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**The enigma of Evolution, Suffering and
Redemption according to John F. Haught**

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INTRODUCTION

In this thesis I will try to analyze how science and religion can collaborate in promoting an understanding of both God and the world. In 1859 Charles Darwin published *On the Origin of Species*, his famous treatise on evolution. It is one of the most important books of science has ever written, and experts today still consider it to be largely accurate. Theologically speaking, it caused a fierce storm of controversy, and we are still wrestling with the question of what to make of it. Does Darwin's theory perhaps put the final nail in religion's coffin? Or can there be a fruitful encounter of religion with evolutionary thought? Does evolution and religion contradict or complement each other? For many scientists evolution means that the universe is fundamentally impersonal. We are not going to analyze what is acceptable and what is not of Darwin's teachings. Only a brief look at Darwin's theory will show why it disturbs the traditional religious belief in a loving and powerful God.

Darwin says that all the living species produce more offspring but not all reach the matured age. In some species, the number of individuals remains fairly constant, which means that there must be a very high rate of mortality. To explain why some survive and others do not, Darwin noted that the individuals of any species are not all identical: some are better *adapted* to their environment than others. It appears that the most *fit* are the ones that survive to produce offspring. Most individuals and species lose out in the struggle for existence, but during the long journey of evolution there emerge the staggering diversity of life, millions of new species, and eventually the human race. What, then, is so theologically disturbing about this theory? What is there about evolution that places in question even the very existence of God? Let us look at more specifically whether Intelligent Design rolls out novelty in the creation? In this

thesis I try to get some of the answers to never ending questions.

In the first chapter I will be dealing with autobiography of John F. Haught. He is working as a Professor of Theology at Georgetown University. He is specialized in systematic theology. He has also some particular interests in issues relating to science, cosmology, evolution, ecology, and religion. He has written many books and written innumerable articles and book reviews. The full bibliography of his writings will be found in the official web site of Georgetown University¹. He has been teaching for many years on his favorite topic of science and religion. He teaches all over the world about various topics related to evolution and it's relation to religion.

When I had intention to do my further studies in faith perspective which could help me to help my parishners in their daily existential problems I was proposed to choose John F. Haught for my investigation. Darwin was an issue in many conversations of catechists, so I thought that this could be a good issue to deal with. Haught's works helped me to have another view of evolution and religion. In this chapter I will be dealing few reviews of his books which were considered more in this thesis. In the second chapter I will be dealing with the topic of evolution in John F. Haught's perspective. In the beginning I will be seeing a general idea about Evolution and the Meaning of Life, and later I will be dealing with how Darwin thinks of evolution; then I would defend how creation and evolution go beyond just an intelligent Design. I will be analyzing how Darwin's evolution is a challenge to Theology, Creation, Revelation, Grace and Divine power. Finally I will fundament this thesis on God as *ultimate explanation* for evolution as John Haught does.

¹ <http://www.woodstockcenter.org/fellows/john-haught#cv>, accessed on September 20, 2012.

Ever since Charles Darwin published his ideas on the theory of evolution, individuals have been passionately pursuing the questions regarding the relationship of Darwinian Theory to Ethics and Morality. Clergy, philosophers, and scientists alike have made statements for and against the viability of such an attempt. In this respect, Haught assumes to do more than put theology into dialogue with evolution.

He tries to create a theology of evolution. A new way of approach to evolutionary view of nature may benefit us to enhance our way of thinking about God. John Haught says that a theology of evolution will be considering the entire deviancy that consists in the post-Darwinian depictions of nature. Moreover theology should have its foundation and experiences of sacred in the communities and traditions of living Christian faith. Our way of thinking and comprehension of divine has to go beyond a Deity who keeps order in the creation. In the third chapter I will analyze how the evolution affects the suffering world? Why there is suffering in this world? Why many innocent people die every year becoming victims of natural calamities? And innumerable “*Why*” questions would be discussed. We explore and analyze how evolutionary theory throws light on key theological themes such as the nature of God’s providence, especially in relation to pain, suffering and evil. This thesis involves a critical reading of Haught’s works, with his respective emphases on classical *process* and *kenotic* theology.

Haught explores the usefulness of kenotic theology for explaining how belief in an omnipotent and supremely loving God can be reconciled with the existence of pain, suffering and evil in the creation. Although, a kenotic approach can account for the scientific evidence of a “*self-creative*” and emergent cosmos along with the presence of suffering and evil, a more complete theological perspective must include an understanding of how God is active in creation, sustaining it in existence and drawing it

towards its divinely ordained end.

I will study a theology of suffering in pastoral perspective especially in Amares and Ferreiros which belong to archdiocese of Braga. We will consider eight viewpoints of suffering which we got from a short informal interview of various people in and around the above mentioned parishes. People came with several opinions and ways of interpreting the pain and suffering. In this chapter I will present just eight groups. There could be more to discuss and present but limited me to eight groups to avoid repetition. Well, I present these groups not in any priority order. We can't just fix the problems of these people to just one group or the other, there just mixed and some seem to be similar. Well I will be looking at these groups in details in this chapter. This thesis helps us to understand suffering and pain to help others in my pastoral work.

In the fourth and the final chapter I will be dealing with theme of redemption through Christ. Primarily following the author, I will be dealing with images of redemption. The fundamental idea is that God has attained the redemption of sinful humanity through Christ's death on the cross. We can only achieve redemption through death and resurrection of Christ. According to John Haught, the invisible God can only be seen through the eyes of faith. He further says that God constantly embraces the world. One can ask saying that it can't be possible because one doesn't see Him embracing the world because there is constant pain and death in the world. One can be much certain of His abandonment than His embracement. To respond to this Haught says that this presence does not show up as an object to be grasped by ordinary awareness or scientific method. It is empirically unavailable. Those who are used to religious experience only understand the presence of God in the world. Haught fundamentals his theology on subjective experience of religious faith. Haught finds out that the process theology offers the best way to define divine action in modern and an

evolving universe.

This thesis, however, is limited by a number of factors. Of several authors writing in this field, only one has been selected for closer study, that is, John F. Haught. This excludes wider views within the scope of the research. Similarly, contemporary theological responses to the research have been compared to a limited sample of classical theology. Despite these limitations, I anticipate that this thesis will add to the fruitful dialogue that is already taking place.

I. I. INTRODUCTION: JOHN F. HAUGHT, A THEOLOGIAN

1. Early Life and Education

I will try to present a short *Curriculum Vitae* of John F. Haught which I got from various websites. There isn't any book as such referring just on his biography. John F. Haught was born and brought up in a Roman Catholic family. He is a professor of theology and Senior Research Fellow at the Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University. He also worked as Professor in the Department of Theology at Georgetown University (1970-2005) and as Chairperson between 1990-1995. His favorite area of specialization is Systematic Theology, at the same time he specifies in issues relating to cosmology, science, evolution, religion, and ecology.

He studied Bachelor of Arts in St. Mary's University, Baltimore in 1964; got his Master of Arts in The Catholic University of America in 1968 and afterwards got his Ph. D. in the same institute in 1970. As a theme of his dissertation he chose *Foundations of The Hermeneutics of Eschatology*².

2. Professional Experience

Haught established the Georgetown Center for the Study of Science and Religion and was the chairman of theological department from 1990 to 1995. He was Senior Fellow, Woodstock Theological Center from 2007 up to this day; He was also chairperson of D'Angelo in the Humanities, St John's University in 2008; He was also

² Cf. http://www.amazon.com/wiki/John_F._Haught/ref=ntt_at_bio_wiki, accessed on September 20, 2012.

a distinguished research Professor of Georgetown University from 2005 up to this day and professor of Thomas Healey between 2002-2005; Distinguished Professor of Landegger between 1996-2002; He worked as Professor of Theology in Georgetown University between 1986-2005; He worked as an Associate Professor of Theology of the same University between 1977-1986 and as Assistant Professor between 1970-1977³.

3. Professional Recognition

He has also authored numerous articles and reviews. He lectures internationally on many issues related to science and religion. In the year 2002 he had won the Owen Garrigan Award in Science and Religion, in the year 2004 had won the Sophia Award for Theological Excellence, and in the year 2008 won a “Friend of Darwin Award” from the National Center for Science Education. He testified for the plaintiffs in the Harrisburg, PA “Intelligent Design Trial” (*Kitzmiller et al. vs. Dover Board of Education*). As acknowledgment of his work on theology and science he was granted the degree of Doctor Honoris Causa by the University of Louvain in 2009. As to his personal life to say that he got married with Evelyn and God blessed him with two sons, at present they are living in Falls Church, VA 22041, United States⁴.

4. Public Debate

As a senior person he had also participated in several public debates arguing and

³ Cf. <http://woodstock.georgetown.edu/fellows/John-Haught-CV.html#cv>, accessed on September 20, 2012.

⁴ Cf. http://web.mac.com/haughtj1/Site/Brief_Biography.html, accessed on September 20, 2012.

debating about the compatibility of science and religion, sharing the stage with Daniel Dennett at the City University of New York in 2009, Kenneth Miller at The New York Academy of Sciences in 2011, Jerry Coyne at the University of Kentucky in 2011 and in many other debates where he had defended always religion and tried to construct a bridge between religion and science. He never sees science as dangerous aspect to religious progress. Science and religion can go hand in hand collaborating and not contradicting each other.

5. Books written

He is the author of several important books on the creation-evolution controversy, including *Deeper than Darwin: The Prospect for Religion in the Age of Evolution*; *God After Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*; and *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*; many other books can be found in bibliography. An evolutionary creationist, Haught views science and religion as two different and noncompeting levels of explanation, stating that science and religion cannot sensibly stand in a competitive relationship with one another.

Here I will try to give some brief summary of some of his books which I used and cited more to do this thesis. I am not able to give summery for all his works but in the foot note you can find the site where can be found his complete bibliography which I got from Woodstock Georgetown University official website⁵.

⁵ Cf. <http://woodstock.georgetown.edu/fellows/John-Haught-CV.html#cv>, accessed on September 20, 2012.

Haught, John F. *Deeper than Darwin: The Prospect for Religion in the Age of Evolution*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2003.

The chapters dealt in this book are: *Religion and Darwin's Truth, A Reading Problem, The Depth of Nature, Deeper than Despair, Beneath Evolution, Deeper than Dawkins, Deeper than Design, Religion and Deep Darwinism, Truth After Darwin, Darwin and the Deities, Deeper Than Death, A Deeper theology, Darwin, God and the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence.*

In this book John Haught argues that our religious beliefs are wholly compatible with ongoing evolutionary biology. He goes on further with his argument by saying that our religious belief and trust in God is even more enlightening and revealing about life than Darwin's theory. Religion reaches where Darwin's theory could not reach. Objective of John Haught through this book is to reach beyond Darwin's thinking. Life is a mystery and neither science nor human intelligence can grasp everything that life contains. Darwinism tries to explain some things but not everything that we need to know about life and its mystery. Science is not everything. To understand deeper about life's mystery and unending and unfinished universe, we need to consult the religions of the world. Haught looks hard at the question of how, after Darwin, religions may reasonably claim to be bearers of truth and not just of meaning and adaptive consolation.

The purpose of his writing this book was to respond to numerous claims made by many contemporary Darwinian's that we cannot expect to surpass the profundity of evolutionary explanations of life. To find the deepest understandings of life and the universe even though not the clearest understanding, we may still profitably consult the various religions of the world. *Deeper Than Darwin* is a continuation of his other book *God After Darwin* left, in another words Deeper Than Darwin takes up where God

After Darwin left off, arguing that even though Darwin's understanding is important and fundamentally correct but that we can go beyond in our understanding of what really happening in human life-story.

“Today more than ever, biologically informed thinkers claim that Darwinian concepts, updated by genetics, provide the deepest and perhaps the ultimate explanation of life. Even when life manifests itself in human religion, they believe we can trust Darwinian concepts to provide the final accounting. If this supposition is true, of course, then Darwinism rules out altogether the ultimate explanation of religion given by religious people themselves, namely, that religion is a consequence of the presence to consciousness of an Absolute Reality. If the *sense of God* comes not from God but *only* from biological factors, then religion is groundless”⁶.

One could say that it is all an accident or coincidence, that the universe's felicitous blend of *contingency*, *necessity* and *temporality* itself has no explanation itself, just as the naked existence of the universe is said at times to be inexplicable. Such a claim is no less metaphysical than a theological one. I think this book could help us all to let go of our cherished images, such as *God* or *Darwinism* and embrace the present discussion as something to enjoy and share, trusting that a variety of views can enrich not threaten one's own view. Thinking other side of religion strengthens our belief system than weakening our faith.

Haught, John F. *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview, Press, 2000.

The chapters dealt in this book are: Beyond design, Darwin's dangerous idea, theology since Darwin, Darwin's gift to theology, religion, evolution, and information, a god for evolution, tragedy, and cosmic purpose, religion, ethics, and evolution, ecology, and the promise of nature, cosmic evolution and divine action, Darwin and

⁶ John F. HAUGHT, *Deeper Than Darwin: The Prospect for Religion in the Age of Evolution*, Westview Press, Boulder, 2003, xv-xvi.

god after doer, conclusion.

In this book John F. Haught writes that the ideas and notions that we have about God the creator and creation, after the life and contribution of Charles Darwin can hardly remain the same as before. No one can deny that science succeeded to find many new things which were not known to us before. Science is continuously finding till today something new in the universe which is changing dramatically our way of thinking and understanding of the world. So we need to rethink and purify our way of thinking about God who creates and cares for this world in the light of evolutionist way of understanding. It does not mean that we accept their theory but we purify our way of belief in God.

According to Haught there is a continues discussion between evolutionists like Darwinians and Christian apologists is fundamentally misdirected and misunderstood: Both of them (evolutionists like Darwinians and Christian apologists) are trying to understand and explain in their perspective the underlying design and order in the universe. Haught suggests that what is lacking in both of these competing ideologies is the notion of *novelty*, a *necessary component of evolution* and the *essence of the unfolding of the divine mystery*. We can't just deny the ideas of the opponent. According to Haught Darwin's disturbing picture of life instead of criticizing and leading astray as scientific skeptics and many believers have thought it to be, he contributes a mature reflection on the idea of God. Haught's explanation of the relationship between theology and evolution is both accessible and engaging.

Nonetheless Haught rejects the views of philosophers like Dennett and Dawkins who claim that science has shown that there is no purpose in the universe and that everything can be explained by mechanistic natural causes. This idea is against our religious way of thinking and teaching. He also rejects intelligent design because it fails

to explain novelty in the universe which emerges every day. Haught positively embraces evolution, moving God from the Alpha to the Omega, the God of the past to the future. God, as Haught sees him, does not force his creation, but rather continuously invites it into the future. God gifts new creation continuously to the universe and universe is not finished yet. It is an ongoing process. In this view, he includes ethics, as an acceptance of God's invitation into this promised or offered future, and the ecology, as we are invited to be part of not merely preserving but also creating along with God.

Up to this day many theologians opposed evolution because it threatens their teachings about God, religion and creation. He says that by opposing theologians had missed an excellent opportunity to present a metaphysics that truly interconnects with what evolution has shown us about the origin and historical nature of life and the universe. He looks at God as emptying himself, and experiencing suffering with His own creation, while calling, rather than driving that creation toward new life, Haught believes that evolutionary theory actually fits better with the God of religious experience than previous "power-based" views. He identifies God as the Christ, emptying himself (kenosis) for the human kind, to redeem us from all that is evil.

In overall view this book helps to understand evolution in a new and purified perspective with the contribution of Darwin's theory. We can no longer think evolution as one day business but ongoing creation. In the second edition of this book he adds an entirely new chapter on the ongoing, controversial debate between intelligent design and evolution as an ongoing process. I used the first addition to site in this thesis.

Haught, John F. *Is Nature Enough? Meaning and Truth in the Age of Science*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. The chapters dealt in this book are: Introduction, Is Nature Enough? Religion, Intelligence, Life, Emergence,

Purpose, Seeing, Cosmos, Morality, Suffering, Death, Anticipation. The main theme of this book starts with one question: is Nature Enough or do we need to find purpose in some other place or person? In this book, naturalists say that *nature is all there is* and that *science alone can make sense of it*. Scientific naturalists for long years say same thing as that of naturalist in other words saying that nature is all that we have. Neither John Haught nor we believers who believe in an almighty God who created heaven and earth do not agree with this above idea that nature is all there is, cannot be justified *experientially, logically or scientifically*. As he develops his idea he tries to create ultimate subjects in a dialogue with science and religion. This dialogue centers in two large questions: the first one: *is nature all there is?* And the second one: *is there any point to the universe?* Here in this book he deals with the first question because he had been one or the other way responded the second question in his other books. As he says that naturalism denies all that is supernatural and existence of realities distinct from the natural world. In this way rejects the existence of supernatural power of God. This naturalism does not agree with our faith and our belief in God and religion. It is disturbing, the faithful who believe in God and supernatural power, which we had been learning for ages from Holy Scriptures. With the development of science has had so much to do with naturalism's intellectual acceptance today, his aim in this book is on scientific naturalism and the way in which some of its most ardent defenders are now trying to put a distance between contemporary thought and religious traditions. His focus in this book is on science-inspired naturalism because there are many universities and developing centers of science every day finding new things and new way of looking at the universe believing much of science-inspired naturalism than religious creationism. He wants to deal systematically this question and prove that there is something that human brain cannot grasp.

This book attempts to provide such an alternative without attacking science. He believes that there is an urgent need today for sensible alternatives to naturalistic belief. In this book he shows what he considers to be a reasonable, scientifically informed alternative to naturalism. He embraces the results of scientific research while simultaneously raising questions about scientific naturalism. In sum this book is a bridge between scientific naturalism and religious beliefs.

With this idea we now move on to the first topic about *Evolution* which is central theme of the second chapter.

II. GOD AS ULTIMATE EXPLANATION FOR EVOLUTION

As a student of theology I have been unavoidably confronted with the question of how science and religion might cooperate in promoting a comprehending of both God and the world. Theories connecting to the mechanisms of biological evolution raise a group of responses in religious people. Many people completely reject evolutionary theories and others agree to a positive appreciation of its contribution to a doctrine of God. Charles Darwin proposed a mechanism for biological evolution in 1859, since then there had been unending discussions and arguments amongst theologians concerning its implications for theology. Numerous contemporary theologians, those who are working with a methodology involving a critical approach to Scripture, have taken the insights of biological science in their re-examination of classical theology. As a student of theology, I have observed this respectful appropriation of scientific data in reformulations of theology and in theology's intelligent critique of the scientific method itself.

In this chapter I will be dealing with the topic of evolution in John F. Haught's perspective. At first I will present a general idea about Evolution and the Meaning in Life. Then we shall examine a short site into Darwin's opposition to the creation; and then, try to explore creation and evolution beyond *Intelligent Design*. We will analyze how Darwin's evolution can be a challenge to Theology. Finally, we will fundament this thesis on God as an *ultimate explanation* for evolution.

