and 'thanks the Christians poorly for it.' When 'the Christians' words and wonders cease…God will end it all; it will all be consumed by fire.' Until that happens, those who are spiritually 'glued' to the Lord are called to 'suffer the stench' from those who do not know the Christ, 'in the same manner as the legs carry the paunch and the reeking belly.'

4.4.4.2.7 <u>Prayer</u>

In prayer, Luther recommended the petitions of the Our Father (the Lord's Prayer) and the use of the Psalms for petition, praise, and thanksgiving. Prayer should not be offered to the Virgin Mary since she is unable to answer prayer. Saints cannot respond to prayer, nor is masses or prayer efficacious for the dead. Christ is the sole mediator of prayer (Raitt 2005:124-125). For Luther prayer is the act of faith *par excellence*, and the powers of darkness attack prayer most sharply. His doctrine about prayer is "without the Word of God the enemy is too strong for us. But he cannot endure prayer and the Word of God." In prayer sinful persons rise so far above themselves that they give the primacy to the honour of God's name, the triumph of God's kingdom, and fulfilment of God's will over the matters of our own safety and deliverance (Tripp 1986b:345-346).

4.4.4.3   Reformed spirituality

The heart of the Christian life is the deeply confident affirmation of experiential faith in God and response to his gracious initiative in both the private relationship with him and corporate expressions of faith. This belief of the Reformed spirituality can be traced back to Swiss Reformation in the sixteenth century led by Hudrych Zwingli (AD 1484-1531) in Zurich and by John Calvin (AD 1509-64) in Geneva. The Protestant denominations are generally called Reformed if they originated on the European continent and Presbyterian if they started in the British Isles (Rice 1991:8-9).

4.4.4.3.1 <u>The spirituality of Zwingli</u>

The primary figure in the Reformed tradition was Huldrych Zwingli. His reform efforts resembled those of Luther, but Zwingli went further.

(a) The supremacy of the Scripture. While Luther allowed whatever is not forbidden by the Scripture, Zwingli taught that only what the Scripture permits is allowed. The piety of Zwinglian Protestant thus was extremely Biblical. The Word of God was the only source and sustainer of the new life in Christ. Zwingli instituted a weekday service called the *prophesying* to promote familiarity with the Word, and the weekday service was as important as the

Sunday liturgy. It was a sort of adult Bible study where the participants shared their understanding of the Word with each other. Zwingli insisted on the scriptural knowledge which is the source of the right knowledge and would cast out ignorance (Hageman 2000:139-140; Raitt 2005:125).

In Zwingli's theology and spirituality, prayer is direct from the heart and needs no intermediary. Since Christ is the sole mediator, there is no need of the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary or of the saints. Erasmus may have influenced him to oppose to the cult of saints. In prayer many words are not necessary, ostentation hypocritical, and the best prayer is a silent prayer for both the individual and the congregation (Dent 1986:348-349).

He also dispensed with all forms of church music including choirs and organs, reduced public prayer to bare minimum, and relegated the Eucharist to a quarterly celebration to remind the believers of the atoning death of Christ, all to emphasise the supremacy of the Word (Hageman 2000:139).

(b) Predominant pneumatology. For Zwingli, the Spirit opens up the heart of the believer, and true religion is totally dependent on the inbreathing of the Spirit, without which man turns to idolatry. The Scriptures themselves therefore must be approached through the work of the Spirit. There is no conflict between these two. The process of justification is also inward and spiritual (Dent 1986:347). For Zwingli, this inward work of the Spirit is essential and even precedes the work of the Scriptures:

> If you want to speak on any matter, or learn of it, you must first think like this: Before I say anything or listen to the teaching of man, I will first consult the mind of the Spirit of God: 'I will hear what God the Lord will speak.' Then you should reverently ask God for his grace, that he may give you his mind and Spirit, so that you will not lay hold of your own opinion but of his. And have a firm trust that he will teach you a right understanding, for all wisdom is of God the Lord. And then go to the written word of the Gospel.

