

A Critical Reflection On The Doctrine Of The Trinity In Jürgen Moltmann's *The Crucified God* With Relation To Human Suffering And Pain

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and Relevance

The Crucified God is a book widely read in many languages and certainly one of Jürgen Moltmann's greatest books. In this regard Alister McGrath noted: '*Jürgen Moltmann's Crucified God is an excellent example of a work which seeks to build up an understanding of the nature of God, on the basis of the assumption that God is disclosed through the cross of Christ*' (McGrath 2005: 374). Jürgen Moltmann is a profound thinker and theologian, and when reflecting on human suffering, he is, indeed, the right person to look up to but then not only as informed scholar, but also as he himself had experienced and witnessed horrifying circumstances and extreme suffering during World War II. He was there during the extremely shocking and ruthless bombardment of Hamburg. Though, he hardly referred to his own experience during the Hamburg *Fire Storm*, and humbly avoided attention being drawn to himself in this regard. And then, remembering the time when he was a prisoner of war, he mentioned: '*this no doubt goes back to the period of my first concern with questions of Christian faith and theology in actual life, as a prisoner of war behind barbed wire*' (Moltmann 2013: xvii). Jürgen Moltmann is in many instances a remarkable person - not only as a scholar and theologian, and through the many achievements of his careers, but also as a Christian and in the personality he portrayed in reaching out to others.

The relevance of this study lies in its meaning and implications not only for Theology as such, but also for the well-being of societies across the world, especially where human suffering seems to be part of the established order.

Moltmann is surely not a stranger to the victims of tragedy and oppression. He remembers a generation of shattered and broken human beings after World War II: '*Shattered and broken, the survivors of my generation were then returning from camps and hospitals to the lecture room*' (Moltmann 2013: xvii). In the midst of the human tragedy, Moltmann encounters in the suffering Christ the affirmative response of God to human suffering, hopelessness, helplessness, the broken hearted, the wounded, the lonely and those in total despair. For Moltmann God meets us in our suffering, in Christ as the crucified God. Elaborating on the survivors of his shattered and broken generation, he emphasised: '*A theology which did not speak of God in*

the sight of the one who was abandoned and crucified would have had nothing to say to us then' (Moltmann 2013: xvii).

People need to realize that God is there for all suffering humans, when becoming aware of God's presence in their experiences of pain. God does not delight in our sufferings (cf. Heb. 13: 5b). In *The Crucified God* Jürgen Moltmann argues that, regardless of all the different types of suffering that we might experience in this world, God needs to be understood in relation to his intervention in this world in and through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. God's response to this world and its future also realizes the Kingdom of Christ on its way to God's fulfilment for the whole of his creation – in which Christians find their task for involvement. That also implicates and surely means that our Christian view of God has its origin in God's revelation in Jesus Christ, our Lord. McGrath affirms: '*Christian theology has recognised that it is impossible to speak of "God" within the parameters of the Christian tradition without relating such statements to the person and work of Jesus Christ*' (McGrath 2005: 349) – the work of Christ refers especially to his crucifixion and resurrection.

The background and relevance of this study points to Jürgen Moltmann's *social* Trinitarian understanding. In short: The theology of Jürgen Moltmann has enormous relevance for the well-being of our societies in anxiety and despair today – bringing hope for the future and posing a meaningful challenge. The second half of the 20th century saw in the theologies of Karl Barth and Karl Rahner the beginning of a renaissance of Trinitarian thinking, impacting on all aspects of future theological reflection. The relevance of Jürgen Moltmann's thinking lies not only in his connection to the new Trinitarian thinking, but also, specifically, in his development of a *social* Trinitarian understanding – when reaching out to the structures of society and addressing the problems humans are faced with there.

1.2 Problem Statement

The research problem is concerned with human suffering and human expectations of God's response. This is certainly one of the most difficult and important theological issues for the Church to address and answer. Moltmann's book, *The Crucified God*, in its exposition of Moltmann's understanding of a social Trinity, published more than 40 years ago, is in this regard offering valuable insights and is even today as relevant as it was then. Through history and across the whole world we become

aware of the tragedy of human suffering. People are faced with different types of suffering and distressing circumstances, for instance, poverty, sicknesses and epidemics, severe droughts conditions, famine, socio-political and economical injustices and so on. It is because of these sufferings, in which humans many times feel abandoned, that they tend to doubt the love of God towards humanity and some in their bitterness even doubt the existence of God.

This research will show that in his book Moltmann argues that the Church's identity and relevance are intimately tied to what Christian theology has to say about God's response in Christ – in referring to the meaning of the suffering and crucified Christ for the suffering of humankind and the created order, indeed all of nature. However, the problem of human suffering cannot be approached without becoming aware of how God, in his revelation, becomes involved in a Trinitarian way. The intention is to search for answers to the problem in Jürgen Moltmann's understanding of the Holy Trinity in its relation to human suffering. Through the centuries the doctrine of Trinity has been one of the most challenging theological doctrines for reaching some understanding of the relationship between God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. In opposition to the faith of the church through the centuries, the Trinity and the Christology (the full humanity and the full divinity of Jesus Christ) have been denied by some, from time to time.

The problem in many instances is that people do not realize that in our confessions we are responding, through God's gift of faith, to God's self-revelation through Jesus Christ in history. In our confessions we *express* our faith. The origin of our faith is not our wisdom, but God Himself is the origin, that is God revealing Himself in and through Jesus Christ, our Lord, God meeting us and touching us individually. To hear and understand something, God has made exactly this possible in the faith He has given us, through our encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ, through His Word and Spirit – and this is not achieved through our own human *reason* (or philosophy), trying to analyse the *mystery* of God. We can only understand partly what God chooses to reveal to us (cf. 1 Cor. 13: 12). Bernhard Lohse reminds us that the influence of philosophy was already apparent in the Early Church: '*Arius had permitted himself to be influenced by certain philosophical presuppositions*' (Lohse 1985: 56).

In addressing our problem of suffering, it is very important for us as church not to be led off the track by philosophical speculation and presuppositions, people's assumptions, whilst passing by God's self-disclosure in Jesus Christ – to which the apostles and their associates attested. As Martin Luther '*said that if philosophical concepts are to be used in theology they must, so to speak, be taken "to the bath," i.e., they must be baptised*' (Lohse 1985: 56). We find evident proof in the Early Church's faith in the divinity of Jesus and the inherent relationship of the Trinity (God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit), for instance, in the Regula Fidei of each of the three Fathers, Irenaeus, Tertullian and Origen (Young 2007: 10). They all emphasised and confessed their faith that there is one God, and Jesus himself is God. Irenaeus:

"This faith in one God, the Father Almighty...and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God," Tertullian: "...there is one only God...that this Word is called his Son, and under the name of God..." And Origen: "...First, that God is one, Christ Jesus...was made man, was made flesh, although he was God..."

(Young 2007: 10).

In addressing the problem of suffering, this study will focus on the insights of Jürgen Moltmann primarily in his book, *The Crucified God* - on the relation between the Trinity and the pain and suffering of mankind. The research question focuses on the problem of human suffering and the pain, and calls out: Where is God? If God exists, then, why so much suffering and pain? Moltmann clearly points in this direction: God is explicitly engaged in the suffering of this world and God responds in suffering love, getting involved in Jesus Christ with the result of renewing and changing this world and all of nature. God, indeed, answers the outcry of man and world.

In *The Crucified God*, our problems and questions are referred to the gripping insights pertaining to the theology of the cross, which is for Moltmann completely a Trinitarian event, which means that all three Persons (God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit) of the Godhead are in *perichoretic* unity. He shows that the death of Jesus is significantly a revelation not only of what God has done for us, but also, implicitly, of whom the triune God is. He specifically focuses on very important soteriological questions which the Church constantly needs to ask.

1.3 Hypothesis and Expected Outcome

The purpose of the study is to focus mainly on Moltmann's book, *The Crucified God*, and to analyse on how he deals with the existential experience of human suffering, and how he discovers the connection with the pain of God in the crucified Christ – who is indeed the crucified God himself. The purpose is to come to an understanding of Moltmann's insights on the two worlds of the crucified God and the suffering of humankind. The purpose is also to understand what Moltmann explains of the future that arises from God meeting mankind in the pain of this world.

The *hypothesis* is that the *answers* to the research problem do exist, and are to be found in what Moltmann learnt from the saving God coming to this world revealing Himself in the *Trinity*. The hypothesis is that the answers to man's pain and suffering are given by God through the unfolding *in history* of His Trinitarian involvement in this world. The research gap lies in the lack of understanding of God's pain as an act of love for men, to get involved in human's misery. God's pain does not end on Good Friday; God's pain transforms into the victory of the resurrection. God's transformation is expressed in a *Trinitarian* way, resulting in the renewal of all of creation, and surely in answering the outcry of humankind in God's liberation of men. Where are we going now after we have met God in and through Jesus Christ, our Lord? What are we living for? It all becomes clear in our new connectedness to Christ and His Kingdom, and our relationship with Him in faith through His Holy Spirit.

This is where problem solving is leading us to: Moltmann draws the future into history. The Kingdom of God already starts here – in this world. The future is already present, to a certain extent, in history, God is already involved, and He is going to change everything. Labuschagne points to similarities in Pannenberg's thinking when he refers to Pannenberg's understanding of '*the prolepsis of God's revelation in Jesus Christ. Prolepsis means representing, actualising the future in something that has already happened – making something of the future real in the present. Resurrection proleptically realises the goal of history*' (Labuschagne 2012: 69).

The arguments in this study will be based, mainly, on a literary study related to and concentrating on Moltmann's book *The Crucified God* and focussing especially on

Chapter six of the book. Expected outcome of this study: The hypothesis leads to the expectation that a meaningful outcome shall be found, and, indeed, does exist in Moltmann's argument of the unfolding of the Trinity in the theology of the cross. The theological insight in what the Triune God does in relation to the problems of humans, in *The Crucified God*, is therefore researched and followed in the expectation of a *meaningful outcome* for humankind's future.

1.4 Methodology

This research is based on a literary study. The main focus will be on aspects of Jürgen Moltmann's understanding of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and its relation to the problem of human suffering and the pain of men in *The Crucified God*. In addition to this, a selection of relevant literature of Moltmann and other theologians and authors will also be made and used in order to reach a better understanding for the questions of our contemporary world.

The research can only offer the researcher's own *narrative construct* – meaning the researcher's account or story (cf. Labuschagne 2014: 3). As Frances Young further elaborates: '*History is a form of narrative and all narrative constructs involve a process of selection, judgement as to what is significant, discernment of cause and effect, and interpretative patterning*' (Young 2007: xiv). Responsibility in methodology endeavours to come as close as possible to truth and reality, and writing (creating) your own account, story, of what happened in history, should never succumb to *invention*: '*... you cannot change or compromise the past, you cannot change what indeed and actually happened*' (Labuschagne 2014: 4).

Recent research work somewhat modified and further developed our outlook on methodology in research (cf. Young 2007: xiii). 19th century extremities, pointing to an over-emphasising of either the *object* of research or the *subjective human mind*, are to be avoided (cf. Labuschagne 2014: 3). Latest research also points to the detrimental effects of separating *literal* and *symbolic* meaning. The new challenge is to take all the relevant interacting factors into account, in a balanced way (cf. Labuschagne 2014: 5). With reference to Young (2007: xiv-xvi) Labuschagne explains:

From latest research on historical methodology and their criticism on the presuppositions of the previous generations, it is no longer so simple, as used to be thought, to distinguish *reality and literal meaning from myth, symbol or metaphor*. This new shift demands from the researcher, now more than ever, to try and enter the “world” of those researched, to give those researched the opportunity to state their “case” or what could be called their case. To imagine that we can easily remove the so-called cultural dressing of symbolic language (according to our biased assessments) in order to get to the real assumed picture, do not uncover the reality of the past. The so-called cultural dressing *really* provides the *well-known concepts* of the period to explain a totally new event or matter

(Labuschagne 2014: 5).

Valuable is the remark of Jürgen Moltmann as pointed out by Labuschagne that: “*a metaphor only begins to illuminate (explain) when not everything is metaphorical*” (cf. Labuschagne 2014: 6). What most certainly has to be taken into account in research is the warning of Hans-Georg Gadamer against *reflection* – which involves the researcher subjectively reflecting his or her own perceptions into the text so that the researcher manipulates the message of the past (cf. Labuschagne 2014: 6). Labuschagne correctly elaborates:

Reflection is reading something into the text or an event that is not really there. *Reflection* is indeed a serious miscalculation when it actually expresses the researcher’s reaction to, not what really happened or was really said, but to what the researcher thinks happened or was said. The researcher’s miscalculation was therefore the subjective result of his or her own prejudice, in terms of unreasonable dislikes or preferences on the matter

(Labuschagne 2014: 6).

Paul Ricoeur adds: “...*relinquishment of subjectivity is thus the precondition for the ultimate expansion of consciousness under the objective guidance of the text*”. And on the determining factor of “context” Ricoeur adds:

“The change of meaning, which requires the full contribution of the context, affects the word. We can describe the word as having a ‘metaphorical use’ or

a 'non-literal meaning'; the word is always the bearer of the 'emergent meaning' which specific contexts confer upon it"

(cf. Labuschagne 2014: 6).

Therefore, researching texts and history – with the intent of analysing, understanding and interpreting – calls for a definite responsible approach to methodology. This is indeed the intention of this study. Moltmann draws our attention to the relation that our *words* may have to God's *transforming* acts in history:

... Revelation would not manifest and verify itself as history of our present society, but would disclose to this society and this age for the very first time the eschatological process of history. The theologian is not concerned merely to supply different *interpretation* of the world, of history and of human nature, but to *transform* them in expectation of a divine transformation

(Moltmann 1967: 84).

Chapter 2: Summary of Chapters

2.1 Pain of Humans (Chapter 3)

The reality of human existence involves suffering - such as people losing their loved ones, people facing all sorts of disappointments, to be curbed by disabilities, being severely injured by tragedies such as rape, people abandoned in loneliness and despair, to be rejected through divorce, and broken relationships, diagnosed with terminal illnesses or diseases, to become victims of crime, drugs and alcohol abuse, and (striking more widely) to lose everything through natural disasters, and probably worst of all (with far reaching proportions) to be left in destitute through on-going poverty, people ruthlessly used and misused or even oppressed and humiliated by other people and by the structures of society or by establishment as such, and also to be severely harmed by the agony inflicted upon humans through terrorism and wars. The list can go on and on.

Time and again many of us struggle with the questions related to affliction. In these dreadful situations Moltmann knows the affirmation of the compassionate and loving God reaching out, in and through His Son, to the destitute. Moltmann says it is this affirmation that proclaims God *'in the sight of the one who was abandoned and crucified'* (Moltmann 2013: xvii). The aspects of Moltmann's understanding of the cross and the resurrection of Jesus brings hope to the suffering. People need to know that God exists, He is God of all situations, circumstances and He is an involved God. He does not delight in our sufferings; instead, He suffers with us as the crucified God. He will not abandon us in our despair (cf. Heb. 13: 5b).

Moltmann explains:

The incarnate God is present, and can be experienced, in the humanity of every man, and in full human corporeality...Furthermore, the crucified God is near to him in the forsakenness of every man. There is no loneliness and no rejection which he has not taken to himself and assumed in the cross of Jesus...The Godforsaken and rejected man can accept himself where he comes to know the crucified God who is with him and has already accepted him

(Moltmann 2013: 286).

Even though we might not see God, pictured before our eyes as we would have imagined, when we are in difficult situations, He does not abandon us in our sufferings. He indeed reveals Himself to us in our suffering. He has shown us this through the suffering of Jesus Christ, as He is fully present in the suffering human figure of Jesus (whilst Jesus is at the same time always also God Himself) and in this way has identified himself with humans.

2.2 Pain of God (Chapter 4)

The love of God for mankind and all His creation is not ever to distance Himself from the woes and agony of all that He has made, but to be always closely involved in their wellbeing – even if it takes to become the suffering God in Jesus Christ our Lord, the *crucified* God. Jesus suffered throughout his life; He suffered rejection, betrayal, and assault until death. On his way to the cross and on the cross Jesus suffered severely. For Moltmann the cry of Jesus on the cross is important for the way in which Christians need to view God -

The final issue...is that of the radical orientation of theology and the church on Christ. Jesus died crying out to God, “My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” All Christian theology and all Christian life is basically an answer to the question Jesus asked as he died

(Moltmann 2013: xx).

The answer comes clearly: it was all because of us and, yet also, for us and our wellbeing.

On the cross Jesus suffers and then dies. He changes our knowledge of God into an understanding of God as a God experiencing suffering, pain and death to offer us new life and a future of fulfilment. God took upon Himself the predicament and hopelessness of humans so that we may live (cf. 2 Cor. 5:15, 1 Thess. 5:10, 1 Pet. 2:24). In this way God revealed His unending love: *‘it is the unconditioned and therefore boundless love which proceeds from the event between the Father and the dying of the Son and reaches forsaken men in order to create in them the possibility and the force of new life’* (Moltmann 2013:253). We also need to stress that the suffering and death of Jesus were not just ordinary but rather distinctive because He was Godforsaken. Moltmann further elaborates:

The torment in his torments was this abandonment by God. It leads us to understand, in the context of his life itself, what happened on the cross as something which took place between Jesus and his God, and between his Father and Jesus

(Moltmann 2013: 151).

Jesus suffered pain as He was assaulted, bruised, crucified and killed, because his God and his Father had forsaken him (cf. Moltmann 2013: 148 -152).

The suffering and the death of Jesus are unique and cannot be compared to anyone else's; it does not matter whether they were heroes or whatsoever. The death of Jesus is, initially, a mystery '*which is so unlike comparable narratives of the death of great witnesses of faith...*' (Moltmann 2013: 149). The suffering and death of Jesus are not ordinary, when, through the eyes of the faith that we receive, we discover that they are redemptive and liberating in nature. For Moltmann the cross of Jesus is indeed a Trinitarian event, and thus refers to the suffering of God himself. The suffering God himself, indeed, says something extraordinary about the person and being of God. The cross of Jesus reveals the suffering God in a transforming act as a God of life where the cross triumphs over death. But what does it say about God? Moltmann explains the Christ-event then in this way:

He was raised through the "glory of the Father", then eschatological faith in the cross of Jesus Christ must acknowledge the theological trial between God and God. The cross of the Son divides God from God to the utmost degree of enmity and distinction. The resurrection of the Son abandoned by God unites God with God in the most intimate fellowship

(Moltmann 2013: 154 -155).

Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human – as expressed in the Ecumenical Confession of Chalcedon (451).

2.3 God's Manifestation in Jesus – The Trinity (Chapter 5)

There is no way from man to God. There is only a way from God to us humans. *'It is not the ascent of man to God but the revelation of God in his self-emptying in the crucified Christ which opens up God's sphere of life to the development of man in him'* (Moltmann 2013: 284). Therefore, God has made Himself known to us, and, as Moltmann says that, *'Christ is our sole means of access to the knowledge of God'* (Moltmann 1981: 40). If God doesn't make himself known to us and if He does not reveal himself to us, we will never know him (cf. John 1:18, John 17: 25, 26, and also Matt. 11: 27.). As McGrath puts it: *'the divine revelation proceeds from God to the world, from above to below, only through the central event of the revelation of Christ, apart from which there is no link between God and humanity'* (McGrath 2005: 374).

The human encounter with God in Jesus Christ is something that can only be understood in terms of God's Trinitarian self-portrayal in history. In Moltmann's Trinitarian view, God is indeed the *living space* for his creation in total, and from there his creation is to be seen as the *space* for God's advent into this world (Buitendag 2003: 13).