1. Evolution and its purpose

Number of scientists, environmentalists, and biologists say that evolutionary theory infers universe without a meaning. Biologists say that life hasn't any purpose and doesn't know what it does and where it goes. All that exists in the universe is outcome of change which takes place in it and they don't give any other meaning to it. Let us see some viewpoints of some of the biologists who defend this idea. Stephen Jay Gould defends saying us that "Darwin argues that evolution has no purpose. Individuals struggle to increase the representation of their genes in future generations, and that is all"⁷. According to William Provine, "Modern science directly implies that there... is no ultimate meaning for humans"⁸. As Richard Dawkins states that, "The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference... DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music"⁹. Edward O. Wilson comes with the other theory saying that, "no species, ours included, possesses a purpose beyond the imperatives created by its genetic history"¹⁰. And according to George Gaylord Simpson claims, "Man is the result of a purposeless and natural process that did not have him in mind"¹¹.

Well, above mentioned biologists have their own ideas about the meaning of evolution and its purpose of existence, but there are various dominating religions like Jews, Christians, Muslims who are convinced and practice their conviction for thousands of years that God is the creator of all that exists in the universe. Above

⁷ Stephen J. GOULD, *Ever Since Darwin: Reflections in Natural History*, W. W. Norton, New York, 1977, 12.

⁸ William PROVINE, «Evolution and the Foundation of Ethics», in *MBL Science*, 3 (1988), 28.

⁹ Richard DAWKINS, *River Out of Eden*, Basic Books, New York, 1995, 133.

¹⁰ Edward O. WILSON, *On Human Nature*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1978, 2.

¹¹ George Gaylord SIMPSON, *The Meaning of Evolution: A Study of the History of Life and of Its Significance for Man*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1967, 345.

mentioned three religions also believe that humans are created in God's image and have a purpose to exist though these three religions don't agree exactly the way the creation is understood by each other. But if we take into consideration that Keith Ward understands that God's purpose is the "generation of communities of free, self-aware, self-directing sentient beings"¹². In respect to theistic believers, the objective of genes is to build bodies, the objective of bodies is to build brains, and the objective of brains is to generate consciousness and even self-consciousness, and this way it appears a critical way of looking at the things, understanding of its significance, love, forgiveness and ability to choose between good and evil are personified in humans¹³.

What we can understand is that there is a big problem which is going on between scientific thinking and religious way of thinking. According to John F. Haught's, we can't just accept all scientific ideas. Science rejects theistic understanding of God and purpose of creation. Religion can support many scientific inventions but can't agree with it that the universe is purposeless and meaningless. We theists believe that God created the universe and gave a purpose to it¹⁴. All the religions may not believe the same way as Christianity believe but generally they don't discard this thought. The above mentioned three major religions believe that God is the origin of the creation. According to John Haught:

"Since for many scientists today evolution clearly implies a meaningless universe, *all religions* must be concerned about it. Evolutionists raise questions not only about the Christian God but also about notions of ultimate reality or cosmic meaning as these are understood by many of the world's other religious traditions... Almost all religions, and not just Christianity, have envisaged the cosmos as the expression of a transcending 'order,' 'wisdom,' or 'rightness,' rather than as an irreversibly evolving process. Most religions have held that there is some unfathomable 'point' to the universe, and that the cosmos is enshrouded by a meaning over which we can have no intellectual control, and to which we must in the end surrender humbly"¹⁵.

¹² Keith WARD, *God, Change and Necessity*, Oxford press, Oxford, 1996, 191.

¹³ Cf. *Ibidem*, 145.

¹⁴ Cf. John F. HAUGHT, *God After Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, Westview Press, Boulder, 2000, 26.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, 9.

In this way we can strongly say that there are good motives to defend our belief systems against scientists and evolutionary biologists. They claim that as we mentioned above that the universe is purposeless and meaningless and the other problem is that our human existence is nothing to do with God. God didn't create us, thus, we don't have a reason to say that we are image bearers and God has a plan for our existence. God has no relation with our existence.

With this what we can understand is that these evolutionary theories are challenging theistic belief systems. So this negation introduces complications in our theistic belief systems. So let's examine seriously to see whether they have some reasons to support their idea. Evolutionist can also understand religious believes that we traditionally learned that love and respect to all creatures is ultimate goal of all creatures. Darwin's idea contradicts our religious idea. Darwin says that "evolution has no purpose. Individuals struggle to increase the representation of their genes in future generations, and that is all"¹⁶. He continues saying that if at all there is any purpose, it is only to survive its species and nothing else. According to Dawkins science and biology has a great deal to say about the meaning of life. It states us that "we are machines built by DNA whose purpose is to make more copies of the same DNA... That is *exactly* what we are for. We are machines for propagating DNA, and the propagation of DNA is a self-sustaining process. It is every living object's sole reason for living..."¹⁷. Dawkins baptizes is as '*Single Utility Function of Life*,' and he considers that "everything makes sense once you assume that DNA survival is what is being maximized"¹⁸. Well, we as theists can't accept these arguments of Dawkins and

¹⁶ Stephen J. GOULD, *Ever Since Darwin*, 12.

¹⁷ Michael POOLE, «A Critique of Aspects of the Philosophy and Theology of Richard Dawkins», in *Science and Christian Belief*, vol. 6, no. 1 (1994), 58.

¹⁸ Richard DAWKINS, *River Out of Eden*, 106.

Darwin. According to them the only purpose is to survive and multiply genes and nothing else. This idea is challenging the religious belief. We believe that the meaning of life is found in having a loving relationship with God and with all other creatures.

Evolutionary theory undertakes two separate religious arguments regarding meaning of life. The first one deals with meaning *of* life and the second one deal with meaning *in* life. The first one deals with a general idea of evolutionary existence and its purpose. The second one just says about my values and inters in life. So to say that Dawkins is much interested in meaning *in* life than having an objective idea of meaning *of* life. Dawkins says that though we don't have an ultimate meaning *of* life we can still have a meaning to survive and pass our genes to future generations. This way of thinking is unacceptable because we believe that there is a meaning *of* life. We are planned by God and are created for a purpose.

The book, *God After Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, contributes a lot about this subject. Haught's purpose in writing *God After Darwin* is to involve theology with a fully informed understanding of evolutionary biology. Haught sees that a new comprehension of an evolutionary view of nature could benefit us to increase our understanding of God. This experience can only be attained through Christian living faith. He also argues that our understanding of God needs to change, we can't remain forever that God is just a Deity that keeps order and design. According to Haught, a theology of evolution would consider all that contains in post-Darwinian way of thinking about the nature and cosmos.

2. Beyond Intelligent Design

Haught uses evolution and all of its interpretations to develop his theology. He and many other theologians consider that our way of making theology misses evolutionary perspective of looking at the things. John Haught is sure that modern theology and “contemporary religious thought has yet to make a complete transition into a post-Darwinian world. The nuances of biology or, for that matter, of cosmology, have not yet deeply affected current thinking about God and God’s relation to the world”¹⁹. This collaboration between Science and theology is being spreading very rapidly. Theology just didn’t close itself and ignored scientific facts but using them to develop wider understanding of the reality. On this basis Haught says that “Darwin has gifted us with an account of life whose depth, beauty, and pathos, when seen in the context of the larger cosmic experience of evolution, expose us afresh to the raw reality of the sacred and to a resoundingly meaningful universe”²⁰. Biologists, scientists and many other scientific investigators believe in Darwin’s theory that the nature is continuing not because of God’s providence but natural process of evolution. In this respect John Haught reacts in following lines:

“The Darwinian picture makes traditional ideas of a caring and almighty God seem superfluous and possibly incoherent... After weighing the now well-founded accounts of life’s lumbering journey on Earth, any subsequent talk about a ‘divine plan’ sounds unbelievable. And the theological claim that life can be explained adequately by divine ‘intelligent design’ is especially suspect”²¹.

Many theologians support *Intelligent Design* (ID). But this ID has no novelty occurring in the evolution. Those who believe in ID ignore on-going process theology.

¹⁹ John F. HAUGHT, *God After Darwin*, 2.

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

²¹ *Ibidem*, 3.

They say that world is created perfectly and there is nothing new that could happen. Supporter of ID ignore the repeated breakdown which is happening in the world every day. He further says that theology that takes its basis on ID is likely to “ignore the *dissolution* that inevitably accompanies the appearance of extensions of life”²². He further says that this kind of theology ignores an ultimate reality that is responsible for all disturbance and distraction that happens in the universe and also suffering and death that occurs in the world. If the universe is perfect and nothing lacking in it then why is that there is lot of suffering, destruction and death in the world? So he does not agree with theologians who support ID. Haught further says that Darwin’s contributions to theology are to “challenge religious thought to recapture the tragic aspects of divine creativity. Evolutionary science compels theology to reclaim features of religious faith that are all too easily smothered by the deadening disguise of order and design”²³.

John Haught further says that *Scientific Materialism* discards whatever we think as wisdom in our lives. Almost all evolutionary scientists depend on materialism for their investigation²⁴. John Haught frequently uses the term *Scientific Materialism* while referring to any scientific process in general or in particular to biological evolution. Scientific Materialists ignore the novelty that occurs in the universe but Darwin himself makes us understand that *novelty, disturbance, and drama it involves* happen in the universe. John Haught maintains that evolutionary theory should not be influenced and dominated by *sterile materialist metaphysics* but should add *depth and richness to the mystery* into Christian life²⁵.

²² *Ibidem*, 5.

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ Materialism or scientific materialism refers here to a theory that physical matter is the only or fundamental reality and that all being and processes and phenomena can be explained as manifestations or results of matter. Haught tends to use this understanding synonymously with metaphysical materialism.

²⁵ Cf. John F. HAUGHT, *God After Darwin*, 5.

John Haught citing David Hull and explains the process of evolution as “rife with happenstance, contingency, incredible waste, death, pain and horror”²⁶. Continues David Hull saying that any almighty God ignores such things is to be considered as “careless, indifferent, and almost diabolical”²⁷. These characteristics of evolution are in the context theological way of thinking. They consider God and His power as almighty and He who keeps order and design. Though it is true if we consider God in this terms we will be disappointed because God gives us freedom to choose and does not implement His ideas on us forcefully. As we said God is seen as source of order and design it does not mean that He could be destructor of His own creation to recreate and renew it, because creation is unfinished (*creatio continua*)²⁸.

John Haught is convinced that the cooperation between evolution and theology “can bring us to a fuller and more satisfying understanding of the many religious references to an ‘ultimate reality’ than we might have otherwise ever attained”²⁹. Haught learnt about the ultimate reality from his childhood as he frequented Catechism in Roman Catholic Church that there is no contradiction between *scientific truth* and *religious faith*. Scientific truth only helps us to understand broadly about faith in God. God is only one reality in which all exists. He interprets scripture and tries to understand it in a critical way to believe it. In responding to E. O. Wilson’s criticisms about religious revelation, Haught distinguishes that *revelation* in science is different to “revelation” as understood by religious believers. Religious revelation is only understood and experienced by permitting oneself *to be grasped by it, not by grasping it*. In contrary scientific revelation needs our grasping it through its scientific methods

²⁶ *Ibidem*, 6.

²⁷ *Ibidem*.

²⁸ Cf. *Ibidem*, 6.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

to understand its secrets. Thus Haught summarizes following way evolution and theology:

“The mystery-oriented mission of theology in no way conflicts with science’s effort to unfold - at its own level and according to its own distinctive method - the boundless secrets of nature. A wholesome expansion of our sense of divine mystery can exist in complete harmony with the scientific disclosure of previously hidden aspects of nature. And irrespective of continuing developments in Darwinian science’s grasp of life’s hitherto unmanifested intricacies, we can trust that there abides in the depths of the universe a forever fresh wellspring of novelty, unthreatened by the ongoing accumulation of scientific knowledge. It is to this faithful source of endlessly *novel* forms of life that a theology of evolution points, and to which the word “God” most appropriately refers”³⁰.

For him, our human brains cannot grasp God’s creation because evolution is an infinite and unsettling source of novelty. A theology of evolution emphasizes that God’s power and promise are well seen in the creation. Haught acknowledges that neo-Darwinian science satisfactorily describes the origin of life in the world. Materialistic science that creates evolutionary theory gets affected when we apply these methods to other areas of comprehension of human existence. The same way scientific ideas are also revised and polished when new findings are taken place. John Haught claims that “theology should... deal with all the untidiness of the Darwinian picture of life and not work with cleanly edited versions of it”³¹. The challenge that is put by biological evolution to theology of evolution is that it should explain sufficiently the aspect of *suffering* that takes place in the world, especially in the living beings, the problem of *common ancestry* and the discarding the *weak*.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, 8-9.

³¹ *Ibidem*, 15.

3. The Challenge to Theology

John Haught is aware of the role of suffering in the evolutionary perspective of life. Evolution doesn't bother about the pain caused during its process and that is being sensed by living beings those who have sense of pain and suffering. Evolution is just is, and does its' work mechanically. If this is the case there arise many questions that theology has to take in to consideration. If God is merciful and all powerful then why did He allow all pain in this world? Is God happy to see His creatures suffer with pain and death? "How could a lovingly concerned God tolerate the struggle, pain, cruelty, brutality, and death that lie beneath the relatively stable and serene surface of nature's present order?"³² Humans have seen this pain and suffering as part of their lives and can't be escaped. We need to accept and bear it. Evolutionists say that this pain and suffering present in the world for millions of years. This problem is common to many Christian believers and scientists. They all sense the pain and suffering in them. According to Mattill:

"Could an Almighty God of love have designed, foreseen, planned, and created a system whose law is a ruthless struggle for existence in an overcrowded world? Could an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent God have devised such a cold-blooded competition of beast with beast, beast with man, man with man, species with species, in which the clever, the cunning, and the cruel survive?"³³

Pain and suffering are part of evolution and not 'suffering is evolution'. There is competition and struggle in the evolution for survival. There is also lot of collaboration in the evolution to feed in and feed of each other. Life is beautiful and suffering should not dominate whole of life, it is just a part of life and not whole of life.

³² *Ibidem*, 20.

³³ *Ibidem*, 21.

The second challenge to theology originates from the scientific proof proposing that all life that has ever lived on Earth has a *common ancestry* and is genetically interconnected. Haught proposes that this continuity of life threatens our way of thinking based on our religious teaching that we learnt from catechism, that there was a discontinuity between humans and all other creation. Evolution makes uncertain the lines separating what we used to think of as distinct levels of being. John Haught points out that, even though this idea is upsetting for some people, but for others it isn't, because this continuity confirms the unity of creation that we learnt in the biblical sense and everybody is connected each other in the universe³⁴.

The third significant challenge to theology contains three types of natural selection, as final mechanism of evolution. The first aspect is that the material selection depends on conditional changes which take place within hereditary substantial to offer diversity upon which selection rests on. The absence of certainty in which happens in evolutionary process “suggests that the universe is not governed by a divine providential intelligence after all”³⁵. *Secondly*, as it is said that the world is full of struggle to survive so in this competitive world there is no place for the reproductively unfit individuals. It means that they need to be eliminated from the face of the earth or from gene pool³⁶. Well, there is a problem with this way of thinking. We even may have a question that is the universe created and governed by a compassionate God or by an economist who wants grow his economy, with lot of profit by producing things? Where is moral in this way of thinking? *The third* problematic point is that the world

³⁴ Cf. *Ibidem*, 23-24.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, 24.

³⁶ *Gene*: a unit of heredity which is transferred from a parent to offspring and is held to determine some characteristic of the offspring; in particular, a distinct sequence of DNA forming part of a chromosome.

operates without any interest. Nothing is personal in this universe; God doesn't bother about the world and all that is in it. He is not governor and protector of this universe³⁷.

John F. Haught tries to respond systematically these problematic three ideas. He divides them in to three groups: "*opposition, separatism, and engagement*"³⁸. In this thesis we will be dealing with *separatist* and *engagement* views. We don't deal with the first one that is *opposition* view because there will not be much dialogue between *opposition* view and theology. So we will be dealing with only later two of them. Haught categories his theology in to the *engagement* category. Haught tries to separate evolutionary science from theology. He finds the division between the two of them by clarifying that "science limits itself with some questions concerning physical or mechanical grounds of proceedings, while theology's worry is that it looks for the real meaning and an ultimate explanation of the things. Science doesn't bother about theological theistic descriptions of nature, so any interpretation that biology gives about purposelessness or Godlessness of the universe can't be recognised as so called scientific. Since science neither bothers nor worries about theistic proofs according to separatist view we can just say that there is no conflict between each other. He further says that if we eliminate Darwin out of theism and theology out of evolutionary science these two are compatible. From the *separatist* perspective, contingency and randomness don't mean a Godless universe. We just baptize these things which are incomprehensible for the human brain but they are still mirror of God's vision and wisdom. Science tries to experiment and prove all that is in the nature, believes so what is seen or touched by human senses and neglects deeper meaning that life has"³⁹.

³⁷ Cf. John F. HAUGHT, *God After Darwin*, 24.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, 24.

³⁹ Cf. *Ibidem*, 28-29. Those in science who claim that the world can only be made intelligible through the use of the scientific method are from a 'separatist' theology's point of view working out of a narrow materialist ideology.

According to John Haught those who ponder on this system wouldn't consider pain and suffering in evolution as unpredictable. When evolution is in process there will be changes and these changes are not always very soft that is without pain, any modification generates some pain and death and that is inevitable. Darwinian science characterizes evolution as proper as for sustaining life and crating of the soul in human beings. The point is that, from the *separatist* view point, there is no conflict between Darwinism and our belief system in all powerful God. Haught reflects, for *Separatists* natural selection is not the problem but they may consider danger with the laws of physics. Physicists may consider suffering as laws of biology and not laws of physics. It may even be claimed that the reliability and lucidity of these laws is a good example of the loyalty and consistency of God. Finally Haught says that this separatist view is as long as related to theology there is no much problem but when it relates to philosophical materialism then there is a great problem to theology. John Haught's own theology of evolution identifies with the category of "*engagement*". Though he recognises the value of separatists' who separate *science* and *ideology* he points out that the *engagement* puts evolution at the centre of theological reflections regarding meaning of life and God's relationship with the cosmos. From this viewpoint, Haught describes that, "Evolutionary theology claims that the story of life, even in its neo-Darwinian presentation, provides essential concepts for thinking about God and God's relation to nature and humanity"⁴⁰. This theological presentation should be considered in a broader framework of cosmic evolution.

According to John Haught there is deference between natural theology and evolutionary theology. Natural theology tries to demonstrate God's presence from nature, whereas evolutionary theology bothers about neither proving nor what

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, 36.

intelligent design argues. So the theological engagement tries to “show how our new awareness of cosmic and biological evolution can enhance and enrich traditional teachings about God and God’s way of acting in the world”⁴¹. Well, how does God act in the evolution where there is lot of pain and suffering? Let us see some of the aspects in these following pages.

3.1 Three dimensions of Creation

What we learnt from theological tradition that there are “three dimensions of God’s creative activity: original creation (*creatio originalis*), ongoing or continuous creation (*creatio continua*), and new creation or the fulfillment of creation (*creatio nova*)”⁴². At present we consider that a 13 billion-year-old universe and a 3.8-billion-year age of the evolution of life has supported the theological understanding of *creatio continua* in particular. Haught quoting on Teilhard de Chardin says that in the evolving universe “incessantly even if imperceptibly, the world is constantly emerging a little farther above nothingness”⁴³. The idea we have about creation is that, it was created in seven days and, God saw it was perfect from the beginning was not consistent with *on-going creation* that we learnt from evolving universe (*creatio continua*) John Haught says that this universe is continuously evolving and we can’t expect perfection where the world is still progressing:

“If this universe is still unfinished, then we cannot demand that it should here and now possess the status of finished perfection. And if the universe is not perfect, then this can mean only that it is now imperfect. Moreover, if ours is an imperfect world, the appearance of evil (including the struggle and suffering depicted by Darwinian science) is not inconceivable... To say that suffering is a logical possibility in an evolving universe, however, is not to claim that it is

⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

⁴² *Ibidem*, 37.