(Zwingli 1953a:88-89)

(c) Theocentric emphasis. For Zwingli, believers are those who have the Spirit of God, know that Christ is their salvation, and rely on the Word. They do not sin, and unbelief is the only mortal sin. This theocentric emphasis is applied to not only the individual believer and the community of the elect but also to the whole life in society: political, social, and even military life. Christian teaching and moral expectations reach into all aspects of life (Dent 1986:347; Raitt 2005:126). This fundamental theocentric emphasis of Zwingli is well expressed as follows:

> Only the eternal and infinite and uncreated God is the basis of faith. Hence the collapse of all that foolish confidence with which some rely upon most sacred things or the most holy sacraments. For it is in God that we must put our firm and sure trust. If we were to trust in the creature, the creature would have to be the Creator. If we were to trust in the sacraments, the sacraments would have to be God….For true piety is the same everywhere and in all men, having its source in one and the self-same Spirit.

> (Zwingli 1953b:247)

4.4.4.3.2 The spirituality of Calvin

Calvin read deeply in the Fathers of the Church. He was also influenced by a Lutheran pastor named Martin Bucer, and it is quite possible that Zwinglian spirituality of Geneva forced him to consider many new questions.

(a) Union with Christ. Calvin's spirituality is based on gratitude for all God has done in Christ (Raitt 2005:127). According to Wilhelm Niesel, one of the best modern interpreters of Calvin, the real centre of Calvinism as a living faith is not predestination or the eternal decrees but the union of Christ with believers. It is the basic reality upon which all other spiritual benefits rest. It is baptism that assures us that we are united with Christ and share in his blessings. The understanding of baptism as a sign of the decision of the convert has brought about consequences for different understanding of the Church and sacraments (Hageman 2000:142).

(b) Faith as inner and outer expressions. Calvin saw the life of faith as unity in both inner and outer expressions (Rice 1991:11). The assurance of the

believer's union with Christ is to be expressed not only in inward feelings but also in outward lives. Ethical life is emphasised in Calvin's spirituality (Hageman 2000:144).

It also needs to be stressed that Calvin did not use the words *justification* and *sanctification* sequentially, as is often the case. He saw them as dual gifts coming from the relationship with Christ. From the time of baptism, the believer is not only made right with God through indwelling Christ but is also enabled to grow continually into the grace and likeness of Christ. The believer's union with Christ and his growth into Christ are closely intertwined (Hageman 2000:144-145):

> For Calvin (3.20.1-14), prayer is the chief exercise of faith and we receive God's benefits from it. The rules of prayer are (1) 'reverence'; (2) 'we pray from a sincere sense of want, and with penitence': (3) 'we yield all confidence in ourselves and humbly plead for pardon'; (4) 'we pray with confident hope.'

The believer's relationship with God is summed up by prayer and a fusion of deep humility with complete confidence (Tripp 1986c:356).

(c) The Church as our Mother. The chapter one of Book Four of the *Institutes* begins with the title "The true Church with which as Mother of all the godly we must keep unity." For Calvin, the Church precedes the individual, and by baptism we are brought into the Church. It is also in the context of the Church that we grow up into Christ by the means of grace. The lonely individual striving alone to achieve sanctification has no place in Calvin's spirituality. It is in the Church that Christian growth takes place and that always as the gift of God in Christ, not as a result of human effort (Hageman 2000:145-146).

Within the Church, the primary agent for spiritual growth is the preaching of the Word. For Calvin, reading and preaching of the Word is what Christ uses to share himself with believers, strengthening and deepening their commitment and assurance. For Reformed spirituality, the Word is the centre of the life of the Church and Christian growth. Calvin differs with Luther here

in that for Calvin the Word empowers the believer for a righteous life, but for Luther the assurance of forgiveness is the final result of the real presence of Christ in the Word (Hageman 2000:146-148).

(d) Importance of liturgy. Calvin departs from Zwingli here by claiming that liturgy is more than preaching and includes prayer, praise, and the celebration of Eucharist. The real purpose of worship is to glorify God, and the real way of glorifying God is by obeying him. Liturgical activities thus enable believers to give God glory in their secular service. For Calvin, Eucharist is the *visible* form of the Word, whereas preaching is the *audible* form of the Word (Hageman 2000:148-150). Gerrish (1982:111-112) puts Calvin's thoughts well: "The very nature of its symbolism suggests to Calvin that the Lord's Supper is a matter of nourishing, sustaining and increasing a communion with Christ to which the Word and baptism have initiated us."

