

Participatory eschatology: A challenge for dualistic and non-dualistic thinking

**Author:**Danie J. Dreyer¹ **Affiliation:**

¹Department of Systematic and Historical Theology, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa

Corresponding author:

Danie Dreyer,
danie.dreyer51@gmail.com

Dates:

Received: 12 Nov. 2019

Accepted: 14 May 2020

Published: 17 Aug. 2020

How to cite this article:

Dreyer, D.J., 2020, 'Participatory eschatology: A challenge for dualistic and non-dualistic thinking', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 41(1), a2069. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v41i1.2069>

Copyright:

© 2020. The Authors.
Licensee: AOSIS. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License.

In the modern era, much optimism, other than biblical hope, dominates both secular and religious consciousness. Whilst critics scorn the apocalyptic hope of the Bible as an indication of ignorance and fear, the dualistic mind does not possess an *operational system* to deal effectively with concepts such as death and eternity. For a dualistic mind to move beyond words, ideas and rational thinking, the 'negative' way of a non-dualistic intuitive mind is also needed. Dualistic and non-dualistic thinking are jointly necessary to create a magnificent form of higher consciousness. Therefore, Jesus used in his teaching the non-dualistic thinking of parables to explain the meaning of the kingdom of God. A meaningful life in light of the age to come is an optimistic life. And an optimistic life is a faithful life in the presence of faithful and eternal God (I AM what I AM and I WILL BE whatever I WILL BE). Such faith as a radical trust in God is a loyal commitment of the self at the deepest level of the 'heart' (consciousness). A participatory eschatology is more than mere discussion (subject/object). Once the eschatological hope turns into participation (subject/subject), the eschatological promise becomes fulfilment and the fulfilment becomes a promise.

Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications: The aim of this article is to rethink, within the discipline of systematic theology, our view of Christian hope (eschatology) in the light of the new consciousness of engagement between human beings and their cultural context. We draw perspectives from philosophy, sociology, psychology and the natural sciences.

Keywords: eschatology; Christian hope; kataphatic; apophatic; dualistic thinking; non-dualistic thinking; evolution; consciousness.

A new context

Until the European Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries, most religions considered death and its aftermath as central to the meaning of life. In modern humanism, heaven and hell ceased to be real places somewhere above the clouds and below the volcanoes (Harari 2015:272). Critics scorned apocalyptic Biblical hope as a product of ignorance and fear. Religions and ideologies, such as liberalism, socialism and feminism, lost all interest in the afterlife (Harari 2015:302). Since the Enlightenment there has been less appreciation of seeing things in their wholeness.¹ But the proclamation of the world's definite finitude came as a cultural shock and evolutionary optimism was replaced by a deep sense of ambiguity about the future. The hard facts of life shocked many from a naïve anthropocentrism and images of a catastrophe began to feed cultural moods of nihilism and apocalyptic despair (Polkinghorne & Welker 2000:7).²

When Christian theology re-examines its views about hope, joy, a divine future, a new creation and eternal life, it must be performed not only in light of biblical tradition and the customs of faith but also in dialogue with the social and natural sciences in their diagnoses of the world's finitude (Schwöbel 2000:113). Eschatology is hugely influenced by the major shifts in modern worldviews and its associated values. Whilst physical sciences force people to expand their consciousness of time, recent social developments collapse time-consciousness to the immediate present. Cultivation of cultural memory is displaced by a demanding collective attention focused on the present and the near future. Long-term expectations and hopes are effectively done away with. These days our complex world with its rapidly changing 'today and tomorrow' demands the ability and intelligence to grasp and adjust to rapid change. Much discourse is needed to match

1. Polkinghorne and Welker (2000:6), theoretical physicist and former president of Queen's College, Cambridge, says: 'In Western cultures, public expectation relies predominantly on scientific procedures and not much, if indeed at all, on theology and human science in the endeavour to come close to truth and evaluate evidence'.

2. The essays in the book authored by Polkinghorne and Welker (2000:141–297), as part of the science and theology discourse, attempt to rethink some eschatological themes under the common topic of a *realistic eschatology* to explore the grounds of hope and joy in the face of a physical death and the threat posed by a finite world and universe (Polkinghorne & Welker 2000:2).

Read online:

Scan this QR code with your smart phone or mobile device to read online.

the multi-layered account of reality to do full justice to the profoundly relational character of reality, the interrelationship between past and present and the richly textured character of the nature of human temporal experience (Polkinghorne & Welker 2000:11).