⁴³ *Ibidem*.

tolerable. For this reason faith and theology cry out for the completion of creation (*creatio nova*)”⁴⁴.

Along our research we went on understanding about this theme of the new creation (*creatio nova or creatio continua*) is central idea in John Haught’s theology of evolution. He constantly repeated this theme whole of his work. Creation is not yet finished and therefore there is unending novelty in the creation which also causes suffering and pain.

3.2 God lets the creation be

According to John Haught’s theory God so loves His creation, gives grace and blessings to His creation which provokes *randomness, struggle and selection*. Darwin points out that there is no order in the creation and it is just *random*. Whereas John F. Haught has another argument contrary to neo-Darwinian thought:

“The doctrine of grace claims that God loves the world and all of its various elements fully and unconditionally. By definition, however, love does not absorb, annihilate, or force itself upon the beloved. Instead it longs for the beloved to become more and more ‘other’ or differentiated. Along with its nurturing and compassionate attributes, love brings with it a longing for the independence of that which is loved. Without such ‘letting be’ of its beloved, the dialogical intimacy essential to a loving relationship would be impossible”⁴⁵.

God gives His grace to whole of universe and takes care of it. Since He loves His creation He also gives freedom to be as it likes. Haught sketches two authors namely Wolfhart Pannenberg and Elizabeth Johnson says that, “theologically interpreted... the epic of evolution is the story of the world’s struggle – not always successful or linearly progressive – toward an expansive freedom in the presence of

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, 38.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, 39-40.

self-giving grace”⁴⁶. Haught says that the world is full of uncertain things and there is lot of contingency, this only reflects that God lets the world be and respects human freedom. He refers to Aquinas’ view of the eventuality that is seen in the creation, it is only to make sure that creation is not same as the creator. Thus we can say that these *randomness, struggle and selection* encountered in the evolutionary view of life are created with abundant grace and kindness of God.

3.3 God’s persuasive power

The idea we have of God is all mighty and all powerful who could do everything under the world and above the world and who has no limits. So this power of God can persuade not with His brutal power but with His love. We need to relate God’s power with His loving grace that loves and leaves the world to live according to its will. He lets the world to be and create independently. As long as there is process in the universe there will be randomness which causes pain and suffering. Theology tries to find ways to suppress these instabilities which provoke pain and death. Haught further says that a world where there is growth of human consciousness and freedom has greater integrity than the world which was predesigned and has no opportunity to grow or modify. God didn’t create the world to dance according to his song but He gave freedom to choose. This type of world has human free will, spontaneity, unknown nature of quantum events and accidental mutations. So this is the real meaning when we say *God lets the world be* because of His infinite love and care for the creation. Conferring to process theology, evolution occurs because God is origin of all things but

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, 40. Theologically, we may view the expansion of the universe as the creator’s means to the bringing forth of independent form of creaturely reality. Creaturely independence cannot exist without God or against him. It does not have to be won from God, for it is the goal of his creative work. For the broader study see Wolfhart PANNENBERG, *Systematic Theology*, 2 vols. trans. by Geoffrey W. BROMILEY, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1994, 127-136. For similar perspective, see also Elizabeth A. JOHNSON, «Does God Play Dice? Divine Providence and Chance», in *Theological Studies* 56 (1996), 3-18.

also goes on creating new things every day in cosmos. He is of source and of novelty in the creation. His continuous creation makes evolution possible in the world. So creating new things causes some disturbance in the nature but it is inevitable⁴⁷. God's almighty power is to be understood as loving grace to the universe. As He loves, He lets the creation to choose according to its will.

4. The Humility of God

According to John Haught, there are two perspectives of evolution: the first one is of theological evolution that depicts God as compassionate and loving and the second one is scientific evolution that depicts world is purpose less and random. The world just exists and has no creator and preserver. To understand and give some solution to this scientific evolution Haught gets central idea from Christian tradition. Haught situates evolutionary science in to theological metaphysical framework that is seen in a biblical sense as *humility of God*. As Christians, Haught invites us to put our trust in a God who submits His life to die on a Cross, He sacrifices Himself with freewill for the sake of humanity. Christians look at this gesture as an inner dimension of His experience and not something that is forced externally⁴⁸. Though God humiliates Himself through His son Jesus Christ on the cross but on the third day He resurrects from humility and death (Paschal Mystery). John Haught refers to various theologians such as Jurgen Moltmann, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Schillebeeckx and Moltmann who refer God and His power. God uses His power of humility and love⁴⁹. Many people ask why did God send

⁴⁷ Cf. John F. HAUGHT, *God After Darwin*, 41-43.

⁴⁸ Cf. *Ibidem*, 45-47.

⁴⁹ See for further studies: Donald G. DAWE, *The Form of a Servant*, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1963; Jurgen MOLTSMANN, *The Crucified God*, trans. by R. A. WILSON and John BOWDEN, Harper &

His own son to the world? When He was dying on the cross God didn't intervene in Christ's suffering? Did God not have any other alternative? What we can understand is that that is only the way God could show His total self-abandonment through His passion and death. St. Paul's reference to Jesus Christ *emptying* himself to take the form of a servant. The total abandonment of God is seen large part of evolutionary theology. All the struggle, pain, suffering and death can be explained and can be drawn new meaning in life by God's *emptying* Himself for the sake of human kind⁵⁰.

Well if this is the case that the world can self-create how a *providential, personal, and intelligent God* could have relationship with the world that can create itself? This kind of *self-creativity* of the world can also be thought as chaos in nature which doesn't have an *order and design* according to evolutionary perspective⁵¹. John Haught tries to give a response to this interrogation using process theology as basis idea. He further says that ultimate reality is well understood in terms of *self-emptying, suffering love*. This explanation helps us to understand the spontaneity and self-creativity seen in the universe. This spontaneity goes further than the origin of the cosmos as *mindless and impersonal physical matter*⁵². Haught continues saying that all the new creation is auto-poetic. He synthesizes his idea as follows:

“In the presence of the self-restraint befitting an absolutely self-giving love, the world would unfold by responding to the divine allurements at its own pace and in its own particular way. The universe would then be spontaneously self-creative and self-ordering. And its responsiveness to the possibilities for new being offered to it by God would require time, perhaps immense amounts of it. The notion of an enticing and attracting divine humility, therefore, gives us a reasonable metaphysical explanation of the evolutionary process as this manifests itself to contemporary scientific inquiry”⁵³.

Row, New York, 1974 and Hans Urs von BALTHASAR, *Mysterium Paschale*, trans. by Aiden NICHOLS, O.P., T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1990.

⁵⁰ Cf. John F. HAUGHT, *God After Darwin*, 47-49.

⁵¹ Cf. *Ibidem*, 53.

⁵² Cf. *Ibidem*.

⁵³ *Ibidem*.

This theological metaphysics in which we find *divine humility* and room for *genuine novelty* helps us to grow authentically as human beings with freedom to choose. This kind of realization is not possible in a world everything is determined materialistically. This cosmos also not predetermined to unfold from the creation but all novelty is taking place because of God's letting the world be. He further says that metaphysics of divine humility helps us to understand well the spontaneity and self-creative cosmos⁵⁴.

5. Power of Absolute Future

John F. Haught refers to Teilhard de Chardin in order to comprehend what a God for evolution. The idea that Haught takes in to consideration which Teilhard deals in his theology is that almost all scientists take in consideration is metaphysics. The metaphysics, which embeds entire data of evolution in it, especially constant new things that occur every day. Haught agrees with Teilhard emphasising that most of the scientists involve some kind of inherent metaphysics but the problem is that this metaphysics is related purely materialistic. Consequently scientists are missing very important issue of evolution especially new things that happen in the world every day (*novelty*). Regarding new life and novelty occurring in the world, Teilhard de Chardin refers as below:

“First, at the very bottom, and in vast numbers, we have relatively simple particles (corpuscles), which are still (at least apparently) unconscious: Pre-life.
b. Next, following on the emergence of life, and in relatively small numbers, we have beings that are simply conscious. c. And now (right now!) we have beings

⁵⁴ Cf. *Ibidem*, 54-55.

that have suddenly become conscious of becoming every day a little more conscious as a result of ‘co-reflection’. This is the position we have reached”⁵⁵.

John Haught applauds Teilhard for suggesting that a “metaphysically adequate explanation of any universe in which evolution occurs requires... a transcendent force of attraction to explain the *overarching* tendency of matter to evolve toward *life, mind, and spirit*”⁵⁶.

Supporting Teilhard’s opinion John F. Haught says that our Christian understanding of the metaphysics is of “*being*” (*esse*) which is similar to the world that is static and hierarchical. However there is one more understanding of metaphysics which is hidden to traditional understanding that is the world as one of *becoming* and germinating new beings every day. According to Teilhard’s understanding there is a fundamental power that draws all things in the direction of profound consistency through an ultimate power of attraction, conceptually known as Omega and identified as basically reality of the *Future*. Teilhard continues saying that:

“If scientific views on humanization are carried to their logical conclusion they assure the existence at the peak of anthropogenesis of an ultimate center or focus of personality and consciousness, which is necessary in order to control and synthesize the genesis in history of spirit. Surely this ‘Omega Point’ (as I call it) is the ideal place from which to make the Christ we worship radiate – a Christ whose supernatural domination, we know, is matched by a physical power which rules the natural spheres of the world. *In quo omnia constant*. We have here an extraordinary confluence, indeed, of what is given to us by faith and what is arrived at by reason. What used to appear to be a threat becomes a magnificent reinforcement. Far from conflicting with Christian dogma, the boundless dimensional augmentation man has just assumed in nature would thus have as its result (if carried to its ultimate conclusion) a new access of immediacy and vitality to contribute to traditional Christology”⁵⁷.

Haught suggests that evolution needs a divine source that *exist in the future*, or *up ahead*, the objective of the universe is still to be accomplished, and it is in process. .

⁵⁵ Pierre TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *Christianity and Evolution*, trans. by Rene Hague, Harcourt Brace & Co., New York, 1975, 238.

⁵⁶ John F. HAUGHT, *God After Darwin*, 83.

⁵⁷ Pierre TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *Christianity and Evolution*, 143.

To fundament this idea, he mentions four famous Christian tinkers and theologians such as Moltmann, who states to *God as Future*, to Rahner, who expresses *God as Absolute Future*, and to Pannenberg and Peters who denote to *God as the Power of the Future*⁵⁸.

As we have seen above that there is novelty that occurs every day in the universe because of the *arrival of the future* then just an algorithmic past⁵⁹. This arrival of the future brings uncertain and unexpected things which are not always comfortable and cause pain. John Haught explains this idea in following lines:

“Contingent events, then, are not themselves ultimately explanatory of evolutionary novelty, for their own occurrence is itself dependent fundamentally on time’s opening toward the future. It is not the occurrence of contingency that brings about the future; rather, it is the arrival of the future that allows events to have the status of contingency, that is, to be more than just the inevitable outcome of past deterministic causes”⁶⁰.

Haught constructs his theology of evolution basically in *metaphysics of the future*. He recognizes metaphysics as this to comprehend “the philosophical expression of the intuition – admittedly religious in origin – that all things receive their being from out of an inexhaustibly resourceful ‘future’ that we may call ‘God’”⁶¹. Haught continues saying that this metaphysics explains well the coming up of novelty in evolution. This novelty can’t be comprehended and explained by subjective experience and materialistic metaphysics. He says that:

“Materialism is closed a priori to the prospect of there arising in evolution truly new being, since by definition it has identified being with mindless “matter” already present prior to life’s evolution. Most materialists, of course, will allow that *unprecedented* arrangements of mindless matter appear in evolution

⁵⁸ Cf. John F. HAUGHT, *God After Darwin*, 84.

⁵⁹ Cf. *Ibidem*, 87.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, 87.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, 90.

constantly. But the underlying being or *reality* of all such configurations, including entities endowed with a high degree of subjectivity, consists of lifeless and mindless atomic constituents rather than of the elusive informational patterns by which they are ordered and in which novelty is realised”⁶².

John Haught’s metaphysics of the future is bit unclear. He ignores a bit traditional understanding of *being (esse)* and present metaphysical understanding of the *past*⁶³. This *power of the future* in its deep understanding is considered as God or Creator of all things who makes an appeal to those who have faith to have also promise of hope. God takes faithful people to promise of hope. Not only God takes humans but also whole universe to the divinely renewing future. This is John Haught’s way of reasoning which is a bit different from scientific way of dealing. Scientists depend on causality that comes from the past. Independently above scientific understanding Haught says that in order to source of novelty and new species, we need to look to the future. On the other hand scientific materialism says that all cosmic and biological evolution purely unfolding of the past actions and not the future actions. This means that there can’t be any new thing occur or predicated. Science can’t be astonished by anything new. Well but science is being surprised every day with new and unknown things in the universe. These happening can’t be understood empirically and scientific materialist view. This novelty would be seen through coming of the future⁶⁴.

Haught makes his understanding of the metaphysics of the future a bit different from that of the tradition that is metaphysics of *esse* and the modern scientific understanding of metaphysics of the past. So neither metaphysics of the past nor

⁶² *Ibidem*, 88.

⁶³ Cf. *Ibidem*, 86. Haught suggests it is metaphysics of the past that scientific materialists use to read evolution. This materialism locates the source and substance of life's diversity in the purely physical determinism that, allegedly, has led, step by fateful step, out of the dead causal past to the present state of living nature in all its profusion of complexity.

⁶⁴ Cf. *Ibidem*, 90-91.

modern materialism are appropriate to consider novelty that happens every day in the universe. The best way to understand this novelty is through metaphysics of the future.

6. Theological Subjectivity versus Scientific Objectivity

Haught's analysis how a God of Chirality be a final explanation for evolution to happen continually. He goes on explaining that God who inspires and affects the progress of evolution. He further tries to understand what is the fundamental link that conceptualises the manner God moved the unconscious universe in the direction of life and awareness?⁶⁵

John Haught tries to respond this question. He takes in to consideration two thinkers namely Alfred North Whitehead and Teilhard de Chardin. Haught continues saying that we cannot produce any significant theology of evolution in a cosmos fully empty of *mind, inwardness, or subjectivity*⁶⁶. Subjectivity is an objective fact within nature. Continuing the thoughts of Teilhard and Whitehead, he suggests that a *withinness* happens in all material features of the cosmos in balanced degree to their complexity. According to Haught, matter is never mindless or spiritless. *Spirit* for him, defines the contrasting nature of evolution toward growing harmony and awareness. We can't just finalize saying that cosmos is *spiritless* or empty of *withinness*. Haught observes that Teilhard ignores dualism of mind and matter. Haught says that pure matter independently of mind cannot exist. He suggests that this *withinness* provides a *responsiveness* that lets nature to be influenced by God⁶⁷.

⁶⁵ Cf. *Ibidem*, 170.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, 178.

⁶⁷ Cf. *Ibidem*, 178.

According to scientific materialism subjectivity is unreachable to scientific objectification and does not happen. John Haught disagrees this idea of scientific materialism. A theology of evolution must, include mentality, subjectivity and consciousness as objective aspects of nature. He refers to Whitehead who states that this *subjective* quality communicates between cosmos and God. God influenced this *inwardness or subjectivity* in all physical aspects of the cosmos. God draws the future towards eschatological fulfilment of the *divine promise*⁶⁸. In this manner Haught disagrees some modern theological efforts that God relates with the cosmos purely mechanical purpose, one of the examples is Arthur Peacock's method. He disagrees with these authors because they give ear to scientific materialism and ignore nature's subjective capacity to obtain influence of God⁶⁹. In the following point we see whether God is really an ultimate explanation for evolution.

7. God as ultimate explanation for evolution

John Haught contributes to evolutionary theology through his metaphysical explanation to life, suffering and death. He fundamentals his methodology by means of layered non-conflicting explanation:

“Theology... does not strive for the same kind of understanding as scientific consciousness seeks with respect to natural causes. Theology... can demonstrate its explanatory relevance only if it is first able to show that there can be a plurality of non-conflicting levels of explanation for any phenomenon and that theology has a legitimate explanatory role as the deepest level in an extended hierarchy of explanations”⁷⁰.

⁶⁸ Cf. *Ibidem*, 177.

⁶⁹ Cf. *Ibidem*.

⁷⁰ John F. HAUGHT, «Science, Theology, and the Origin of Life», in *Theology Digest*, vol. 49:4, Eighth Annual Henri De Lubac Lecture, St. Louis University, 2002, 336.

In the context of epistemology, science should try to investigate and explore life's natural causes as long as possible and it is not the job of theology to go around looking for left over aspects by science for developing theological reflections on nature and its origin. Both of them look at their own areas of investigation. Those explanations of divine providence should not clash each other but should be busy in their own naturalistic explanations. In this structure, theological explanation helps us the genuine comprehension of reality. This deepest understanding of Absolute Mystery of God is understood through *analogies, metaphors and symbols*. John Haught further says that, the critical consciousness, or realism, used by science “demands quite properly that we ‘face reality’. But it holds that our ideas and convictions are in touch with reality only if they are ‘verifiable’ or ‘falsifiable’ according to publicly accessible methods of knowing”⁷¹. Haught reminds us that science by its method of critical awareness that it applies to all material world cannot understand theological understanding of reality, revelatory promise and hope. With his layered non-conflicting explanation he explains absolute ministry of God and respects scientific critical realism.

Haught proposes a very good understanding of *an unfolding, emergent universe is still unfinished*. According to this idea he says that all the imperfections, sufferings and death are because of an unfolding and unfinished world. The growing cosmos is still undergoing on-going transcendence into the infinite love of God (*creatio continua*). Haught's idea corresponds with the biblical revelation of a God of promise and hope. The perfection of the world only be over in the *metaphysics of the future* by the influence of God⁷².

⁷¹ John F. HAUGHT, «Revelation», in Joseph A. KOMONCHAK, Mary COLLINS, Dermot LANE (eds.), *The New Dictionary of Theology*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, 1987, 896.

⁷² Cf. John F. HAUGHT, *God After Darwin*, 50.

According to Haught a *metaphysics of the future* explains cosmic characteristics of *chance*, *lawfulness* and *temporality* that support the biological evolution. His opinion is not far from biblical vision of a *saving future*. Haught further says that:

“These biblical accounts empower us to expect... that the cosmic process will finally be redeemed from the insignificance that alternative metaphysical outlooks logically expect.

It is to such an anticipated but not yet fully actualised coherence that a metaphysics of the future points. And this anticipated integration is the goal and ground not only of our human hopes but also of cosmic and biological evolution”⁷³.

Whatever occurs in the cosmos even biological evolution happens because God wants it to happen, He comes to universe out of an infinite future. Haught observes how *contingency*, *lawfulness* and *time* can be comprehended within *metaphysics of the future*. Haught explaining on Contingency happens because the universe is not yet finished creating and it will be finished in fullness of time. He continues his thought in following lines:

“As pictured by science since the time of Newton, the world *should* be dominated completely by necessity and therefore devoid of inherent uncertainty. It *should* be ruled by linear processes captured easily by mathematical reasoning. Thus, when novel, unpredicted events do occur they are considered absurd, or the result of inaccurate measurements and scientific ignorance”⁷⁴.