Moltmann's understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity goes even further, to include its relation to the problem of human suffering in this world and in society - indeed a *social Trinitarian* understanding. He says that *'if a person once feels the infinite passion of God's love which finds expression here, then he understands the mystery of the triune God. God suffers with us - God suffers from us - God suffers for us: it is this experience that reveals the triune God'* (Moltmann 1981: 4). Moltmann imparts that we need to move away from the same tendencies of describing God as a God who is incapable of suffering or feeling pain. He says that if God is incapable of suffering, God will be incapable of love (cf. Moltmann 2013: 229). He says that *'God takes man so seriously that he suffers under the actions of man and can be injured by them. At the heart of prophetic proclamation there stands the certainty that God is interested in the world to the point of suffering'* (Moltmann 2013: 280).

God is a God of love, and reveals himself to us in *encountering* us in the history of this world (for today and for future fulfilment) in Jesus Christ, our Lord, and specifically as Trinitarian God. Moltmann further uses the word 'Persons' in his understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity. He states that there are three Persons in

the Trinity (God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit) in one unity (cf. Moltmann 1981: 148 -150). One Person cannot be exchanged or replaced with the other and One Person cannot stand in the place of the other. *'The Trinitarian persons form their own unity by themselves in the circulation of the divine life'* (Moltmann 1981: 175). Each Person is and always is himself and each Person is different from the other Persons. Meaning each Person is having his own characteristics and role to play. His understanding is comparable to that of the *Agreed Statement on the Holy Trinity – A Statement of the Reformed Orthodox Dialogue 1992* (Gross 2000: 281) reading: *'The three Divine Persons are distinct from one another and yet, all three Persons are "co-eternal and co-equal" in the one being of God'*.

Moltmann's thinking is comparable with the perichoretic views of the contemporary ecumenical understanding of the Trinity. According to the *Agreed Statement on the Holy Trinity – A Statement of the Reformed Orthodox Dialogue 1992* (Gross 2000: 281) the three Persons are in this sense equal: *'one is not more or less God, nor is one before and after another... All three Persons are co-eternal and co-equal ... completely con-substantial in their mutual indwelling of one another'*. One Person is not greater, above or more dominant than the other Persons; as we read in the *Agreed Statement on the Holy Trinity – A Statement of the Reformed Orthodox Dialogue 1992* (Gross 2000: 281): *'each Person is himself Lord and God'*. Each Person in the Trinity is of divine nature and yet each Person is unique and not interchangeable. The Father cannot take the place of the Son and the Son cannot take the place of the Father and this also applies to the Holy Spirit. As it is stated in the *Agreed Statement on the Holy Trinity – A Statement of the Reformed Orthodox Dialogue 1992* (Gross 2000: 281): *'the three Divine Persons are neither exchangeable nor interchangeable while nevertheless of one and the same divine Being'*. Moltmann attests to this stating that *'the doctrine of the Trinity must go past simply establishing the same thing three times. To view the three Persons merely as a triple repetition of one and the same God would be somewhat empty and futile'* (Moltmann 1998: 141- 142).

Following the *perichoretic* understanding of the Trinity, Moltmann concludes that: *'the shortest expression of the doctrine of the Trinity is the divine act of the cross, in which the Father allows the Son to sacrifice himself through the Spirit'* (Moltmann

2013:249). This means, at the cross, explicitly because of God's love, God gave up his only Son to die for us (cf. John 3: 16).

2.4 The Future: The Kingdom and the future (Chapter 6)

The cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Lord, brings hope to the world of sinners and to the many people who are suffering and experiencing pain. Moltmann and Pannenberg focus in their theology mainly on the eschatology, and clearly teach that the resurrection of Jesus must be seen in the very centre of the way Christians understand eschatology (cf. Labuschagne 2012: 60). For both of them the resurrection of Jesus Christ must be interpreted in terms of what all humans and the whole of the universe can expect for the future, which now has already begun. They use the word '*prolepsis*', and then specifically in relation to the '*anticipatory and promissory nature of the event of the resurrection*' (Labuschagne 2012: 62). The resurrection of Jesus Christ is an event in Christ in our history, revealing to us that God has started to change everything and revealing to us our future event of resurrection (cf. Rom. 8: 11, 1 Cor. 6: 14 & 2 Cor. 4: 14).

'Life in communion with Christ is full life in the Trinitarian situation of God. Dead in Christ and raised to new life...' (Moltmann 2013: 286). Moltmann says the resurrection of Jesus means that we must not focus on the past but on the future that is full of hope. Labuschagne explains: *'We should be moving into the future of righteousness, peace and new life promised by God in the event of the raising of Jesus who was crucified. The resurrection is, thus, the ground of Christian hope and the basis of the commission of the Church'* (Labuschagne 2012: 62). Christian eschatology, for Moltmann, is the new beginning that has already started in the reality of this world we live in (Buitendag 2003: 2). Pannenberg, in his book *Jesus – God and Man* (1973), explains the *prolepsis* of God's revelation in Jesus' resurrection in this way: *'the resurrection of Christ must be seen as the anticipation of the general resurrection of the dead at the end of time. It thus brings forward into history both that resurrection and other aspects of apocalyptic expectation of the end-time –including the full and final revelation of God'* (Pannenberg 1973: 69). Pannenberg adds to this:

Only at the end of all events can God be revealed in his divinity, that is, as the one who works all things, who has the power over everything. Only because

in Jesus' resurrection the end of all things, which for us has not yet happened, has already occurred can it be said of Jesus that the ultimate is already present in him, and so also that God himself, his glory, has made its appearance in Jesus in a way that cannot be surpassed. Only because the end of the world is already present in Jesus' resurrection is God himself revealed in him

(Pannenberg 1973: 69).

Resurrection is the transformation of the world and the universe. As Moltmann says:

Now the proclamation of the Easter witnesses that God has "raised" this dead Jesus "from the dead" amounts to nothing less than the claim that this future of the new world of the righteousness and presence of God has already dawned in this one person in the midst of our history of death

(Moltmann 2013: 175).

Labuschagne explains Pannenberg: *'God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ is accessible to all people, not only believers, because it happened in history for everyone with eyes to see'* (Labuschagne 2012: 63). There is no spiritualizing to be interpreted, because it really happened! Therefore, you cannot spiritualise the resurrection of Jesus because it really happened and there are people who witnessed its unfolding. Moltmann concurs with this starting off by saying that both the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus happened in public and not in secret: *'Jesus was crucified in public. But at first only his disciples learned of his resurrection by God through the "appearances of Jesus". After that they spoke again of Jesus as the Christ in public'* (Moltmann 2013: 170). For him the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a real event. He speaks of the *kerygma* of the resurrection or rather the Easter *kerygma* which he says, 'mean that *Christ was seen*, it can also mean that *Christ appeared and showed himself*' (Moltmann 2013: 171). He takes it even further to say that *'the eyewitnesses: 1. had a foretaste of the coming glory of the kingdom of God in the form of Jesus and 2. recognized Jesus again by the marks of crucifixion'* (Moltmann 2013: 172).

The resurrection of Christ is the basis of our hope as Moltmann says that: *'all who hear and believe this, move from a distant expectation of an uncertain future to a*

sure hope in a near future of God which has already dawned in the one person' (Moltmann 201: 175). The resurrection is also our basis of new life:

Believers no longer live in this unredeemed world of death. In that one man the future of the new world of life has already gained power over this unredeemed world of death and has condemned it to become a world that passes away. Therefore, in faith in the risen Jesus, men already live in the midst of the transitory world of death from the powers of the new world of life that have dawned in him. There is already true life in the midst of false life, through only in communion with the one who had been crucified by that false life

(Moltmann 2013: 175).

Also: it has influence in the world not only socially but also ecologically and naturally. Everything is going to be changed and transformed in God's future (cf. Buitendag 2003: 12).

2.5 Conclusion (Chapter 7)

The conclusion of this study is, then, that Jürgen Moltmann's theological insights in his book *The Crucified God* could serve as a basis for a new understanding of the Theology of the cross as a Trinitarian event, and also as a strong point of departure to address, in the presence of the suffering and crucified God in Christ, the problem of human suffering and pain. The conclusion is: The pain of man needs to be understood in the presence of the pain of God, God meeting man and bringing new life and future through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Now, as Moltmann says that:

Man is taken up, without limitations and conditions, into the life and suffering, the death and the resurrection of God, and in faith participates corporeally in the fullness of God. There is nothing that can exclude him from the situation of God between the grief of the Father, the love of the Son and the drive of the Spirit

(Moltmann 2013: 286).

Chapter 3: Pain of Humans

3.1. The problem of human suffering

As human beings, we always struggle with the reality of problems and who we are in this life. Jürgen Moltmann asserts that: *'The Christian life of theologians, churches and human beings is faced more than ever today with a double crisis: the crisis of relevance and the crisis of identity'* (Moltmann 2013: 1). Time and again we are faced with the debates and questions on the reality that being human is necessarily concerned with human suffering and pain, and then also the existence of God. The problems we are faced with arise from the many times we ask: Why is everything so brutally unfair. Above all we ask: Where is God amidst the dire evils and injustices of this world? *"Where is God? Where is he?"* (Moltmann 2013: 283). Any form of suffering and pain that we face every day leaves either our minds puzzled or our hearts heavy with despair. As Pitchford says *'and all suffering-including spiritual suffering- is capable of leaving us lost and bewildered: we don't know how to cope with our own pain, or respond to the pain of others'* (Pitchford 2011: 1).

Suffering has micro and macro dimensions. We know a family member or a friend or even ourselves going through a painful illness or an incurable disease, the death of a loved one, the breakdown of a marriage or divorce, a couple going through the pain of the inability to have a child, many people are unemployed and unable to provide the basic needs for themselves and their families, other people suffer due to the experience of subordination and subjugation, others find themselves oppressed either in the church or/and in the society, others suffer inequality and injustice, others are discriminated against on the basis of caste, race and gender, others experience suffering due to economic and political changes, for instance on the African continent. Oduyoye (2004: 59) explains the whole scenario that:

In Africa, the instabilities of war and the disruption of natural disasters, economic and political mismanagement, often result in the disruption of whole communities and inexorably propel women into the situation of having to parent their children single-handedly. Stateless and homeless, they struggle to care for the people who have survived with them

(Oduyoye 2004: 60).

Women in many cases are the most vulnerable in society as they experience the dishonour of their full equality and human dignity due to sexually based discrimination, oppression, violence directed to them (in form of assault by domestic partners, rape, murder, infanticide, cruel neglect, and the international trafficking in women and girls), economic unfair treatment and all sorts of social injustices, such as cultural mistreatment. Clifford refers to what he calls the *secondary status* of woman: *'in every part of the globe women are still discriminated against because of their sex. Many women continue to be relegated to a secondary status and even actively oppressed by men'* (Clifford 2001: 13).

Suffering is a mystery to be lived because we all go through suffering either directly or indirectly, all the days of our lives whether you are rich or poor, black or white, famous or unknown, sick or healthy, young or old, happy or sad, privileged or underprivileged, Christian or other religion or atheist. Pitchford adds that Christians also go through spiritual suffering and pain; he says that *'boredom afflicts many of us, either because we've lost excitement that first brought us to Jesus, or because we never knew it to begin with'* (Pitchford 2011: 1). The reality is that as a human being suffering is surely part of life, and if not now for certain in future you. Migliore states that *'to wish the world were immune from every form of suffering would be to wish not to have been created at all'* (1991: 101).

Tillich considers human suffering both as a state of having limits or bounds and as caused by a fall-out. According to him, the fall of mankind caused self-loss, alienation, loneliness, finitude and guilt (cf. Tillich 1957: 71). He argues:

Suffering, like death, is an element of finitude. It is not removed but is transformed into blessedness in the state of dreaming innocence. Under the conditions of existence, man is cut off from this blessedness, and suffering lays hold of him [her] in a destructive way. Suffering becomes a structure of destruction – an evil

(Tillich 1957:70).

Tillich also states that since human beings are removed from having the ultimate power and authority of life they became isolated, sinners and are inclined to dying. Therefore, it can be said that they are *'determined by their finitude'* (Tillich 1957: 66).

For Tillich, human beings are experiencing suffering and pain because of finitude and estrangement which all started at the Garden of Eden (cf. Tillich 1957: 66-70). Suffering entered the world like sin through Adam: *'Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned'* (Rom. 5:12).

Guthrie argues in the same line as Tillich that human suffering is part of being human and it *'is the result of human finitude and the presence of evil in the world'* (Guthrie 1994: 168-169). Human beings are born, they grow up, they become happy, healthy and the opposite also, as they go through suffering and pain, they become sick and they eventually die, all these are part of being creatures. For Guthrie *'creaturely life at best is fragile, vulnerable, and temporary – Ps. 103:15; Is. 40:6-7'* (Guthrie 1994: 169). Suffering denote that we are just mere human beings and we are not God and therefore we are fragile and vulnerable – being all sinners in this broken world. Guthrie highlights says that *'real evil enters the world scenario when humanity refuse to accept the finitude of human life or try to play God with their or others' lives'* (Guthrie 1994: 169). We must accept suffering as part of who we are, as part of our finitude because failure to do so will cause us more pain and suffering in life. We need to acknowledge that as part of the creation we are vulnerable and mortal (cf. Guthrie 1994: 168 -170).

Moving along to grief which is caused by the death of a loved one. There are many diseases and terminal illnesses that infects or affects us and our loved ones. Many people are living in poverty struggling to get day to day basics to live by. There are different kinds of annoyances that we go through, we experience lots of difficulties, sadness, pain and discomfort in our lives that causes us a lot of suffering and pain be it physically, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. Some people go through more pain than others, but then we all suffer one way or the other. There is no one in this world who does not go through pain, no matter who you are, as long as you have breath and blood running through your veins, which means you are human. Vandenberg says: *'Suffering is part of the human predicament since the fall... Following the fall, to be human is to suffer'* (Vandenberg 2007: 404).

3.2 Human suffering and evil

Buitendag identifies, in Jürgen Moltmann's books, five important aspects of far-reaching *realms* in human society – and from which man needs *liberation*:

- 1.) *Poverty*: Exploitation, by those in power and with vast material means, has a detrimental effect on people with lesser means and leads to dire poverty.
- 2.) *Force and violence*: Ruthless centralised power and privilege lead to the lack of basic human rights, political participation and self-determination. An oppressive society is often the cause of uprising and brutal revolution.
- 3.) *Human alienation*: Racial, sexist and cultural alienation degrade people to lesser beings and rob them of their dignity.
- 4.) *The impact of human greed on nature*: The severely negative impact of profit-seeking industrialisation on the ecology has become a real threat to humans, animals and the whole of nature.
- 5.) *Meaninglessness and God-forsakenness*: Modern man striving for endless power over nature became dehumanized, losing God and meaningfulness

(cf. Buitendag 1985: 188-190).

It is important to evaluate and appreciate Moltmann in the context of his time and the issues at stake, as well as the relevant debate. Human suffering cannot just be described in a single sentence because it is manifold. It does have a connectedness to all sorts of evil and appears in various forms. Pain and suffering go hand in hand because when defining the words suffering and pain you can notice that in both definitions the one contains the other. According to Cambridge Advanced Learner's dictionary, suffering is: '*when you experience physical or mental pain*'. Whereas pain is defined as: '*1. a feeling of physical suffering caused by injury or illness 2. Emotional or mental suffering*'. According to Oxford dictionary suffering is: '*The state of undergoing pain, distress, or hardship*'. In other words, suffering is experiencing pain, difficulties, misery and or grief. In the journey of life, we all experience pain of some sort during certain stages of our lives, inflicted upon us, by ourselves or by others, or circumstances beyond human control.

According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, evil is ‘1. a. *morally reprehensible: sinful, wicked <an evil impulse>* b. *arising from actual or imputed bad character or conduct, a person of evil reputation>*. 2. a. *archaic: inferior* b. *causing discomfort or repulsion: offensive <an evil odour >* 3. a. *causing harm: pernicious <the evil institution of slavery>* b. *marked by misfortune: unlucky*’ (Merriam-Webster, 3 August 2017). And on the other hand, evil as described by Wikipedia ‘*in a general context, is the absence or opposite of that which is described as being good. Often, evil is used to denote profound immorality or wickedness*’ (Wikipedia, 3 August 2017).

Carson’s depiction of suffering has a strong connection to human wrongdoings and evil. He categorises suffering by pointing out that ‘*in scripture suffering is described by a range of biblical themes such as social evils, poverty, war, natural disasters, the suffering people of God due to discipline, opposition and persecution and bad leaders of God’s people, illness, death and bereavement*’ (Carson 2006: 37-38). When we are faced with such miserable situations we tend to ask questions about life and society and we even start questioning the existence of God. Towner gives examples of such questions:

“Why is such suffering in our world?” “Why is evil so strong?” “If God is all-powerful, why does wrong seem so often to triumph?” “If God is not only powerful but good, why does He allow pain to afflict His good creation?” The crucial among the many questions is that which concerns theodicy: the philosophical and religious enterprise of reconciling the perfect goodness of God with the presence of evil in the world

(Towner 1986: 335).

The sufferer will always doubt the presence of a good God when going through pain. Towner refers to the challenge of ‘*the philosophical and religious enterprise of reconciling the perfect goodness of God with the presence of evil in the world*’ (Towner 1986: 335).

Edwards gives three different explanations of suffering: ‘a. “let,” “allow” b. “experience,” “endure” c. “feel pain or anguish”’ (Edwards 1988: 649). Then he goes even further to describe “suffering” looking at the New Testament using different terms; for instance: “chastisement” “discipline”, “distress”, “endurance”, “grief”,

“persecution”, “plague”, “tribulation”, etc. (1988: 650). In all these definitions, it can therefore be concluded that suffering is experiencing pain, hurt, difficulty, trouble, problems, misery or illness. There is suffering that one experiences because of the evil things that one has done, i.e. karma (‘the Buddhist belief that whatever you do comes back to you, e.g. if you do something good, something good will happen to you, and vice versa’ (Lane 2003:3).

For Barth, *‘evil is nothingness which means privation, the attempt to defraud God of His honour and right to be gracious and at the same time to rob the creature of its salvation and right’ (Barth 1960: 349). Karl Barth further distinguishes between one who suffers because of the sins one has committed or because of the sins and evil from the shadow-side of creation. For him ‘evil is emptiness or nothingness which means a lack or being in need of something’ (Barth 1960: 349). Suffering and pain, as the result of sin and evil, are inherently part of human existence.*

Clarkson explains pain as *‘every sorrow the human spirit can experience consciously or unconsciously, whether understood or uncomprehended; it is the sum total of all the devastation wrought by evil from the beginning of time to the present’ (1983: 9). When we are faced with suffering of any sort we experience pain be it a physical, emotional, psychological or mental pain. When we are faced with such pain we look around and start searching for answers. We all struggle with these when we are faced with suffering and pain. We cannot deny that suffering remains a real dynamic factor on the worldwide scene. Suffering is prominent and ambiguous in the world: it is a reality that humanity face.*

For Emerson (1986: 22) *‘suffering must be acknowledged as a reality of evil in the world. This acknowledgement will raise a necessity in us to decide what to do with evil that causes suffering’.* He stretches the definition of evil further to say that *‘the Hebrew word for evil is “ra” or “ra’ah” and the Greek word is “kakos” or poneros”, the word has its root meaning: to spoil, to break into pieces; therefore in short evil is being broken and so made worthless’ (Emerson 1986: 34). The Bible describes evil as anything that does not go with the nature of God, for instance sinful behaviour, immorality and wickedness. Emerson categorises evil into two categories a. one which is committed against other people for instance murder, theft, adultery, etc. and b. one which is committed against God for instance unbelief, idolatry and blasphemy*

(cf. Psalm 51: 4) (cf. Emerson 1986: 34-36). John Calvin argues that human suffering is the result of original sin. He says that the fall of Adam and Eve had consequences which brought a curse to all humankind. Now the fall resulted to humankind being completely debauched and stripped off the enjoyment of life as it was originally planned by God from the beginning (Inst. II.1.4.11). Calvin's argues that:

Therefore, after the heavenly image was obliterated in him [Adam and his guilt], he was not the only one to suffer this punishment – that, in place of wisdom, virtue, holiness, truth, and justice, with which adornments he had been clad, there came forth the most filthy plagues, blindness, impotence, impurity, vanity, and injustice – but he also entangled and immersed his offspring in the same miseries

(Inst. II. 1.5.12).