Whilst scientific predictions and cultural developments posed powerful questions about theology and the church, an oversimplified reduction, whether scientific or fideistic, must certainly be avoided if Christian theology wishes to steer clear of a belief that eschatology is nothing but false consolation. It is therefore, in the first place, the purpose of this article is to argue that dualistic and non-dualistic thinking are jointly necessary to create a higher form of consciousness and understanding. The unknowing of non-dualistic thinking is a new kind of understanding. In the second place, it is important to point out that dualistic and non-dualistic thinking is a part of Biblical tradition. We need the wisdom of non-dualistic thinking to gain insight in the meaning of certain concepts in this age and the one to come. Consequently, we explore the meaning of a participatory eschatology. An optimistic life in light of the age to come is a faithful life in the presence of eternal God. In addition, a faithful life is a meaningful life once eschatology becomes more than mere discussion (object/subject) and turns into participation (subject/subject).

Knowing and unknowing as dualistic and non-dualistic thinking

Perhaps the most universal way of identifying the two traditions of knowing and not knowing is by way of the concept of *light* and *darkness*. The formal theological terms are the *kataphatic*, or the 'affirmative' way of dual (dualistic) mind which employs words, concepts and images, and the *apophatic* or 'negative' way of unitive mind that moves beyond words and rational knowing into silence (non-dualistic thinking).³ Kataphatic theology is the theology through positive assertion about who God is and describes who God is as a person. It speaks of his attributes in positive terms. Apophatic theology as a way of unknowing is the theology through which negation asserts only what God is not and sees God as transcending the kinds of attributes posited of him in scripture.⁴ Kataphatic and apophatic theology are jointly necessary to create a higher form of consciousness and understanding.

3. There are many shades of meaning to the word *non-duality*. Non-duality is the philosophical, spiritual and scientific understanding of non-separation and fundamental intrinsic oneness. It is the understanding that *identification* with common dualisms avoids recognition of a deeper reality. In the last century, Western scientists through quantum mechanics have arrived at the same conclusion: The universe does indeed comprise as a single substance, presumably created during the Big Bang, and all sense of being – consciousness – subsequently arises from it (non-dualism).

4. Apophatic theology found its classic expression in the mystical theology of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite in the early 6th century. This way of 'unknowing' has persisted in various manifestations such as the Hesychasm of the Eastern orthodoxy. It shows itself in many of the medieval mystics, for example, Meister Eckhart in the 14th century. The heritage of apophatic theology could be seen in Karl Barth and the Neo-orthodoxy. Barth's 'wholly other' God is so wholly other that nothing certain could be spoken of him in propositions. Postmoderns such as Derrida are sometimes called apophatic in their approach to the subject of deity or *différance*. In the 20th and 21st centuries, there has been a resurgence of interest in mysticism and contemplative prayer. Thomas Merton, Henri Nouwen and Morton Kelsey are just three names amongst many in this stream (Kowalski 2003:n.p.).

The question under discussion is not the ontological question: 'What really exists?' It is rather an epistemological question: 'How do we think we know what really exists?' Rohr (2014:15–16), Franciscan priest and writer from the Centre for Action and Contemplation (CAC) in Albuquerque, says that Western theologians tried to match the new rationalism with what felt like solid knowing. They mimicked the secular mind instead of knowing spiritual truths in a spiritual way (1 Cor 2:13). Migliore (1991:7), professor emeritus of theology at the Princeton Theological Seminary, confirms: 'Surely faith is more than thinking correctly (a notion that might be called the heresy of orthodoxy). Faith is a matter of transformation – personal, social, and world transformation'. Whilst Polkinghorne and Beale (2009:7) believe that theology is concerned with the intellectual reflection on human encounters with the sacred, together with probing the nature of God. God's existence has never been self-evident in some perfectly unambiguous and undeniable way. The presence of God is veiled, as the naked presence of divinity would overwhelm finite creatures, thus depriving them of truly being themselves and freely accepting God (Polkinghorne & Beale 2009:11). Therefore, Judaic tradition that originated from Isaiah 55:8–9 taught humility before God's mystery. That is why, as Shapiro (2004:4) said: 'God reveals the essence of his divinity to Moses: *Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh*, often translated as I AM *what* I AM (Ex 3:14)'. A more acceptable Hebrew translation would be 'I WILL BE whatever I WILL BE' (future continuous tense).