Calvin's spirituality is well summarised by Hageman (2000:151):

> What was the spirituality of John Calvin? Once we have been received into God's new people by baptism, we are given everything that Jesus Christ is and has and are enabled to appropriate it in increasing measure by sharing Christ in the preaching of his Word, in the receiving of his Supper, in the liturgical life of his body, the Church. From the power and the strength which we receive in these ways, we are enabled and expected for obedient service to God in the world which is under his promise.

4.4.4.4   Later Protestant spirituality

The spirituality of Calvin flourished in seventeenth century Scotland among a group known as the Aberdeen Doctors and in Puritan New England. According to *The practice of piety* of Charles Hambrick-Stowe, Puritan piety contains two contradictory strains, one anti-sacramental and the other Calvinistic (Hageman 2000:152-153).

4.4.4.4.1 <u>Puritanism</u>

The name "Puritan" was first applied to those who did not think that the Elizabethan Settlement did not go far enough to reform the English Church.

They were not separatists, though not satisfied with the established Church. Most Puritans were influenced by Calvinism, and they developed Calvin's emphasis on sanctification further. For Puritans, conversion was a necessity not achieved without agony or struggle, and assurance of salvation was crucial. Leaning toward ascetic legalism to create a distinctive Protestant spirituality against Counter-Reformation piety, Puritans sought to attach patristic and medieval spirituality to the Reformation spirituality of justification by faith. They wanted to rule out cheap grace. The goal of Puritanism was the power of godliness as opposed to a form of godliness denying its power. They opposed lifeless traditionalism or heterodoxy (Lovelace 2000:218-219; Wakefield 1986:438-439).

Following the tradition of Zwinglian reformation and the Reformed churches of the mid-sixteenth century, Christians are never without the Church for one moment, and God's covenant is with the Church, which is formed by God's act in Christ not by a mystical hierarchy of supposed succession from the first apostles. Infant baptism was accepted following Luther, Calvin, and the Book of Common Prayer, and the Lord's Supper was a permanent obligation for Christians. The Lord's Day was to be devoted wholly to the exercise of religion, and play and work were considered unlawful. At home, the whole household must assemble for worship twice a day, and inordinate affection between husband and wife and parents and children were feared for resulting in detachment in family relationships (Wakefield 1986:440-443).

For Puritans, meditation was central to prayer, and a sermon is also a meditation. The sacraments as visible words were a supreme medium of meditation. However, contemplation beyond mediation was suspected and irrationalism was feared. The mind was a doorway to God. Spiritual guidance was provided not only through sermons but through private counselling as well (Wakefield 1986:443-444).

4.4.4.4.2 Pietism

The great religious movement of revitalisation between the Reformation and the Enlightenment within Continental Protestantism was pietism. It stirred and

renewed the Protestant church, both Lutheran and Reformed, during seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, in Germany first, then the Netherlands, France, Switzerland, Scandinavia, and even the United States. Pietism was the response of sincere Christians to the religious and moral lassitude in Germany after the devastating Thirty Years War (AD 1618-48). They criticised the government-controlled churches and called for the separation of church and state. Pietism is also a reaction to the dry intellectualism of Lutheran and Reformed orthodoxy. Thus the pietists emphasised pure life as opposed to pure doctrine, doing over knowing, and experiential knowledge of pastors to awaken their hearers. In pietism the new birth, that is, regeneration and conversion, was a focus. Experiencing a breakthrough from sin to the new life of Christian perfection is identified with becoming parkers of the divine nature, and the goal of conversion is the real moral transformation of the believer the evidence of which is works of love. (Lotz 1986:449-450).

The founder of German Pietism is Philipp Jakob Spencer (AD 1635-1705), whose *Pia Desideria* (Pious longing) became the seminal text for German Pietism. Then, A H Francke (AD 1663-1727) made Halle a centre of Pietism, and Count Zinzendorf (AD 1700-60) founded the Hernhut Brotherhood in AD 1722 and welcomed Moravian refugees. Zinzendorf proclaimed a "religion of the heart" based on intimate fellowship with the Saviour, and he also gave a profound influence to John Wesley. Pietism found its new expression in Wesleyan Methodism. Freidrich Schleiermacher (AD 1768-1834), the father of modern Protestant theology, was also a Pietist influenced by Spencer (Raitt 2005:132; Lotz 1986:450-451).