This predicament has affected the entire human creation; and therefore, the ever-increasing evil and suffering which affects the entire created order.

Now humankind find hope in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ who restores the image of humanity. He took the position of being a mediator between God and humanity (Inst. II. 6.1-4; 12.1-3; 15.1-6). Moltmann says that '*Jesus is designated God's lieutenant on earth, "God's representative", who stands for God before men and for men before God*' (Moltmann 2013: 184). On the relationship between God and suffering Moltmann states two important questions:

First, the onlooker's question is "how can God let this happen?" Such a question is more abstract and leads to traditional discussions of theodicy. Second, the sufferer's question is about God's suffering with us. When Moltmann survived the bombing of his hometown of Hamburg, his concern about God was more existential. "Where is God? Is he far away from us, an absentee God in his own heaven? Or is he a sufferer among the sufferers?"

(Moltmann 1994: 30-31).

Hicks differentiates between different kinds of evils and different kinds of suffering. In his book for the different kinds of evils he names from the book of Revelation:

Falsehood, exploitation, injustice, sexual immorality, abuse of power, war, economic exploitation, death, earthquake and natural disasters, Satanic and demonic forces, worship of demons and idols, murder, magic arts, theft, false religion, blasphemy, destruction of the earth, plagues, crime, mourning, famine, cowardice and unbelief

(Hicks 2006: 17).

Suffering and pain is something that is hard to understand and give reason for to somebody going through it. As Pitchford says that: '*we can't explain why a loving God allows life to break our hearts, and seems so far away just when we most need to feel reassurance of the divine presence*' (Pitchford 2011: 1-2).

3.3 Two examples of human suffering involving society on a macro scale

3.3.1. Poverty

Our thoughts always need to be weighed and considered against the context of our surrounding world. One of the things to be admired and greatly valued in Moltmann, very different from the majority of people following their ideology constantly without second thought, is his ability to listen to and communicate with people across the world and from various backgrounds and convictions. Moltmann was, for instance, able to communicate with theologians of Liberation Theology struggling with the agony of poverty. For liberation theologians, poverty with its accompanying suffering is viewed from *socio-cultural and economical-political perspectives*. For instance, Gustavo Gutierrez, leading proponent of Latin-American Liberation Theology, describes human suffering from a dire situation of the oppressed and poor (the '*nonpersons*'). He states:

But in Latin America the challenge does not come first and foremost from nonbelievers but from nonpersons – that is, those whom the prevailing social order does not acknowledge as persons: the poor, the exploited, those systematically and lawfully stripped of their human status, those who hardly know what a human being is. Nonpersons represent a challenge, not primarily to our religious world but to our economic, social, political, and cultural world; their existence is a call to a revolutionary transformation of the very foundations of our dehumanizing society

(Gutierrez 1990: 7).

Gutierrez observes that, through a Western capitalist process of exploitation, South American countries have been caught up in an on-going and detrimental grip of *economic dependence*, and this has been going on since the days of colonialism – creating enormous wealth for the few and poverty for the many (cf. Gutierrez 1974: 84-92). He explains:

It has become ever clearer that underdevelopment is the end result of a process. Therefore, it must be studied from a historical perspective, that is, in relationship to the development and expansion of the great capitalist countries. The underdevelopment of the poor countries, as an overall social fact, appears in its true light: as the historical by-product of the development of other countries. The dynamics of the capitalist economy lead to the establishment of a center and a periphery, simultaneously generating progress and growing wealth for the few and social imbalances, political tensions, and poverty for the many

(Gutierrez 1974: 84).

He reveals the realities of *internationalization* (the growth, globally, of wealth for the few) and *internalization* (the growth, locally, of severe poverty and dire economic dependence):

During the past few years we have witnessed in Latin America an acceleration of the process which Cardoso and Faletto call “internationalization of the internal market” and which José Nun refers to as “internalization of dependence”. The old forms of imperialistic presence by means of the enclave economy (mining centers and plantations), simple prolongations of the central economies, still exist

(Gutierrez 1974: 85).

Gutierrez also points to:

The ever more revolutionary political options of Christian groups – especially students, workers, and peasants – have frequently been responsible for conflicts between the lay apostolic movements and the hierarchy. These

options have likewise caused the movement members to question their place in the Church and have been responsible for the severe crises experienced by some of them

(Gutierrez 1974: 103).

Moltmann gives a summary on the 'life-setting' of Latin American Liberation Theology, and it is indeed also a response to Gutierrez (to whom he refers directly) and a gesture of Moltmann's understanding of what Gutierrez and his people are really dealing with: '*The Sitz im Leben for the theology of liberation is the suffering and dying of the poor*' (Moltmann 2000: 220). Violence and revolution against the established order pose, however, an enormous problem; blood on your hands is not the way for Christians to go. Moltmann points to the teachings of our Lord, Jesus Christ: '*... he did not call upon the poor to revenge themselves upon their exploiters nor the oppressed to oppress their oppressors*' (Moltmann 2013: 143).

Moltmann talks about '*the vicious circle of poverty*' (Moltmann 2013: 351) and also the '*social circumstances*', which in material sense leads to poverty as a '*misery*' that has become '*institutionalised*', caused by for instance capitalism (Moltmann 2013: 17). It is sometimes overlooked that for Moltmann the church and theology are not subservient to any form of politics or ideology:

There is an inner criterion of all theology, and of every church which claims to be Christian, and this criterion goes far beyond all political, ideological and psychological God criticism from outside. It is the crucified Christ himself ...

(Moltmann 2013: xviii).

Moltmann says the '*theology of the cross ... is present today in the persecuted churches of the poor and the oppressed*' (Moltmann 2013: xix). And:

... for only by Christ is it possible to tell what is a Christian church and what is not. Whether or not Christianity, in an alienated, divided and oppressive society, itself becomes alienated, divided and an accomplice of oppression, is ultimately decided only by whether the crucified Christ is a stranger to it or the Lord who determines the form of its existence

(Moltmann 2013: xix).

Christian theology cannot be compromised with any injustices in society or prejudiced against any group or authority in society. Moltmann, with reference to the unjust structures of society, warns against falsities and pretence of being on the right track:

Christian theology cannot come to terms with the cry of its own age and at the same time always be on the side of the rulers of this world. But it must come to terms with the cry of the wretched for God and for freedom out of the depths of the sufferings of this age

(Moltmann 2013: 155).

Personal, inner change without a change in circumstances and structures is an idealist illusion, as though man were only a soul and not a body as well. But a change in external circumstances without inner renewal is a materialist illusion, as though man were only a product of his social circumstances and nothing else

(Moltmann 2013: 18).

Human emancipation ... is impossible if economic and political relationships are overlooked ... Finally, there can hardly be peace between man and man and between mankind and nature without the overcoming of despair with hope for the indwelling of meaning in everything

(Moltmann 2013: 350).

When defining poverty from the contributions of a broader context the contributions of a broader context, Carson correctly says that '*what we mean by "poverty" is immensely variable*' (Carson 2006: 51). There is not one specific definition of poverty but many depending on the context and kind of poverty. As Carson says, '*to live just under a government-specified "poverty line" is quite different from dying of starvation. Indeed, to live "just under the poverty line" may feel rather different in two dissimilar families*' (Carson 2006: 51). Poverty is different for different people:

Marxist analysis may identify the poor as those who are economically deprived from want of power. Some studies begin by assuming that in the Old Testament the poor are the landless. Almost all of them assume that poverty

is always the case, in fact, poverty is sometimes superior to other alternatives. And even where we have rightly understood the text of Scripture, how the Bible's meaning is to be applied to the present day is not always easy to determine

(Carson 2006: 52).

An online Business dictionary defines poverty as a condition where people's basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter are not being met. It distinguishes poverty into two categories:

- (1) Absolute poverty is synonymous with destitution and occurs when people cannot obtain adequate resources (measured in terms of calories or nutrition) to support a minimum level of physical health. Absolute poverty means about the same everywhere, and can be eradicated as demonstrated by some countries.
- (2) Relative poverty occurs when people do not enjoy a certain minimum level of living standards as determined by a government (and enjoyed by the bulk of the population) that vary from country to country, sometimes within the same country

(Business dictionary, 3 August 2017).

Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines poverty as:

1a: the state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions **b:** renunciation as a member of a religious order of the right as an individual to own property **2:** scarcity, dearth **3a:** debility due to malnutrition **b:** lack of fertility

(Merriam-Webster 2017, 3 August 2017)

Growing up in poverty can expose children to greater levels of stress, which can lead to psychological problems, which can affect their development and later in life. If we hope to alleviate poverty, we need to address the root causes of poverty. To expect everything from government is unrealistic. Business corporations and the public as a whole also need to get involved and, with the government, all participate in a concerted effort. In our contemporary selfish and greedy world the moral conscience

of the church is vital in reaching some success. We need to tell ourselves that government is not the only answer.

Africa is a poverty-stricken continent. Seventy-five per cent of world's poorest countries are located in Africa including Zimbabwe, Liberia, Ethiopia and Republic of Congo. Year after year the poverty rate goes higher and higher. First World countries are dependent on Third World countries for resources, and resources tie them together, as Cassen et al. (1982) attest. While this has a lot of advantages for First World countries, it has a lot of disadvantages for Third World countries. In the process First World countries become richer and richer at the expense of Third World countries, which become poorer and poorer. The rules of the economy are the First World's. Over the past years they have been making new policies. Cassen et al. (1982) say that the *'US policies towards the countries that comprise the Third World have gone through several phases'* (Cassen et al. 1982: 41). These policies have been going through a lot of changes to benefit First World countries' economies. Sewell and Mathieson further state that:

First there was a concern with alliances and aid designed to 'contain' the Soviet Union. In the 1960's the emphasis shifted towards 'nation-building' and winning 'hearts and minds' of people in the Third world. The 1970's was a period of relative neglect as the United States focused on domestic problems, tempered only by a dawning awareness of dependence on certain developing countries - most notably for petroleum - and a sense that 'interdependence' was strengthening the links between developed and developing countries and at the same time making the conduct of American foreign policy more difficult

(Cassen et al. 1982: 41).

Supply and demand regulates the world's economy. First World countries have the economic advantage to determine the rules and in this way hold developing countries hostage and dependent on them for the much-needed capital for development. This means poverty is the pain First World rich countries afflict upon the ever-dependent Third World countries, lacking the necessary capital. Thus, the rich countries are accumulating their economic wealth at the expense of the poor countries. In the past, when communism was still a threat, the independence of Third

World countries was threatened by the communist expansion across the world as well as the growing danger of economic dependency on the US. It was argued:

Renewed worries over the strategic intentions and military capability of the Soviet Union is dominant along with growing anxiety about US resource dependence, most marked in the case of oil, but not negligible in the case of some other raw material

(Cassen et al. 1982: 41).

Today, First World and Western countries are still fighting for liberalism and capitalism. The developing countries are caught in between as they can't liberate themselves because they are dependent on other countries for resources and capital:

Once again the developing countries are viewed largely as an arena for East-West competition reminiscent of the Cold War era, as a drain on scarce US budgetary resources, and as potentially unstable sources of key materials needed in the United States

(Cassen et al. 1982: 41).

They developed a new approach as far as the Third World countries are concerned, which was met with Third World scepticism:

This approach, essentially a variant of the administration's domestic programmes, attaches great importance to the role of the private sector as opposed to government and lays great stress on the need for developing countries to adopt a proper set of domestic policies, rather than to attempt to change the rules of the international economic game. Within this framework, efforts to inaugurate global negotiations on North-South economic issues are viewed with great scepticism by the Administration as is the possibility of new government initiatives, whether bilateral or multilateral, to improve the economic prospects of the developing countries

(Cassen et al. 1982: 41-42).

This approach, however, has changed the United States radically as it:

Now shares its formerly dominant position in the world economy not only with the other industrial countries, which have greatly increased their economic competitiveness in the post-Second World War period, but also with a number of developing countries that have emerged in recent years as major actors in international economic transitions

(Cassen et al. 1982: 42).

There is, however, also another side of the story, where Third World countries (or developing countries) are mainly creating their own impoverishment. South African leading business entrepreneur, director of several companies and political commentator and journalist, Moeletsi Mbeki (in his book, *Architects of Poverty – Why African Capitalism needs Changing* [2009]), explains the South African situation post-1994 and how the ‘*black political elite*’ are responsible for the economic destruction of the country. Mbeki (2009: 78): ‘*The primary object of the economic oligarchy during Codesa II negotiations was to ensure the preservation of the MEC*’ [Minerals-Energy Complex]. ‘*Globalisation*’ had an important role to play. The ‘*economic oligarchy*’ had to persuade the ‘*emerging black political elite to agree to the use of globalisation to maintain the system of cheap labour required by the MEC*’ (Mbeki 2009: 78). And (p.78): ‘*The new way of keeping labour cheap was ... to import wage goods from cheaper producers in the global economy, especially China*’. When this started to become a reality, it had a severe and detrimental effect on the local South African manufacturing industry, causing ‘*de-industrialisation*’ (Mbeki 2009: 164), which rapidly leads to job losses and moving towards poverty for the working class:

In South Africa there is a growing tendency to import these products from cheaper producers. One of the most obvious areas in which this tendency is evident – to the detriment of workers who lose their jobs – is in the clothing, textile and footwear industry, where local products are increasingly being replaced by cheap imports, especially from East ... The supply of food, too, is affected, with cheaper products coming in from Argentina and South-East Asia. Other products consumed by the working class are increasingly imported, among them textbooks, furniture, cooking utensils, white goods (large domestic appliances) and television sets.

The outcome of the use of globalisation to provide cheap consuming goods for the working class in the MEC has resulted in the destruction of the non-MEC manufacturing sector. ... The destruction of the manufacturing sector is at the root of the growing impoverishment of South Africans, leading as it does, to increasing structural unemployment

(Mbeki 2009: 79-80).

Contemplating poverty, Labuschagne emphasizes the role of ethics *in creating a caring environment*.

In reflecting on poverty and ethics, we are confronted with challenges of vast proportions, challenges that have always been there. In the past the on-going search for answers and real solutions to problems of poverty, many times did not deliver satisfactorily and sometimes even dismally failed. No matter how you look at poverty, in the end you will be faced always by a miserably negative reality, with many contributing socio-economic and political (or ideological) circumstances.

The initial response to this is usually to revert to the old typical human habit of asking: Who's to blame? But negative responses do not get any further than creating more complications and wrong attitudes. That is for sure the wrong road.

What we need to see, and what we desperately need to discover, behind the miserably negative reality created by socio-economic and political (or ideological) circumstances, is the *lack of care*, is the lack of people really caring for one another. And that is an *ethical problem*.

What desperately needs to be changed is the attitude of people, their lack of morality, their total ignorance of morality, their totally wrong perceptions of themselves and others. The right road is to be found in a *positive approach* (not a negative one) – *in creating a caring environment*

(Labuschagne 2013: 7).

And in turning to *theological ethics*, Labuschagne argues:

Theological ethics has to do with all the facets of man's life. It therefore *also* has the task to focus on *poverty* and on the *market place*. Everyone has to be included in the evaluation of well-being, and also on the scale of criticism, including bosses and workers and the jobless.

Man becomes himself through *labour* (cf. Van Wyk 1988: 44-46, 72-73), in the sense that through his labour man acquires the means to improve his material well-being, and through that to better his situation and opportunities to gain success, respect from others, self-esteem and happiness (in other words, to also gain spiritually). Job-opportunities are therefore very important to all of humankind.

Nonetheless, *man's labour* has its *meaningful place* only when it can be part of and obedient to *God's work* – and especially part of and obedient to the *Kingdom of God*, in and through Jesus Christ. Man's work finds its meaning only within the broader picture of God's work. In the *image of God*, man needs to be *God's representative* in man's *labour*, and on the *market place*. In Christian ethics the opportunities of man's labour, especially spiritually (to serve Christ and his Kingdom) and only afterwards materially, is something we ought to grant not only to ourselves but also to every other person

(Labuschagne 2013: 10).

In his reflection on '*Christian responsibility*' Buitendag (1985: 326) calls for an awareness of Christians' suspenseful existence (p. 327) in expectation of God's future when his '*eschatological peace*' will become the present reality (p. 326). '*The tension between Christ's advent and second coming constitutes the co-ordinates for a Christian responsibility*' (Buitendag 1985: 325). In referring to the insights of G Altner, he argues for a needed re-orientation and reassessment of political, economic and scientific interests for the purpose of achieving prosperity for all, serving solely the mutual survival of all, and to minimise or even wipe out the dire imbalances of both exploited mankind and depleted nature (Buitendag 1985: 324). Following the views of Altner, Buitendag (1985: 327) refers to a needed '*new level of consciousness*', which demands conversion *from* privileges, monopolies and exploitation in serving a conversion *to* God in Jesus Christ, the crucified and resurrected Lord (1985: 327).

3.3.2. War: Firestorm

Wars are, in all moral and reasonable sense, portraying humankind's radical evilness and worst sins, in ruthlessly demolishing cities and insanely slaughtering millions of people – shocking history that never should have occurred. Who is to be blamed? In the stories told by popular history all atrocities, with boring repetition, are always blamed on the other side. The challenges of truth and good research always seem to escape the views of popular history. In spite of pretence and pretext, the reasons for the utter disasters of wars somehow accumulate around human greed. The war-mongers and the money-mongers are too often the same people or at least connected – as for instance in the Anglo-Boer War 1899 - 1902 (which was mainly about Britain's seeking the gold of the Witwatersrand to support their monetary system).

Jürgen Moltmann criticises the evils of human society – as indicated by the unjust socio-political and economic structures of society. Human greed and the unjust society go together, and too many times greed leads to wars. During World War II Moltmann, as a young man, also experienced the pain and agony of war, but, in his humbleness, he hardly referred to himself, to what he really experienced during the allied bombing raids – the '*Fire Storm*' over Hamburg in July 1943 (cf. Moltmann 1999: 16-17). In surviving the terrible ordeal, his 'question was not, "Why does God allow this to happen?" but, "My God, where are you?" ... During that night I became a seeker after God' (Moltmann 1999: 17).

Eventually, when contemplating the pain and suffering of humans, our question will indeed follow Moltmann's question: 'My God, where are you?'

What was the evil and agony of the *Fire Storms* all about? What did Moltmann really see? The eye-witness accounts of what happened to German citizens and soldiers as their nation fell to the Allies in World War II was extremely shocking. German civilians were targeted in the despicable Allied bombing raids, such as the attacks on Hamburg, Dresden and other cities towards the end of the war. In many cases there were no military value in targeting these cities. It was vile and deplorable, and revealing that unacceptable and cruel acts also came from the side of the Allies.

Women and children were burned alive during these bombing raids. Later, in addition to the ruthless killings, when the Soviets invaded, millions of German women and young girls were mercilessly raped. Among the many other dark secrets of World War II counted also the fate of those wretched victims in post-war death camps and torture chambers. It was the most deadly and destructive war in human history. Millions of people violently and mercilessly lost their lives. Billions in property were destroyed, and ancient cultural sites were reduced to rubble. Indeed, World War II was truly man's greatest cataclysm.

The research of Thomas Goodrich, professional writer and historian (in his book '*Hellstorm*' 2010) reveals the role that was played by the Western Powers in the complete destruction of German cities. There are many people who have thought that it was only the Bolshevik Russians who savaged Germany's women and children in the race to conquer Nazi Europe, but there were more to it. Goodrich's study is an eye-opening and detailed account of a tragedy of epic proportions that the mainstream media have been covering up for more than seventy years. Goodrich exposes the dark side of Roosevelt, Stalin, Churchill, Truman and Eisenhower – horrific detail. Scientific research does not cover up; all sides need to be taken into account in the search for truth. Ideology favours one-sidedness. Wars, as seen from all sides, are all extremely bad – wiping out large numbers of people, even animals, the horrors of concentration camps, destroying cities.