Meanwhile, the evolutionary process has opened a new way of religious experience and reaching out to God. It helps to regain a vision on this dynamic God (*Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh*) who, according to Genesis 1:27, '... created human beings to be like himself' (to His image and likeness). There is something godly in human beings (2 Pt 1:4).⁵ When the New Testament describes the relationship between God and humans as follows: 'Yet God is not far from any one of us; as someone has said, "In him we live and move and exist"' (Ac 17:27–28), it means that human beings are part of the universe of God's dynamic flow of love, love as a connection, communion and communication. Whilst we know that the universe is wider than our theories, we try to grasp its reality in and through distinctly human ways of knowing (Polkinghorne & Welker 2000:7).

In search of truth, the dualistic mind of the *kataphatic* or 'affirmative' way primarily focuses on answering the 'how?' and 'what?' questions (Polkinghorne & Welker 2009:5–7). Dualistic thinking is rational subject/object thinking and regards the world impersonally. It treats the world as an 'it' and seeks to answer questions by measuring and describing reality seemingly without personal, religious or cultural bias (Rohr 2008:115–116).⁶ This linear dualistic thinking with definite laws, boundaries and beliefs about right and wrong, true and false is particularly useful in science. However, this

5.2 Peter 1:4 'in this way he (God) has given us the very great and precious gifts he promised, so that by means of these gifts you ... may come to share the divine nature'.

6. Nürnberg (2018:10), professor emeritus of systematic theology (UNISA), takes a clearly kataphatic stand in his experiential realism as practised by the positive sciences. He restricted his observations to the immanent reality, respecting the fact that the transcendent as such is inaccessible to our observation, explanation and manipulation (see also Conradie 2018:3).

Newtonian way of thinking (reductionist physicalism) was relativised by the quantum theory which stated that there is an indeterminacy present in processes. The quantum mechanics revealed that an observer is no longer separate but rather inseparable from observed quantum effects. It is as if consciousness itself contributes to create reality (Polkinghorne & Welker 2000:5–6, 35). Just how things appear to us (epistemology) may consequently differ from the way they truly are (ontology). As a result, better *understanding* seems to go beyond mere *explanation* of related strategies. The dualistic mind as such does not possess an *operational system* to deal effectively with concepts such as faith, love, suffering, death and eternity (Rohr 2014:16). The ‘negative’ way of a non-dualistic intuitive mind is needed to move beyond words, ideas and rational thinking to understand what we believe to be ‘the whole’ and making sense of complex arrangements and interconnected events (Polkinghorne & Welker 2000:4). A theology which therefore only addresses concrete ‘how’ and ‘what’ issues is a sterile, limited theology without real impact on people’s lives. This intellectual, textbook, or dogmatic knowing, stimulates a religion without any fruit (Lk 6:44–45) – and an eschatology without hope!⁷

Profound human consciousness is primarily concerned with answering the ‘why’ question: ‘Why is there meaning and purpose behind what is happening?’ (Polkinghorne 2009:7).⁸ The non-dualistic thinking of *apophatic* or ‘negative’ way considers more than mere theoretical and factual knowledge. It sees things beyond the sequential and separated way in their wholeness, connection and union.⁹ It gets a whole *Gestalt* in one picture. It strives through contemplation and mindful meditation for wisdom and the real *meaning* of facts. To overcome the gap between being and doing, contemplation is essential in the non-dualistic consciousness (Rohr 2014:20). Once we look at reality from a personal perspective, as subject to subject, our approach has to change. It touches the heart, the ‘true self’. It seeks integration of the true self as part of the cosmos and in light of the Divine as a seamless whole. Christian hope encompasses the entire creation in this holistic view.¹⁰

By way of *faith* this unknowing of non-dualistic thinking is a new kind of understanding. Faith sees the unseen in the cosmos, history, the lives of people and society, and hears the voice of God in the words of the Bible. Faith is a step into the unseen darkness (unknown). Faith is a kind of knowing that does not

7. Since the Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment, non-dualistic *apophatic* thinking has been largely underutilised, undertaught and underdeveloped. Conversely, the dualistic religious thinking has, until now, applied laws and sought security by trying to separate right from wrong, true from false, yet it had a devastating effect on the unity of the church as the body of Christ (Rohr 2008:120).