About the contribution of Pietism, Lotz (1986:452) says the following:

> While Pietism often encouraged and sometimes ended in subjectivism, separation, legalism, anti-intellectualism, and mystical-ascetic flight from the world, it must be given credit on the whole, and in its mainline representatives, for the rise of Protestant ecumenicity and mission-mindedness; for significant impulses to philanthropic and educational work; for renewal of the pastoral ministry and preaching office, as well

as for a remarkable efflorescence of hymnody and devotional literature; and, not least, for restoring the emphasis on *personal* Christianity (faith as decision) in opposition to 'nominal' Christianity, and for saving the institutional church (the *community* of the faithful) from dissolution by a radical religious individualism that might otherwise have won the day.

4.4.4.4.3 John Wesley and the Methodism

John Wesley (AD 1703-1791) was the most prominent figure of the eighteenth-century evangelical revival. He was influenced by both Anglicans and Pietists. Although he was a man of one book, the Bible, he read widely. Thomas à Kempis, Jeremy Taylor, and the *Christian Perfection* and *Serious Call* of William Law influenced him the most. The influence of the Moravians was also significant in the conversion of Wesley. The pious group he established was known as Methodists or the Holy Club. After conversion he preached the common doctrines of evangelical faith such as salvation by faith and new birth through the Holy Spirit. He emphasised the Arminian doctrine of God's universal love, the prevenient grace, present assurance through the Spirit, entire sanctification, and perfect love (George 1986:455-457; Raitt 2005:132). Since humans are able to resist the divine initiative with the freedom of prevenient grace, the path to perfection is a growth in obedience to the divine initiative. God permits a freedom of choice to humans, but because of sin it is not a freedom of choice between good and evil, but rather between resistance and submission to the divine initiative (Watson 2000:178).

Wesley put great emphasis on the means of grace for spiritual life and listed them. The instituted means are prayer (private, family, public), searching the Scriptures (reading, meditating, hearing), the Lord's Supper, fasting, and Christian conference. The prudential means are the Society, Class and Band meetings of the Methodist system, watchnight, love-feasts, and Covenant Service. Though he laid emphasis on the Spirit, his spirituality was not of a Pentecostal or enthusiastic type. Various Holiness Movements are rooted in Methodism of which Wesley is the founder (George 1986:457-458). Watson (2000:207) analyses Methodist spirituality as follows:

> For in the final analysis, Methodist spirituality is nothing if not a responsiveness to the divine initiative. And on this, Wesley's word remains definitive and timely: as we yearn for the Spirit to move in our lives and across the world, let us wait, 'not in careless indifference, or indolent inactivity; but in vigorous, universal obedience, in a zealous keeping of all the commandments, in watchfulness and painfulness, in denying ourselves and taking up our cross daily, as well as in earnest prayer and fasting, and a close attendance on all the ordinances of God.'

4.4.4.4.4 Awakening spirituality

Living in the eighteenth century, Jonathan Edwards (AD 1703-58) embodied the rationalist ideal of the early modern period. He believed that humans could use reason to know about God and God's universe but must employ the affections to know God. The affections must be turned on by God's divine agency and only when God instils the soul with a "divine and supernatural light" could the justified comprehend God's beauty and respond to it through growth in holiness. He connected the Calvinist doctrine of predestination and Enlightenment philosophical ideas with God's saving activity (Bass & Stewart-Sicking 2005:143). To Edwards, the divine and spiritual light was "a true sense of the divine and superlative excellency of God and Jesus Christ and of the work of redemption and the ways and works of God revealed in the gospel." He taught that this spiritual light is conveyed to the mind by the word of God, and the sense of the divine excellency of Christ is the work of the Holy Spirit (Faust & Johnson 1935:102-11). Such preaching, his deep piety, and fervent devotion based on the Reformed or Calvinist tradition prepared the way for the Great Awakening in New England in which Edwards played a major role (Handy 1986:474-475).

Awakening spirituality was not simply perfecting individual spirituality but waiting on God in corporate prayer for Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit to invigorate the Church to attack the kingdom of darkness. Awakening spirituality was also consciously ecumenical. Discernment of the Spirit as work across denominational boundaries of Calvinism, Lutheranism, and Arminianism is a mark of eighteenth- and nineteenth- century evangelicalism including Awakening spirituality (Lovelace 2000:221).