In referring to Hamburg, Goodrich says '*with a population of over one million, Hamburg was a huge northern city of harbours, canals, lakes, and rivers, and citizens in one part of town...*' (Goodrich 2010: 13). It was during a night in July 1943 when people started hearing sirens, and then '*the first waves of British bombers appeared overhead...Soon hundreds of planes began raining down tons of high explosives on the heart of Hamburg, blowing to bits schools, churches, hospitals, and homes*' (Goodrich 2010: 13). People now started trembling in fear as '*the onslaught increased in fury with each succeeding wave of bombers, building minute by minute to a fiery devastating crescendo*' (Goodrich 2010: 13). Then after a while the planes disappeared, and it was silent.

Those who had survived crawled out of their cellars in disbelief as they '*saw that their once beautiful city was now a smouldering ruin*' (Goodrich 2010: 13). In just that

night as Goodrich puts it *'during the ensuing massacre, thousands perished'* (2010: 14). It was not yet over, the following night the bombers returned. *'In addition to the normal payload of high explosives, the British sent down tons of phosphorus bombs to accelerate the fires. The resulting conflagration ignited a "firestorm"'* (Goodrich 2010: 14). It was more horrifying than the previous night as the *'hurricane-force winds created by the intense heat and subsequent updraft uprooted trees, ripped roofs from buildings and sucked screaming victims back into inferno'* (Goodrich 2010: 14).

People died dreadful and horrifying deaths. Goodrich further narrates the deaths of innocent citizens, saying that those *'who escaped the 150 mph winds in the streets became mired in melting asphalt and quickly burst into flames. Those who threw themselves into city's canals died of thermal radiation to the lungs, then, as they floated on the water's surface, they too ignited'* (Goodrich 2010: 14). It was inferno (- a place of fiery heat or condition suggestive of hell, especially with respect to human suffering or death (cf. Merriam Webster dictionary). *'In the centre of the holocaust, temperatures reached 1, 500 degrees and when the great mass of flames joined they rose to a height of three miles. The hellish drama below was not lost on those above'* (Goodrich 2010: 14). A horrified British crewman attest to this inferno saying that *'as I looked down, it was as if I was looking into what I imagined to be an active volcano'* (Goodrich 2010: 14). These attacks continued persistently for days as they destroyed everything.

Goodrich says the aim of so much destruction was nothing other than that:

The raids had been a cold and calculated attempt to scorch Hamburg and its people from the face of the earth. The plan succeeded. With thirteen square miles of total destruction, with 750,000 homeless, with an estimated 60,000 to 100,000 dead, mostly women and children, Hamburg, for all intents and purposes, had ceased to exist

(Goodrich 2010: 14).

It means, this was not really a 'military war', as they claimed. Their targets were not exclusively those who were involved in combat. The British authorities promised not to harm women and children, Harold Balfour said boldly that *'I can give the*

assurance that we are not bombing the women and children of Germany wantonly' (Goodrich 2010: 37).

There were responses to the lies:

Some voices of conscience were outraged, calling the massacre of innocent civilians "savage", "inhuman and un-English". Many critics, however, were, more concerned by the apparent "morale collapse" of any nation that could commit such crimes than for the nation who was a victim of it

(Goodrich 2010: 37).

No matter the reasons, there is no such thing as a 'good war'; wars always involve, in utmost and deplorable sense, conflict, aggression, destruction and death. The *Fire Storms* over German cities were so wrong in so many ways. As Bishop, of Chichester, George Bell announced: *'to bomb cities as cities, deliberately to attack civilians, quite irrespective of whether or not they are actively contributing to the war effort, is a wrong deed, whether done by the Nazis or by ourselves'* (Goodrich 2010: 37).

People were bombed, buried, drowned, trapped, asphyxiated, roasted in the heat, it was horrifying (cf. Goodrich 2010: 26). Goodrich attests:

an elderly lady had a heart attack and died right in front of us, there was nothing anybody could do for her...The strange thing was that nobody seemed to care very much that she had died...after the house had been hit the whole mirror had smashed in a thousand splinters which had penetrated the woman's back and head... without anyone noticing it in the dark and excitement, the old woman bled to death

(Goodrich 2010: 22).

The victims saw people dying in front of them until they did not care no more. As a little girl from one terror-filled shelter attested. She recalls:

an elderly lady had a heart attack and died right in front of us, there was nothing anybody could do for her...The strange thing was that nobody seemed to care very much that she had died...after the house had been hit

the whole mirror had smashed in a thousand splinters which had penetrated the woman's back and head... without anyone noticing it in the dark and excitement, the old woman bled to death

(Goodrich 2010: 23).

As bad as it was for those who were inside the shelters one can imagine those who were trapped outside, like one old woman, named Ilse Koehan, and her grandchildren who were just helpless. She recalls:

[B]ombs fell like rain. Millions of long, rounded shapes come tumbling down around us. The sky turns grey, black, the earth erupts. The detonations begin to sound like continuous thunder...

I am flat on the ground. Bombs, bombs, bombs fall around me... Above the detonations, flak fire, [and] shattering glass, rises the old woman's high-pitched voice: "*God in Heaven! God in Heaven!*" And now the baby's wailing, too. ...

Grandma, little girl and baby wailing over bombs, the flak. Will this ever end?

(Goodrich 2010: 24-25).

Another survivor and witness, Jan Montyn saw in Mannheim:

The crackling of fire. The smell of sulphur and TNT. A rumbling of house collapsing. The occasional delayed explosion. And people. People giving orders, calling out, shouting, screaming, crying. Footsteps. Running. Shuffling...

(Goodrich 2010: 25).

Mothers tried by all means to protect their children; as one woman in Ilse McKee's bunker remembers:

The next moment there was an unpleasant whistle, followed by an explosion. In an instant everybody was flat on the floor...there were a few more explosions in the distance...The mothers were lying on top of their children,

protecting them with their bodies. Some of the suitcases came tumbling down the stairs where we had put them

(Goodrich 2010: 21).

It was indeed very tough for women, mothers and children. Eva Beyer says that: *“We all crouched together, and cried, and prayed, and trembled, absolutely terrified. One of the women was so fearful that she had diarrhoea, two other women passed out, the children screamed, the baker’s wife started to have a bilious attack. It was like a lunatic asylum”* (Goodrich 2010: 21).

Remembering one incident in the shelters, Liselotte Klemich wrote: *‘... My little Karin, who was five years old, began to pray very loudly, “Dear God protect us, dear God protect us”. Her little voice kept getting louder and more penetrating’* (Goodrich 2010: 22). In that situation of enormous pain, suffering, fear and death many felt forsaken by God, but there were those who still hoped that God will save them. They sang hymns of protection and salvation to God and the singing helped them as the fear decreased (cf. Goodrich 2010: 26).

Another witness and survivor, after a raid over Berlin, recalled:

As we slowly made a cautious move out of the cellar we were shocked by the darkness...Two hours earlier it was a beautiful summer day. Now we couldn’t see the sun. All there was to see was a putrid looking greenish blue sky, with scraps of burned cloth and paper floating through the air. It was dark in the middle of the day

(Goodrich 2010: 26 - 27).

Everything was destroyed. What was left, was ashes and the remains of what had been. Little Traute Koch remembered:

... There was a great heat and leaden gloom over us. Where there had been houses only a few hours before, only some single walls with empty windows towered upwards. In between were large heaps of rubble, still glowing. Torn overhead wires were hanging everywhere...’

(Goodrich 2010: 27).

Another witness, Olga Held from Nuremberg remembered what she saw as she was running in the streets: *‘people with an arm or leg caught under heavy burning timbers cried for help... Screams came from under tons of burning debris. In every direction I looked trapped people begged to be freed’* (Goodrich 2010: 28). Goodrich concluded: *‘To the shattered survivors following a raid, the dead seemed to outnumber the living...’* (Goodrich 2010: 28).

As far as human suffering and evil (prevented and perpetrated by the State) is concerned, Carson refers to four aspects that need to be taken into perspective. Namely:

1. The Bible is entirely realistic about the suffering that the state inflicts, and the suffering from which the state protects us. There is no need for Christians to think that they or any other group should be exempt from the pain that they or any other group should be exempt from the pain that arises from these sources.
2. The underlying assumption in biblical thought is the fallenness of humankind, our propensity for evil, the tragedy and the malice of a broken and rebelling world.
3. Despite whatever suffering we may have to endure from this quarter-whether from evils the state is called to curtail, or from the state itself-Christians will see themselves responsible to promote justice. They entertain no dreamy-eyed hope that utopia is possible down here. They acknowledge that even the best efforts are only palliatives: the final “cure “awaits the new heaven and the new earth, and the most telling reformation of society this side of glory comes about in massive, heaven- sent revival (as the history of the Great Awakening and its aftermath suggest). Even so, they find they cannot read say, Amos, without urgently rediscovering the mandate to pursue justice.
4. The mysteries bound up with God’s sovereignty have returned in another form. God stands behind the state, yet acknowledges the state frequently acts wickedly and hold it to account

(Carson 2006: 51).

In response to all the wrongs and suffering in the world, Moltmann emphasizes, that God does not take the side of the 'powerful', those who use their state positions to hurt, oppress, kill and destroy the weak. Moltmann identifies '*the suffering God*', and then explains that: '*God is not a powerful tyrant. In the conflict between the perpetrators and victims, 'the suffering God' is always on the side of the victims- indeed he himself is the victim in, with and among the victims of those who wield power*' (Moltmann 1999: 184). The suffering and pain of this world was, is and always will be part of the suffering and pain of God. As Moltmann says that:

This world's history of suffering is the history of God's suffering too, the God who does not merely permit the evil act because he wishes men and women to be free, but also endures the evil act in the victims, and receives only the victims, and receives only the victims into eternal community with him

(Moltmann 1999: 184).

Moltmann, in this way, answers the important question: 'My God, where are you?' The answer: The crucified God meets us in our suffering. We are not alone in our suffering. '*There is no suffering which in this history of God is not God's suffering; no death which has not been God's death in the history of Golgotha*' (Moltmann 2013: 255). Through his cross and resurrection, God liberates.

Through the pain, suffering and deaths in wars, even in *Hellstorm*, God also suffered alongside the victims:

By his suffering and death, Jesus identifies himself with those who were enslaved, and took their pain upon himself. And if he was not alone in his suffering, nor were they abandoned in the pains of their slavery. Jesus was with them. And there too lay their hope of freedom, by virtue of his resurrection into the freedom of God. Jesus was their identity with God in a world which had taken all hope from them and destroyed their identity until it was unrecognizable

(Moltmann 2013: 46).

He is a God who knows and understand suffering as He himself suffers willingly out of love. Moltmann says that '*a God who cannot suffer cannot love either. Every*

loving man or woman who through love is capable of suffering is more than a God like that' (Moltmann 1999: 184). God is not just a God who loves, but He is love.

3.4. Social, political and economic reflection on Suffering

Human suffering is a reality that we all experience in some way. In reflecting on human suffering, we discover that in many cases, our suffering can be very complicated, when it originates from the unjust *structures of society*, meaning from the unjust way in which our society is organised. Ever since Africa has become independent, many African people have experienced suffering under the yoke of their own undemocratic political leaders: military coups, conflicts and dictatorial leaders. The socio-political and economic structures of society significantly influenced and manipulated to their own advantage the rich and powerful, leading to unjust and oppressive conditions under which the majority of the people of a country may suffer severely. In this regard, Moeletsi Mbeki says that the cause of suffering in Africa is *'the way the powerful in Africa instead of enriching their societies sell off the continent's assets to enrich the rest of the world'* (Mbeki 2009: xi).

The powerful becomes richer and richer while the poor becomes poorer and poorer. He further says that *'in return for this service these powerful Africans - who I call the political elites - receive the crumbs from the tables of the foreigners who make their fortune by processing Africa's resources'* (Mbeki 2009: xi). First World countries are benefiting from the Third World countries. The rich are increasing their wealth considerably while the poor are becoming even more impoverished. As Moltmann points out that *'because the representatives are out of their control, the citizens lapse into a passivity which allows further misuse of power to go unhindered'* (Moltmann 2013: 342).

Though our main attention is on the suffering of third world societies, it must be remembered in the study of first and third world interaction that the independent and objective researcher, without prejudice, strives to take the situations into account of all parties involved. A biased approach is something to be expected from ideology. The challenge remains in research to find a balanced way of evaluating the conduct

and interests of all parties. In this respect, Christian theology and morality have an important role to fulfil, and can indeed contribute to a better future society.

In reflecting on and following the study of Moeletsi Mbeki (2009), much become clearer regarding the dire impoverished situation of Africa. Africa is being drained of resources by the rest of the world and it is losing far more each year than it gains. This is mainly in profits made by foreign companies, through their tax dodging and their irresponsible approach to climate change. Whilst rich countries often talk about the aid their countries give to Africa, this is in fact much less than what Africa loses each year. The idea that they are assisting Africa is inconsistent; it is Africa that is assisting the rest of the world to get richer at their expense. Many of the continent's losses directly benefit rich countries. All this is related to the unjust way in which society and its structures are organized and administered, as a result of bad policies and practices. And to be more specific, this involves the unfair trade agreements and practices of multinational companies, as well as the brain drain of skilled workers.

The money that Africa loses each and every year is more than the amount of the additional money needed to deliver affordable health care. Politicians are looting millions and even when caught they are never obligated to pay back the money. South Africa used to be rated at the top when compared to other African countries, but now its economy has been downgraded to junk status. If African countries continue at this rate, over the next few years more billions will be lost. African leaders are dragging their countries down, as Mbeki says, *'on the economic front, with a few exceptions, Africa's political elites have driven their countries' economy backwards'* (Mbeki 2009: 2).

Another crisis that the continent is facing is the environmental crisis: ecology, and pollution. There is water pollution and air pollution from irresponsible factories and industries. Forests are being exhausted, and destroyed by chemicals. Africa used to be a sanctuary of natural resources, of which much have been plundered. Expired foods are traded. Drug trafficking emerged. All sorts of misconduct followed. Even though Africa is blessed with rich natural resources and opportunities, the continent finds itself in a downward spiral: Socio-political and economic structural inefficiencies, corruption, ecological deplorable conditions, poverty, famine, poor health care, lower education standards, civil wars, and influx of refugees.

Political leaders in Africa have a challenge *'to transform their countries' economies from their colonial format as suppliers of raw materials produced through the exploitation by the colonialists of the cheap, unskilled (de-skilled) labour of the indigenous populations'* (Mbeki 2009: 1). They need to get the middle class (entrepreneurs, lawyers, teachers, social worker, etc.) in motion, and then change and transformation will emerge.

Many middle-class people (both black and white) are leaving their countries when finding better job opportunities in First and Second world countries. For the needed transformation of our society, something substantial has to be done with Africa's resources, together with a much needed development of its manufacturing industry, which would in turn stimulate economic growth and create job opportunities. At first there was no difference between the economic development of Asia and Africa during colonisation period, but now, Asia has erupted, and they became very rich (for instance Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, etc.). Mbeki reminded of the initial expectations: *'the World Bank noted that it had been expected that Asia would remain mired in poverty while Africa would steam ahead. The opposite, however, has been the case'* (Mbeki 2009: 2-3).

It is of the utmost importance that middle class skills and capabilities are not lost to more favourable careers abroad. The middle class are key instrumental to creating economic growth and employment opportunities. Ethics in the working place has to be restored. Christians must take charge and address this problem. They must not distance themselves, but get involved. Moltmann reminds us that there needs to be:

...a relationship between church and state or dogmatic faith and political action. Concrete attention must be paid to religious problems of politics and to laws, compulsions and the vicious circles which for economic and social reasons constrict, oppress or make impossible the life of man and living in humanity

(Moltmann 2013: 331).

Moltmann rightly emphasizes: *'Salvation, the object of the Christian faith in hope, is not private salvation'* (Moltmann 2013: 340). Christians are to go out and have a significant impact on changing the structures of an unjust society. Aware of the

freedom of faith, Moltmann draws the attention to alleviation of suffering: *'the freedom of faith therefore urges men on towards liberating actions, because it makes them painfully aware of suffering in situations of exploitation, oppression, alienation and captivity'* (Moltmann 2013: 331-332). The kingdom of God is not violent and it does not favour nor take the side of the rich and powerful but it stands with the poor and powerless. In his analysis of the unjust society, Moltmann finds the centre point from which to search for answers in the triune God's intervention – in and through the *crucified Christ*.

The glory of God does not shine on the crowns of the mighty, but on the face of the crucified Christ. The authority of God is then no longer represented directly by those in high positions, the powerful and the rich, but by the outcast Son of Man, who did between two wretches. The rule and the kingdom of God are no longer reflected in political rule and world kingdoms, but in the service of Christ, who humiliated himself to the point of death on the cross

(Moltmann 2013: 341).

Moltmann encourages dynamic relations, and refers to:

...a hermeneutics of life in the situation of the passion of God, and therefore includes both practice and the alteration of practice. Liberation of mankind towards better mutual relationships is always practised in particular vicious circles which do not allow men to be men. Just as there are psychological pattern formations which make men ill, so too there are hopeless economic, social and political pattern formations which drive life towards death

(Moltmann 2013: 343).

In the light of the *crucified God*, revealing himself in human history as *Trinitarian God*, we seek to find our understanding of suffering in the future of God's liberation for man and all of his creation. The Trinitarian God is there for the wellbeing of others. There is no individualism, no inequality and no selfishness in the Trinitarian relationship of God.

3.5. Theological reflection on human suffering

Theology is not only concerned with the personal salvation of the individual, which is of course central to our faith's relation with the Triune God, and therefore extremely important in our theological reflection. In addition to this, theology also reflects on humankind's social relations – and engages every context of society, which then includes human suffering, with the aim of bringing about hope, guidance and positive change in suffering. Every aspect of society includes our interaction with nature and the world around us.

Our research leads our theological reflection to the reality of human suffering, in relation to the Triune God's intervention in and through the *crucified Christ* – which addresses also human suffering in society. In our attention to experiences of society's unjust structures, Jürgen Moltmann reveals how politicians fail in serving the interests of their citizens – and people end up in growing poverty: *'the citizen surrenders the right of self-determination to his representatives so that they may act for him...political idolatry and political alienation arise when the representatives go over the heads of those whom they are meant to represent...'* (Moltmann 2013: 342).

Moltmann teaches that the proclamation of salvation *'forced Jesus into a mortal conflict with the public powers of his time'* (Moltmann 2013: 340). *'The consequence for Christian theology is that it must adopt a critical attitude towards political religions in society and in the churches'* (Moltmann 2013: 341).

3.5.1. Moltmann's insights and reflections on human suffering

Christians need to proclaim Christ as the crucified God who liberates and sets free. *'The situation of the crucified God makes it clear that human situations where there is no freedom are vicious circles which must be broken through because they can be broken through in him'* (Moltmann 2013: 332). Moltmann argues that:

Every eschatological theology, therefore, must become a political theology, that is, a (socio-) critical theology. Christian theology which wants to be aware of the present political restraints on and functions of its language, rites, institutions and practice will therefore do well to recall the political crucifixion

and divine resurrection of the Christ who was executed as a 'rebel' and the consequence of discipleship

(Moltmann 2013: 340-341).

This does not mean that Moltmann sells out theology and faith to any ideological claims or dominance whatsoever. Quite the opposite, for he holds: *'political hermeneutics of faith is not a reduction of the theology of the cross to a political ideology, but an interpretation of it in discipleship'* (Moltmann 2013: 332). Theology's and faith's involvement in society and politics is aimed at bringing their *'liberating content into the political dimension and to make them relevant towards really freeing men from their misery in certain vicious circles'* (Moltmann 2013: 332). The use of the term *'political theology'* refers to theology's engagement in politics and the matters of society, and does not refer to any form of being subjected to a specific ideology or political conviction. Theology has to challenge unjust social, political and economic issues:

The political theology of the cross must liberate the state from the political service of idols and must liberate men from political alienation and loss of rights. It must seek to demythologize state and society. It must prepare for the revolution of all values which is involved in the exaltation of the crucified Christ, in the demolition of relationships of political domination

(Moltmann 2013: 341-342).