8. Harari (2017:275–277), who lectures at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, says that in medieval Europe the chief formula for knowledge was: Knowledge = scriptures + logic. The scientific revolution proposed a very different formula for knowledge: Knowledge = empirical data + mathematics. However, it has had one huge drawback: It could not deal with questions of value and meaning. However, humanism offered an alternative. A new formula for ethical knowledge appeared: Knowledge = experiences + sensitivity.

9. Bourgeault (2017:n.p.) sees non-duality as a modality of perception that perceives from oneness. As an operating system, it is a way of organising and making sense of the whole perceptual field as a seamless whole. The core conviction is that this new operating system is not carried in the brain alone but in the brain and with the heart (consciousness).

10. Non-dualistic thinking, as seeking for meaning and truth, is sometimes linked with *deep time*, *deep incarnation*, *deep suffering* and *deep resurrection* (Dreyer 2017:392–396).

need certainty and yet does not dismiss knowledge either. Knowledge (*accensus*) is just as important a part of biblical faith as vision (*visio*), but faith is *more* than knowledge and vision. Faith is also trust (*fiducia*) and faithfulness (*fidelitas*) (Borg 2004:28–37). It is a radical trust in God’s benevolent intentionality as a loyal allegiance and commitment of the self at the deepest level of the ‘heart’ (consciousness). That is why Jesus praises faith as a certain quality even more than love (Mt 18:2–5). It is the ability to stand in a liminal space, to stand on the threshold and to hold contraries until we are moved by grace to a much deeper level and a much larger frame (Rohr 2016:121).

We must therefore be aware of certain theories about the future which are based on fundamentalist or literal interpretation of scripture concerning things to come (and which did not materialise).¹¹ Polkinghorne and Beale (2009:24) admit that present thoughts about our afterlife inevitably involve a degree of speculation. No language can adequately describe the Holy and the future. Despite all our understanding about knowing, we must have an equal and remaining appreciation that we do not know (Rohr 2008:115–116). We can merely use metaphors, approximations and pointers when speaking of God and transcendental matters. An apt addition to the famous phrase of Anselm of Canterbury (ca.1033–1109) to describe theology as *faith is seeking understanding* (*fides quaerens intellectum*) (McGrath 1997:43) could therefore be: *Theology is (also) the art to know the Unknown*.

Biblical thinking as dualistic and non-dualistic thinking

We have seen that both *kataphatic* and *apophatic* ways of thinking are good and necessary. But the experimental dualistic thinking cannot deal effectively with aspects such as faith, suffering, death and eternity. Consequently, questions, such as theodicy, remain an unsolved problem for the dualistic mind (Hick 1966:39–52).¹² The coexistence and cooperation of one and more is problematic in the ontological thinking of the dualistic mind. It is non-dualistic thinking when Colossians 1 says:

Christ is the visible likeness of the invisible God. He is the first-born Son, superior to all created things ... God created the whole universe through him and for him. Christ existed before all things, and in union with him all things have their proper place. (vv. 15–17)

The wisdom of non-dualistic, intuitive experiential thinking is needed to gain insight into the meaning of certain concepts in this age and the age to come (eschatology).¹³

11. The *fundamentalistic apocalypticism* of Hal Lindsay, as a version of the Christian hope, is an example of this approach that feeds on the fears of people. The dispensationalism achieved considerable influence in the 20th-century evangelicalism, particular during 1920–1970 (McGrath 1997:551–552).

12. Conradie (2018:6) is of opinion that for Klaus Nürnberger, with his experiential realism, the theodicy question remains. Conradie (2018) continues: ‘In my view its focus on the imminent implies that it loses something of the comprehensiveness of the vision it espouses ... It does address the long-term future but seems to disallow human wondering about the beyond’.

13. According to Migliore (1991:113), John Hick’s *person-making theodicy* in his more non-dual thinking postulates the existence of worlds beyond this world in which persons continue their movement towards the fullness of life in love that God intends for all creatures.

The Bible, as the story of two ancient communities, that is ancient Israel and the early Christian movement, tries to find an equilibrium between knowing and not knowing, between using particular and carefully chosen words and having humility about words (Rohr 2008:114). Because pre-biblical and biblical thinking (Old and New Testament) were predominantly non-dualistic thinking,¹⁴ the authors were not overly concerned with the historical factuality of Bible stories, but rather focused on their meanings (Borg 2004:13). The narrative as a descriptive and interpretative tool, accompanied by parables, myths, legends, oracles, poetry and prose, provided meaning, identity, acceptability, direction and authority, regardless of a historical core or not (Nürnberg 1991:100–101).