Science cannot predict and understand new occurrences that happen in the universe. Through these sudden and unpredictable happenings, the universe opens itself to the future and to evolutionary novelty. In this way the cosmos opens up to new beings and future⁷⁵.

Explaining the second aspect: Lawfulness he proposes that science relies too much on laws of physics which are inflexible and makes it difficult to understand

⁷³ *Ibidem*, 95.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, 101.

⁷⁵ Cf. *Ibidem*, 102.

novelty that occurs every moment in the cosmos. He places *natural selection* as an *evolutionary process* which is *mindless determinism*. However laws that govern the universe are indispensable because in any other way we can't differentiate novelty from chaos. These laws help the universe work in a consistent manner. If this consistency is lacking then the world could not have a future neither God could have come from the future⁷⁶.

Coming to the third character regarding *time*, Haught says that past *time* cannot be reversed. Time lost is lost forever. To this problem, we can give a satisfying answer through *metaphysics of the future*. When the future comes to the present the present is pushed to the past so that new moments can occur. So in this way, there are progressive sequences of moments where evolution can happen.

To conclude these three characters of *contingency*, *law* and *time*, John Haught says that together make evolution happen. These three aspects are not far from the biblical vision of cosmos supported by the promise of an *Absolute Future*, called as God or Creator. This theory gives an ultimate explanation for evolution⁷⁷.

The genuine novelty in the world is proof of on-going creation which is corresponding with the biblical image of a God of promise and hope. Here, God is always first, bringing about a divinely renewing future. Modern biologist oppose theological perspective of looking at the creation. They say that genuine novelty in evolution results from mutations in DNA. John Haught explains that:

“for some scientific thinkers we should reserve the term “information” only for the coding that life introduces into the cosmos. In any case, in DNA it is not chemistry alone but the specific informational sequence of four acid bases (A, T, C, and G) that codes and figuratively sketches the distinctive shapes and identities of living beings. The DNA molecule, although at a certain level of analysis appealing to be “just chemistry,” is also, at another level of

⁷⁶ Cf. *Ibidem*, 102-103.

⁷⁷ Cf. *Ibidem*, 103-104.

understanding, dearly distinguishable from the strictly deterministic chemical processes operative in it and in the living cell as a whole. The specific sequence of the “letters” in the DNA of any particular organism consists of an informational arrangement that cannot be reduced without remainder to chemistry. This is necessarily the case, for if DNA were the product of chemical determinism alone there would be only one kind of DNA molecule, when in fact an indefinite number of arrangements of the “letters” in DNA molecules is chemically possible. In the nuclear DNA of the living cell an informational ordering can steal onto the scene of nature in such an elusive way that it completely escapes the notice of a purely atomizing or historicizing focus”⁷⁸.

Even though mutations are of many types they are consequence of some modification to present *nucleotide* sequence along a DNA *molecule*. Several reasons could be origin to these mutations but cannot be predicted. Radiation from outer space, chemical mutagens or random quantum mechanical fluctuations, may cause nitrogen base switches, removals, additions or block changes in the DNA sequence. Even though these are unexpected and are contingent, it means they are truly novel. We can explain them easily without the help of metaphysics. On a cosmic scale, ontological contingency due to quantum level events or chains of *cause and effect* are all explicable within the framework of scientific materialism⁷⁹. Hence, evolutionary processes such as natural selection, geographical isolation do not require the positing of divine influence. Haught’s *layered non-conflicting* could help us to have a critical insight on his own formulation. He opposes saying that:

“Ever since the birth of modern science, a fatal temptation for theology has been to move away from analogies that protect and enable the mystery of divine action and to emulate science more and more by trying to be scientifically precise about how God acts in the world. However, attempts to make the idea of divine causal influence palatable in terms congenial to scientific consciousness have generally been abject failures, both apologetically and spiritually”⁸⁰.

⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, 76.

⁷⁹ Cf. *Ibidem*, 14-16.

⁸⁰ John F. HAUGHT, «Science, Theology, and the Origin of Life», 343.

John Haught is not scientifically in his explanations of divine influence in nature and his theology of evolution in some part, is not always consistent with his own epistemology. This tentative assessment may provide further reflection on his insightful proposal of *metaphysics of the future*. Haught acknowledges that much of the creativity seen in the world originates through related dissolution, frequently a mixture of suffering and death. The process and on-going creation gives such dissolution. God reveals Himself in a marvellous, dynamic, creative yet suffering world. The magnificence of the evolution of life is held within the infinite love and compassion of God.

We shall now move on to the other theme which is very important to understand how evolution affects the suffering world. Why is there suffering in this world? Why does God allow suffering to exist at all? Could the world be better without suffering? Why do so many innocent people die every year as a result of natural disasters?

III. GOD’S SUFFERING IN EVOLVING CREATION AND ITS INFLUENCE IN PASTORAL CARE

A question often heard by many people in my pastoral work in the parish is: Why do we have to suffer? Or why does God allow suffering? These difficult questions surrounding the existence of suffering have been pondered throughout human history. Many theological reflections concentrate on the basic question of theodicy: Why should we believe in a God who allows suffering and evil? Evolutionary science does not contribute any remedies to this problem. It doesn’t bother much about it. Theology tried to find remedies how to support the pain but never shown any solution to its perishing. “If theology has never answered it satisfactorily in the past, we can scarcely expect it to do so now”⁸¹. We can find probable answers to the above question but one or the other way fall short. There is no any answer as such predefined for every question and problem but our hope in God will “wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain...” (Rev 21:4) This may be the consolation not just reduced to the human kind but for the whole life story of all the ages.

The intent of this chapter is to provide theological awareness from various perspectives to benefit doctors, nurses, administrators, volunteers, patients, family members, priests and my parishners. This audience would include anyone who supplies pastoral care to people with challenging life issues especially when personal health stability is challenged or compromised.

We will examine a theology of suffering within the context of pastoral care. We

⁸¹ John F. HAUGHT, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, Paulist Press, Mahwah, 2001, 123.

shall formulate a critical response based on the two main perspectives to communicate important theological elements about suffering. Theological reflection will be achieved and included throughout within the process of the living faith. This will be accomplished by incorporating the major elements of Christian tradition, experience and culture in the pursuit of insight that will shape and support a reflexive pastoral response.

“Suffering is the disruption of inner human harmony caused by physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional forces experienced as isolating and threatening our very existence. As the deprivation of human good, suffering is inseparable from the mystery of evil. However, suffering and evil are not caused by God, the author of all good (Genesis 1), but are inherent in the universe’s natural processes and in the uniqueness of human freedom. In the misuse of free will that is the moral evil of sin. The reasons for and meaning of the suffering apparently inseparable from human life have been the subject of questioning throughout history”⁸².

Numerous aspects of this definition will be integrated throughout to provide a thorough and applicable understanding of suffering in relation to pastoral ministry. I have been concerned how suffering affects people. Frequently I am asked to explain suffering. Depending on the situation, I sometimes struggle to respond with an appropriate answer. The quest of learning about suffering to help others is very important to me. Within the Christian context of pastoral care, this paper has been an opportunity to learn more about suffering to assist others with their fears and inability to cope with this daunting issue.

We shall present how Haught denies Darwin’s way of dealing the suffering. We shall present how we can find hope in the middle of all suffering and pain. Many modern people say that our teachings should be renewed; we should adapt according to

⁸² Mary Ann FATULA, «Suffering», in Joseph A. KOMONCHAK, Mary COLLINS, Dermot LANE (eds.), *New Dictionary of Theology*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, 1993, 990-992.

new scientific findings and go along the rhythm of science and its innovation. We should not cling on rigidly to old traditions. We shall propose in this chapter, that it is completely proper to teach and live traditions and it's dealings about culmination of suffering. It does not mean that we can just neglect all the scientific evolution that happens every day. The new scientific finding surprise us every day, the evolutionary biology helps us to deepen our understanding of theological reflection to get in to know vast breadth and depth of not only human pain but also non-human pain and mainly of *creation continua*. According to Haught though theology can be seen as an alternative to naturalism it cannot substitute a good science⁸³. In order to build up religious perspective of suffering first we need to counter attack on dangerous Darwin's naturalistic view of suffering. After Darwin all aspects of life, including suffering, can apparently be understood in natural terms. According to naturalistic view this means that,

“as far as life's suffering is concerned, there is no need to fall back on obsolete religious interpretations, nor is there any good reason any longer for invoking the idea of a redeeming God. Humans, with the aid of science, can understand and respond to the fact of suffering all by themselves.

From Darwinian biology's point of view, suffering is simply an adaptation that enhances the probability of survival and reproductive success in complex organisms. How then could theology plausibly add anything of explanatory substance to the Darwinian naturalist's account? Darwin himself observed that suffering is well adapted to make a creature guard against any great or sudden evil. Suffering, he surmised, is life's warning system, and if at times the torture it brings seems exorbitant, the excess is still consistent with a purely naturalist understanding of life”⁸⁴.

Well, if suffering is a natural cause, why should we worry of it? Then there is no need to put God in this question of redeeming. Hunger is a natural cause such as pain and suffering then theological interpretation is excused. At any rate we will be dealing with this point further ahead in this chapter.

⁸³ Cf. John F. HAUGHT, *Is Nature Enough? Meaning and Truth in the Age of Science*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006, 172.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, 167.

1. The very good evolutionary world

Pain and death are two of the most difficult realities for humans to encounter. They jar our world by being insistent and wholly unpleasant. When pain enters our lives, our typical worries and responsibilities grind to a halt, surrendering their place of priority. Death likewise, in its utter finality, steals away our ability to interact with everyday realities. What is more, these two experiences in particular seem entirely alien and unwelcome to the human mind. Whether it is because God has “set eternity in the human heart” (Ecclesiastes 3:11b) or because of our strong penchant for survival, pain and death feel like they *just ought not to be*. This is reflected in some of the earliest human writings. For example, the Epic of Gilgamesh features a snake which steals from Gilgamesh a plant which would grant him immortality. In Genesis, humans are cut off from the Tree of Life, transgressing the apparent original divine intent.

Humans feel that they simply were not intended for death. The Bible speaks of death as *the last enemy*, bound for destruction in the lake of fire (1 Corinthians 15:26, Revelation 20:14.) In the face of such powerful biblical language, it seems laughable to assert that death and pain are good realities or that they were, and are, being used by God to continually create the world. My goal in this chapter is not to point out to the suffering or death of the individual and say *this is good*, nor is it to try to deny or quench the proper human response of grief when encountering them. Instead, I hope to paint a picture of what the alternative might be: what would our world, without pain or death, look like? I will argue that to accept an embodied, physical existence as good (as the Church always has in response to Gnostics) is also to ultimately understand the goodness of both pain and death.

2. Pain is a good part of the good creation

The insistence and unpleasantness of pain too quickly blinds us to the benefits of its amazing Service. Pain serves as an ever-present security system, warning our bodies of the dangers that lie around us. Small amounts of pain are easily borne, warning us of stress in our tissue, allowing us to override the pain for a short time if needed. Greater amounts of pain compel us to stop our damaging activity and give our bodies time to repair broken bones, muscles, and ligaments. This is achieved through a remarkably elegant system of Controls and balances.

The initial mechanics of pain seems simple. One of the earliest pioneers into pain research was Descartes, who imagined pain traveling through channels in the body in the same way that tension travels up a bell cord. A person stands at the bottom of a tower and pulls a rope, while almost simultaneously, a bell strikes overhead. In the same way, Descartes understood particles of an injurious substance (such as fire) setting off an alarm in the brain⁸⁵. While his understanding of pain was simple to the point of caricature, it does outline one very important point: pain exists only in the mind. To experience pain in its proper function requires a fall cycle of: 1) generation of the signal in the peripheral nerves, 2) transmission through the “gates” in the spinal cord and then 3) perception and interpretation of the pain signals in the brain. If any one of these steps is missing or malfunctioning, the protective function of pain is lost. Furthermore, the signals of pain are prioritized through gates in the spinal cord and brain. For this reason, real tissue damage is not always felt, if the mind is distracted or if the nervous system is overloaded with input⁸⁶. This is why rubbing or pressing the tissue around an injury helps reduce overall pain, it overloads the system. The great

⁸⁵ Cf. Michael Richard BOND, Karen Hankins SIMPSON, *Pain: Its Nature and Treatment*, Elsevier, London, 2006, 6.

⁸⁶ Cf. *Ibidem*, 51.

majority of the time, this complex system of warning serves its function perfectly: pain is brief and intense at the time of injury, and it disappears as the wound heals. There are two ways in which it fails: first, the nervous system may send signals to warn of pain that does not exist. Second, it may fail to send or properly transmit pain signals which would result in insensitivity.

In the first case, certain types of pain may be generated from within the nervous system itself⁸⁷. This is known as *neuropathic pain* and is caused by dysfunction within the pain pathways. This is how phantom limb pain (pain from an amputated limb) and many instances of chronic pain occur⁸⁸. While chronic pain could seem a classic example of how *pain is evil*, the reality is that while the nervous system is warning the person of damage that does not exist, it continues to warn of real damage as well. A central nervous system that malfunctions in this way still accomplishes its central function. Some of the pain perceived is without any useful function, but the rest of the pain perceived continues to serve its bearer well. The second malfunction that of painlessness, is far more devastating⁸⁹. To feel pain can be uncomfortable, even traumatic. Yet, to not feel pain is a veritable nightmare.

Initially, one might want to argue with the idea that painlessness is a true evil. We live in a culture that spends over \$50 billion annually on pain killers⁹⁰. The mythical heroes of our culture, like Superman or the Terminator, cannot feel pain, and thus are able to perform great acts of salvation. We fantasize about the merits of living totally without pain, but none of us would want to live with a painless reality.

⁸⁷ Cf. *Ibidem*, 37.

⁸⁸ Cf. *Ibidem*, 53.

⁸⁹ Cf. *Ibidem*, 227-228.

⁹⁰ This figure is expected to increase to \$75 billion by 2010 and to \$105 billion by 2015. Gale Group, "The Worldwide Analgesic Market was Worth \$50 Billion during the Year 2005 and is Expected to Increase to \$75 Billion by the Year 2010 and \$105 Billion by the Year 2015", *Business Wire*, 12 April 2006. [http://www.thefreelibrary.com/The+Worldwide+Analgesic+Market+was+Worth+\\$50+Billion+during+the+Year...-a0144392172](http://www.thefreelibrary.com/The+Worldwide+Analgesic+Market+was+Worth+$50+Billion+during+the+Year...-a0144392172), accessed April 24, 2013.

A real-world existence without pain is the experience of leprosy patients everywhere. When the devastating bacteria *Mycobacterium leprae* invades the body's nerves, the body's defensive response causes inflammation. Unfortunately, nerves are covered tightly within a lipid-protein sheath which does not allow room for swelling. As the pressure increases within the sleeve, the blood supply, which runs alongside the nerves, is cut off, causing the cells to die⁹¹. Once dead, the nerves do not regenerate and can no longer send pain signals to the brain. All the well-known symptoms of leprosy, such as fingers falling off are a result of this inability to feel pain not as a direct result of the bacterial infection itself. In fact, because the nerves never recover their ability to send pain signals to the brain, the debilitating effects of the disease continue forever, even after the leprosy infection is cured. Pain protects us in ways that we would not even imagine possible. Despite this, it is common to wonder why it has to hurt *so badly*. Could not God have made pain like a little bell that simply informed us of our tissue damage, but did not actually hurt? Why not has a world where a different type of system existed in which the warning systems of pain did not involve suffering? The short answer to this is that pain has to be persistent and unpleasant for us to listen to it. We, intent upon our own agendas, would not heed pain's call if it were not unpleasant.

The long evolutionary process from which we have emerged selects against unnecessary or useless pain. As a result, our pain systems are ruthlessly efficient and ultimately pragmatic. Pain compels us to pay attention because there is no other way to arrest our task-oriented natures; we would achieve our goals at the cost of the destruction of our bodies. When Jesus healed lepers, he not only restored their social respectability; he also restored their ability to feel pain an ironic twist when you

⁹¹ Cf. Paul BRAND, Philip YANCEY, *The Gift of Pain: Why we hurt & what we can do about it*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1993, 152.

consider that most of us think of healing as taking pain away.

To reinforce the benefit of pain, we must remember that the world started as a place without pain. Where there is no life, there is no pain. Where there are no brains, there is no pain. In fact, the majority of living organisms do not feel pain. Plants, bacteria, and even some animals like jellyfish, lack a central nervous system and thus do not feel pain. Why then did pain develop? It developed because it conferred an evolutionary advantage. Those creatures that felt pain in more sophisticated ways lived longer and reproduced more. If anything convinces us of the absolute goodness of pain, it should be that pain is almost universal amongst mobile creatures. Pain systems have evolved separately over and over again because they help life. Pain is a good gift of God, given through the evolutionary process.

Of course, it has to be acknowledged that pain is meant to serve a specific purpose. It is a warning system that is alert to the most likely types of damage various organs might encounter. Skin is, therefore, vulnerable to most kinds of pain, whereas intestines could be cut, burnt, and punctured without much discomfort. The slightest bit of distention from within the intestines, however, would immediately result in acute distress. Due to the specific purpose of pain, it often will not warn us of some serious types of damage that fall outside those parameters, like cancer. People often do not feel any type of pain until the final stages, when treatment is beyond hope. In the 21st century, this seems like a great failing of our bodies. Throughout most of human history, this would have been a great blessing, since the pain would have been coupled with the inability to treat the cancer (or the pain) in any way. We must be careful not to condemn pain on the grounds that it does not meet expectations in an area that it was not evolved to solve. Having said that, let us also explore the positive merits of pain.

3. Pain and Pleasure

Pain and pleasure are usually seen as diametric opposites. Instead, they are closely connected both physiologically and psychologically. There are no *pleasure nerves* in the body. There are, in fact, four types of nerve endings which sense: touch (pressure), cold, heat, and pain⁹². Pleasure is derived from a complex mixture of these four types of nerve endings along with the interpretation that our mind fixes to the reception of these signals. This is part of why if someone seeks pain it can be procured quite easily, yet the pursuit of pleasure is far more elusive. Our Western concept of pleasure is that it is the complete absence of pain with some sort of pleasant stimulus.

The reality is that pleasure cannot occur without pain: they are intrinsically linked. Sometimes it is even the same sensation which in one context brings pleasure and another brings pain. While shooting down the slope of a roller coaster, the feelings of weightlessness often invoke intense pleasure. When falling from a cliff face during a rock climbing exercise, the same feelings of weightlessness bring abject terror. The difference is not in the physical transmission of the signals, but in their interpretation⁹³.

Furthermore, if pain nerves are severed, the ability to feel pleasure is equally impeded. Slowly, those, who lack the ability to feel pain begin to regard the offending limb as a mere tool or even a burden. With neither pain nor pleasure, the sense of personal ownership is lost. The body becomes a prison instead of being a gift. Soon, the body is no longer seen as intrinsically part of being human. The body, considered to be of no consequence, is treated either with extreme asceticism (it is evil, and should be heeded as little as possible) or with extreme hedonism (it is temporary, and thus bodily

⁹² Cf. *Ibidem*, 68-69. See also Michael Richard BOND, Karen Hankins SIMPSON, *Pain: Its Nature and Treatment*, 6.