When speaking about human suffering in the society, Jürgen Moltmann is, indeed, the right person to look up to, as he himself has witnessed the horrific circumstances and extreme suffering of World War II. He became aware of the wrongs and atrocities of *both sides*, e.g. the firestorm-bombardments of allied bombers over Hamburg and other cities, the inhumane treatment in concentration camps by Nazi's in Auschwitz and other camps (cf. Moltmann 2004: 4). The situation after the War was in many instances also painful to experience. He remembers a generation of shattered and broken human beings: *'Shattered and broken, the survivors of my generation were then returning from camps and hospitals to the lecture room'* (Moltmann 2013: xvii). After he became a minister in the Reformed Church in Bremen-Wasserhorst, he had to preach and minister to the people there who had

experienced the pain and misery of the War and many times questioning the existence and love of God, people who were trying to find their identity, to find themselves again as people and also as Christians.

Moltmann allows us to partake in his journey of discovering and trying, by all means, to make sense and meaning of the presence of God within the context of human pain, suffering, death, destruction and evil in the world. In the midst of human tragedies, Moltmann encounters in the suffering Christ the affirmative response of God to human suffering, hopelessness, helplessness, the broken hearted, the wounded, the lonely and those in total despair. Moltmann discovers how God meets us in our suffering, in Christ as the *crucified God*. Touched by God in the *crucified Christ*, he realizes: '*A theology which did not speak of God in the sight of the one who was abandoned and crucified would have had nothing to say to us then*' (Moltmann 2013: xvii).

Moltmann emphasises that theology is not just talking about God in the realm of academic conversations and church surroundings, but necessarily also includes the reality of every person's encounter with God. In reaching out to the world: '*today the church and theology must turn to the crucified Christ in order to show the world the freedom he offers. This is essential if they wish to become what they assert they are: the church of Christ, and Christian Theology*' (Moltmann 2013: xvii).

Moltmann wrote his book, *The Crucified God* (First German edition in 1972), within the context of suffering and of searching for meaning. '*The Crucified God could be said to be about believing in God 'after Auschwitz', where Auschwitz stands, without surrendering its own particular reality, for all the horrors of twentieth-century history*' (Moltmann 2013: ix). Moltmann is one of the few boldest theologians who speaks with authority about a God who is truly present in the history of creation, especially that of human beings. His theology shows us that God is a good God and a God of love who suffers alongside us, and therefore we truly believe in him despite the existence of suffering in the world and our lives.

Moltmann focuses on the crucified God and invites us to discipleship which is a calling that requires us to be transformed both personally and in our relationships. This entails that we need to be active and participate in making a change and bringing hope in our societies. In his book, *The Crucified God*, he emphasises the

critical role of the cross in Christian theology, with consequences for the believer's spirituality and in church practice amidst the reality of this world. In analysing the modern socio-political and economic structures of society, Moltmann concludes: '*... The causes of misery are no longer to be found in the inner attitudes of men, but have long been institutionalized*' (Moltmann 2013: 17). He further adds that '*personal, inner change without a change in circumstances and structures is an idealist illusion. ... But a change in external circumstances without inner renewal is a materialist illusion ...*' (Moltmann 2013: 18).

Regarding the crucified God's coming future, he refers to the Christian's '*conflict*' with the unjust society, and '*solidarity with the alienated*', together with a '*liberating*' practical-mindedness:

... There is no vertical dimension of faith opposed to a horizontal dimension of political love, for in every sphere of life the powers of the coming new creation are in conflict with the powers of a world structure which leads to death.

... Christian theology finds its identity as such in the cross of Christ. ... The crucified Christ became the brother of the despised, abandoned and oppressed. ... Thus Christian theology must be worked out amongst these people and with them. ... Christian identification with the crucified Christ means solidarity with the sufferings of the poor and the misery both of the oppressed and the oppressors. ... Christian identification with the crucified necessarily brings him into solidarity with the alienated of this world, with the dehumanized and the inhuman. But this solidarity ... accepts the suffering of creative love, and is not led astray by its own dreams of omnipotence in an illusionary future.

... Christian theology must be theology of the cross, if it is to be identified as Christian theology through Christ. But the theology of the cross is a critical and liberating theory of God and man. Christian life is a form of practice which consists in following the crucified Christ, and it changes both man himself and the circumstances in which he lives

(Moltmann 2013: 18-20).

Our research on Moltmann's theological reflection on human suffering leads us to Moltmann's understanding, his epistemology, in terms of '*dialectical knowledge*'. *Dialectical knowledge* means tension, and *contradicting* solidarity with the powers of this world. *Dialectical knowledge* has its origin in the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The origin is neither in Immanuel Kant's autonomous human mind nor Plato's 'principle of likeness' (as Moltmann puts it) – it contradicts both. This epistemology portrays God's revelation as '*revelation in contradiction*'. *Dialectical knowledge*, therefore, means understanding human suffering in terms of *God's revelation* (the Triune God's intervention) in and through the *crucified Christ* in the history of this world – contradicting the unjust worldly powers. Knowledge comes through God's self-revelation, as *revelation in contradiction* (cf. Moltmann 2013: 20-23).

In terms of his epistemological '*dialectical principle of "revelation in the opposite"*', Moltmann explains how God reaches out to humans in the *crucified Christ* – he reaches out not to those who think they are powerful in themselves (in their greediness) and do not need God in their self-justification, but to those without self-justification and without worldly power, surely, both the victims and the perpetrators (Moltmann 2013: 22):

In concrete terms, God is revealed in the cross of Christ who was abandoned by God. His grace is revealed in sinners. His righteousness is revealed in the unrighteous and in those without rights, in his gracious election in the damned. The epistemological principle of the theology of the cross can only be this dialectical principle: the deity of God is revealed in the paradox of the cross. This makes it easier to understand what Jesus did: it was not the devout, but the sinners, and not the righteous but the unrighteous who recognized him, because in them he revealed the divine righteousness of grace, and the kingdom. He revealed his identity amongst those who had lost their identity, amongst the lepers, sick, rejected and despised, and was recognized as the Son of Man amongst those who had been deprived of their humanity. ... God justifies the godless ... One must become godless oneself and abandon every kind of self-deification or likeness to God, in order to recognize the God who reveals himself in the crucified Christ. One must abandon every self-justification if one is to recognize the revelation of the

righteousness of God amongst the unrighteous, to whom basically one belongs oneself

(Moltmann 2013: 22).

Since his book, *The Trinity and the Kingdom – The doctrine of God* (1980), Moltmann's epistemological thinking moved in a new direction, in view of his understanding of a '*social doctrine of the Trinity*' – '*truth is to be found in unhindered dialogue*' (Moltmann 2009: 287). He was now concerned with a new direction in Trinitarian thinking, '*to perceive the relationships of sociality in God*', and that led him to think in terms of '*relationships*', '*communities*' and '*transitions*' (Moltmann 2009: 287).

As Christian focussed on the future of the kingdom of Christ, one discovers oneself in a constant contradiction to the powers of self-complacency in our secular and materialistic world. Our world is continuously losing its moral responsibility and is increasingly blinded by greed. In a broader context, it therefore makes sense to take cognizance of the further development of Moltmann's thoughts. Increasingly, we are confronted by the problems originating from the interaction between humans and nature as a whole and this is also connected to the tensions between the interests of the First World and the Third World. In referring to humankind's faith in its ability to generate progress, Moltmann argues: '*With our credulous faith in progress it is easy for us to throw ourselves from the pre-modern into modernity, and from modernity into 'post-modernity'...*' (Moltmann 1999: 11). However, looking at the interaction between First World and Third World countries, Moltmann refers to the cost of progress for the victims:

To be clear about the victims of modernity in sub-modernity. History's fine messianic top coat has its ugly apocalyptic underside; the victorious advance of the European nations has meant the retreat of the other nations, with all the tremendous loss involved and the development of the culture of reason has led to the subjugation of the body, the feelings and the senses of modern men and women

(Moltmann 1999: 11).

The advancement of the European nations is at the cost of the Third World countries: *'the success story of 'the First World' has never gone unaccompanied by the story of the Third World's suffering'* (Moltmann 1999: 12). He says that:

When in 1517 Luther nailed up his reforming Thesis on the door of the castle church in Wittenberg, and the Reformation in Germany began, Hernando Cortes was sailing to Tenochtitlan, Mexico. In 1512, when he conquered the city of Aztecs, Luther stood before the Reichstag in Worms, under the ban of church and empire. When Lessing and Kant were publishing their Enlightenment treatises, hundreds of thousands of black African slaves were being sold out of Africa to America every year

(Moltmann 1999: 12).

Nature was not unscathed either:

The industrial build-up of the modern world was always at the cost of the earth's destruction, as the ravaged industrial landscapes in Germany, central England, Pennsylvania and Siberia show. So the progress of the modern world has always been acquired only at the expense of other nations, at the expense of nature, and at the expense of coming generations

(Moltmann 1999: 12).

Moltmann says: *'only a third of the modern world is what we now call Western civilization- the so-called First World. Two third-thirds of it are the modern Third World'* (Moltmann 1999: 12). *'But because some live in the light and others in the darkness, the people in the light do not see the people who are forced to vegetate in darkness'* (Moltmann 1999: 12). The rich often choose to turn a blind eye to their own wrongs and how they exploit others, and:

The memories of the perpetrators are always short, while the memories of the victims are long. For the repressed people in the countries of the Third World, and for the exploited and silenced earth, the messianism of modern times has never been anything but the apocalypse of their annihilation

(Moltmann 1999: 12-13).

The love that Christians are called to have for God and all other people urges them not to overlook the injustices of the world, but to work towards solutions.

First and Third worlds need one-another, as Moltmann explains:

But because our divided human worlds are inextricably interwoven, and because no human civilization can cut itself free from the ecosystems of the one earth we share, the downfall of the Third World means the downfall of the First World too; and the destruction of the earth will also mean the extinction of the human race

(Moltmann 1999: 13).

Moltmann mentions three realities which were brought about by modernity, and which are spelling out suffering for humankind and all of nature:

Firstly – The economic end-time:

The economic end-time. With the beginning of the modern world the Third World also came into existence, for it was in fact only the enslavement of Africans and the exploitation of America's mineral resources which provided the labour and capital for the development and advancement of the West

(Moltmann 1999: 13).

He further states that between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries the First World built their wealth by taking advantage of other countries. They built their wealth by exploiting continents like Africa. On the industrialization of Western Europe he says that:

Europe's wealth was built up on the bases of a great transcontinental, triangular commerce: slaves from Africa to America; gold and silver from America to Europe, followed by sugar, cotton, coffee, tobacco and rubber; then industrial commodities and weapons to Africa; and so on. This wholesale transatlantic commerce produced the investment capital for the industrialization of Western Europe...

(Moltmann 1999:13).

Third World countries were led into enormous debts accrued for the promise of their development, and in the process, became dependent on First World finance. And:

Even yesterday the direct exploitation of labour and natural resources had already been replaced by the burden of an enormous debt which has to be repaid with interest. Even today, the interest flowing back to the industrial countries exceeds the capital being invested in the so-called developing countries

(Moltmann 1999: 13).

Growing poverty in Third World countries went hand in hand with the burden and vicious circle of cheap labour. *‘The Third World is being turned into a superfluous backwoods, and its population into ‘surplus people’*” (Moltmann 1999: 13).

Secondly – The ecological end-time:

The ecological end-time. The beginning of the modern world is also the beginning of:

The end of nature’...The spread of the scientific and technological civilization as we have hitherto known it is leading to the annihilation of more and more plant and animal species. Carbon dioxide and methane are producing the greenhouse effect which in the coming decades is going to change the climate of the earth... Chemical fertilizers and diverse pesticides are poisoning the soil. The rain forests are being cut down. Pastures are overgrazed. The deserts are growing. In the last sixty years the human population of the world has quadrupled...

(Moltmann 1999: 14).

Massive air pollution on a global scale, that seems to be out of control, is a growing concern and creating many ecological problems. Because of this, we are experiencing climate instability, for instance, global warming, shortage of rain, even draughts in some countries, and in other countries floods and severe health problems. Moltmann elaborates on the *destruction of nature*:

The human destruction of nature is based on a disturbed and distorted relationship between human beings and nature. Unless the fundamental

values of this society of ours are given a new orientation, unless we find a new praxis of living in our dealings with nature; unless human beings arrive at a new understanding of themselves and evolve an alternative economic system; unless we arrive at these things it is not difficult to extrapolate from the facts and trends of the present crises the ecological collapse of the earth

(Moltmann 1999: 15).

As we are facing an ecological crisis that threatens our future, theologically, as humans (and that addresses Christians in the first instance) it is our responsibility as stewards over God's creation to respond positively for the sake of all and the whole of nature.

Thirdly – The God Crisis

Moltmann describes our self-assured and impetuous world as a world that lost God:

The God crisis. Confidence in the earth collapses once the earth is turned into a rubbish dump. Confidence of human beings is destroyed by our modern mass murders... loss of the assurance of God and the self in a profounder sense. Nietzsche... 'The greatest new event (is) that "God is dead"'

(Moltmann 1999: 16).

Moltmann suggests that the people in the First World need to think deep and ask themselves '*whether our progress is worth the sacrifice among people in the Third World*' (Moltmann 1999: 16). The original intension of the Bible was indeed that 'we are all created in the image God and we are all equal before God' (cf. Gen. 1: 27, Gal. 3: 26-29) and therefore we all deserve to live freely and with dignity. Moltmann sadly says that:

The cynicism of modern manipulators is an expression of our contempt for God. We have lost God, and God has left us, so we are bothered neither by the suffering of others which we have caused, nor by the debts which we are leaving behind us for coming generations. We see all this, but it doesn't touch us. We know it, but it leaves us unmoved. We are as if paralysed. Knowledge is no longer the revelation of our power; it is the revelation of our powerlessness

(Moltmann 1999: 16-17).

Moltmann says that this is not a problem of a certain individual, certain gender, certain race, certain caste, certain church, certain country but rather this is a universal problem. Moltmann adds that this problem '*has to be based on an objective alienation from God. God has hidden his face and is far from us*' (Moltmann 1999: 17). Modernity was created by mere human beings. They did not create the heavens and the earth. As Moltmann puts it '*the scientific discovery and technical mastery of nature did not make human beings the image of God. The humanitarian notions of the Enlightenment neither improved the human race morally, nor did they 'consume' history*' (Moltmann 1999: 17). It is not the new world. We need not lose ourselves to it. It must not change who we truly are and what we believe in. Moltmann says that:

We no longer know where the project of the modern world is taking us. That is the "crisis of orientation" which is so often invoked. And we no longer know whether our thinking and labouring within this modern project ministers to life or death. That is the "crisis of meaning" which we hear so much about

(Moltmann 1999: 17).

We cannot run away from modern time; hence we are living in now. Not everything about modernity is all bad; there is good in it too. Therefore, we must separate the good from the bad and choose what is good. Moltmann speaks of '*the rebirth of modernity out of the Spirit of life*' (Moltmann 1999: 17). He says that there are things that we need to keep, there are things that we need to get rid of and there are things that we need to re-invent. For the possibility of the rebirth of modernity, the following three points made by Moltmann need to be taken seriously into account:

1. *Hope for God without triumphalism and millenarianism.* The God of modern times is 'the coming God'. The God of the Bible...is the God "who is and who was and who is to come" (Rev. 1.4). That is to say, he will appear in his full God-ness only in his kingdom....it is not in our domination that the coming God is present, it is in our suffering, in which he is present through his life-giving Spirit... "Only those who endure with Christ will reign with him" (2 Tim. 2.12) Francis Fukuyama... "the global marketing of all

things and liberal democracy”, transfiguring these things into “the end of history”? We must again turn back theologically from the apocalyptic Armageddon to the Christian Golgotha... It is on Golgotha that the coming God is present in history...Where is God? Where can we find God in this history of ours? Before his eternal kingdom dawns, the coming God is present in his Shekinah...God is the comrade on the way, and the companion in suffering of his people...John 1.14... If God lives among us, he journeys with us too. If he journeys with us, he also suffers with us. If he suffers with us he gives us the assurance of God and ourselves in the great exile of this world...We take a step further when we try to revere and discern God in the victims of our own violence, perceiving him as being himself the victim of human greed for world domination. God - the victim in the victims: that is “the crucified God” who looks at us with mute eyes of the street children...

2. *Humanity's project of modernity began with the acknowledgement that 'all human beings are created free and equal'*... And yet there is no universal liberty for every individual without the fundamental equality of all human beings. Without equality, liberty cannot be universalised. Without a degree of economic equality there is no democracy...Equality as a social concept means justice. Without just social and political conditions there is no peace between human beings and nations... we shall only be able to do by creating living conditions similar to our own in the countries from which the refugees come. The social task of the future is equality.
3. *Ecological reformation of modern society and the religion of modern men and women.* If humanity is to survive, the human economy will have to be aligned towards preserving life through harmony with the earth's ecology and by righting the wrongs done to the soil, the water and the atmosphere. The dominating and exploitative mentality which has prevailed up to now will give way to a new cosmic spirituality. We shall rediscover God's hidden immanence in nature, and revere the divine presence in everything created... We shall leave behind us the Western anthropocentrism which with Pico della Mirandola declared the human being to be “the centre of the world”. It is not the human being who is the measure of all things. It is God, who has created the whole of life...the human being is more than just

a “subject of understanding and will” ...To integrate human culture into the nature of the earth’s organism... We cannot go on as we have done up to now without arriving at a universal catastrophe. Do we still have time? We do not know and we dare not know... If we knew that we still had time enough, we should do nothing either, but should leave all the unsolved problems to the coming generations...We have to act today as if the future of the whole human race depend on us

(Moltmann 1999: 18-23).

We must not lose hope and think that God has left us in our suffering and in pain. As the book of Deuteronomy says: *‘Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you’* (Deut. 31: 6, cf. also Heb. 13: 5). He is a God who is present in our suffering and suffers with us: *‘in his “indwelling” in the people he suffers with the people, goes with them into prison, feels sorrow with the martyrs’* (Moltmann 2013: 282). When we are victimised he also become a victim with us as Moltmann attests to this that: *‘God - the victim in the victims: that is the “crucified God” who looks at us with the mute eyes of the street children’* (Moltmann 1999: 20). He is there in our suffering *‘...It is in our suffering, in which he is present through his life-giving Spirit. It is not in our strength that the grace that raises us up is made perfect; it is in our weakness’* (Moltmann 1999: 18).

Whoever touches us touches God, whoever hurts us hurts God; as Zechariah 2: 8-9 says that:

For this is what the Lord Almighty says: “After the Glorious One has sent me against the nations that have plundered you-- for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye-- I will surely raise my hand against them so that their slaves will plunder them. Then you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me...

Moltmann also attests to this, he says that *‘we kill God when we make his image the victim of our violence, for God is in his image. We kill God when we shut out strangers and drive them away, for God is in the stranger’* (Moltmann 1999: 20). Every human being is created and is the representation of the image of God. God is in each and every human being and therefore all human beings deserves to be

treated equal and with respect and dignity. We don't have a right to kill other human beings and we also don't have a right to kill other living creatures (soil, animals, water or plants, etc.). *'For God is a living God. Anyone who infringes life, infringes God. Anyone who does not love life, does not love God. God is a God of the whole of life, of every life and of the shared life of us all'* (Moltmann 1999: 20).

3.6. Conclusion

We all go through suffering and pain in life, but our suffering and pain is unique from one another hence it is not the same, and the causes and experiences are not the same. We need to understand that despite the fact that suffering is unpleasant and terrible to the human mind, it is however part of being human. According to the Bible this is because of original sin that was committed by humankind in the beginning (cf. Gen. 2-3). After all, what is said on the perspectives of suffering and pain mentioned above, we can observe that human suffering and the pain of man are a reality which represents an unclear picture, which we cannot fully understand. Presented in both human freedom and the human state, and also the increasing evil that is in the world, suffering can be experienced directly or indirectly and it exists at personal, communal, national, continental and global levels.