According to the New Testament, Jesus not only used non-dualistic teaching in his parables,¹⁵ but he also reacted against the legalistic (dualistic) spirituality of the Pharisees (Mt 5:17–20).¹⁶ When the Bible speaks of life beyond, or about the resurrected body, or of a new heaven and a new earth, it uses language that is rich in symbolism and imagery (Migliore 1991:240). As Apostle John began his ‘record of the events that Jesus Christ revealed’ (Rv 1:1), he said: ‘On the Lord’s Day the Spirit took control of me, and I heard a loud voice that sounded like a trumpet, speaking behind me’ (Rv 1:10). We must not pretend to have precise and detailed information about the future. Symbolic language of hope must accordingly be taken seriously but not literally. Even when God’s people were in his presence, they did not respond with more theories and knowledge but rather reverted to worship, prayers, dance, rituals and celebrations.

Participatory eschatology

Traditional Western eschatology is seen as the doctrine of last things, whether the end of an individual’s life, the end of an age, the end of the world and the nature of God’s kingdom.¹⁷ Christian faith is seen as an expecting faith, and eschatology is the proclamation of a divine vision of *what ought to come*. But eschatology is not speculation about a *virtual reality*. In asking questions that reach towards the ultimate, it explores *ultimate meaning*. For the non-dualistic mind, the given answers have a holistic impact (Schwöbel 2000:111). In this sense, eschatology, as a notion of ‘last things’, embodies an interesting ambiguity. Religious chronicles are narratives of beginning and ending. Schwöbel (2000:109),

14. Van Huyssteen (2012:120) interprets the so-called *fall*, as a *fall upward*. The *fall* (Gn 3:1–24) described the evolution of the moral consciousness of *Homo sapiens* to distinguish between good and evil. In a certain sense, it was the ‘*birth*’ of the dualistic thinking.

15. ‘Jesus used parables to tell all these things to the crowds; he would not say a thing to them without using a parable’ (Mt 13:34).

16. The purpose of the thora (Book of the Law – Dt 30:10) was to teach Israel to distinguish between right and wrong. The dualistic spirituality of the thora was enforced by the priests after exile in Babylonia. The Wisdom literature, for example, the books of Job and Ecclesiastes, protested against this dualistic way of thinking. While Paul said: ‘The written law (letter) brings death, but the Spirit gives life’ (2 Cor 3:6).

17. Christian eschatology looks to study and discuss matters such as death and the afterlife, heaven and hell, the second coming of Jesus, the resurrection of the dead, the rapture, the tribulation, millennialism, the end of the world, the last judgement, and the new heaven and new earth in the world to come (Christian Eschatology:n.p.).

professor of systematic theology at the University of Heidelberg, says: ‘Then, what comes last, that concludes the history of the cosmos, seems to throw light (or shadow) on everything that comes before it’. It is the end that determines the story. The Bible (*Good News Bible*, today’s English Version, National Publishing Co, New York; *The Holy Bible*, authorised King James Version, Tyndale House, London) as a book of hope is a witness to the past and a promise for the future to inspire people to live their lives in the presence of God. The vision of God’s comprehensive well-being towards our cosmos moves like a horizon as we approach it, opening new vistas, challenges and opportunities (Nürnberg 2018:11). Prophets envisioned a time of universal harmony when the Lord shall be glorified in all, when nations ‘shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks’ (Is 2:4).

The New Testament particularly is imbued with a spirit of expectation when justice and peace shall prevail throughout creation. Jesus also proclaimed the coming reign (kingdom) of God in word and deed (Mk 1:15). God’s kingdom was the frame of reference for the followers of Jesus to be in the ever presence of God (Mt 6:10; 13:37–43). Early followers of the crucified and risen Lord eagerly awaited the final triumph of God when ‘death will be no more’ (Rv 21:4). They spoke of God as the *God of hope* (Rm 15:13), and their persistent prayer was ‘Maranatha – our Lord, come!’ (1 Cor 16:22).¹⁸

The narrative of Jesus is the paradigmatic account of God, continuing and pointing to the completion of God’s story with Israel. The *theological* content of the *Christological* story is the key to its *eschatological* significance (Schwöbel 2000:115). Most eschatological symbols and texts in classical and canonical religious traditions address *continuity* and *discontinuity* between this world and the world to come, the *new creation*, or *new heaven and new earth* (Polkinghorne & Welker 2000:2). Whilst hope points to continuity and discontinuity after death, only God is ultimate. This supports the hope which was established by the resurrection of Jesus that the last word lies with God and not in death. This truth was suggested as the one event to answer all eschatological questions. Early Christians applied the message of Jesus about the coming kingdom of God as an unconditional, unjustified act of God. The gospel portrays God’s redemptive action on the cross and his resurrection as the healing of the broken relationship between God and his estranged creatures. God grants continuity where there is discontinuity. God upholds the claim implicit in the story of Jesus about living in absolute and total trust in the God Jesus called Father (Schwöbel 2000:111–112, 115–116).