Bass and Stewart-Sicking (2000:143) says about the development of evangelical Protestantism as follows:

> Other eighteenth-century Protestants, notably John Wesley and George Whitefield, developed Edwards's insights and initiated a popular trans-continental revival movement which emphasised the emotive aspects of faith through a felt experience of being 'born again.' A Christian spirituality thus seated in the heart—rather than in the head—would eventually shape much of Anglo-American evangelical Protestantism.

4.4.4.5   Summary of Protestant spirituality

The Protestant spirituality can be summarised as sole dependence on God, God's word, faith response to the Word, ethical purity instead of ritual purity, justification by faith instead of works-righteousness, and eschatological hope. Reformation spirituality's four main characteristics are *sola gratia, sola fide, solus Christus,* and *sola scriptura.*

- **Lutheran spirituality**: Lutheran spirituality emphasises Christ-centred faith (Christ-for-us and Christ-in-us). The Word is embodied in baptism and the Lord's Supper. Priesthood of all believers is claimed. The inner union of believers with Christ is the foundation of moral life.

- **Reformed spirituality**: The heart of the Christian life in Reformed spirituality is the deeply confident affirmation of experiential faith in God and response to his gracious initiative in both the private relationship with him and corporate expressions of faith. This belief can be traced to Zwingli and Calvin.

- **Zwinglian spirituality**: Supremacy of the Word, predominant pneumatology (the Scriptures must be approached through the work of the Spirit), and theocentric emphasis (only the eternal, infinite and uncreated God is the basis of faith) are the focal elements of Zwinglian spirituality.

- **Spirituality of Calvin**: Calvin's spirituality is based on gratitude for all God has done in Christ. Union of believers with Christ is the real centre of Calvinism. Some essential characteristics are as follows: (1) the assurance of the believer's union with Christ is to be expressed not

only in inward feelings but also in outward lives; (2) believer's relationship with God is summed up by prayer—a fusion of deep humility with complete confidence; (3) the Church as our Mother precedes the individual, and by baptism we are brought into the church in whose context we grow up into Christ by the means of grace; (4) the preaching of the Word is the primary agent for spiritual growth; (5) liturgy is more than preaching; Eucharist is the visible form of the Word, whereas preaching is the audible form.

- **Puritan spirituality**: For Puritans, conversion was a necessity, and assurance of salvation was crucial. Leaning toward ascetic legalism to create a distinctive Protestant spirituality against Counter-Reformation piety, Puritans sought to attach patristic and medieval spirituality to the Reformation spirituality of justification by faith. Christians are never without the Church for one moment; the Book of Common Prayer and the Lord's Supper are permanent obligations for Christians; and the Lord's Day is to be devoted wholly to the exercise of religion. For Puritans, meditation is central to prayer, and a sermon is also a meditation.

- **Pietism**: Pietism was a revitalisation between the Reformation and the Enlightenment within Continental Protestantism. Reacting to the dry intellectualism of Lutheran and Reformed orthodoxy, Pietists emphasised pure life as opposed to pure doctrine, doing over knowing, and experiential knowledge. In pietism, regeneration and conversion were the focus, and the goal of conversion is the real moral transformation of the believer resulting in works of love.

- **Methodist spirituality**: John Wesley emphasised the Arminian doctrine of God's universal love, the prevenient grace, present assurance through the Spirit, entire sanctification, and perfect love. A growth in obedience to the divine initiative is the path to perfection.

- **Awakening spirituality**: Awakening spirituality was waiting on God in corporate prayer for Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit to invigorate the Church to attack the kingdom of darkness. Awakening

spirituality was also consciously ecumenical across denominational boundaries of Calvinism, Lutheranism, and Arminianism.

4.4.4.6   Anglican spirituality

The Caroline age (AD 1594-1728) forms the foundation and first flowering of the Anglican tradition although Anglicanism traces its root to the New Testament and the Fathers (Thornton 1986:432).

Anglican spirituality is distinctively corporate, liturgical, and sacramental. Although the Bible is central to Anglican spirituality and is read regularly and extensively, the Bible itself is not the basis of Anglican spirituality. Its basis is the *Book of Common Prayer*, which is the means by which the corporate, liturgical, and sacramental life of the Church are participated in by both clergy and laity (Guthrie 2000:161-162). As an ascetical system in the line of the Rule of St Benedict and liturgical composition, the Prayer Book is a symbol of domestic emphasis and provides spiritual stimulus, moral guidance, meditative material, and family prayer (Thornton 1986:435). The Anglican Church is also pragmatic in that the basic thing Anglicans have in common is neither a doctrinal position nor a religious experience but participating in what the Church does as a Church. They are concerned with (1) whether the sacraments are presided over by validly ordained ministers; (2) with what vestments may be worn on occasions of public worship; (3) with whether the persons proposing to vote in a parish meeting have been baptised, received communion at least three times during the past year, and supported the parish financially (Guthrie 2000:159-160).