Material and economic poverty manifests itself in inequalities, inaccessibility of health care, deprivation, violence, sickness and ill-health, malnutrition, hunger and dying. Furthermore, many children have become orphans in Africa because of the incurable diseases like HIV/AIDS and cancer, and they have become bread winners to young siblings. Many young girls have become prostitutes and young boys have turned into criminals because they have to provide for themselves and their families financially due to lack of employment. Because of all these, it seems as if there is no God. If there is a God He is a faraway God. When people are faced with suffering and pain they feel like they are *'in a world God seems to have fled'* (Pitchford 2011: 1).

However, in the *crucified Christ* the living God himself in his loving kindness and grace meets the abandoned humans of the world, *'in the godlessness of the perpetrators and the God-forsakenness of the victims of injustice and violence in human history'* (Moltmann 2009: 189), reaching out to them in God's saving act of creating a better future for humans, their society and the whole of created nature.

Chapter 4: Pain of God

Jürgen Moltmann confronts us with the question whether God is capable of suffering pain? Moltmann took cognisance of other theologians that already wrote on the *suffering* of God, e.g. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Karl Barth (Moltmann 2009: 192, 193). Moltmann's '*existential question*' – '*Where is God?*' – led him to the *theology of the cross*, and to him the question of God became a cry for justice by victims of '*mass annihilations*' (Moltmann 2009: 190, 191). Then followed his discovery: Jesus meets us again and again in our human suffering (Moltmann 2009: ix), Jesus is God, and Christ's suffering, indeed, reveals to us God's own suffering and pain (Moltmann 2009: 191). If God is to be incapable of suffering, the passion of Christ would have lacked its redeeming power, and would be no more than a human tragedy (Moltmann 2009: 193). The living God does not suffer out of deficiency, but he suffers pain as a loving God actively involved. '*God can suffer*', and this means an:

... active suffering of love in which one opens oneself in order to be touched and affected by the other, and so as to participate in what happens to him or her. If God were incapable of suffering in this sense, then he would also be incapable of love. God does not suffer out of deficiency of being; he suffers from the overflow of his creative and loving nature. In this respect God can suffer, is willing to suffer, and does suffer from the contradictions of his beloved world

(Moltmann 2009: 194).

God is a God of love (cf. John 3: 16); He is not only a God of love but He is love Himself; 1 John 4: 8 '*Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love*'. God is a God who is involved in our suffering and pain as Moltmann describes Him: the '*Crucified God*'. For Moltmann, '*a theology of the cross understands God as the suffering God in the suffering of Christ...*' (Moltmann 2013: 234). Out of love God understands and knows suffering; '*God and suffering are no longer contradictions... but God's being is in suffering and the suffering is in God's being itself, because God is love*' (Moltmann 2013: 234). God does not suffer because He is less of a God but rather out of love God and suffering are not strangers but God has himself

experienced suffering through Jesus. Moltmann says: *'It is not that God suffers because God is deficient, rather God suffers from the love which is the superabundance and overflowing of his being'* (Moltmann 1998: 23). And *'He suffers in his passion for his people'* (Moltmann 2013: 281). The cross of our Lord, Jesus Christ, refers to God's saving act – and this, at the same time, reveals *God's suffering alongside us*. God's reaching out to us, also reveals the actions of the Trinitarian God.

Moltmann explains that God functions in terms of relationships, history and interpretation. There is a relationship between God the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. The *concept* of God is about *interpreting the divine history*. The concepts do not replace the history. The concepts are not in opposition to history. Meaning that the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity are not opposites, but rather that they complement each other (cf. Moltmann 2013: 248-249). Immanent Trinity is the *explanation of what really happened in the divine history* (economic Trinity). Moltmann says that *'the Christian experience of God springs from the perception of God's presence in the person of Jesus Christ, in the self-giving of his life into our future. This perception of Christ is also the source of the experience of the divine Spirit who dwells in believers and their community'* (Moltmann 2010: 110).

Resurrection is new life not only in the eternal future of God but also now and here, for God's kingdom already became a reality through the resurrection of our Lord. So indeed, we can and must pray: 'Dear Lord, let your kingdom come now and here and in future ever more' and indeed we must pray: 'Dear Lord use us, lead us as children of your kingdom'. Is God concerned with the pain and suffering of humans in this world, in our societies? In reaching out to us, God also suffers. The crucified God has planted his cross in the midst of our crosses so that we will never be forsaken, he took our burden upon him.

Jesus died crying out to God, *"My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" All Christian theology and all Christian life is basically an answer to the question Jesus asked as he died*

(Moltmann 2013: 4).

The answer comes clearly: It was all because of us. And it spells out a '*theology of life*':

To return today to the theology of the cross means ... comprehending the crucified Christ in the light and context of his resurrection, and therefore of freedom and hope.

... Jesus who was abandoned by God ... is the beginning of a specifically Christian ... critical and liberating, theology of life

(Moltmann 2013: 4).

Moltmann names three aspects in which Jesus suffers on his way to the cross (cf. Moltmann 2013: 126-153):

1. *Jesus and the law: 'The blasphemer'*--His relationship with the religious law as understood by the Jews was questioned and therefore he was called a blasphemer, because they said Jesus was arrogant: *'the conflict was provoked not by his incomprehensible claim to authority as such, but by the discrepancy between a claim which arrogated to itself the righteousness of God and his unprotected and therefore vulnerable humanity'* (Moltmann 2013: 132). The reason for all this was because they said in his teachings *'Jesus placed his preaching of God, and therefore himself, above the authority of Moses and the Torah'* (Moltmann 2013: 129). The result was constant confrontation and suffering on his way to the cross.

2. *Jesus and authority: 'The rebel'*--His relationship with the authorities was in question – he was labelled a rebel and seen as such. He was even compared to the revolutionary sect known as the Zealots. That is why they convicted him as a rebel. He was punished at the cross *'Jesus did not undergo the punishment for blasphemy, which in Israel at his time, as can be seen from the death of Stephen, was always that of stoning. Jesus was crucified by Roman occupying power'* (Moltmann 2013: 137)

3. *Jesus and God: 'The Godforsaken'*-- Then lastly his relationship with the Father. We need to stress that the suffering and death of Jesus were not just ordinary but rather distinctive, because He was Godforsaken. *'And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my*

God, why have you forsaken me?”’ (Mark 15: 34; also in Psalm 22: 2). ‘The torment of his torment in his torments was this abandonment by God. It leads us to understand, in the context of his life itself, what happened on the cross as something which took place between Jesus and his God, and between his Father and Jesus’ (Moltmann 2013: 151). Jesus suffered pain as He was assaulted, bruised, crucified and killed because his God and his Father had forsaken him (cf. Moltmann 2013: 148-152).

The suffering and the death of Jesus are unique and cannot be compared to anyone else’s it does not matter whether they were heroes or whoever. The death of Jesus is a mystery *‘which is so unlike comparable narratives of the death of great witnesses of faith...’* (Moltmann 2013: 149). The suffering and death of Jesus are not ordinary, for we have to understand it as redemptive and liberating in nature. For Moltmann the cross of Jesus is a Trinitarian event. The cross of Jesus reveals the suffering of God where the cross triumphs over death. Indeed, it does not end at the cross and at death, but rather goes further, as Moltmann puts it, saying that:

He was raised through the “glory of the Father”, then eschatological faith in the cross of Jesus Christ must acknowledge the theological trial between God and God. The cross of the Son divides God from God to the utmost degree of enmity and distinction. The resurrection of the Son abandoned by God unites God with God in the most intimate fellowship

(Moltmann 2013: 154-155).

In his book, *The Crucified God*, Moltmann speaks of a God who Himself has experienced suffering on the cross. Moltmann makes two strong rejections. Firstly: of the impassible God; he says that if we hold that God cannot suffer or feel pain we imply that he is an uncaring, unkind and unloving God (cf. Moltmann 2013: 229-230). Secondly, if we say that God suffers because he does not have a choice this will be to make him like us human beings (cf. Moltmann 1998: 23, Moltmann 2013: 229-230).

Moltmann moves away from our traditional understanding, the understanding that we are used to of Jesus on the cross, that it is only Jesus’ humanity that suffers and experiences pain on the cross, while his divinity is not affected. He gives us a totally

new understanding of the cross of Jesus in its relation to the Trinity (God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit). He explains by making use of the concept of perichoresis, which refers to the mutual indwelling of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. *‘The doctrine of the perichoresis links together in a brilliant way the threeness and the unity, without reducing the threeness to the unity, or dissolving the unity in the threeness’* (Moltmann 1998: 175). The event of the cross reveals shared participation of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (cf. Moltmann 2013: 254). Moltmann gives a full explanation of this new understanding of the cross – *Trinitarian Theology of the Cross* (cf. Moltmann 2013: 243-258).

Sin separates us human beings from God, our Father (Gen. 1-3). We were far away from God, but, because of God’s mercy and kindness towards us, he wanted to reconcile us with him again: *‘...Jesus took the place of helpless man as his representative and in so doing made it possible for man to enter into communion before God in which he otherwise could not stand and survive’* (Moltmann 2013: 188). He wanted to renew and mend our broken relationship with him, therefore out of love (John 3: 16), he sent his one and only Son to come to our rescue and die for us on the cross, to be redeemed before God. Paul says in the book of Romans (8: 32) that *‘God gave him up for us all...’*. Jesus also out of love willingly obeyed and honoured God’s wish and freely allowed himself to be crucified for our sins: *‘...not my will, but yours be done’* (Luke 22: 45). That is why Moltmann says that the cross is not just an event of Jesus Christ but it is an event between God and God. It is a Trinitarian event, meaning between the Father who out of love hand over and give up his Son and then the Son who willingly obeys the Father and allows himself to be handed over (cf. Moltmann 2013: 249).

The pain and suffering that Jesus went through were also felt by his Father. *‘God not only acted in the crucifixion of Jesus or sorrowfully allowed it to happen, but was himself active with his own being in the dying Jesus and suffered with him’* (Moltmann 2013: 195). They both (Father and the Son), and in unity, experienced suffering and pain but their experience of pain and suffering were in different ways. As Moltmann argues *‘in the forsakenness of the Son the Father also forsakes himself. In the surrender of the Son the Father also surrenders himself, though not in the same way’* (Moltmann 2013: 251). He further says that *‘the suffering and dying of the Son, forsaken by the Father, is a different kind of suffering from the suffering of*

the Father in the death of the Son' (Moltmann 2013: 251). The Father is in pain as he suffers the loss of his only Son, while the Son's suffering the pain of being abandoned by his Father.

Moltmann says *'for Jesus suffers dying in forsakenness, but not the death itself; for men can no longer "suffer" death, because suffering presupposes life. But the Father who abandons him and delivers him up suffers the death of the Son in the infinite grief of love*' (Moltmann 2013: 251). Therefore, both Father and Son suffered, and yet both were united in love. Because of their love for humankind, this suffering and pain were necessary for the salvation of humankind: *'it may therefore be said that the Father delivers up his Son on the cross in order to be the Father of those who are delivered up. The Son is delivered up to this death in order to become the Lord of both dead and living*' (Moltmann 2013: 251). The Holy Spirit at the cross is the love which unites the Father and the Son and the entire created order:

What proceeds from this event between Father and Son is the Spirit which justifies the godless, fills the forsaken with love and even brings the dead alive, since even the fact that they are dead cannot exclude them from this event of the cross; the death in God also includes them

(Moltmann 2013: 252-253).

When Jesus dies on the cross, it reveals the love of God for the salvation and redemption of the whole of the created order. The cross of Jesus Christ opens the way to all sinners and victims to go to God himself. God touches and changes the negativity of human suffering and pain and he transforms it into the victory of life (cf. Moltmann 2013: 288).

God does not only suffer but suffering is also in God. Which means that as suffering, pain, evil and disaster is upon him it is only he who can save us and deliver us from suffering and pain. As the Lord's Prayer states that *'...deliver us from evil'* (Matthew 6: 13). Moltmann emphasizes his theology of the cross and the suffering God with the words of Eli Wiesel, who also survived Auschwitz:

The SS hanged two Jewish men and a youth in front of the whole camp. The men died quickly, but the death throes of the youth lasted for half an hour. "Where is God? Where is he?" someone asked behind me. As the youth still

hung in torment in the noose after a long time, I heard the man call again, “Where is God now?” And I heard a voice in myself answer: “Where is he? He is here. He is hanging there on the gallows...”

(Moltmann 2013: 283).

Moltmann says that *‘to speak here of a God who could not suffer would make God a demon. To speak here of an absolute God would make God an annihilating nothingness. To speak here of an indifferent God would condemn men to indifference’* (Moltmann 2013: 283). God does feel pain and suffer when his creatures are suffering and are in pain. God is a kind, loving, caring and helpful God. God is there with the sufferer. Moltmann portrays a God near to us, a God who is compassionate and a God who overcomes evil by being involved himself. He says: *‘God and suffering are no longer contradictions... but God’s being is in suffering and the suffering is in God’s being itself, because God is love’* (Moltmann 2013: 234). And that God suffers out of love: *‘It is not that God suffers because God is deficient, rather God suffers from the love which is the superabundance and overflowing of his being’* (Moltmann 1998: 23).

Though he took cognisance of Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s letters from prison (on the pain of God) and was hugely impressed by Karl Barth’s *theology of the cross* (Moltmann 2009: 192), Moltmann developed his theology of the cross also with reference to Martin Luther’s ‘Theologia crucis’ (cf. Moltmann 2013: 67). In his theology of the cross, Martin Luther uses Cyrillian’s insight but he limits the passibility of God the Father to Jesus the Son. Moltmann takes this theology of the cross further by explaining it as an event of the Trinitarian God (Participation of the entire Trinity):

...the cross is the “revelation of the entire Trinity”, this event too can only be presented as a God-event in trinitarian terms. What happens on the cross manifests the relationships of Jesus, the Son, to the Father, and vice versa. The cross and its liberating effect makes possible the movement of the Spirit from the Father to us. The cross stands at the heart of the trinitarian being of God...

(Moltmann 2013: 213).

Moltmann then goes on to speak of the crucified God - which the divine fellowship manifests in love to unite the suffering world with God, the Father:

And therefore the suffering of abandonment is overcome by the suffering of love, which is not afraid of what is sick and ugly, but accepts it and takes it to itself in order to heal it. Through his own abandonment by God, the Crucified Christ brings God to those who are abandoned by God. Through his suffering he brings salvation to those who suffer. Through his death he brings eternal life to those who are dying

(Moltmann 2013: 42).

Criticism against Moltmann's understanding of a *suffering God*, which they could not accept, came from Karl Rahner, Johann Baptist Metz, Hans Küng, Dorothee Sölle, and others. However, many other theologians appreciated Moltmann's insights. Similar views to Moltmann's understanding are to be found in prominent theologians like Eberhard Jüngel and Hans-Urs von Balthasar. Of Moltmann's books, *The Crucified God*, has the most editions, and is widely read in many languages. (cf. Moltmann 2009: 197-200).

Chapter 5: God's Manifestation in Jesus - The Trinity

It is of great importance to indicate that when we speak of God in a biblical sense, God must not be seen as a continuation and enrichment of the concepts and ideas which usually constitute immanent human religious thinking in general about God. *'Christian faith does not believe in a new "idea" of God'* (Moltmann 2013: 284). According to the Christian faith, He is not one of many gods, one in a series of gods. He is not founded in the piety or alleged knowledge of mankind. *'Here we shall presuppose the unity of God neither as homogenous substance nor as identical subject'* (Moltmann 1998: 19). Moltmann further argues that:

Thus the unity and the Trinity of God belong together in one tractate. One cannot first describe the unity of the nature of God and then distinguish between the three divine persons or hypostases, as in that case one is essentially dealing with four beings. The being of God then becomes the hypostasis of God, so that the three persons can be renounced and one can think in monotheistic terms

(Moltmann 2013: 248).

When we speak of God, as Christians, we mean God (in those well-known words of Barth) as the 'Wholly Other', *'God is He who according to Holy Scripture exists, lives, acts, makes Himself known to us in the work of His free love, resolved on and consummated in Jesus Christ: He, God alone'* (Barth 1960: 35).

There is no way from man to God. There is only a way from God to us humans. *'It is not the ascent of man to God but the revelation of God in his self-emptying in the crucified Christ which opens up God's sphere of life to the development of man in him'* (Moltmann 2013: 284). Therefore, God has made Himself known to us. *'Christ is our sole means of access to the knowledge of God'* (Moltmann 1998: 40). Moltmann stresses: *'We cannot say of God who he is of himself and in himself; we can only say who he is for us in the history of Christ which reaches us in our history'* (Moltmann 2013: 246). If God doesn't make himself known to us and if He does not reveal himself to us, we will never know him or anything about him. *'No-one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known'*

(John 1: 18). As McGrath puts it: *'the divine revelation proceeds from God to the world, from above to below, only through the central event of the revelation of Christ, apart from which there is no link between God and humanity'* (McGrath 2005: 374). Moltmann says God made himself visible to us at the cross of Christ: *'if God has reconciled the world to himself through the cross, then this means that he has made himself visible in the cross of Christ and, as it were, says to man, "Here I am!"'* (Moltmann 2013: 195).

Furthermore, humankind's encounter with God in Jesus Christ is something that can only be understood in terms of its Trinitarian unfolding. Moltmann argues that Trinity is not speculation. He explains: *'One does not "philosophize" speculatively about the mysteries of the Trinity, as Melancthon put it, but stands before the question how God is to be understood in the event of the cross of Christ'* (Moltmann 2013: 245). And:

Consequently the dogma of the Trinity was evolved out of Christology. It is designed to preserve faith in Christ, the Son of God, and to direct the Christian hope towards full salvation in the divine fellowship. The doctrine of the Trinity cannot therefore be termed 'a speculation'. On the contrary, it is the theological premise for Christology and soteriology

(Moltmann 1998: 129).

Labuschagne (2016: 2,5) refers to Moltmann's own conclusion and words regarding the *Trinity* (which Moltmann describes as the '*Trinitarian mystery of God*') and a true *theology of the cross* – and Moltmann's response to the Early Church father, Cyril's, '*One of the Trinity suffered*':

For me, the conclusion to be drawn from this was that a true theology of the cross must be a Trinitarian theology, and that conversely the doctrine of the Trinity becomes abstract and loses its relevance without the event of the cross.

And:

But I would add: where “one of the Trinity suffers”, the others suffer, too, each in his own way. Seen in this way, Christ’s death on the cross is an event within God before it takes on a salvific significance for the world.

Indeed, it should be clarified that in the doctrine of the Trinity *‘there are not three lords or gods, but only one Lord God, and there is only one and the same eternal Being of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit’* (Agreed Statement on the Holy Trinity – A Statement of the Reformed Orthodox Dialogue 1992, in Gross 2000: 281). Lohse emphasizes the true nature of the Early Church’s faith:

From the beginning, of course, certain fundamentals were firmly held by the church, namely, that God is one, i.e., that it did not believe in two, let alone three gods; that this one God has revealed himself in a threefold way as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit...

(Lohse 1985: 41).

History teaches that, through the centuries, more and more questions and misunderstandings needed to be answered and cleared by the church fathers (for instance Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen) and also by the church as a whole, at the Ecumenical Councils of the church in Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381) and Chalcedon (451). For later Church Fathers like Gregory of Nazianzus, *‘the word “God” means nothing other than the life which is actively shared by Father, Son and Spirit’* (Faith and Order Paper No. 153 1996: 45).

The Trinity must be understood in *‘the threeness and oneness of God’s eternal unchangeable Being’* (Agreed Statement on the Holy Trinity – A Statement of the Reformed Orthodox Dialogue 1992, in Gross 2000: 281). Moltmann’s understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity has a *social* dimension and includes the Trinity’s relation to the problem of human suffering. He says that *‘if a person once feels the infinite passion of God’s love which finds expression here, then he understands the mystery of the triune God. God suffers with us - God suffers from us - God suffers for us: it is this experience that reveals the triune God’* (Moltmann 1998: 4).