⁹³ Cf. Clive S. LEWIS, «Transposition», in *The Weight of Glory*, Harper Collins, New York, 2001, 91-116. This concept is explored in terms of different “*mediums*”.

actions have no impact on the eternal soul)⁹⁴. Neither of these reflects the Christian understanding of the body, which views the body as an intrinsic part of being human. Since pain plays an important part in claiming ownership of our own bodies, it helps us to be fully human.

The deep irony is that the more we avoid pain, the more we are unable to deal with the small remnants of pain that we do experience. Pain, once accepted, is a great ally. If it is rejected, it can tyrannize lives, keeping people from the very happiness that they feel can only come about through its absence. There are, of course, many objections to this view of pain. There is the possibility of torture, which does not serve a protective function. There is chronic pain generated from within the nervous system itself. Most problematically, there is the excruciating pain of cancer. The first two of these are excusable from the point of view of theodicy: torture is the result of fallen moral choice. It is not a function of the natural world, but an example of depraved freewill. The second is a defect within the system. Chronic “neurotic” pain comes from a failure within the central nervous system to function properly, just as a myopic eye does not focus light appropriately. These are not reasons to question the goodness of the system, but rather are examples of how a good system can break down. The third question that of cancer, is more problematic. It is pain serving its proper function: telling the body that there are issues. Unfortunately, the pain is chronic and the problem is not easily resolved.

⁹⁴ Cf. <http://www.iep.utm.edu/epicur/#SSH3c.i>. Both of these were found in ancient Greek thought, amongst the Stoics and the Epicureans respectively. The Gnostics, another philosophy which competed with early Christianity, sought to escape the body and the flawed material creation, deeming them to be the results of the creation attempts of a lesser god (demiurge), accessed April 24, 2013.

4. Eight Perspectives on Suffering

What follows is a grouping or conceptualization of ways to make sense of suffering. Suffering is universal. In the parish where I work people face with many problems and they come to talk to me. I try to say some comforting words that God would never forget them and would help them in their pain, suffering and lose. Whatever I say was not sufficient to comfort them. So I thought of talking to various people like priests in the parishes around and to my parishioners (Amares and Ferreiros) about the problem of suffering and the ways to comfort. Many people came with many theories and various ways of approaching the same problem to resolve or to comfort. I tried to sum up in eight categories. There may be more but I reduced them to eight. The categories that emerged upon study and reflection are not presented in any priority order. Individuals were neither conscious of specific viewpoints nor aware of influences forming their perspective on the subject of why suffering occurs. Individuals often have strong feelings associated with specific perspectives on suffering.

As is the case in any conceptualization or categorization of human experience, the reality of human thought and belief is more complex than a particular system can represent. Human beings do not fit exactly into stages or categories of any sort, whether such categories are meant to describe complex experience (e.g. stages of death), or developmental growth (e.g. stages of learning). Categorical descriptions of illness, belief systems or other human characteristics, experiences or thoughts all remain ambiguous around the edges, lacking a definitive means of understanding reality. Nevertheless, broader conceptualizations or categories serve positive purposes.

In this same manner the perspectives described in this research are meant to be general categories emerging from analysis of how individuals represent their own viewpoints. An individual may be comfortable in more than one perspective and not able to

define one specific viewpoint as a valid descriptor of beliefs. It has been observed that individuals are able to contrast perspectives that may fit their particular understanding of suffering in relation to those they are sure do not fit. Comforts and hazards of each perspective are based upon my reflections, as well as pastoral ministry to individuals who struggle more deeply with understanding why suffering has occurred in their lives. Finally, theological reflection offers a means to understand how God might be viewed from the vantage of each perspective.

4.1. Fate/Karma Perspective

Suffering occurs because *“that’s the way it is.”* Individuals who understand experiences of suffering from this viewpoint may also assert that, *“When your number comes up, there is nothing you can do about it.”* Gambling metaphors often appear in dialogue with persons holding this perspective (e.g. *“It’s in the cards.”*).

The idea is that suffering is the result of some plan or predetermined scheme that exists apart from human knowledge. This plan or fate or, in Eastern religious terms, karma, holds all that is to be, and it is futile to resist its expression in our lives. Christians may speak of *“God’s plan”* for their lives in this manner, reconciling oneself to whatever comes in life as specifically designed and brought about by God. Humans may not understand God’s purpose or timing, but we cannot really resist or change what is meant to be. It is as if the events and experiences of human life are written down in a book somewhere, unfolding over the course of time according to plan. In Hinduism and Buddhism, *“Karma/kamma* in traditional Indian religions is regarded as part of the universal or cosmic law of cause and effect. This means that we reap the fruit (*vipaka*) of what we sow (karma). If we sow what is constructive or skillful

(*kusala*) we will reap what is constructive or skillful, if we sow what is destructive or unskillful (*akusala*), we will reap the same”⁹⁵.

4.1.1. Comforts

Comforts are available within this perspective on suffering for an individual. For many it is comforting to believe that there is some control in the universe. Humans may not fully understand the purpose of suffering; however, suffering does not occur randomly within this perspective. The world is orderly, following some sort of plan; individuals have a specific destiny or fate. In addition, everything makes sense within the fate perspective and fits within a logic or plan apart from whether or not humans are able to know or to understand the specifics of such a plan or fate. It is also comforting for many that the individual is not responsible for suffering. Suffering is not a result of specific sins of either omission or commission; it simply exists within the framework of fate or karma. The fourth comfort within this perspective is the peaceful calm that can come with acceptance of suffering.

4.1.2. Hazards

Hazards or aspects that can cause additional suffering within the fate/karma perspective are that the perspective is passive and that the individual has little control to diminish suffering. A person who believes that suffering is caused by their fate or that it is a part of God’s plan for their life, has no real reason to fight suffering or to exert change. Furthermore, since an individual cannot by effort somehow avoid suffering, helplessness can be induced.

4.1.3. Theological Reflection

In the fate/karma perspective, God is distant and impersonal. A system or

⁹⁵ Cf. Carr Norman McCLELLAND, «*Karma*», in *Encyclopedia of Reincarnation and Karma*, Publishers Jefferson, North Carolina and London, 2010, 136.

scheme has been set in motion and then allowed to unfold. God relates to individuals within such a system in a passive manner. Prayer may allow for expression of feelings and instill a sense of God's presence amidst suffering, but petition does not change in a person's fate (or God's plan). Individuals may question God's love and power since the plan that unfolds often contains so many difficult experiences of suffering. Yet the comfort of yielding to God's leading and accepting whatever comes in life as a disciple, including suffering and loss is also real.

4.2. Reaping What You Sow Perspective

Suffering occurs, in this perspective, as a result of wrongdoing (i.e. breaking rules or codes). In a theistic worldview, suffering may be understood as a result of individual sins of omission or commission. From an atheistic standpoint, adherence to societal mores (ex. work ethic, directly impacts an individual's life in the outcome of happiness or struggle). Illness may be the result of not handling stress in a constructive manner. Blessing, health, wealth, happiness and fulfillment come from following a specified path and suffering occurs when one turns aside from this path.

4.2.1. Comforts

In this perspective, the individual can control what occurs. Change or repentance can eliminate suffering and bring about health, restoration, and blessing. Secondly, individuals find comfort in that this perspective presents a world that is orderly and just. God is fair in a way that makes sense to many people, bringing about or allowing in a passive manner suffering to occur to those who deserve punishment and rewarding those who deserve to be rewarded. The world is not a random, chaotic place where suffering can happen to anyone.

4.2.2. Hazards

A problem for some individuals is that guilt is added to their suffering or pain, perhaps intensifying the experience of suffering. In addition, if an individual feels guilt for specific sin(s), he or she may actually seek suffering as penance. It may also be that an individual of low self-worth may deem oneself as deserving of suffering, thus seeking such experience as confirmation of their self-image.

4.2.3. Theological Reflection

God is a God of justice, measuring out punishment and reward based on an individual's obedience. God's fairness is evident, if not in the present world then one day through the various gradients of heaven and hell. An individual has some effect upon God's healing and blessing by means of repentance and discipleship.

4.3. Purifying Perspective

Suffering is brought about as a challenge to purify the soul or to build character. Pain is sent with a goal in mind; survival builds inner strength and cleanses from sin. Christians who understand their suffering from this viewpoint often identify their own suffering with the sufferings of Christ. For some, the path toward holiness or becoming a better Christian requires suffering either through personal experience or meditation and internalization of the sufferings of Christ (e.g. Stations of the Cross). From an atheistic standpoint, suffering, extreme challenges or harrowing experiences can be understood as necessary for the development of character, leadership skills or as a means to team building.

4.3.1. Comforts

In this perspective, it is comforting for many individuals to believe that they are

selected or special. It is an honor to undergo the test of suffering. Additionally, this viewpoint helps to activate fighting and coping mechanisms. Many are highly motivated to live up to the challenge of suffering in hopes of achieving some higher goal. It is also of comfort to believe that one's suffering has a positive goal and that the potential of a greater purpose can be attained.

4.3.2. Hazards

One hazard of this perspective is that pain is associated with a positive reward. Suffering could be sought or perhaps even magnified, especially if the goal attributed to suffering is desired. Some individuals might seek to increase the challenge or perhaps refuse treatments or relief from suffering in order to fulfill what is perceived to be a calling or requirement from God. Finally, what if a person doesn't measure up to the test by whatever standards they might have? Then failure is added to suffering.

4.3.3. Theological Reflection

God is parental, seeking to make better people through the crucible of suffering. The process of refinement or purification is necessary to be acceptable to God and/or to achieve inner holiness. Suffering can also create a bond between Christ and the sufferer, bringing about redemption of self and others. Individuals who ascribe to the purification perspective often experience an increased sense of God's presence and sense of purpose.

4.4. Learning Perspective

The learning perspective is similar to the purifying perspective, except that the goal of suffering is not holiness or development of character, rather it is to learn a much needed lesson. Suffering exists in order to teach. Knowledge is the result of the experience of suffering. The lessons learned from suffering are highly valued and often

change a person's orientation to life in dramatic ways. From a Christian standpoint, God is seeking through suffering to make known more of Himself and His will to each believer. Non-Christians within this perspective often speak of learning increased empathy or new priorities for life as a result of an experience of suffering.

4.4.1. Comforts

It is comforting to understand that God has selected one to learn deeper truths through the experience of suffering. An active, reflective response is stimulated in the sufferer, often resulting in life changes. From suffering, a positive purpose is accomplished. The individual is not to blame for suffering; rather the potential for learning is recognized and brought about through such difficult experiences. Many books and articles express the truths learned through suffering (e.g. dependency on God, value of family, ability to empathize), and such stories serve as inspiration to others.

4.4.2. Hazards

Once again, suffering or pain is associated with a positive reward. If a person does not measure up to the task of learning whatever lesson must be learned or finding a deeper truth within the experience of suffering then failure is added to suffering.

4.4.3. Theological Reflection

God is a teacher, seeking to make known His ways to persons through the experience of suffering. The high value of the truths that result from suffering more than offset the pain associated with the experience of suffering. For both the learning and purifying perspective, an individual might ask why the path to holiness or learning must travel through suffering. Was there no other possible way to fulfill these goals?

4.5. Counterpoint Perspective

In this perspective, suffering must exist as a counterpoint to pleasure. A positive cannot exist without a negative. We would not know the meaning of pleasure or good without the contrast to pain or evil. The counterpoint perspective is an intellectual response to the question of why suffering exists that provides a logical explanation, as well as a means of coping with suffering. From a Christian viewpoint, God really had no choice about the existence of suffering if God wanted the potential for good and pleasure to exist within His creation. An atheist might assert this viewpoint simply based on logic. In Chinese dualistic philosophy, suffering is understood from the perspective of yin-yang, opposing forces that co-exist.

4.5.1. Comforts

It is comforting to know that suffering is not caused by the individual involved but that it occurs simply as a counterpoint to all that is positive in the world. This perspective also includes the notion, for many, that enduring suffering will bring about a greater appreciation and capacity for joy and pleasure. The objective stance of this perspective offers a means for coping up with suffering in a detached fashion.

4.5.2. Hazards

This perspective is potentially harmful in that the view is philosophical and logical without accounting for expression of feelings such as anger or sadness. Although objectivity offers emotional distance from the experience of suffering, it also may create a barrier interpersonally.

4.5.3. Theological Reflection

Both good and evil come from God, and this is as it must be. One must enjoy or endure all aspects of life. Prayer is a means to seek intervention from God and/or help

to endure suffering. Ultimately, suffering has the function of increasing the capacity for the joys of life but God does not bring about suffering for any specific reason, they simply must co-exist. God, therefore, does not mean harm and God's stance is removed from how such events unfold in the lives of persons.

4.6. Broken World Perspective

Suffering occurs as a result of the fallen world (cosmos). As a result of God's desire that human beings have free will and the choice of humans to rebel, the entire world is broken, and evil is a powerful force within it. Suffering occurs in a random fashion within this broken world. One day evil will be overcome completely and the entire world will be made whole. From a Christian viewpoint this renewal began in Christ and will be fulfilled upon His return.

4.6.1. Comforts

It is comforting to believe that suffering is not a result of individual sin, rather the whole world is sick or broken. For Christians who hold this perspective, there is also the comfort of the Spirit's presence amidst the broken world and the belief that evil's defeat has begun in Christ and that its defeat will be complete upon Christ's return.

4.6.2. Hazards

A sense of helplessness can be induced from this perspective, in that suffering cannot be eliminated due to the broken state of the world. Additionally, the random nature of suffering can seem unjust and/or cause anxiety. There is no means to control suffering, rather an expectation that its effects would somehow be expressed in each human life.

4.6.3. Theological Reflection

God created the world and “it was good.” Within this world he desired to create beings who had the capacity to choose good or evil. Through the disobedience of Adam and all humans, the world is now a broken place. Yet into this broken world, God came to dwell with us, seeking to overcome evil on our behalf. The compassion and love of God is evident in his companionship amidst our broken world and experiences of suffering. Prayer is a means of battle with God against that which is evil and broken. Questions may be raised regarding the knowledge of God concerning mankind’s fall from grace and subsequent broken world. Didn’t God know which way humans would choose? Therefore, was not the deck stacked against humans? Does each individual have an equal opportunity to know freedom from the broken world through Christ? Is this just?

4.7. *Mystery Perspective*

The mystery perspective asserts that there is no answer to the why of suffering, and it is wrong to try to find meaning because suffering is meaningless and/or it is not our place to know why suffering exists. Humans are creatures, not the Creator, therefore it is impossible to comprehend the mystery of suffering.

4.7.1. Comforts

In this perspective, it is comforting that there is no guilt or fault assigned. In addition, there is no struggle to find meaning amidst suffering. Active coping mechanisms are engaged in the individual to avoid suffering since there is no reason to achieve some goal from suffering (e.g. learning). For many it is comforting to place trust in God for the mystery of suffering believing that one day, beyond this world, it will all make sense.

4.7.2. Hazards

This perspective denies a natural struggle for meaning, perhaps judging oneself or others if not satisfied with accepting the mystery of evil. In effect, this perspective asserts that suffering is beyond comprehension and that those who do wrestle with such questions are not trusting in God or understanding the limits of human nature.

4.7.3. Theological Reflection

God is transcendent, holy and other. Humans have no means of comprehending the ways of God, therefore such difficult experiences of suffering are a mystery to us. Prayer is a means to express feelings and concerns and also to acknowledge human limitations and place trust in God.

4.8. Evolution Perspective

Suffering occurs as a component of evolution of the human species, working through natural selection. In this perspective, suffering has a role toward development of a species that is adapted to its environment and capable of benefiting the species as a whole.

4.8.1. Comforts

It is comforting that suffering is not related to individual sins or that specific goals from each experience of suffering are intended. It is also a positive stance that suffering is at work for the betterment of the entire species through the process of evolution.

4.8.2. Hazards

Perhaps suffering indicates less quality of some nature. Additionally, this perspective does not offer clarification of how such a system (evolution) came to be.

4.8.3. Theological Reflection

God is the distant author of the universe who set in motion all that is, including an evolutionary system. God seems less personal and not empathetic to the suffering of humans. Prayer may be a means of purification but cannot really effect change.

The described perspectives on suffering are based on the viewpoints expressed by individuals struggling to find meaning and to answer the question of why suffering occurs. “Comforts” and “Hazards” sections were brief descriptions of features of each perspective developed from pastoral ministry with individuals who were searching for alternative viewpoints either to clarify their own understanding or to find a new way of dealing with suffering when a current viewpoint was not adequate.

For individuals struggling to make sense of specific experiences of suffering, both the intellectual and emotional journeys were important and not separate experiences. People of my parish search for a strong need to understand difficult experiences, and there were no boundaries between theological and pastoral areas. As an observer it appeared that the whole person, body, mind and spirit strove seriously to resolve questions of the deepest importance.

5. Exposition of suffering within the context of pastoral care

Suffering abounds in the context of pastoral care when a situation is overwhelmingly filled with doubt and fear. There is much to learn from all experiences of suffering. All suffering has the potential to be understood as an integral part of Jesus’ work on earth for the benefit of others in distress. By the faith of Christians, through Jesus, suffering is an integral part of God’s work. The fruits of God’s work may or may

not be an answer to the mystery of suffering. It depends on numerous circumstances of the individual or people in a particular situation involving suffering and their openness to God's presence and care. God is always at work to help humanity achieve salvation and accomplish love, eternal joy, happiness and peace for all.

God is present through the eyes of faith and hope when people relate their suffering with Jesus because "faith is the ultimate answer to the question of suffering but we humans cannot bring about faith in anyone. Only God can do that"⁹⁶. From a Christian perspective, God has given Jesus Christ to help humans understand and endure suffering, revealing more of the loving and attentive nature of God in the process. In my ministry in the parish, I have found that when hopeful people look at God through Jesus and the Holy Spirit for well-being and meaning they blame God less frequently for their agony. It is our Christian belief that God through Jesus Christ accompanies people in all horrifying circumstances.

God does not abandon people in their time of suffering. God is present through the eyes of faith and hope. The answer to the problem of why suffering exists is ongoing. Suffering exists for society to get involved and do something to control or eliminate it which would expose the love, compassion and care of God and Jesus. Throughout time when people looked to God for well-being and meaning they were less likely to blame God for their suffering and agony. From a Christian view, all suffering has the potential to become an integral part of Jesus' work on earth for the benefit of others in distress. By the faith of Christians, suffering has the capacity to become part of God's work through the work of salvation to win love, eternal joy, happiness and peace for all.

Through Jesus' incarnation, God came into suffering. Salvation can be attained

⁹⁶ Daniel SIMUNDSON, *Faith Under Fire. How the Bible Speaks to Us in Times of Suffering*, Academic Renewal Press, Lima, 2001, 127.

by Christ's followers by avoiding sin and suffering with the hope for attaining eternal life. Christ's words in the synoptic gospels and the writings of St. Paul all stress that suffering is essential to be a follower of Christ. Through Jesus Christ, God did not disregard our sins and suffering. God came into it. God became human; we touched Christ and he profoundly affected humanity. Through Jesus, God is the very inner spiritual essence of who we are as human beings experiencing the devastation of pain and suffering. God comes into the lowest places in the lives of people. Through unconditional love, God enters the suffering and pain of all people along with their brokenness, sinfulness and woundedness.