In Anglican spirituality, personal devotion and meditation are not central. The centre of the spiritual life is participation in the corporate, liturgical, and sacramental life of the Church. The Church itself in its entire life and liturgy is the principal spiritual director. There is no special class of believers who possess knowledge or techniques or status that common people do not have (Guthrie 2000:166-168). Thornton (1986:433-434) says:

> The patristic doctrine of priesthood is also maintained but not the professional and sacerdotal clericalism of the Middle Ages. The emphasis is upon the *unity of the Church* with the lay intelligentsia playing a leading part. The Prayer Book is nether Missal, Breviary nor lay-manual but *common* Prayer for the whole Church.

From the Caroline age emerged moral theology that is characteristic of interrelation of faith, prayer, and conscience, which points to moral maturity and responsibility. The "true piety with sound learning" of the Caroline age, however, developed into the scholastic principle of synthesis between faith, reason, and revelation in the little group called the *Cambridge Platonists*, and moved further towards learning against piety, reason against affective feeling, and transcendence against immanence (Thornton 1986:437).

4.4.4.7   De-traditionalisation

During the past centuries Christianity experienced enormous challenges in Europe and North America. Christian tradition became less acceptable in the face of philosophical, scientific, political, and social changes. Responding to these massive cultural changes, Western Christianity nevertheless retained its vital sense of the sacred against the forces of "secularisation"—secular forces and social organisation replacing religious belief and institutions (Bass & Stewart-Sicking 2005:140). According to Dupré (quoted by Bass & Stewart-Sicking 2005:140), the roots of modernity is traceable back to the fourteenth century nominalism which emphasised God's inscrutable otherness and argued that it is impossible to speak about God's reality through analogies from the natural world. Thus philosophy and science came to be regarded independent of theology and faith. When this nominalism combined with a rising humanistic thought that stressed human creativity, a new modern thought pattern emerged.

The basis of modernity is separation of science and religion along with the rivalry of reason versus revelation. This separation is not necessarily a process of secularisation but is called by contemporary cultural theorists as "de-traditionalisation"—a set of processes by which societies that were once shaped by univocal authority became multivocal cultures where authority

shifts to individuals (Bass & Stewart-Sicking 2005:139-140). Bass & Stewart-Sicking (2005:141) continues:

> Through the past three centuries, the displacement of external authorities has nurtured a profound sense of the self in relation to God, allowed for an enlarged vision of human community and creation, and prompted serious re-engagement, re-appropriation, and re-working of Christian traditions.

Christian spirituality in modernity is characteristic of the multitude of spirituality, a shift from univocality to multivocality (Bass & Stewart-Sicking 2005:154).

4.4.5 Major streams of spiritual traditions

Richard Foster (1998), a Quaker, identified and classified the traditions of Christian spirituality for the last two millennium into six major streams in his book *Streams of living water*: (1) the Contemplative Tradition—the prayer filled life; (2) the Holiness Tradition—the virtuous life; (3) the Charismatic Tradition—the Spirit-empowered life; (4) the Social Justice Tradition—the compassionate life; (5) the Evangelical Tradition—the Word-centred life; (6) the Incarnational Tradition—the sacramental life.

Foster defines the Contemplative Tradition as "beautiful of soul," "fire and love," "the steady gaze of the soul upon the God who loves us," and "an intimate sharing between friends," the last one from the words of Teresa of Avila. Foster calls this stream "a rocky, desert spirituality" and includes in it the fourth century Desert Fathers and Mothers, Benedictines, Poor Clares, Julian of Norwich (AD 1342-1413), John of the Cross (AD 1542-1591), Moravian Movement, Pietist Movement, Thomas Merton (AD 1915-1968), and Henri Nouwen (AD 1932-1996), to name a few.