Moltmann uses the word ‘Persons’ in his understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity. He states that there are three Persons (God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit) who in unity form one family of the Trinity (cf. Moltmann 1998: 148-150).

One Person cannot be exchanged or replaced with the other and One Person cannot stand in the place of the other. *'The Trinitarian persons form their own unity by themselves in the circulation of the divine life'* (Moltmann 1998: 175). Each Person is and always is himself and each Person is different from the other Persons. Meaning each Person is having his own characteristics and role to play. *'The three Divine Persons are distinct from one another and yet, all three Persons are "co-eternal and co-equal" in the one being of God'* (Agreed Statement on the Holy Trinity – A Statement of the Reformed Orthodox Dialogue 1992, in Gross 2000: 281).

Moltmann teaches that the three Persons, in the unity of the Trinity, need to be understood through the *'perichoresis of the divine Persons'* (Moltmann 1998: 150). Moltmann is in line with the *perichoretic* view of the *Agreed Statement on the Holy Trinity – A Statement of the Reformed Orthodox Dialogue 1992*: These Persons are equal: *'one is not more or less God, nor is one before and after another... All three Persons are co-eternal and co-equal ... completely con-substantial in their mutual indwelling of one another'* (Agreed Statement on the Holy Trinity – A Statement of the Reformed Orthodox Dialogue 1992, in Gross 2000: 281). One Person is not greater, above or more dominant than the other Persons *'each Person is himself Lord and God'* (Gross 2000: 281).

Each Person in the Trinity has a divine nature and each Person is unique and not interchangeable. As the *Agreed Statement on the Holy Trinity – A Statement of the Reformed Orthodox Dialogue 1992* states it *'the three Divine Persons are neither exchangeable nor interchangeable while nevertheless of one and the same divine Being'* (Gross 2000: 281). In short, Moltmann says: *'The doctrine of the Trinity must go past simply establishing the same thing three times'* (Moltmann 1998: 141-142). And: *'Unity of the tri-unity'* (1998: 175). There is a union and oneness in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. *'The Unity of the Trinity is constituted by the Father, concentrated round the Son, and illumined by the Holy Spirit'* (Moltmann 1998: 178).

In describing the three Persons of the Trinity, starting with *the Father*: *'The Kingdom of the Father consists of the creation of a world open to the future, and the preservation both of its existence itself and its openness for the future of the kingdom of glory'* (Moltmann 1998: 209). The Father is without origin, without beginning and without end. Moltmann states that *'God's passion should be our starting point and*

we should understand the suffering of Christ as the suffering of the passionate God' (Moltmann 1998: 22). God the Father is *the 'almighty power of suffering love. It is this that he reveals in Christ'* ((Moltmann 1998: 31). *'This is the fundamental idea of the whole Anglican theology of God's suffering: the cross on Golgotha has revealed the eternal heart of the Trinity'* (Moltmann 1998: 31).

Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is God. He was there in the beginning when God created the heaven and the earth. He was with God and He was God (John 1: 1ff.). 'The Son is the Logos through whom the Father creates the world. The Son is that image of God for which God destines human beings' (Moltmann 1998: 117). Moltmann adds that the *'Son has everything in common with the Father except the Father's Fatherhood'* (cf. Moltmann 1998: 166). *'The Kingdom of the Son consists of the liberating lordship of the crucified one, and the fellowship with the first-born of many brothers and sisters'* (Moltmann 1998: 210). Jesus became human to redeem man and bring them back to God: *'the Son of God humbles himself, becomes human like us, lives among us, and dies a violent death – and God the Father raises him from the dead, exalts him, and receives from him the redeemed world'* (Moltmann 2010: 111).

Then lastly, *God the Holy Spirit* is not created, As Moltmann explains:

He issues from the Father's being and is of the same essence or substance as the Father and Son. In experiencing the Holy Spirit we experience the Spirit of God himself: we experience the Spirit of the Father, who unites us with the Son; the Spirit of the Son, whom the Father gives, and the Spirit who glorifies us through the Son and the Father

(Moltmann 1998: 170).

The New Testament acknowledges Jesus as God who became man. Moltmann says: *'Everywhere in the New Testament Christians see in Jesus "the indwelling of God". That is why they said later that "In him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily"'* (Col 2:9) (Moltmann 2010: 111).

The Holy Spirit is the gift given to help us and comfort us in all our suffering and pain (cf. John 14:26, Romans 8: 26). Moltmann argues that:

The Kingdom of the Spirit is experienced in the gift conferred on the people liberated by the Son - the gift of the Holy Spirit's energies. That is the reason why the kingdom of the Spirit is as closely linked with the kingdom of the Son, as the kingdom of the Son is with the kingdom of the Father

(Moltmann 1998: 211).

In summary: God's manifestation in Jesus Christ needs to be understood in terms of the Trinity. Humans encounter God through Jesus Christ and in one Spirit we have access to the Father. Moltmann insists that a distinctively Christian view of God must be based on God's revelation in Jesus, especially his crucifixion and resurrection. '*How can Christian theology not speak of God in the face of the cry of Jesus for God on the cross?*' (Moltmann 2013: 153).

5.1. The new Trinitarian thinking

The new Trinitarian thinking originates from the second halve of the 20th century when Karl Barth and Karl Rahner placed the Trinity in the central position of their theological understanding, affecting the whole of theology, and this new direction in theological thinking became known as the '*trinitarian renaissance*' (cf. Labuschagne 2015: 9). Barth, pointing to the historic reality of the *economic Trinity*, then makes the important connection (Labuschagne 2015: 9):

[W]e have to say that in respect of revelation there is a genuine and necessary connexion with the doctrine of the Trinity.

And in referring to the Trinitarian understanding:

[W]e can and must regard it as good interpretation of the Bible.

It is therefore indeed of hermeneutical significance when Gijsbert van den Brink now explains (Labuschagne 2015: 9): '*This renaissance – or revival ... is not restricted to the doctrine of the Trinity as such, but tends to affect the overall scheme of how Christian theology is being done*' (Labuschagne 2015: 9). The new Trinitarian thinking is also, in the words of Kärkkäinen, as quoted by Labuschagne, concerned

with an *'ongoing debate'* on *'the relationship between the economic and the immanent Trinity'* (Labuschagne 2015: 9).

The new Trinitarian thinking has its roots thoroughly in the Early Church – in e.g. their confessions. Moltmann says that *'in the tradition of the early church the doctrine of the Trinity had its place in the praise and vision of God, and not in the economy of salvation'* (Moltmann 2013: 245). Also, Christoph Schwöbel discerned already a *'prototrinitarian grammar of Christian Discourse on God'* in both Old and New Testament (Labuschagne 2015: 8, 9). In responding to the questions and problems of its time the Early Church's understanding of the Trinity had to find greater clarity.

However, the period in church history that followed after Augustine (354 - 430), experienced a constant decline of the prominent position in which the Early Church had understood the Trinity. This started already in medieval times, in Thomas Aquinas and other theologians of the time, compromising theology with philosophical assumptions and constrictions. Philosophical pressure gradually increased, and during the age of Enlightenment supernatural intervention were even viewed with scepticism – Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768 -1834) only mentioned the Trinity in the appendix of his book, *The Christian Faith* (cf. Labuschagne 2015: 8, 9).

By the second half of the 20th century, the 19th century's philosophical dualism and pressures were overcome, and Stanley J Grenz sees *'the rebirth of Trinitarian theology ... as one of the most far-reaching theological developments of the century'* (Labuschagne 2015: 9). The interaction between the subjective mind and the objective reality were now realized. In New Trinitarian theology developed aware of and on the basis of the interaction between the *economic* and the *immanent Trinity*.

The contribution of Wolfhart Pannenberg and Jürgen Moltmann in the new Trinitarian debate is their emphasis on and explanation of the unfolding of the *future* (the *eschatology*). Significant is also Moltmann's contribution regarding the *social dimension* in the realization of the Kingdom of Christ. Kärkkäinen holds that for Pannenberg the unity of God is connected to the work of the three Persons of the Trinity in this world (that refers to the *economic Trinity*), and this work will be eschatologically fulfilled, bound up with the relations within the eternal life of the Trinitarian God (that refers to *immanent Trinity*) (Labuschagne 2015: 9). Labuschagne refers to Letham when he says that in Moltmann's *economic Trinity*,

the '*economy of salvation*' cannot be something else than the Trinity '*in itself*' (*immanent Trinity*), the *social Trinity* operates from the three Persons of the Trinity to the unity of God, and '*the eschatological consummation is the key to both the unity of the Trinity as well as the way of reconciling the relationship between the economic and the immanent Trinity*' (Labuschagne 2015: 9). But then Barth had already taught: '*God's triunity is to be found not merely in His revelation but, because in His revelation, in God Himself and in Himself too, so that the Trinity is to be understood as "immanent" and not just "economic"*' (Labuschagne 2015: 9).

Jürgen Moltmann explains the *theology of the cross* as event of the Triune God. However, in the light of the new awareness of the Trinity and necessarily its further insights, he realises that we, as theologians and as Christians, need a re-evaluation of our Trinitarian understanding which would also include the *social* dimension. This new understanding of God, as Triune God, affects God's relationship with humans in their suffering and pain. Moltmann starts with this world and its history, and therefore begins with the understanding of an *economical Trinity* (the path of the Early Church), and from there develops his new insights of a *social interpretation of the Trinity*. His views now lead to a redefining of the Trinity, in terms of an intra-communitarian fellowship within the Godhead and also an inter-communitarian relationship between the Triune God and the world. Moltmann also says: '*God's relationship to us is three-fold. And this three-fold (free and unmerited) relationship to us is not merely an image or analogy of the immanent Trinity; it is this Trinity itself, even though communicated as free grace*' (Moltmann 2013: 248).

In his search for answers, Moltmann also presents a critique against Western conceptions of the doctrine of Trinity (both classical and modern), when noticing ideas that are invariably monotheistic Monarchianism:

Let me point out at once here that this monotheistic Monarchianism was, and is, an uncommonly seductive religious-political ideology

(Moltmann 1998: 131).

Strict monotheism obliges us to think of God without Christ, and consequently to think of Christ without God as well...The intention and consequence of the doctrine of the Trinity is not only the deification of Christ; it is even more the

Christianization of the concept of God. God cannot be comprehended without Christ, and Christ cannot be understood without God

(Moltmann 1998: 131-132).

Moltmann's new social Trinitarian thinking identifies three things: *relationships*, *communities* and *transitions*. In his *understanding* of divine history, Moltmann emphasizes that a concept can never replace history, and that a concept can also never be in opposition to history. Consequently, the immanent Trinity and economic Trinity are not in opposition to one another, but they complement one another. Immanent Trinity is therefore an explanation of what really happened in the divine history (of the economic Trinity).

In his theology Moltmann presents what he calls a "theopathy", which is a theology that begins from God's passion and not his *apatheia* which is where most theologians engaging the doctrine of impassibility usually start (cf. Moltmann 1998: 25). Moltmann argues that the starting point of theology must always be the pathos of God. He further says that God's pathos is best implicit in the event of the passion and the love shown between Jesus the Son and God the Father. This act of love is a window in which the believer can look through and see the inner-workings of the Trinity. We know that the traditional understanding of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ says that it is only Jesus who is involved in this event, it is only him who suffer as God does not suffer (cf. Moltmann 1998: 25-32).

Now Moltmann's new Trinitarian thinking says that the entire Trinity was involved at the cross, the entire Trinity experience suffering and pain at the cross though on different levels:

In that case, "God" is not another nature or a heavenly person or a moral authority, but in fact an "event". However, it is not the event of co-humanity, but the event of Golgotha, the event of the love of the Son and the grief of the Father from which the Spirit who opens up the future and creates life in fact derives

(Moltmann 2013: 255).

The reality of the love, that is present at the cross, opens up not only the human nature of Christ to active suffering alone, but the entire Trinity which also actively experiences the suffering and pain at the cross (cf. Moltmann 2013: 213). Therefore, Moltmann's new Trinitarian thinking starts with the pathos of God which lead to an understanding of God as a loving God who is capable of being intimately affected by the one whom he loves, and therefore capable of experiencing grief and pain (cf. Moltmann 2013: 229, 283). Moltmann does not side line the pain of the Father he says that *'the grief of the Father here is just as important as the death of the Son. The Fatherlessness of the Son is matched by the Sonlessness of the Father...then he also suffers the death of his Fatherhood in the death of the Son'* (Moltmann 2013: 251).

Moltmann criticizes Greek philosophical influence (including its concept of *'Apatheia'*) in Christian theologies that *'paradoxically'* refer to *'the suffering of the God who cannot suffer'*. Responding to this kind of theology he says:

But in doing this they have simply added together Greek philosophy's "apathy" axiom and the central statements of the gospel. The contradiction remains – and remains unsatisfactory

(Moltmann 1998: 22).

Aristotle's God cannot love; he can only be loved by all non-divine beings by virtue of his perfection and beauty, and in this way draw them to him. The "unmoved Mover" is a loveless Beloved

(Moltmann 2013: 229).

Moltmann's New Trinitarian thinking emphasises the importance of discovering the suffering God himself, and in this way find the starting point of theology as well as the truth in the centre of Christian faith:

For the person who can only see Christ's passion as the suffering of a good man from Nazareth, God is inevitably bound to become the cold, silent and unloved heavenly power. But that would be the end of the Christian faith.

This means that Christian theology is essentially compelled to perceive God himself in the passion of Christ, and to discover the passion of Christ in God

(Moltmann 1998: 22).

Moltmann's new Trinitarian thinking moves away from the Greek metaphysical influence and, from there, classical theism's understanding of God – as a God who was both perfect and self-sufficient. A God exhibiting *apatheia*, was, according to this kind of Greek philosophical reflection, to be understood as a God who could not be affected by the actions of humanity. In Greek philosophical thinking God was transcendent, and in order to respect and pay homage to God's transcendent otherness, God had to be unable to experience the same kind of suffering which plagued humanity. The new understanding of God - involved the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ in history and, therefore, involved the real Christian God who has empathy and is indeed capable of suffering, a God who understands human suffering and pain because he himself suffers willingly out of love that he has for his created order. Moltmann says:

If a person once feels the infinite passion of God's love which finds expression here, then he understands the mystery of the triune God. God suffers with us- God suffers from us- God suffers for us: it is this experience that reveals the triune God

(Moltmann 1998: 4).

Theologians distinguish two types of Trinity namely; the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity. Moltmann defines the immanent Trinity '*as the name given to the triune God as he is in himself*', and he also calls the immanent Trinity '*the substantial Trinity*' and the economic Trinity is '*the triune God in his dispensation of salvation, in which he is revealed*'; he also calls the economic Trinity '*the revelatory Trinity*' (Moltmann 1998: 151). Moltmann says that differentiating between these two kinds of Trinity (immanent Trinity and economic Trinity) does not mean that there are two different Trinities but '*it is rather a matter of the same triune God as he is in his saving revelation and as he is in himself*' (Moltmann 1998: 151). Meaning that the immanent Trinity refers to the inward relationship within the Trinity itself and whereas economic relationship refers to an outward relationship of the Trinity and the entire creation.

There is an enormous correspondence between Moltmann's new Trinitarian thinking and that of the Early Church. Like the Early Church Moltmann also realise that we need to find the relationship between the immanent Trinity (for instance Augustine) and economic Trinity (for instance Tertullian, Irenaeus). There must be a balance between the two understandings of the Trinity and yet there must be no separation between the two. Moltmann refers to Karl Barth saying that he begun with the doctrine of the Trinity *'which for him was the hermeneutic canon for understanding the Christian principle 'Jesus Christ the Lord'* (Moltmann 2013: 248). Though it was often argued that Karl Barth starts like Augustine with the immanent Trinity, from above, Barth occasionally starts from below, from the economic Trinity (cf. Labuschagne 2016: 3).

Barth followed the Cappadocian Fathers 'in distinguishing between the immanent Trinity and the economy of the Trinity. God is *'beforehand in himself' everything that he reveals in Christ. God corresponds to himself'* (Moltmann 2013: 248). Karl Rahner is on another level by saying that the difference between the two is inappropriate but rather we must say that: *'1. The Trinity is the nature of God and the nature of God is the Trinity. 2. The economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, and the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity'* (Moltmann 2013: 248).

Moltmann says that by rethinking the doctrine of the Trinity we are not in essence creating a new version of Trinity altogether, because the Trinity is always rooted in the beginning. *'As Schleiermacher rightly said, any new version of the doctrine of the Trinity must be "a transformation which goes right back to its first beginnings"'* (Moltmann 2013: 248). Moltmann says that *'the place of the doctrine of the Trinity is not the "thinking though", but the cross of Jesus'* (Moltmann 2013: 248-249). The starting point of our understanding must always be at the cross. For Immanuel Kant's philosophy, as can be expected, the doctrine of the Trinity must be subjectively understood and must have its origins in the human mind's *'practical reason'*, meaning that it can only make sense on the *basis of morality*. Kant says:

Virtually no practical consequences can be drawn from the doctrine of the Trinity taken literally ... [For] by principles of believe is not to be understood that which should be believed ... but that which is possible and purposeful to

accept in a practical (moral) intent, though this cannot be demonstrated, but only believed

(Moltmann 2013: 246).

Schleiermacher (thinking subjectively and following Kant) said that theological statements, including the understanding of the Trinity, need to be seen as statements of Christian self-awareness (Moltmann 2013: 246).

Nevertheless, in following Moltmann our understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity is through the crucified Christ, and our understanding of the crucified Christ is through the doctrine of the Trinity. *'The material principle of the doctrine of the Trinity is the cross of Christ. The formal principle of knowledge of the cross is the doctrine of the Trinity'* (Moltmann 2013: 249). He goes even further to say that *'the theology of the cross must be the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of the Trinity must be the theology of the cross, because otherwise the human, crucified God cannot be fully perceived'* (Moltmann 2013: 249).

In differentiating the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity, Moltmann follows the Cappadocian Fathers on their arguments: Firstly: the immanent Trinity: he says that as far as the immanent trinity is concerned, there are two things: (1.) the three Persons of the Trinity (Father, Son and the Holy Spirit) exist in the common and mutual divine substance, and (2.) that each Person of the Trinity exists essentially because of their relationship with the other Persons of the Trinity (Moltmann 2013: 174). Moltmann's understanding of the Persons of the Trinity is that there is mutual indwelling between the Three Persons; and that each Person has a distinct and personal responsibility. That which is essential to their differences is their commonality in terms of their eternal mutual indwelling, *perichoresis*.

Explaining perichoresis, Moltmann says that:

The doctrine of the perichoresis links together in a brilliant way the threeness and the unity, without reducing the threeness to the unity, or dissolving the unity in the Threeness. The unity of the triunity lies in the eternal perichoresis of the of the trinitarian persons

(Moltmann 1998: 175).

Perichoresis means that there is mutual indwelling amongst the Trinity. There is no separation and there is no division amongst the Three Persons. As Moltmann says that by understanding perichoresis one needs to understand that it *'consist of the living fellowship of the three Persons who are related to one another and exist in one another. Their unity does not lie in the one lordship of God; it is to be found in the unity of their tri-unity'* (Moltmann 1998: 175). The Three Persons of the Trinity compliments each other, meaning that each Person highlights the work of the other Persons of the Trinity in such a way that brings splendour and exaltation to the entire Trinity.

For Moltmann, the inner-life of the Trinity is not a fixed and limited formula whereby the Father is always the first member of the Trinity, the Son is the second and the Holy Spirit is the third person but an "open unity" where there is no hierarchy in the membership of the Trinity but rather equal partnership as they work together to accomplish their God's rule (cf. Moltmann 1998: 88-90,94).

Secondly; the Economic Trinity: For Moltmann our understanding of: *"God is love" must also mean: "God is self-communication"* (Moltmann 1998: 58). To emphasise this further he says that God decides to communicate himself which is a revelation of his own being. In this communication, God reveals himself or rather He makes himself known to us human beings.