Jesus offers his suffering as a means of understanding suffering. Jesus' suffering transformed the meaning of suffering into his redemptive work. With an appreciation of the Lord's suffering, our suffering becomes an opportunity to taste the joy, peace and tranquility of heaven for ourselves and for those we love. Catholic social teaching emphasizes service to those who are suffering as Christ did. Christ's death paid the price for sin and transformed the end to a new beginning. Through the resurrection, Christ brings back new hope and life both in the present and the future.

We have been taught that "everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving" (1 Timothy 4:4). When humans first sinned, that perfection was spoiled and the environment was tainted. The fact is we live in a world where evil abounds and has a huge impact on suffering. Humans are sometimes targets for pain and suffering caused by a life altering event. It is rampant in every aspect of creation and within all societies in the world. Sometimes suffering is the result of choices made both as individuals and as members of the human race to turn away from God's wisdom and love. Suffering constitutes one of the greatest challenges to

people in the world today and there is no way around it⁹⁷.

Through personal stories, I have been deeply touched by the strength, depth of sincerity, openness and courage of people when suffering is frequently accompanied by intense pain especially during a hospitalization. In pastoral ministry, my goal is to offer individuals, families and youngsters meaning, attentive listening, presence and empathy as they attempt to cope with incomprehensible suffering and grapple with the question why suffering exists⁹⁸. I integrate theological significance, hope and encouragement through pastoral ministry to give evidence of God's abundant presence in the midst of suffering.

People experience suffering throughout life. God created us to exist in relationship with others, nature, events, and ultimately God. Faith communities have the potential to reach out to those experiencing suffering so that no individual or group of people has to suffer in isolation to carry the burden of suffering alone. When life becomes overwhelming or unexpectedly takes a turn for the worse, people often blame God. Frequently people believe God has abandoned them or that whatever has happened is God's fault. That is not the way God thinks or plans life for creation. People are conscious beings with the ability to make tough decisions and choices. Some

⁹⁷ Cf. Clement OGUNBIYI, *Winning with Gratitude: Gratitude 101*, Xlibris Corporation, United States of America, 2010, 8.

⁹⁸ Paradoxically, by withdrawing into ourselves, not out of self-pity but out of humility, we create the space for others to be themselves and to come to us on their own terms. James Hillman, director of studies at the C. G. Jung Institute in Zurich, wrote this about counseling: For the other person to open and talk requires a withdrawal of the counselor. I must withdraw to make room for the other... This withdrawal, rather than going-out-to- meet the other, is an intense act of concentration, a model for which can be found in the Jewish mystical doctrine of Tsimtsum. God as omnipresent and omnipotent was everywhere. He filled the universe with his Being. How then could the creation come about? ... God had to create by withdrawal; He created the not-Him, the other, by self- concentration... On the human level, withdrawal of myself aids the other to come into being. But human withdrawal is a very painful and lonely process, because it forces us to directly face our own condition in all its misery as well as all its beauty. But when we are not afraid to journey into our own center, and to concentrate on the stirrings of our own souls, we come to know that being alive means being loved. This experience tells us that we can only love because we are born out of love, that we can only give because our life is a gift, and that we can only make others free because we are set free by the One whose heart is greater than our own. J.M. Henri NOUWEN, *The Wounded Healer Ministry In Contemporary Society*, Image Books Doubleday, New York and Doubleday, 1972, 97-98.

of these situations that people find themselves in are heartbreaking and include feelings of loneliness, sadness, pain, loss, sorrow, depression, illness, grief, anxiety, guilt, anger and hurt.

“God’s will is determined by His wisdom which always perceives, and His goodness which always embraces, the intrinsically good. But when we have said that God commands things only because they are good, we must add that one of the things intrinsically good is that rational creatures should freely surrender themselves to their Creator in obedience”⁹⁹.

In pastoral ministry, I attempt to assist people with a sense of spiritual wholeness, when it feels as if God has abandoned them or not listening (Psalm 71:11). Sometimes it is a challenge to help others make them understand that God is not the cause of suffering; “Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change” (James 1:17)¹⁰⁰. Wholeness of spirit can be the attainment of personal wholeness or completeness sometimes resulting in healing that comes from God through the Holy Spirit. How do they endure their suffering? In Romans 8 Paul provides some insight into this question. Faith usually helps to answer that question.

Paul states that “We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28). I am reminded of Paul’s imprisonment and how he related all that to the Paschal Mystery of Christ. For Paul, Jesus suffered as we physically, spiritually, and psychologically suffer¹⁰¹. Jesus knows suffering, never abandons us and will be our guide through any challenge.

Personal suffering of others in my lifetime has left an indelible impression upon me. Why does suffering exist and why does God allow the suffering of millions of

⁹⁹ Clive Staples LEWIS, *The Problem of Pain*, Collier Books, Macmillan Pub. Co., New York, 1962, 99.

¹⁰⁰ *The Revised Standard Version* of the Bible.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Philip YANCEY, *Where is God when it hurts?*, Zondervan Press, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1977, 59.

people? Suffering is a part of a sinful world. God graciously has sustained people on earth allowing them to make choices, reproduce, to develop governments and systems to deal with the effects of sin¹⁰². God has sustained creation providing sun and rain for food and to support life. But the natural effect of a fallen creation is that even good things can have evil byproducts, for example: water can drown someone; gravity can kill someone; lightening can burn and kill; a disease such as cancer can slowly cause suffering and death over a long or short period of time.

Since suffering is so prevalent throughout the world, God is continually revealing so much about it to help in our understanding of it. God does not intentionally and vindictively promote suffering. Suffering happens and it is an unfathomable mystery. Humans are finite beings and eventually life does have an end. God does not purposefully want humans to suffer. God wants us to live and experience all that we are meant to experience in life, in relationship with others and sometimes that includes suffering.

People frequently say that *God only sends you what you can handle*. In pastoral care, I believe this statement and it gives people hope that their suffering has a time limit and will not continue indefinitely. This statement tells me that people feel the love and support of God in their struggle with suffering. Even in all the suffering, God has a limit placed on the intensity of the suffering which will help the sick endure until their body has a chance to heal with proper care. Perhaps this explains why some people seem to skip through life without being besieged by insurmountable suffering and tragedy after tragedy. Some people do not think about suffering until it actually happens to them and then they desperately reach out for God to help.

All people at some *time or other* have to face the reality of personal suffering

¹⁰² Cf. Garry POOLE, *How Could God Allow Suffering and Evil?* Zondervan Press, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1984, 17.

and tragedy. No one has a secret formula for avoiding it. Since suffering cannot be avoided it can be destructive to one's self and to others or it can be creative and lead to victory over evil or failures and anything else oppressive for the individual¹⁰³. Paul expressed the Judeo-Christian insight of suffering in his letter to the Romans 8 that states, "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us... because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans 8:18, 21). For someone who suffers, the thought of eternal life with Christ is comforting.

When people lash out in anger toward God because of their suffering, often compassion and attentive listening help them to restore inner peace. Besides anger, sometimes other underlying issues exist such as frustration and anxiety that are associated with the suffering of an individual. Attitudes consumed by anger associated with suffering tend to promote mistrust and doubt in God surrounding the main issue of suffering. God does not allow for suffering as a means of payback, getting even or settling an account. Suffering in the world does not prove that God does not exist. It just proves that God does not run things the way we think God should. For some people, there are definite reasons why God allows suffering in the world such as building strength, courage and character in preparation for other future challenges¹⁰⁴.

Jesus' afflictions are not God's punishment for sin. Jesus, the suffering servant exposed a redemptive and glorifying dimension to his suffering. This can be appreciated through the statement made by Jesus to the Emmaus disciples: "Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" (Luke

¹⁰³ Cf. Robert SYDNEY REYES, *Job & The Gospel Of Suffering*, Xulon Press, United States of America, 2010, 168.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Christiana CHINEME, *God Didn't Do It, He Only Signed Off on It: Living a Purposeful Life Through the storm*, Bloomington, Indiana, USA, 2010, 43.

24:26). Jesus' suffering was necessary to demonstrate how to face undeserving suffering like Job did. Jesus' sufferings modeled dignity, trust, and love even in the face of despair. Jesus' suffering is saying that there is no way to strengthen the human soul other than through the unpredictable challenges of suffering. The suffering servant illustrates that suffering is not a curse from God. Through presence and assurance, the suffering servant helps others to become closer to God to experience more of God's unconditional love¹⁰⁵.

In pastoral ministry God finds a way within my heart to attend to the specific needs and situations involving suffering. God uses me to facilitate new awareness, hope, understanding and meaning as I accompany people and help them cope with their suffering. My pastoral ministry is dedicated to "rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15). It is not God's will to abandon suffering. Suffering is God's way of inviting people to follow God to the same cross and suffering that Jesus experienced. Taking up Jesus' cross allows people to share in Christ's sufferings. "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Mark 8:34).

God will provide peace, hope and the necessary strength to cope with the pain and challenges of suffering similar to how God accompanied Jesus in his suffering. St. John embraces hope and peace: "I have said this to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Peace opposes suffering and anxiety. Peace can be the result of trusting and appreciating that through Jesus, God will not abandon anyone who is suffering. The chaotic condition filled with loneliness, frustration, sadness and anxiety can easily cause frustration and discouragement. God has a stronger desire for (*shalom*) peace, to

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Stanley J. GRENZ, *Theology for the Community of God*, Broadman and Holman, Nashville, 1994, 337.

counteract all that the human condition is about in relation to suffering¹⁰⁶. Through Jesus, in the midst of suffering, God assures that peace can be achieved.

Jeremiah 29:11 gives assurance that God loves us and wants to provide comfort when the future is unknown. By participating in pastoral ministry visiting the sick, especially in the parish setting, I have the opportunity to transmit the loving, hopeful and compassionate presence of God to those who are suffering. In my work as a deacon and through personal experiences of suffering, I have become more caring with others because “suffering is what turns us into caring people”¹⁰⁷. Psalm 46 is a good reminder of God’s loving presence even in the chaos of suffering and all that is so bad and heartbreaking in life. No matter what people have to go through, God cares and is always with them, Though the future may seem bleak, God says, *I know the plans I have for you, plans to give you a hope and a future.*

6. Suffering and evil according to John Haught

According to John Haught, there raises a problem regarding the presence of pain and suffering in the creation. He has lot of questions regarding God’s mighty power and His goodness as loving father. Why God allows so much suffering in the world, not only to the humans but to all other creatures? Could not have God crated creatures

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Cajetan IHEWULEZI, *Hospital Preaching as Informed by Bedside Listening, A Homiletical Guide for Preachers, Pastors, and Chaplains in Hospital, Hospice, Prison, and Nursing Home Ministries*, University Press of America, New York, 2011, 68. Does God really abandon us in our suffering? Sometimes, difficult circumstances can make us feel forgotten by God as Jesus felt during his Passion. But in a real sense, our faith tells us that God does not abandon us. The feeling of abandonment may indicate the depth of human suffering. Even though it is possible to feel abandoned, it is still our belief that Jesus had so much love for the sick. In the Gospel of today, Jesus responds practically to human illness and suffering. His response reveals the true image of God and God’s compassion to those who are suffering either from illness or from other sources of pain. Jesus was surrounded by a multitude of physically and mentally sick people who needed help. He did not start answering the question of why people suffer. He did not treat them as those who were responsible for their illnesses and so were being punishment by God.

¹⁰⁷ Joan CHITTISTER, *Called to Question: A Spiritual Memoir*, MD: Sheed & Ward, Lanham, 2004, 92.

without pain and suffering? How can we understand extinction, cataclysm and genocide that happen in the world?¹⁰⁸ Haught attempts to make sense of the pain, suffering and evil evident in the natural world by employing a kenotic theology. The understanding of divine omnipotence in this theology images a God who “empties” God self of manipulative power. A God who is unconditional love and Supreme Good lets the whole creation “*be*”, to unfold its own potentiality. Evolution, governed by law and contingency in interaction, has thus brought into existence a myriad of life forms. The same evolutionary processes have brought into existence nervous and endocrine systems of varying degrees of complexity. Such physiological systems account for the experience of pain and suffering in human persons. In a kenotic theology, built on the experience of the cross, the image of God is one who limits God’s own power to intervene. God “withdraws” and makes “space” for the creation to be free. In this theology, God suffers with the creation.

“This is the God who suffers along with creation and saves the world by taking all of its evolutionary travail and triumph into the everlasting divine compassion. This is not a God that theology invented just to accommodate Darwin. This is the empathetic God revealed in the pages of the Bible. This is the God of Israel who felt the pain of the oppressed in Egypt. It is the God who identifies with the Crucified. This is the God that Christian faith encountered long before we learned the story of nature’s evolutionary birth pangs”¹⁰⁹.

This theme is very much rooted in Christian faith from the beginning of the Christianity, that God made man born of a woman to redeem His people. He experienced the pain of mortal bodies. The early Christian communities tried to give a new meaning to their suffering and pain. Jesus lived with the suffering people and they

¹⁰⁸ Cf. John F. HAUGHT, *God After Darwin*, 20.

¹⁰⁹ John F. HAUGHT, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 124.

shared their pain and suffering with Him. Even Jesus had to go through the pain through His cross. He assumed human condition to feel what we feel, suffer the way we suffer and die as a human.

“Suffering, therefore, need not be seen as punishment—since Jesus was innocent—but instead as a gift for others. And if suffering can become grace, this can only be because the suffering of Jesus is in some mysterious way God’s own suffering. Because of Jesus’ incarnational solidarity with all of nature and history, the suffering in these realms is assimilated into the life of God where it takes on an unfathomable but redemptive meaning”¹¹⁰.

Haught suggests the image of divine kenosis best accounts for the presence of pain and evil in the world. For Haught, God’s defenselessness and vulnerability is the result of exercising divine power through humility and love. For him this image is firmly rooted in the biblical tradition. For him, working within a methodological framework of process theology, all things that occur in the creation, including evolution, are ultimately taken into God’s own experience. Hence, God suffers with the creation, as God lovingly draws it into the future towards divine perfection and fulfillment. For him the ultimate explanation of the apparent spontaneity and self-creativity in the cosmos is this purpose of divine fulfillment in God. This means the cosmos is not mindless or impersonal material matter¹¹¹.

Haught recognizes that the study of evolution brings to the forefront for theology the phenomenon of pain, and suffering in life. For him the incarnation and cross provide the pivotal image of divine suffering love. He suggests that kenotic theology best accounts for pain and suffering in creation. Thus we can sum up that God of natural selection is thus the liberating, healing, and inclusive God of Jesus. This God is engaged with and suffers with creation; at the same time, creatures participate in

¹¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 125.

¹¹¹ Cf. John F. HAUGHT, *God After Darwin*, 53.

God's being and Trinitarian relationships.

Haught draws on the book of Job to make the point that we ultimately cannot know the mind of God. Hence, the existence of suffering will always remain to some degree a mystery. He also warns against the inappropriate application of human moral behavior to evolutionary processes, arguing that we should be cautious about the term "natural evil" and recognize that those phenomena that constitute such "evil" do not in fact involve any moral element. Evolution is not cruel, selfish or in any way evil, in the sense that evil constitutes a willing rejection of God.

The challenge is to hold the theological data of a radically compassionate God together with the scientific data that natural selection involves significant suffering and cost. God appears to be a self-limiting God, although we cannot know why God achieves the divine purposes in this way.

After all our reflection in various perspectives a big question still remains. This problem has been coming up for long time from the investigators of scientific naturalists. They ask the question saying that if universe is created by other than itself and as we believe is God so why is it not complete? Why didn't God create the world finished when he created? When is He going to finish creating the world? Did God have the power to create the universe finished when he created or did He fail to create a world perfect or is He fooling around for fourteen billion years and the years to come?¹¹² Here the only answer that makes sense to me is that any notion of an originally completed cosmos would be theologically incoherent.

"If a creator, in the beginning, made a perfectly finished, fully completed world, such a world would not be distinct from its maker. It would not be *other* than God. If the world were created perfectly in the beginning, then this world would be nothing more than an extension of God's own being, an appendage to a dictatorial

¹¹² Cf. John F. HAUGHT, *Is Nature Enough?* 189.

deity. It would not be a world at all”¹¹³.

We can't identify God as world or the other way. God is God and the world is world. God is perfect and world is not. If world is not perfect, it tries to achieve its perfection and make itself to be perfect as its creator who is perfect. World had its freedom to achieve its perfection or even it can choose to remain as is.

We can find alternatives. If we suppose that God created a world perfect where there is no suffering, no pain, no death and no passion it would be a world without a future because everything would have been fixed in place once and for all. If everything is fixed then there is nothing to do, everything is predetermined by God that means that I lose my freedom. The world will be same as it was created. There is neither ruin nor spoil. Neither humans nor all other living beings get old or die to give place for novelty. There would be no indeterminacy or contingency, essential ingredients in any world open to the newness for the future. A perfect world would be one without life and future. It can't anticipate anything¹¹⁴. There could be no other world so beautiful and passionate then this imperfect and ongoing creation.

Now we move on to conclude this chapter saying that humans are very complex in their way of thinking and doing. So they do not fit in to any category. Some people can have more than just one category. We cannot just put a human behavior into one category of behavior. Human is dynamic and changes from time to time. These categories are only to describe complex experiences. These categories are a bit unclear in the end. Their objective is to help us to understand human behavior in the time of suffering and pain.

As we work in the parishes and in various pastoral ministry, our model is Christ.

¹¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹¹⁴ Cf. *Ibidem*, 189-190.

His mission is our mission. As Christ we should be the wonder healers. Healer first treats his own wounds and then only heals others who have been suffering and get his help. As he suffers also understands well the pain and suffering of others. We can reduce suffering through God's gift of love and freedom. When we work together the social and economic difficulties can be solved.

Darwin's evolution changed our way of thinking and acting in life. We see the things differently. Even suffering is seen in natural terms. Naturalists say that we don't need to call God's help when we suffer because suffering is natural. The body has a sensibility to feel touch, heat and cold. Body is sensible whatever is dangerous to its resistance. They explain everything in naturalistic terms. By the help of science we can cure the pain and suffering and excuse any aid from outside. For John Haught suffering is an adaptation that helps the survival.

According to John F. Haught, the pain, suffering and evil evident in the natural world can be made sense through kenotic theology. God's omnipotence is understood by His emptying Himself for sake of humankind. God gives the creation freedom to unfold its potentiality. God doesn't intervene just to respect freedom of the creation. He respects our freedom; it doesn't mean that He has no power. In this theology, God suffers with the creation. Jesus Christ died for our sins and through His resurrection; He brings new hope and life for our lives both in the present and in the future.

Now we move on to another chapter looking forward to discuss how can God who suffers along with the evolution also be God of redemption?

IV. DIVINE KENOSIS AS REDEMPTIVE IN EVOLUTION

In this chapter I will be dealing with the theme of redemption. As we discussed in the previous chapter about pain and suffering, and its consequences in our life, in this chapter I will discuss about redemption. John F. Haught makes available most productive understanding when he notes that *an unfolding, emergent universe is still unfinished*. He explains that there are many imperfections and suffering in the universe as well as in life. In God's infinite love the universe is still experiencing ongoing transcendence. The biblical understanding of a God of promise and hope is matching with the power of renewal in creation. This conception of God is deeply involved in the *creatio continua*.

1. The meaning of the individual in light of the whole

According to John F. Haught the theology of evolution admits that the new creation and novelty that occurs in the evolution involves death, pain, suffering and destruction. The processes of evolution offer profound evidence of such dissolution. God empties Himself, suffers as human and redeems human kind. We will deal much more deeply about this topic in following pages.