The assurance of the Gospel is God promising himself and it calls for an unconditional trust in him. When Jesus and the Sadducees disputed destiny beyond death, he pointed to the

18. However, as the church expanded, it adapted to its cultural environment and eventually became the official religion of the state under Constantine (313 AD). It was then that hope in the glorious coming of Christ and the transformation of the world was being increasingly marginalised. Over time it was on the one hand replaced with the powerful hierarchy under leadership of the Pope (*vicarius Christi*), and on the other hand with a spiritualised existential relationship with God in Christ (Nürnberg 2018:9).

God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and said: 'He is the God of the living, not of the dead' (Mk 12:27). As an absolute reliance on the relationship of God to his creation, eschatological hope is fulfilment *in* the promise and a promise *in* the fulfilment. Hebrews 11:1 confirms this by stating: 'To have faith is to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see'. Abel (Heb 11:4), Enoch (Heb 11:5) and Abraham (Heb 11:8ff) acted in faithful certainty *in God* rather than on certainty of fulfilled promises. They acted confidently in faith, although 'They did not receive the things God had promised' (vs. 13). In faith Abraham did not need or hold all knowledge. He knew he was held inside a much larger frame and perspective. Paul too said:

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then we shall see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, just as I have been fully known myself. (1 Cor 13:12)

This indicates a knowing by *participation with*, rather than a subject to object *observation of facts*. It is knowing subject to subject (Rohr 2014:15–16).¹⁹ Biblical religion is about trust in the everlasting faithfulness of the living and eternal God (Polkinghorne & Welker 2000:12). Eschatology is therefore a way of living as God's people in their daily lives in the presence of God as I AM *what* I AM and I WILL BE *whatever* I WILL BE (Ex 3:14–15).

People of faith are part of an unfolding future when eschatological hope turns into participation and ultimately becomes part of their being (subject/subject).²⁰ They need some artistic skills to participate in this unfolding (evolving) drama to discover *how* and *what* is happening (analytical dualistic mind) *and* to listen *why* it is happening (a contemplative non-dualistic mind). God's grace allows our minds to explore, understand and reflect on creation and even on his works, but we cannot think our way to God. At the deepest level God can be loved, not discovered through thought.²¹ Therefore, the ultimate focus must be on God and not on us or our future. Our future is with God as the creator, the destiny, the alpha and omega. He, as the I AM *what* I AM and the I AM *whatever* I AM, gives meaning to life. It incites imaginations to dream new dreams and motivates individuals and societies to renewed efforts of helping to 'make and keep human life human in the world' (Paul Lehman in Migliore 1991:241). Therefore, the symbols of Christian hope are both spiritual and ethical. The gospel proclaimed by the church must give meaning to the world, whilst the sacraments point to the ultimate destiny of the whole creation. Hope in God could and must encourage Christians to work for greater justice, freedom and peace.

19. Harari (2017:168) says there is a third level of reality: the intersubjective level. Meaning is created when many people weave together a common network of stories. To think historically means to ascribe real power to the contents of our imaginary stories (Harari 2017:170, 176).

20. American philosopher Ken Wilber, in his *Integral Theory*, says an integral approach that uses intersubjectivity (non-dualistic thinking – D.J.D.) to evaluate both religious claims and scientific claims, will give a more complete account of reality than *narrow science*, which only allows evidence from the lowest realm of consciousness, the *sensorimotor* (the five senses and their extensions) (dualistic thinking – D.J.D.) (Ken Wilber: n.p.).

21. Butcher (2009:156) says: 'When we reach the end of what we know, that's where we find God. That's why St. Dionysius [5th/6th century] said that the best, most divine knowledge of God is that which is known by not-knowing'.

The church as the body of Christ, in dependence of the spirit, has to be a noticeable sign that solely God is its hope for today and tomorrow.