Moltmann says that *'God communicates himself to other beings, not out of compulsion and not out of some arbitrary resolve, but out of the inner pleasure of his external love'* (Moltmann 1998: 58). Therefore, economic Trinity is when God's act of love is being transferred from God himself to us human beings. He further says that it is because of the work of the economic Trinity that humanity is able to participate in the divine life, which comes from the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. *'There is no experience of salvation without the expression of that experience in thanks, praise and joy'* (Moltmann 1998: 152). It is because of the economic Trinity that human beings finally obtain the knowledge of God and not only that but human beings now are able to share in the divine knowledge of God (knowing God in fullness as God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit), and this becomes the source of human's gratitude, love and praise. This saving act of the Trinity must not limit our worship, but our worship must be a result of the character of the Trinity,

for the Trinitarian God offers us human beings out of his grace and mercy freely such saving act.

Moltmann says: *'But the giver is not thanked merely for the sake of his good gift; he is also extolled because he himself is good'* (Moltmann 1998: 153). Therefore, we do not worship God because of what he does for us, but we worship God because He is God. He is worthy to be worshipped because of his Being, not only for what he does:

So God is not loved, worshipped and perceived merely because of the salvation that has been experienced, but for his own sake. That is to say, praise goes beyond thanksgiving. God is recognized, not only in his goodly works but in his goodness itself

(Moltmann 1998: 153).

The saving act of the economic Trinity draws us human beings into the inner-life of God. We find unity with the one who is himself unity, we find love with the one who is himself love and we are given life by the one who is himself life.

Chapter 6: The Future: The Kingdom and the future

At the cross (Good Friday event) Jesus suffered and experienced pain and then He died, but on the third day (Easter) He was resurrected from the dead (cf. Moltmann 2013: 171-173). The death and resurrection of Christ was for us and for our benefit. Moltmann says: *'Christ did not die only as that expiatory offering in which the law was restored or the original creation was reconstituted after the fall of man. He died "for us", to give us, "the dead", a share in his new life of resurrection and in his future of eternal life'* (Moltmann 2013: 191).

His resurrection brings hope to a world of sinners and the many people who are suffering and experiencing pain. Moltmann and Pannenberg, focuses mainly on the eschatology, stating that the resurrection of Jesus must be seen at the very centre of the way in which Christians understand the eschatology (cf. Labuschagne 2012: 60). For both of them the resurrection of Jesus Christ must be interpreted within the context of the eschatological future. Both use the word *'prolepsis'*, and then specifically in relation to the *"anticipatory and promissory nature of the event of the resurrection"* (Labuschagne 2012: 62). The resurrection of Jesus Christ is an event in Christ in our history, revealing to us something of the transformation of the world and our future event of resurrection. Moltmann says:

Now the proclamation of the Easter witnesses that God has "raised" this dead Jesus "from the dead" amounts to nothing less than the claim that this future of the new world of the righteousness and presence of God has already dawn in this one person in the midst of our history of death. All who hear and believe this, move from a distant expectation of an uncertain future to a sure hope in a near future of God which has already dawned in that one person

(Moltmann 2013: 175).

On the basis of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are also going to be resurrected from the dead to life everlasting: *'God's kingdom point towards the eschatological kingdom of glory in which people will finally, wholly and completed be gathered into the eternal life of the triune God'* (Moltmann 1998: 213).

'Life in communion with Christ is full life in the Trinitarian situation of God. Dead in Christ and raised to new life...' (Moltmann 2013: 286). God the Father, who didn't forsake his Son Jesus in death, will also not forsake us. As Moltmann says that *'...God was not silent and uninvolved in the cross of Jesus. Nor was he absent in the godforsakenness of Jesus'* (Moltmann 2013: 197). As *Deuteronomy 31: 6&8* says *'...for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you'*. Moltmann says *'God is no longer understood as the "God above us" or "in the depths of being", but as the "God before us", going before us in history as the "God of hope"'* (Moltmann 2013: 265). Moltmann says the resurrection of Jesus means that we must not focus on the past but on the future that is full of hope. Labuschagne says Moltmann teaches that *'we should be moving into the future of righteousness, peace and new life promised by God in the event of the raising of Jesus who was crucified. The resurrection is, thus, the ground of Christian hope and the basis of the commission of the Church'* (Labuschagne 2012: 62).

The Kingdom of God is the kingdom that is full hope. Moltmann says *'Christianity is eschatology, is hope, forward looking and forward moving, and therefore also revolutionizing and transforming the present'* (Moltmann 2013: 265). Hope is the motivation that keeps us going in the most difficult circumstances that we might experience or imagine. If we lose hope, then there is no future. Moltmann says that:

We are promised abundance of all good things – yet we are rich only in hunger and thirst. What would become of us if we did not take our stand on hope, and if our heart did not hasten beyond this world through the midst of the darkness upon the path illuminated by the word and Spirit of God!

(Moltmann 1967: 19).

We see beyond our suffering and pain. We see beyond what our physical eyes see now, we hope! as Moltmann says that *'in contradiction between the word of promise and the experiential reality of suffering and death, faith takes its stand on hope and "hastens beyond this world" ...'* (Moltmann 1967: 19). Therefore, we are to *'recognise the reality of the raising of Jesus and proclaim the future of the risen Lord'* (Moltmann 1967: 17).

Within this context, McGrath refers to Pannenberg's argument:

“The resurrection of Jesus must be seen as the anticipation of the general resurrection of the dead at the end of time. It thus brings forward into history both that resurrection and other aspects of apocalyptic expectation of the end-time – including the full and final revelation of God”

(McGrath 2005: 374-375).

The resurrection of Jesus is also the self-revelation of God. Moltmann says ‘...*the resurrection is the foundation not only of the transcendence but also of the immanence of this faith, because it sees the transcendent God immanent in Jesus, and conversely the immanent Jesus transcended in God*’ (Moltmann 2013: 173). McGrath further states that:

Only at the end of all events can God be revealed in his divinity, that is, as the one who works all things, who has the power over everything. Only because in Jesus’ resurrection the end of all things, which for us has not yet happened, has already occurred can it be said of Jesus that the ultimate is already present in him, and so also that God himself, his glory, has made its appearance in Jesus in a way that cannot be surpassed. Only because at the end of the world is already present in Jesus’ resurrection is God himself revealed in him

(McGrath 2005: 375).

Moltmann says: ‘*when God becomes man in Jesus of Nazareth, he not only enters into the finitude of man, but in his death on the cross also enters into the situation of man’s godforsakenness*’ (Moltmann 2013: 286). And:

Hope finds in Christ not only a consolation in suffering, but also the protest of the divine suffering against suffering...Peace with God means conflict with the world, for the goad of the promised future stabs inexorably into the flesh of every unfulfilled present

(Moltmann 1967: 21).

For Moltmann hope is when you realise that there is a future. If you only live for this world, what is there to hope for? If you cannot hope, there is only despair. Hope is a driving force that drives our human conduct. We live hopeful lives, because we know

that there is a tomorrow. We live different lives because we are hopeful. Even in death we know that God, who resurrected Jesus Christ from the dead, will also resurrect us to eternal life. *'Therefore there is no life, no fortune and no joy which have not been integrated by his history into eternal life, the eternal joy of God'* (Moltmann 2013: 255). Because He lives we can face tomorrow. This hope is built upon faith (cf. Romans 4: 17 & 18).

The resurrection involves the transformation of the world. And that is not all. Jesus will come again and in final sense make this world a better place. Also, Labuschagne points out that according to Pannenberg: *'God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ is accessible to all people, not only believers, because it happened in history for everyone with eyes to see'* (Labuschagne 2012: 63). There is no spiritualizing to be interpreted, because it really happened! As Moltmann says that *'Christian eschatology...sets out from a definite reality in history and announces the future of that reality, its future possibilities and its power over the future. Christian eschatology speaks of Jesus Christ and his future'* (Moltmann 1967: 17).

God's transformation has influence in the world not only socially but also ecologically and naturally. As much as God is concerned with the suffering humankind, He is also concerned with nature. Human beings are not above the nature and they don't have a right to misuse it. As Moltmann says that *'the relationship of working man to nature is not a master-servant relationship but a relationship of intercommunication which pays respect to the circumstances'* (Moltmann 2013: 348). Therefore, humans must stop exploiting nature and start seeing themselves as part of the entire created order. There must be a peaceful cooperation and relationship between the two: *'as far as we can see today, only a radical change of the relationship of man to nature will get us out of the ecological crisis'* (Moltmann 2013: 348).

Moltmann says a successful liberation and transformation includes both humankind and nature: *'no liberation of men from economic distress, political oppression and human alienation will succeed which does not free nature from inhuman exploitation and which does not satisfy nature'* (Moltmann 2013: 348). Everything is going to be changed and transformed in God's future. In explaining Moltmann, Labuschagne refers to Migliore saying that:

If we really believe in the resurrection of Jesus, this will be manifested in our being an exodus community, a people called to take part in the struggle against injustice and for the liberation and transformation of all things, from the chains of sin and law and death to new life in Christ

(Labuschagne 2012: 62).

'If God has taken upon himself death on the cross, he has also taken upon himself all of life and real life, as it stands under death, law and guilt' (Moltmann 2013: 286). Moltmann says that to understand the message of Easter man must set himself apart and live a different life. In referring to Bultmann individualizing the Easter message, Moltmann rejected a *transformation*

... only referring to the transformation of my (individual) consciousness – splitting the self and the world apart. To believe in the resurrection of the crucified is not just to have a new self-understanding. Belief in the resurrection is also to understand and act differently in this world

(Labuschagne 2012: 62).

It is to realise and know that: *'you are the salt of the earth...You are the light of the world...'* (Matthew 5: 13-14). This means that you must live an exemplary life. You must also be part of the transformation of this world into a better place, making a difference in other human beings: *'the event of the cross in trinitarian terms is an event concerned with a relationship between persons in which these persons constitute themselves in their relationship with each other'* (Moltmann 2013: 254) and the environment as well: *'nature is not an object but man's environment, and this has its own rights and equilibria. Therefore men must exchange their apathetic and often hostile domination over nature for a sympathetic relationship of partnership with the natural world'* (Moltmann 2013: 348).

Nature (obviously including humankind) is always part of God's ongoing renewal of the whole of His creation – moving into future fulfilment. The future belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ and His Kingdom – and not to politics or ideology. Therefore, in whatever situation of pain and suffering we might find ourselves, there is no despair; in Christ, our Lord, we never lose hope or faith. Moltmann says that *'Christian hope is resurrection hope, and it proves its truth in the contradictions of the future*

prospects thereby offered and guaranteed for righteousness as opposed to sin, life as opposed to death, glory as opposed to suffering, peace as opposed to dissension' (Moltmann 1967: 18). We are to hope in the God who can do things that do not exist. He is able to recreate new things in our lives. In Romans 4 Abraham still hoped. His hope was built upon his faith in a God who can do things that do not exist, a God who can even make the dead people alive again, and the God of impossibilities.

Moltmann says that humanity is forced to live in this world surrounded by suffering and pain. However, it is in this suffering and pain in which the suffering God enters into the world of humanity, suffering alongside those who suffer in a relationship built upon the crucified God. Moltmann says *'only Christ's representative suffering and sacrifice "for them" in his death on the cross brings hope to the hopeless, future to those who are passing away and new right to the unrighteous'* (Moltmann 2013: 190-191). God suffers with humankind in order to redeem, to transform, to set things right, He says on that cross follow me. The way in which suffering can be bearable is to be found in the resurrection of Christ and to be part of his kingdom in the hands of a God on his way to recreating and renewing everything:

Thus the real presences of God acquire the character of a *"praesentia explosiva"*. Brotherhood with Christ means the suffering and active participation in the history of this God. Its criterion is the history of the crucified and risen Christ. Its power is the sighing and liberating spirit of God. Its consummation lies in the kingdom of the triune God which sets all things free and fills them with meaning

(Moltmann 2013: 352).

Active participation in the Kingdom of Christ in this world involves 1. the overcoming of the vicious circles of death (Moltmann 2013: 343-346), 2. finding ways towards liberation (Moltmann 2013: 346-349) and 3. involvement in the transformations of God (cf. Moltmann 2013: 350-352). The world is full of 'vicious circles of death' which make it difficult for mankind to live freely and to the fullest and therefore the need for liberation. Moltmann says *'...there are hopeless economic, social and political pattern formations which drive life towards death'* (Moltmann 2013: 344). He further says that these vicious circles of death are interlinked or rather connected to each other as *'each of which contributes to another'* (Moltmann 2013: 344). Therefore, in

quest for liberation one cannot only focus on one vicious circle of death and ignore the other as they go hand in hand. And he therefore is ‘...*in search of the traces of men’s liberation in a series of realms and dimensions*’ (Moltmann 2013: 344). He mentions five vicious circles of dehumanization and death:

- a. In the *economic dimension of life* there is the *vicious circle of poverty*. It consists of hunger, illness and early mortality, and is provoked by exploitation and class domination.
- b. The *vicious circle of force* is inextricably bound up with the *vicious circle of poverty*. It is produced in particular societies by the domination of dictatorships (in politics), the upper classes or those with privileges. It is also produced through the relationships between powerful and weaker nations.
- c. Also involved with the vicious circles of poverty and force is the *vicious circle of racial and cultural alienation*. Men are adaptable and compliant once they have been robbed of their identity and characteristics and have been degraded to the point where they become factors which can be manipulated by the system. From here on they are shaped according to the dictates of their rulers.
- d. The vicious circles of poverty, force and alienation are now bound up in a greater circle, the *vicious circle of the industrial pollution of nature*. Mindless faith in progress has irreparably destroyed the balance of nature through industrialization.
- e. In the economic, political, cultural and industrial vicious circles one can see a deeper, more embracing reality: *the vicious circle of senselessness and godforsakenness*

(Moltmann 2013: 344-346).

These vicious circles affect humankind as individuals and society, and ‘a *general syndrome of decay develops*’ – ‘*The vicious circles work together as a linked system and bring the human life involved in them to a state of dehumanization and death*’ (Moltmann 2013: 346). In these vicious circles, we often sit back and expect those in power to change the situation. But Moltmann suggests that we all take part in breaking these vicious cycles to bring about freedom. He mentions five important spheres of life which will lead towards this liberation:

- a. In the *economic dimension of life*, liberation means the satisfaction of the material needs of men for health, nourishment, clothing, and somewhere to live. A further part of this is a social justice which can give all members of society a satisfying and just share in the products they produce.
- b. In the *political dimension of life*, liberation from the vicious circle of oppression also means democracy. By this we mean human dignity in the acceptance of political responsibility.
- c. In the *cultural dimension of life*, liberation from the vicious circle of alienation means identity in the recognition of others. By this we mean the “human emancipation of man” (Marx), in which men gain self-respect and self- confidence in the recognition of others and fellowship with them.
- d. In the *relationship of society to nature*, liberation from the vicious circle of the industrial pollution of nature means peace with nature. No liberation of men from economic distress, political oppression and human alienation will succeed which does not free nature from inhuman exploitation and which does not satisfy nature.
- e. In the relationship of man, society and nature to the *meaning of life*, liberation means a significant life filled with the sense of the whole. A society which is oppressed with economic, political, cultural and industrial vicious circles is always a “disheartening society”

(Moltmann 2013: 346-349).

In order for the liberation of humankind to be possible, Moltmann is calling upon a new society where the economy is very much sufficient and there is social justice for all humankind so that all people can be liberated and free. This involves a society where everyone is able to have an influence and bring about change, where people are no longer controlled and oppressed by others, where everyone is treated with respect and dignity and all forms of alienation are addressed, where human beings treat nature with respect and as part of their environment and not as an object (cf. Moltmann 2013: 346-349).

Moltmann says that ‘*these realities are not another kingdom separate from God, nor are they just similes and equivalents of his kingdom*’ (Moltmann 2013: 351). Moltmann says that ‘*in this sense a theology of liberation cannot get by without corresponding materializations of the presence of God, unless it means to remain*

idealistic' (Moltmann 2013: 351). The identifications of the presence of God and the manifestations of His Kingdom in this world are not compromised with politics and ideologies (cf. Moltmann 2013: 351). God is present in these vicious circles of death as the crucified God who suffers with humankind, he is omnipresent:

- a. In the vicious circle of poverty it can be said: "God is not dead. He is bread." God is present as bread in that he is the unconditional which draws near, in the present sense.
- b. In the vicious circle of force God's presence is experienced as liberation for human dignity and responsibility.
- c. In the vicious circle of alienation his presence is perceived in the experience of human identity and recognition.
- d. In the vicious circle of the destruction of nature God is present in joy in existence and in peace between man and nature.
- e. In the vicious circle of meaninglessness and godforsakenness, finally, he comes forward in the figure of the crucified Christ, who communicates courage to be

(Moltmann 2013: 352).

Moltmann expects, in *practical terms*, from Christians committed to the Kingdom of Christ here and now to participate and be involved in bringing about change and freedom. In this way all humankind will be led to experience meaning and purpose for life which is only made possible in the Shekinah (the indwelling presence of God) (cf. Moltmann 2013: 352).

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The crucified God, in Christ and Christ in God, meets us in our moments and situations of despair and God-forsakenness. When we cry out – *Where is God?* – and whilst crying out to the unreachable God in our lack of capacity, He reaches down in Trinitarian involvement in our world and in our history. The Trinitarian God reaches down to us in his gracious love, and plants His cross alongside our crosses of pain and destruction. God does that in His unexplainable kindness in our world order of the globalization of extreme evil and total exploitation of everything in God's created world. The Triune God makes our suffering His suffering, and in His unending love He becomes the *crucified God* – for us victims and perpetrators.

In the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we discover the *prolepsis* of God's revelation, revealing essentially what God's future entails, revealing that the Triune God created and started His new world for humankind and all of nature, in the here and now, and in the irresistible power of God to be fulfilled in His future. *'In that case it must be said that Jesus was raised into God's future and was seen and believed as the present representative of this future, of the free, new mankind and the new creation'* (Moltmann 2013: 173). When the Triune God touches you, His Holy Spirit makes you part of His Kingdom in this world to become part of God's transformation of mankind, society, nature, all of God's creation.

There is a mutual indwelling and relationship between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, in the unity of the Trinity, as they eternally love one another, and this relationship extends to human beings that now entirely change to love God and one another. And through the Triune God's intervention and actions this compassionate love, in the involvement of the Kingdom of Christ, is extended to the whole of society and the surrounding natural world.

In response to the theology of Jürgen Moltmann, we also clearly realize that the involvement of Christian love in this world includes a *specific anthropological understanding* – on the basis of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, human life has its future in relation to all other humans, the whole of nature, in the Triune God's recreation of His universe. Buitendag (2014) calls for an 'eco-

sociological understanding of homo religiosus' (p.8). He refers to Heidegger: '*Ecology is the "house of being"*' (p. 6). And elaborates on Bauckham and Moltmann:

...The well-known creation pericope of *Genesis 1: 1-2:4a* clearly reveals the oneness between human beings and nature

(Bauckham 2010: 27).

...The pericope forms a kind of *inclusio*-structure with verses 1:1 and 2:4a, both beginning and ending with the same expression: *God who created heaven and earth*. The climax of creation is therefore not the human being, and not even day six, but indeed day seven, the Sabbath Day (Moltmann 1985: 20, 151, 279, 281). This is when and where God and humans exist peacefully in creation

(Buitendag 2014: 6, 7).

This concludes the impact of Moltmann's soul-stirring insights in his book, with so many editions and translations, *The Crucified God*, inspiring us to extensive theological reflection, and a sure consciousness of Christian love and responsibility. The church needs to be aware of the evils and wrongs of the world, even more of institutionalized unjustness, and to be obedient to the message of the *crucified God* for both victims and perpetrators. In a special sense of empathy, the church needs to stand by the poor, the marginalised, the victimised and the oppressed. As Moltmann boldly says that '*it is the indwelling of God himself which gnaws at our conscience and does not let us come to terms with injustice, but makes us protest and cry out for the dumb and the silenced*' (Moltmann 2009: 185). It is our calling!

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