It is an evolutionary creation that fully embraces the interest that God has in all of life, which sees humans as intimately connected with the whole of the creation. Humans are tied in to the world around them, feeding off and in turn feeding other life. Our genes flow from the same lines, our ancestors were kin. Humanity is a blood brother to the world. This means that in terms of life, humans are not "further evolved"

(even the humble earthworm has evolved for as long as humans), or “set above creation” in any physical way. Instead, they perform a different role. Humans are image bearers, or icons, of divine presence. They function as the bearers of divine presence, not because of different composition, but because of different ordination. By emphasizing the continuity of humanity with the rest of creation, it allows us to understand that the world was not made for humans. It was made for the delight of God and for his incarnation¹¹⁵. God’s delight stretches before, after, and beyond human purview. Psalm 104 and the divine speeches in Job remind us that humans do not take center stage. Rather, all is for and to God, and everything is epitomized in the incarnation of God in Christ. M. C. Steenberg writes:

“All human history prior to the encounter with the incarnate Son was intended for growth into the reception of that experience. All human history since is intended for the accustomization of humanity to the life offered in the incarnate Christ - an accustomization that is the working in humanity of the Holy Spirit, who will bring to perfection at the *eschaton* that which man experiences in token even now”¹¹⁶.

Yet it is not just human history that was intended for growth towards Christ, but the history of the cosmos. Because of the love of God for every life, the 3.8 billion years of evolutionary process was not wasted time waiting for humans to emerge so that history could finally begin.

Thus, if Christ is the center and focus of all history, the purpose of creation is a journey towards incarnation and resurrection¹¹⁷. The creation was never intended to be a place for immortal beings to dwell in paradisaal bliss, nor was it a place for hammering

¹¹⁵ Cf. Robert Farrar CAPON, *The Third Peacock: The goodness of God and the badness of the world*, Doubleday & Company, Inc., New York, 1971. For an imaginative description of the delight of God in creation.

¹¹⁶ Matthew Craig STEENBERG, *Of God and Man: Theology as Anthropology from Irenaeus to Athanasius*, T&T Clark, London, 2009, 52.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Jurgen MOLTSMANN, *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1985, 245.

out the human soul upon the anvil of suffering. The creation was intended to provide a place suitable for God to enter his creation. In this way, it is very good, regardless of the violence we might find inherent within it. The universe has birthed and sustained life. God has become incarnate and walked with us. His Spirit continues to indwell the world through humanity. The purpose of creation continues to be fulfilled for as long as this is true, before it finds ultimate fulfillment in the renewal and recreation of all things.

This differs from popular arguments in several ways. First, it does not negate the importance of *failed* creatures. With over 60% of human pregnancies ending in spontaneous abortions, notions that the world is a *vale of soul-making* simply cannot hold weight¹¹⁸. A world intended for the development of the human soul would be better at protecting humans from mortal harm. As it is, too many either die too young to benefit from trials and tribulations, or people are entirely broken by the suffering they encounter. A world solely for developing the human soul would need, as John Hick points out, opposition, pain, and the possibility of denying God because of his apparent absence¹¹⁹.

However, the complete destruction of the human person, especially when the possibility of development is ruled out, is irreconcilable with personal development being the primary purpose of creation or of human suffering. If the world was *primarily* created for people to develop towards Christ-likeness, then every person would have a chance to accept or reject that development. Also, the creation would have to be harsh enough to create space for learning, yet gentle enough not to destroy the pupil in the process. Yet the world we observe does not match up with such a teleology. The rates

¹¹⁸ Cf. Sara Helene GARMEL, «Early Pregnancy Risks», in Lauren NATHAN, Alan Hersh DECHERNEY (ed.), *Current Obstetric & Gynecologic Diagnosis & Treatment*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 2003, 272. Even this 60% does not cover the true incidence of spontaneous abortion, only those chemically evident pregnancies.

¹¹⁹ Cf. John HICK, *Evil and the God of Love*, Harper & Row, New York, 1978, 137.

of infant mortality and miscarriage alone would disprove this position, because the creation would have failed each of those infants in its primary purpose towards them. Furthermore, a pedagogical theodicy could only be applied to those people whose trials ultimately lead to purification and benefit. Yet, all too often, the sufferings of this world bring death, madness, or loss of faith. If God had, first and foremost, created the world to be a place of development for the individual, then God did not create it well. Such an approach would lead to the neglect argument as raised by Wesley J. Wildman. He writes:

“A human parent, indeed parents in many species, must constantly balance the need to protect and guide offspring with the need to allow the offspring freedom to learn. Loving parents do not hesitate to intervene in a child’s life when they discern that ignorance or mischievousness or wickedness is about to cause serious trouble, and perhaps irreparable disaster. Parents rescue the child, interjecting education, punishment, or encouragement as needed... We hold parents negligent, and sometimes criminally negligent, when they fail to intervene when necessary for the sake of their child’s safety and well-being”¹²⁰.

Either God is neglectful or He is unable to deal with the evil in the world and so the ambiguity we see around us is the result of God’s best efforts at alleviating and fighting evil. In short, in this second view, *God is incompetent*. The last available option, which Wildman takes, is to assume that *God is not in the caring business*¹²¹. The reason the world is full of evil is because God himself is not wholly good. While both of these latter options are obviously not open to Christian believers, we must deal adequately with the charge of neglect. Hick’s vale of soul-making option can only account for obviously pedagogical suffering, and not for those instances of destructive evil which Marilyn McCord Adams neither calls horrific evils, nor for those instances

¹²⁰ Wesley J. WILDMAN, «Incongruous Goodness, Perilous Beauty, Disconcerting Truth: The Ultimate Reality and Suffering in Nature», in Nancey MURPHEY, Robert John RUSSELL, William STOEGER (ed.), *Physics and Cosmology: Scientific Perspectives on the Problem of Evil in Nature*, Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences, Vatican City, 2007, 278.

¹²¹ Cf. *Ibidem*, 282.

where the individual has suffered the loss of potential flourishing¹²².

The charge of neglect (or incompetence) only stands under two conditions. The first would be if the only purpose in the universe was one for which the universe was obviously not suited. The second would be if there was nothing beyond this world, no chance of redemption for those who “lose” the evolutionary race. Both of these can be reconciled to a Christian worldview.

The *first* is reconciled by understanding the purpose of creation in the light of the incarnation. Instead of seeing the creation as a place of inhabitation primarily for humans, we must see it as the place that only finds fulfillment in the indwelling of God. In this line of inquiry, the Genesis 1 account of creation told in the language of God building a temple-palace makes perfect sense, as does the subsequent understanding of the temple as a microcosm of the universe¹²³. If the cosmos was created for the sake of the incarnation, the greater complexity of life that emerges from the process of evolution can be understood not as costing something, but as an additional grace. To talk of life becoming more diverse and complex as *costing* something is an error. As Francis Bacon points out a forward retention of custom is as turbulent a thing as an innovation, and thus the sustenance of life at any stage of complexity is just as expensive as evolutionary development of new life¹²⁴. That new life should emerge, and should become more diverse is an ultimate grace, no more expected or deserved than the wonderful order in the non-living world. Beyond this, the world has become a place where God could be incarnate in flesh amongst creatures that could know and love him or ignore and revile him. Furthermore, the world continues to be a place

¹²² Cf. Marilyn MCCORD ADAMS, *Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1999, 190.

¹²³ Cf. Raymond C. VAN LEEUWEN, «Cosmos, Temple, House: Building and Wisdom in Mesopotamia and Israel», in Richard CLIFFORD (ed.), *Wisdom Literature in Mesopotamia and Israel*, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta, 2007, 76.

¹²⁴ Cf. Francis BACON, «On Innovation», in *Francis Bacon: The Major Works*, University Press, Brian Vickers, Oxford, 1996, 388.

where God can dwell within the living temple of the human body. And thus the universe continues to fulfill its purpose even after the incarnation event and in anticipation of a final *eschaton* of God's indwelling.

Our *second concern* is for the individual. How do we understand those who have no chance to flourish, to reproduce or to enjoy fellowship with God? We must ensure that we keep a proper sense of value in mind. Jurgen Moltmann, in speaking of evolutionary values writes:

“... every single person, and indeed every single living thing in nature, has a meaning whether they are of utility for evolution or not. The meaning of the individual is not to be found in the collective of the species, and the meaning of the species is not to be found in the existence of the individual. The meaning of them both is to be found in God. Consequently no reduction is possible”¹²⁵.

While seeing part of the meaning of the individual in light of the whole, and vice versa, is valuable, we must not be tempted to find the whole value of the individual in that light. The value of each individual is in God's delight in the continuing being of that individual. Nor, we must remember, does that being end with the cessation of biological function in the here and now. We have come to the all-important necessity of redemption through Christ.

2. Images of redemption

We have learnt from the scripture and from Christian family background that God sent His own loving Son to redeem us from bondage of sin which we received from our first father (Adam and Eve). This theme '*redemption through Christ*' resounds all over the New Testament, Christian worship and Christian theology. What

¹²⁵ Jurgen MOLTSMANN, *God in Creation*, 197.

is important here is that God reestablished lost paradise and redemption of sinful humanity by sending His own son to die on the cross for the sake of humanity. We cannot attain this redemption in any other method. “The term “soteriology” (from the Greek word *sōteria*, “salvation”) is used in works of Christian theology to refer to the network of ideas and images which centers on the redemption achieved through the death and resurrection of Christ”¹²⁶. We can examine this act of redemption of Christ through His cross and death in five general distinguished categories:

1. *Images of victory*. As we Christians believe that Christ was sent by God to bring back the lost relationship with God. Humans sinned and spoiled their relationship with God. Christ died to save us from our sin and death. Through Jesus believers have been given victory over sin, death, and the power of Satan. These promises are only for those who have faith in Jesus Christ. Without faith God does not guarantee us this victory.

2. *Images of a changed legal status*. The word forgiveness means to wipe the slate clean, to pardon, and to cancel a debt. When we hurt someone we lose our good relationship with that person. So in order to regain that good relationship we seek their forgiveness. Forgiveness is not granted because a person deserves to be forgiven. No one deserves to be forgiven. Forgiveness is an act of love, mercy, and grace. Forgiveness is a decision to not hold something against another person, despite what they have done to us. “Christ through his obedience on the cross, Christ has obtained forgiveness and pardon for all our sins. So all our sins can be washed and be justified in the sight of Creator of all humanity”¹²⁷. In this way we are freed from our punishment and gained lost relationship with God.

3. *Images of changed personal relationships*. Because Adam sinned all

¹²⁶ McGrath ALISTER, *Reformation thought: an introduction*, Blackwell Publishing, Malden, 1999⁴, 115.

¹²⁷ *Ibidem*, 116.

humanity lost paradise and was alienated from the presence of God. Through second Adam we were reconciled. *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself* (2 Corinthians 5:19), in this way we gain back our “renewed relationship between himself and humanity possible and available”¹²⁸. We humans are far from each other because of our shot comings. We can restore back that lost relationship through forgiving each other as true Christians, so those who are far from God can draw close to God through Christ’s death and resurrection.

4. *Images of liberation.* When a person continually uses drugs, that person becomes addicted to drugs and loses one’s capacity to resist and control when those substances are not injected in one’s body. Compulsive and repetitive use of drugs may result in tolerance to the effect of the drugs injected in the body. So as with us, if we go on sinning we get used to it. Once we get used to it, it gets difficult to liberate from sin and sinful acts. When sin is too big we need a liberator to liberate. Jesus Christ comes to our aid to redeem us not only just from sinful acts of the world but to restore our broken relationship with God. “Just as Christ broke free from the prison of death, so believers can, by faith, break free from the bonds of sin, and come to life in all its fullness. “Redemption” belongs to this category of images”¹²⁹.

5. *Images of restoration to wholeness.* We have seen many perspectives of suffering in the third chapter of this thesis. Predominant thought of suffering was of our sins. God punishes sinner. We also have seen that our Christian God is God of all compassion and merciful. He does not want sinner to die but to repent and live. So, Jesus Christ sacrifices for our sins to redeem us from all this sinful bondage. “Through his cross and resurrection, Christ is able to bind up wounds of sinful humanity and heal them, restoring people to wholeness and spiritual health. “*Salvation*” belongs to this

¹²⁸ *Ibidem.*

¹²⁹ *Ibidem.*

category of images”¹³⁰.

So Salvation is not just an escape; Redemption is not simply being delivered from the material universe in order to be translated into a nonmaterial *spiritual* and platonic world somewhere beyond the blue. We are not being delivered from the created and temporal world into an eternal and *spiritual* dominion. This whole created world will also participate in salvation (Romans 8:18-21). We are being saved from this present evil age, not from creation as such.

3. Christ our Redeemer

In Old Testament particularly in prophets frequently we can understand the relation concerning human failure consequently sin in the eyes of God and destruction of creation. At the same time we also can see redemption from wicked way of living and restoration of creation. God created the universe and saw that it was good. He never abandoned it but constantly frees and releases it from all kinds of sin and bondage. We humans are unable to understand the idea of *right relationship* with God. Bible also offers us the same idea of *right relationship* if we participate in His liberating act through Jesus Christ. This liberation is not only just for the human kind but of all creation¹³¹. This way of understanding in St. Paul’s letters to Romans 8:18-25. Many systematic theologians adapted this idea of St. Paul. One of them is Francis Schussler Fiorenza, who contributed saying that

“Redemption is a central category of Christian theology, for it explicates

¹³⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹³¹ Cf. Carol J. DEMPSEY, «Creation, Evolution, Revelation, and Redemption: Connections and Intersections», in Carol J. DEMPSEY, Mary Margaret PAZDAN (ed.), *Earth, Wind, & Fire: Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Creation*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 2004, 17.

the Christian proclamation of Jesus as Christ, as our Redeemer and Savior, The English word “redemption” literally means a buying back. The term “Redemption” is closely related but distinct from three other terms. “Atonement,” which is often used to express a kind of propitiation of God by Jesus, literally means at-one-ment, a bringing together of parties divided against each other. “Reconciliation” refers to the bringing together of parties that have been estranged and separated from one other. Strained relations of discord and hostility are brought back to harmony and peace. “Salvation” refers to a healing, a bringing to health or a making whole and well. All terms refer to a transition from one state or status to another. The term “redemption” is best understood as a liberation from one state to another: from bondage to liberation. Redemption is the act or process by which the change takes place”¹³².

He continues saying that redemption is supposed to be understood as liberating just from punishment of sin, but it also frees us from the cosmic power of law, sin and death. This conception of redemption of the present extends further to the future and for all the creation¹³³. This aspect of theology of creation and cosmic redemption that we got from prophets, St. Paul and some systematic theologians match with the views of evolutionary theology. According to John F. Haught this evolutionary theology that we are talking about considers the entire created universe be saved by Jesus Christ from His death and resurrection. Furthermore, he says that humankind failed to take part in God’s creative, re-creative and redemptive work. Humans could not establish right relationship with rest of the creation and failed to take their own responsibilities.

This cosmic redemption rooted in the writings of the bible especially of prophets, St. Paul and numerous theologians and theological viewpoints give us hope. He says in the book of prophet Isaiah that: “...I am about to create a new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind”. (Isa 65:17) This eschatological promise which appears in Old Testament has come true in the life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is not yet over, it will continue in the universe and also humans continue to be transformed and become likeness of Christ

¹³² Francis SCHUSSLER FIORENZA, «Redemption», in Joseph A. KOMONCHAK, Mary COLLINS, Dermot LANE (ed.), *The New Dictionary of Theology*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, 1987, 836-837.

¹³³ Cf. *Ibidem*, 840.

who is:

“the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross (Col 1:15-20)”¹³⁴.

Transforming our life into Christ likeness helps us to be in union with God and all that exists in the universe. The promise of God is not just for humankind but of all creation. This means that together with humans all other creation participate in common destiny. So all that exists has come from same place that is *Source of All Being* and goes on evolving and flourishing finally goes back to the *Source of All Being* that we understand as God. In this way we abide in the Love of God¹³⁵.

3.1. Eschatology to Cosmology

John Haught offers three perspectives on eschatology which are unlike and bit contradictory which he got from process theology and Roman Catholic theology. In the first perspective Haught understands redemption through process theology (*ceatio continua*), our immortal hope allows Haught to look at cosmic settings are *compatible with process eschatology*¹³⁶. The second perspective points to the nature's power. It is a mixture of the first. It seems to be different on the theme of physical eschatology; if this

¹³⁴ For additional discussion on this passage from Colossians see Mary Catherine HILKERT, «Creation in the Image of God and Wisdom Christology» in Carol J. DEMPSEY, Mary Margaret PAZDAN (ed.), *Earth, Wind & Fire: Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Creation*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 2004, 147-148. See also Elizabeth A. JOHNSON, «God's Beloved Creation», in *America Magazine* 184 (2001), 8-12, especially 9 (<http://americamagazine.org/issue/334/article/gods-beloved-creation>), sited on January 31, 2013.

¹³⁵ Cf. Carol J. DEMPSEY, «Creation, Evolution, Revelation, and Redemption: Connections and Intersections», 18.

¹³⁶ Cf. John F. HAUGHT, *The Promise of Nature: Ecology and Cosmic Purpose*, Paulist Press, New York, 1993, 128-135 refers to objective immortality.

is the case then it is completely unlike from an eschatology based on Jesus' bodily resurrection. So in faith's viewpoint 15 billion years of cosmic evolution is provided with promise and surprising results out of it¹³⁷. The third perspective is based on resurrection of the body that is entire physical universe takes part in our destiny. It seems that Haught gives lot of emphasis to scientific scenarios about the future of the universe and seemingly inconsistent to his position. He leaves the challenge unaccepted¹³⁸.

According to theologians Jurgen Moltmann and John F. Haught, creation is threefold: *creatio originalis*, *creatio continua*, *creatio nova*¹³⁹ which lead finally to eschatology. Moltmann tries to define numerous decisive motives that eschatology should have cosmic possibilities. We should not think of redemption *of* as gnostic thinks but we should think of redemption *from*, both body and world. Moltmann continues saying that only creator has all power and freedom to redeem the creation. If God doesn't redeem what He creates that means that He is contradicting Himself and His creation. In this way cosmic eschatology is necessary because of Moltmann's theological anthropology:

“Because there is no such thing as a soul separate from the body, and no humanity detached from nature - from life, the earth and the cosmos - there is no redemption for human beings either without the redemption of nature. The redemption of humanity is aligned towards a humanity whose existence is still conjoined with nature. Consequently it is impossible to conceive of any salvation for men and women without 'a new heaven and a new earth'. There can be no eternal life for human beings without the change in the cosmic conditions of life”¹⁴⁰.

¹³⁷ Cf. John F. HAUGHT, *God After Darwin*, 123.

¹³⁸ Cf. *Ibidem*, 160-164.

¹³⁹ Cf. Jurgen MOLTSMANN, *God in Creation*, 208.

¹⁴⁰ Jurgen MOLTSMANN, *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1996, 260. See for further study Jurgen MOLTSMANN, *The Way of Jesus Christ: Christology in Messianic Dimensions*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1990, 274-312 and Jurgen MOLTSMANN, *In The End — The Beginning*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2004, 151.