This Christian hope ought once again to be voiced in all its fullness amidst the despair and false hopes of our age. Although Jesus Christ inaugurated the Christian hope of God's reign, it has not yet been completed. It encompasses history *and* cosmic process. This hope embraces personal *and* communal fulfilment. It is a divine gift, *yet* liberates humanity for partnership with God. Biblical faith and hope are themes of *transformation*, which is personal, social and world transformation. It is a life transformed to the image of God and lived in the likeness of God. The ensuing Christian life is the ability to live in the presence of a faithful God *without* fully knowing.

Acknowledgements

Competing interests

The author has declared that no competing interests exist.

Author's contributions

The author declares that he is the sole author of this research article.

Ethical consideration

This article followed all ethical standards for a research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

Funding information

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

Data availability statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the author.

References

- Borg, M.J., 2004, *The heart of Christianity: Rediscovery a life of faith*, Harper Collins, New York, NY.
- Bourgeault, C., 2017, *Christian nonduality: A Q&A with Cynthia Bourgeault*, Garrison Institute, New York, NY.
- Butcher, A., 2009, *The cloud of unknowing with the Book of Privy Council*, transl. C. Acevedo, Shambhala, Boulder, CO.
- Christian Eschatology, *Wikipedia*, viewed June 2019, from <https://en.wikipedia.org/Christian Eschatology>.
- Conradie, E.M., 2018, 'What hope is there – for Klaus?', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 39(1), a1847. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v39i1.1847>
- Dreyer, D.J., 2017, 'Evolusie, Christologie en spiritualiteit – 'n Tweede (post-) aksialeperspektief', *Stellenbosch Theological Journal* 3(2), 379–402. <https://doi.org/10.17570/stj.2017.v3n2.a17>
- Harari, Y.N., 2015, *Sapiens. A brief history of humankind*, Vintage, London.

- Harari, Y.N., 2017, *Homo Deus. A brief history of tomorrow*, Vintage, London.
- Hick, J., 1966, *Evil and the God of love*, Harper & Row, New York, NY.
- Ken Wilber, *Wikipedia*, viewed June 2019, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/Ken Wilber](https://en.wikipedia.org/Ken_Wilber).
- Kowalski, D., 2003, *Cataphatic and apophatic theology*, viewed June 2019, from <https://www.apologeticsindex.org>.
- McGrath, A.E., 1997, *Christian theology. An introduction*, Blackwell, Oxford.
- Migliore, D.L., 1991, *Faith seeking understanding: An introduction to Christian Theology*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI.
- Nondualism, *Wikipedia*, viewed June 2019, from <https://en.wikipedia.org/Nondualism>.
- Nürnberg, K., 2002, *Theology of the biblical witness. An evolutionary approach*, LIT-Verlag, Munster.
- Nürnberg, K., 2018, 'Systematic theology – An experiential approach: Core assumptions of my "invitation to systematic theology"', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 39(1), a1863. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v39i1.1863>
- Polkinghorne, J. & Beale, N., 2009, *Questions of truth. Fifty-one responses to questions about God, science, and belief*, WKJ Press, Louisville, KY.
- Polkinghorne, J. & Welker, M. (eds.), 2000, *The end of the world and the ends of God. Science and theology on eschatology*, Trinity Press International, Harrisburg, PA.
- Rohr, R., 2008, *Things hidden: Scripture as spirituality*, Franciscan Media, Cincinnati, OH.
- Rohr, R., 2014, *Dancing standing still: Healing the world from a place of prayer*, Paulist Press, Mahwah, NJ.
- Rohr, R., 2016, *A Spring within us: A book of daily meditations*, CAC Publishing, Albuquerque, NM.
- Schwöbel, C., 2000, 'The church as a cultural space. Eschatology and ecclesiology', in J. Polkinghorne & M. Welker (eds.), *The end of the world and the ends of god. Science and theology on eschatology*, Trinity Press International, Harrisburg, PA.
- Shapiro, R., 2004, *Hasidic tales: Annotated and explained*, Jewish Lights Publishing, Nashville, TN.
- Van Huyssteen, J.W.V., 2012, 'J Wentzel van Huyssteen in gesprek met Frits Guam', in G. Claassen & F. Gaum (eds.), *God? Gesprekkeoor die oorsprong en die uiteinde van alles*, pp. 113–132, Tafelberg, Kaapstad.