Secondly, the Holiness Tradition of Christina life and faith "focuses upon the inward re-formation of the heart and the development of the 'holy habits'" so that we can "rely on these deeply ingrained habits of virtue to make our lives function appropriately and to bring forth substantial character formation." According to Foster, a divinely transformed heart produces right action,

therefore "holiness *is* a bodily spirituality." Cistercians, sixteenth century Roman Catholic Reformation, Puritan Movement, Holiness Movement and John Wesley, Keswick Movement (19th-20th centuries), and Dietrich Bonhoeffer are some examples of the Holiness Tradition.

Thirdly, the Charismatic Tradition centres upon the power to *do,* whereas the Holiness tradition centres upon the power to *be.* "The Charismatic Stream of Christian life and faith focuses upon the empowering charisms or gifts of the Spirit and the nurturing fruit of the Spirit," and "the nurturing fruit of the Spirit makes the empowering gifts of the Spirit a blessing and not a curse." Foster classifies Montanist Movement (2nd-3rd centuries), Gregory the Great, Franciscans, Pentecostal Movement (20th century), and Charismatic Renewal (20th century) as the Charismatic tradition.

Fourthly, the Social Justice Stream of Christian life and faith stresses "justice and shalom in all human relationships and social structures." *Mishpat* (justice), *hesed* (compassion), *shalom* (wholeness, unity, balance), these three are perspectives of the Social Justice Tradition. Foster claims, "The Church must forever stand as the conscience of the state, insisting that it fulfil its divinely appointed function of providing justice and order in society." He includes John Woolman (AD 1720-1772), David Livingstone (AD 1813-1873), Salvation Army, Dorothy Day (AD 1897-1980), Mother Teresa (AD 1910-1997), Martin Luther King, Jr (AD 1929-1968), and Desmond Tutu (AD 1931), to name a few.

Fifthly, the Evangelical Tradition focuses on the proclamation of the evangel, the good news of the gospel. According to Foster, the three themes of this tradition is the faithful proclamation of the gospel, the centrality of the Scriptures, and the confessional witness of the early Christian church as a faithful interpretation of the gospel. This tradition gives us a clear theology of salvation, that is, *sola gratia* (grace alone), *sola fide* (faith alone), and *solus Christus* (Christ alone). Included in this tradition are Athanasius (AD 295-373), Ambrose of Milan (AD 339-397), Augustine of Hippo (AD 354-430), Dominicans, Protestant Reformation, Roman Catholic Missionary Movement,

Great Awakenings (18th-19th centuries), Protestant Missionary Movement, and Billy Graham (AD 1918-).

Lastly, the Incarnational Tradition is concerned about the relationship between spirit and matter: God is manifest to us through material means. The most fundamental arena for the Incarnational Tradition is the arena of everyday life: homes and families, work, and society in large. Foster (1998:266) says,

> It [the Incarnational Tradition] saves us from a spirituality divorced from the stresses and strains of ordinary living. We cannot retreat from the 'secular' world in hopes of finding God elsewhere. Indeed, the very presence of God is manifest in the smallest, most mundane of daily activities.

Some examples of this tradition are Eastern Orthodox Iconography, Renaissance (14th-16th centuries), Classical Movement (17th-18th centuries), Romantic Movement (18th-19th centuries), and Professional Christian Societies (20th century).

These six streams—Contemplative, Holiness, Charismatic, Social Justice, Evangelical, Incarnational—*are* flowing *together* to form a mighty movement of the Spirit, and these streams constitute the contours and shapes of a new gathering of the people of God (Foster 1998:273).

4.4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the biblical and historical spiritual traditions have been examined. Truly, the biblical and historical spirituality is varied and diverse. They are deep and wide. As I conclude the chapter, I would like to mention the following. First of all, the spirituality of each era was developed distinctively by the needs of the time. Sheldrake's words (1995:218) ring true.

> Spiritual traditions are not merely accidental 'instances of enduing truth', but arise and develop in accord with historical circumstances. This is…a theological as well as a historical truth for the realm of spiritual experience is not cut off from the concreteness of the world and history

Secondly, there have been healthy tensions between two opposing ideas such as intellectual vs affectionate, kataphatic vs apophatic, clergy vs laity, and contemplative vs active to name a few. These tensions provide a healthy balance to those who pursue spirituality. Thirdly, the love of God has always been the final goal or objective of spiritual pursuit.

Now with the insights and perspectives of this chapter, I will turn to the integration of horizons discovered in chapters 2, 3, and 4 and then to the final forward movement.