John F. Haught says that the story of life which we get from neo-Darwinist view, gives us fundamental notions to think about God and His relation to human beings and to natural world. According to Denis Edwards view God transforms the whole universe without leaving anything behind because God loves His creation and wants to save it¹⁴¹. Science has helped us to see the reality bit different from what we have learnt from traditional teachings. This new understanding should help us God's presence, mainly in respects to creation, eschatology, revelation, divine love (or grace), divine power, and redemption¹⁴².

What we learnt from the tradition is the original creation; God created the world and saw that it was good and harmonious. Evolutionary theology helps us to go bit further saying without disagreeing the original creation but it is still continuing to evolve every day (*creatio continua*). If God had finished the creation when He created in seven days that we read in Genesis, that means that whatever was created could not have perished, no life could have emerged new, nobody could have been born, brought up, got old, could not have any suffering at all. Everything could have been like machines without sensation of pleasure and pain. World could not have any hope and future but world has future because there is new life every day emerging and if new life is emerging pain and pleasure is inevitable. John F. Haught says that revelation from evolutionary understanding is not just a communication to inform something from the part of Divine but God Himself communicates His *own selfhood* to the creation¹⁴³. God loves His creation and gives it freedom to be itself. God does not impose His decisions up on the world without giving freedom to choose. God created the world free so He leaves it to be free by withdrawing Himself. Many times we ask questions saying that

¹⁴¹ Cf. Denis EDWARDS, *Jesus the Wisdom of God: An Ecological Theology*, Homehush, St. Pauls, 1995, 145-152.

¹⁴² Cf. John F. HAUGHT, *God After Darwin*, 36-43.

¹⁴³ Cf. *Ibidem*, 39.

why did God allow such thing happen if He had loved the world? Why He permits suffering at all? Answer to these questions is God lets the world to choose and not impose His will. He self-withdraws in order for the world to emerge by itself¹⁴⁴. Nature has capacity to choose between good and bad. He only invites and not force. This is mandatory for both human freedom and novelty to happen in the creation. If universe is same as its creator there is no deference not can be any necessity nature's dependency on its creator but it is not. God created the universe and it depends on His benevolence to protect and accompany in its process. His creation is not rigid but can be experimental and unfolds continually. Process theology can thus integrate quantum indeterminacy and undirected genetic mutation into its theological framework of divine action. God causes order in the universe. He causes also disorder which theological evolutionists say *novelty*. This novelty causes instability and disorder which helps evolution happen¹⁴⁵. In this way evolution straggles to become similar to its creator.

Haught to understand concept of redemption in a world where there is lot of suffering, pain and death, and evolution that is taking place in every instance he uses process theology. Before lot of suffering and death God is not immune but He feels it and takes part of human suffering. God is influenced by (*creation continua*) ongoing process of evolution. Each creature is redeemed from death and led to its creator and thus gives an ultimate meaning. We can't feel and see this ultimate meaning because we are still in an unfinished world. Creation is still continuing¹⁴⁶. Haught also says that this evolving and unfinished universe also has a promise that God will unfold His plan in the future.

“The thrust of much recent science, and especially evolution, is that we truly belong to the universe. Theologically this would mean that the revelatory promise that gives us our hope extends backward to cosmic beginnings, out-

¹⁴⁴ Cf. *Ibidem*, 40.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. *Ibidem*, 41-43.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. *Ibidem*, 43.

ward to the most remote galaxies» and forward to the future of the whole creation, And if all of nature shares in the promise, then this should be more than enough reason for taking care of it here and now as we wait “in joyful hope” for its fulfillment in God’s new creation”¹⁴⁷.

Haught further says that God who descends from heaven and takes form of human who empties Himself for the sake of human kind fits the image of the universe painted by evolutionary science. He places the image of a self-emptying God at heart of the Christian concept of revelation and the doctrine of the Trinity. God who empties Himself and suffers brings new significance to the innumerable questions of pain and suffering that we find in our daily life. By God’s retreat from the intervention of the creation helps not only initial creation but also ongoing creation happen. Through this ongoing creation evolution is responding to God’s plan in its specific manner. So this is what we can say that divine humility is a possible metaphysical explanation of the evolutionary process as seen in modern science¹⁴⁸.

John F. Haught didn’t say that process theology is accepted by everybody such as theologians and evolutionists universally. He provides three motives for such unacceptability. *First*, process theology requires more development if it depends up on traditional teachings about creation. *Second*, many don’t agree with extreme diminution of God’s power to create and redeem. *Third*, theologians don’t bother much about evolutionary science, scientific findings and natural world.

“In process theology, “divine power” means the “capacity to influence” so that “persuasive love,” rather than coercion, is the defining character of divine power. God is therefore not a deity who magically forces things and events to fulfill divine intentions immediately in miraculous ways that contradict the laws of nature that God created. A coercive deity is one that immature religious minds often wish for and that scientific skeptics most often have in mind when they assert that evolutionary biology has destroyed theism. Thus, given the nature of

¹⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, 164.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. *Ibidem*, 45-55.

God's character as love, God wills the independence of the universe, rather than being a despot who controls every event and wills every outcome"¹⁴⁹.

The universe becomes autonomous by using its freedom. It creates and recreates creatures and things in that way gains its realization and freedom. This way of thinking has much more meaning than which God created than a world which has no final meaning which Neo-Darwinists say. Haught continues to argue that God's power as *almighty* who could force and archive isn't unsuitable with human freedom and freewill but also with the pre human spontaneity that permitted life to develop and take its own shape of a creature. This way evolution occurs because God is God of love and cause of novelty. This newness or novelty which makes evolution continue because God wants new things happen in the universe and little bothers about keeping all old things. He doesn't cancel old things to happen new creation but gives much more emphases for the novelty (*status quo*).

“According to process theology evolution occurs because God is more interested in adventure than in preserving the status quo. “Adventure,” in Whiteheadian terms, is the cosmic search for more and more intense versions of ordered novelty, another word for which is “beauty.” God's will, apparently, is for the maximization of cosmic beauty. And the epic of evolution is the world's response to God's own longing that it strive toward ever richer ways of realizing aesthetic intensity. By offering new and relevant possibilities to the cosmos in every period of its becoming, God “acts” not only to sustain but also to create the world continually”¹⁵⁰.

What seems is that God is not only interested in *status quo* but much busier in creating continuously every moment new life in the world.

Haught continues saying that evolutionary biology supports a reviewed understanding of Christian redemption. The question still arises that immeasurable

¹⁴⁹ Paul O. INGRAM, *Buddhist-Christian Dialogue in an Age of Science*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, USA, 2008, 69.

¹⁵⁰ John F. HAUGHT, *God After Darwin*, 42-43.

suffering that occurs daily how can we still have hope? To respond this question Haught refers to biblical traditions and other monotheistic traditions, specifically, that God acts positively where ever there is life in the whole universe. God's is love and He never ceases to do justice. Whatever is created is impermanent in the universe but makes it permanent in Him where finally all beings reach and abide in love of God¹⁵¹. Though everything is impermanent in the world they abide permanently in love and compassion of almighty God. Haught simplifies this idea in following lines:

“In God's own sensitivity to the world each event is redeemed from absolute perishing and receives the definitive importance and meaning that religions encourage us to believe in – always without seeing clearly. That we abide in darkness on something of such ultimate moment is itself consistent with the fact that we live in an unfinished, imperfect universe; in other words, the only kind of universe consistent with the idea of an infinitely loving and active God”¹⁵².

We can't just wait to see and feel and then only believe in everything including God as creator of the universe. Our faith is that we believe without seeing. Though we can't see physically but we feel spiritually that God is an ultimate meaning for our lives. There is lot of suffering in the world because the universe is still in process and things change which cause us pain. We find hope and consolation in God our redeemer.

3.2. Divine Humility in Evolution

We live in a world dominated by believing in visual facts. We want to experiment everything to believe. We want proofs for each and every thing. But it can't be same in the aspect of faith. We can't proof God's presence laboratory experimental basis. If Jesus, Holy Spirit and God the Father, or the Creator were visible to us wherever we had seen, we could have suffered the problem of existential disorder. The noticeable

¹⁵¹ Cf. Paul O. INGRAM, *Buddhist-Christian Dialogue in an Age of Science*, 69.

¹⁵² John F. HAUGHT, *God After Darwin*, 43.

presence of God would overpower us. Our personal space, our efforts to control our lives, our efforts to furnish a meaningful individuality, would alternate between Him and ourselves until we lose control of our lives. Whatever we were as persons would be lost. We could have been turned into domesticated animals. There could have been a problem of our existence. God gives us absolute freedom to choose and live harmoniously. So God hides Himself so that we can feel free and not conditioned. Everything within the universe of the creation was created to exist and function as if it had existed for eternity. The natural world exists as if God never existed. The creator's identity on His work is only found within the intangible things, those things about which we think things like an eternal future for the natural world. According to John Haught we can only see this hidden God by faith. He further says that God is seen very close to His creation. Though He is seen we can't grasp by normal awareness or by laboratory experiences. It can't be seen or touched. Only those who are used to religious experiences could feel and sense it¹⁵³. Haught is requesting to subjective experience for a major pillar of his theology. And he makes the request more than once: "The raw ingredients of evolution flow forth from the depths of divine love, a depth that will show up only to those whose personal lives have already been grasped by a sense of God"¹⁵⁴. A few phrases later he repeats saying that the very reason that nature can offer itself to a literalist understanding is a consequent result of the humble, hidden and susceptible manner in which divine love works. God hides Himself because He doesn't want make available at the level of scientific understanding in laboratory¹⁵⁵.

Haught claims to base this subjective discovery of God in nature from Tillich's concept of God as infinite depth. Religion means believing in a supernatural controlling power, a particular system of faith and worship. This belief system is based on our

¹⁵³ Cf. John F. HAUGHT, *Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution*, 119.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, 60-61.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. *Ibidem*, 61.

quality of faith. In our religious experience we are not able to grasp the depth of it because it is unlimited and we are limited. The better way is to allow ourselves to be grasped by it instead of grasping it. Once this depth takes hold of us then we are controlled by it without having any possibility to dominate it. We can only feel it and sense it. This depth is God and draws us towards Him and without this depth peace is impossible¹⁵⁶.

3.3. *Divine Kenosis*

Haught argues that “the metaphysics of divine humility... explains the actual features of evolution much more intelligibly than either of the main alternatives”¹⁵⁷.

Haught is inspired from St. Paul’s letters to Philippians chapter 2. His metaphysics of divine humility is based on *Divine Kenosis*:

“At the center of the Christian faith lies a trust that in the passion and crucifixion of Christ we are presented with the mystery of a God who pours divine selfhood into the world in an act of unreserved self-abandonment. The utter lowliness of this image has led some theologians in our century to speak carelessly of God as “powerless.” ... The image of God’s humility does not imply weakness and powerlessness, but rather, a kind of “defenselessness” or “vulnerability”....

The image of the self-emptying God lies at the heart of Christian revelation and the doctrine of the Trinity”¹⁵⁸.

Further ahead Haught continues saying that our faith has meaning when we meet with crucified man, Jesus. We can further understand God’s relation to the creation. As we understand that God is all powerful and omnipotent is presented as vulnerable manner *in persona cristi*; “For God so loved the world that he gave his only

¹⁵⁶ Cf. John F. HAUGHT, *Deeper Than Darwin*, 27-29.

¹⁵⁷ John F. HAUGHT, *God After Darwin*, 55.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, 48-49. HAUGHT makes use of the theology of Moltmann to help establish the conclusions quoted above. A key quotation of Moltmann is found in *God in Creation*, 88, quoted in Haught, *God After Darwin*, 49, and reads: “This self-restricting love is the beginning of that self emptying of God which Philippians 2 sees as the divine mystery of the Messiah. Even in order to create heaven and earth, God emptied himself of his all-plenishing omnipotence, and as Creator took... the form of a servant”.

Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). It shows that the essence of divine life is emptied into the creation and in this way the creation is disposed to receive the future¹⁵⁹.

For Haught, the *kenosis* of Philippians 2, especially as seen in the crucifixion, is the primary way in which God has related to creation, through eternity. “It is to this image that Christian theology *must always repair* whenever it thinks about God’s relationship to the world and its evolution”¹⁶⁰. A theology of redemption consequently sees all things prevented from perishing absolutely by God’s own compassionate relationship to the world.

4. Christian activity as redemptive activity

Christian activity may be defined as redemptive activity. Jesus Christ, alone, is the Redeemer of God’s people. In that sense, of course, we can redeem nothing. We cannot build the Kingdom of God, nor can we extend it, but we can give witness to it. And that witness may properly be called kingdom-activity. We can give witness to Redemption and this witness can rightly be called redemptive activity. The way that we relate to the world can be representational of the way that the Redeemer relates to it; we can relate in redemptive ways by giving witness to the healing, reconciliation, renewal, deliverance, justice, and shalom found in Redemption. By the grace of God we can influence life in healing ways; we can begin to undo some of the evil effects of the sin and of the curse; we can be a *New Humanity*, a *New Creation*, and, in the power of the Spirit who dwells in the midst of the Church as the same Spirit who raised Christ from the dead, be that which gives visibility to the Kingdom of God and which points

¹⁵⁹ Cf. *Ibidem*, 112-113.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, 111.

beyond ourselves to the glories to come.

Thus John F. Haught comes to a conclusion saying that evolutionary science has rolled out the supposition of original cosmic perfection was *spoiled* by original sin. Haught continues saying that evolutionary theory eliminated at least in attitude, the cosmology's saying that the broken peace and harmony should be repaired and expiated. His theology concentrates on not-yet perfected universe. He emphasizes on ongoing and continues creation (*creatio continua*). So the perfect world where there is no pain, no suffering and death will be realized in eschatological future. So "Christian faith's conviction that in Christ God has put an end to the epoch of expiation sits much more comfortably in an evolving, unfinished world open to the future than in cosmologies that posit an eternal perfection that hovers judgmentally over and paralyzes our current projects"¹⁶¹. In this understanding of redemption, Christ points forward to a future of promise and hope where "all beings – including, in a special way, us humans – are gifted with the opportunity of making unique and unrepeatable contributions to an ever innovative cosmic adventure"¹⁶². As Haught goes on responding to numerous facts of the evolutionary story anticipates some aspects of his own fuller theology of evolution. He points out all throughout of his theology the notion of a "kenotic" or *self-emptying God*, which he believes fits the picture of the universe painted by evolutionary science. He points out all throughout of his theology the notion of a "kenotic" or self-emptying God, which he believes fits the picture of the universe painted by evolutionary science. He places the image of a self-emptying God at heart of the Christian concept of revelation.

¹⁶¹ *Ibidem*, 142.

¹⁶² *Ibidem*, 143.

CONCLUSION

Our reflections in this thesis are being limited; nevertheless, the examination and assessment of theological methods used by Haught helped us to expand our understanding of evolution. The collective co-operation between evolutionary theory and theology would help us to understand ongoing creation.

According to contemporary cosmological understanding evolutionary theory culminates the vital character of life as one of becoming. As part of a developing universe, life becomes vigorously original and emergent fact. Almost 30 billion species were born, evolved and eventually vanished from the surface of the earth with related pain, suffering and death. These facts challenge those attributes which we attribute to God as compassionate, supremely loving and all powerful God. Well, this may be true but the change and destruction in the world happens not just around us on earth but in whole cosmos. Not only just species but many stars, planets and galaxies were born and died. Birth and death are part of all species in cosmos.

All the mystery of creation is understood through *divine kenosis*. Although the theory of *divine kenosis* helps us to understand the meaning of human person, we can't explain the destruction occurred in last 15 billion years and the destruction which is going to take place in the future, would look like to refuse any fundamental teleological purpose in the evolution of life. Theology faces an ongoing challenge from scientific interpretation that there is utmost probability of the future of human extinction. However John F. Haught doesn't give a direct answer to this problem but tries to integrate some features of process theology, saying that God feels intimately the pain of the world through His son Jesus Christ. In his understanding, all things are finally taken into the infinite compassion of God as Absolute Future. After all these theological and

evolutionary explanation there still remains an unending and incomprehensive question that an immediate experience of pain, suffering and death that occurs in the world: why is it still happening?

In the first chapter I tried to present a short *curriculum vitae* of John F. Haught who helped me to see the evolution, suffering and redemption in a deferent perspective and have a wider idea about these topics. He is a man of deeper understanding of various topics such as science, cosmology, evolution, ecology, and religion. I just concentrated in three above mentioned topics.

In my second chapter our author Haught says that we can ignore neither new evolutionary findings nor theory of Charles Darwin. Our understanding of theology can never be the same as before Darwin's theory. We changed our way of thinking and looking at the evolution, world and our place in it. We can't remain happy just having a dialogue with science but needs to go beyond it. Haught's idea is to combine theology and science so that we could get a combination of theology of evolution. This new consideration of nature's evolution could help us to widen our understanding of God. This experience had to be based on communities' faith, living Christian traditions and experiences. We can't remain forever with the perception of God as deity who puts order in everything. We need to go beyond.

Material causation alone can't explain the emerging new species and possibilities that occur in the world. In order to explain his "metaphysics of the future", John Haught says that all the pain and suffering that we face in the evolving and ever changing world, God gives us hope and promise. He is continuously accompanying us and doesn't leave us alone. God is Creator, Protector and Redeemer of all the creation. Life is understood by Darwinists as purely in terms of natural causes while we

Christians consider in divine providence. God comes down (*descent of God*) and takes the human form, as human He suffers, dies and liberates us from all bondage.

In the third chapter we dealt that John F. Haught makes sense of all pain, suffering and death in the world through kenotic theology. Though God is omnipotent and omniscient empties Himself of His manipulative power. God lets the world *be*, to reveal its capacity. God is an active participant in all situations of suffering. God suffers when people and creation experience suffering. As a close loving companion throughout time, God desires to be involved in intimate and meaningful relationships. God fully entered into experiences of suffering and the suffering of creation through the cross of Jesus Christ. In light of the *Paschal Mystery*, it is liberating and consoling for people to remember that God is present in times of suffering.

In the fourth chapter we see that Evolution is a story of life's creativity through pain, suffering and death. It is a story of dis-solution and re-solution. In our Christian understanding of salvation, dis-solution meets re-solution through the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through His death and resurrection, He lead to re-solution in His disciples and motivated them to a new feature, practice of freedom, compassion and hope.

In Haught's theological formulation, evolution could not happen without God, as Absolute Future, creating always new things (*genuine novelty*). Moreover, Haught synthesizes this metaphysical explanation with process theology. There is lot of imperfection, pain and death in the world because creation is ongoing (*creatio continua*) and not yet finished. God leads the creation to its completion by influencing a proposed subjectivity in all new objects in the universe. It is in Christ that we find God most fully and perfectly revealed.

We have come finally to the end of this study. I have hoped to offer a different perspective of *evolution*, *suffering* and *redemption*. I hope that this study has given readers an alternative framework to see evil in the perspective of natural theology. The world changes in accordance with the freedom granted by God, and autonomous life interacts with an evolving earth with its evolving beings. Haught's theology incorporates a not-yet perfected universe. The ideal world in this scheme is located not in the past but in the eschatological future.

The world, created by God through an evolutionary process, is a good place for the development of more complex life, and eventually as a place that could host and recognize the incarnation of God himself. Finally, the suffering of this world will ultimately be redeemed in the eschatological kingdom of God. God is the ultimate explanation for evolution.

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