Christian Spirituality and Bioethics: A Narrative Approach Based on the Metaphor of Journey.

“In whom we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28)

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2007
Dedication.

To Lee-ann,
who has continually encouraged and supported this eternal student.
Acknowledgements.

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Bioethics is a new category of ethics that provides both policy and decision-making frameworks with regard to the use of biotechnology. In the New Zealand context, reflection on the use of biotechnology has resulted in a broadening of the bioethical framework to include, cultural, ethical, and spiritual considerations. Of these three areas, spirituality remains the most ill-defined category especially in relation to the new field of bioethics, however studies have identified that spirituality and in particular Christian spirituality, does play an important role in public attitudes to bioethics [Chapter 1].

Spirituality is now identified as a constitutive part of what it means to be human, and relates to the human capacity for self-transcendence within daily lived experience that provides fulfilment and meaning to life. Within the Christian faith, spirituality places emphasis on a lived faith that engages every aspect of life, including the moral life both individually and corporately, so that the whole of human life is lived in relationship with the Creator God [Chapter 2]. Significantly, if Christian spirituality is to include the whole of lived experience, spirituality must also engage with science, the dominant worldview in Western society. This is particularly true in relation to bioethics, where the application of scientific knowledge to manipulate biological processes challenges many Christian views about meaning and value. I am suggesting that spirituality engages with science in the areas of knowledge and sacredness, where both spirituality and science can complement each other and deepen our understanding of creation. One new area of knowledge is especially important, the new field of emergent theory, which is now the predominant philosophy of science and incorporates a multidisciplinary approach to knowledge that includes spirituality [Chapter 3].

Before developing an approach for utilising Christian spirituality in bioethical decision-making, it is first necessary to understand current Christian approaches to bioethics. The case study on human embryonic stem cell research highlights a new area of biotechnology with significant spiritual importance, especially in the area of human personhood. As suggested, the current Christian ethical approaches focus primarily on various biblical perspectives on personhood, and on theological reflections about the
moral status of the embryo [Chapter 4]. It is my suggestion that a broader method for relating Christian spirituality and bioethics can be developed using a narrative approach based on the metaphor of journey. In particular, journey is a metaphor that is relevant to both Christian spirituality and science, because both presuppose a historical narrative. Furthermore journey, also provides three ethical categories; the past, the present, and the future, which correspond to the major themes of the Christian meta-narrative; Creation, Continuing Creation, and New Creation, respectively. Each of these three ethical categories in turn identify a number of interconnecting spiritually-based ethical principles that are then tested using the case study on hES cells. These categories also provide a connection with several cultural values that are important within the New Zealand’s bioethical framework [Chapter 5].
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List of Abbreviations.

AD ..................... *Anno Domini* (the year of the Lord)
BC ..................... Before Christ
hES cells ............. Human Embryonic Stem Cells
HSNO ................. Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Legislation
ICBC ................ InterChurch Bioethics Council
ICM .................... Inner Cell Mass
IVF .................... *In vitro* Fertilisation
NOOM ................. New Organisms and Other Matters Bill
NRSV ................. New Revised Standard Version of the Bible
SCNT .................. Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer (Cloning)
Biotechnology is the term that relates to medical, environmental and agricultural technologies ‘that are based on applying biological processes, [and] involves the use of living things or their derivatives to solve problems and make products’.\(^1\) We are therefore in a new era where not only can science deepen our understanding and provide new insights, but technology can now produce new entities and situations that have never before existed and provide new relationships to that which is familiar. As a result, technology challenges the beliefs that form the basis of our moral worldview and leads to new ethical responses.\(^2\) In relation to biotechnology, bioethics is the particular category of ethics originating in the 1960s that provides the framework for policy and decision-making.\(^3\) Within secular society, the predominant determinant of public policy relating to bioethics has been the ‘lowest common denominator capable of securing public consensus’, an approach which negates many of the larger questions about worth and value, and so at best provides a morally neutral stance where decisions are based only on the impact on social policy.\(^4\)

There is a growing realisation that religion can inform bioethics and often deepens the justification for ethical action by focusing on the ‘intention embedded in action’ rather than a justification based on the action or the result alone.\(^5\) The ethical teachings of Jesus also

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emphasise this point, where Jesus utilises the intent of the law rather than the action alone.\textsuperscript{6} As a result, differences between ethics based on religious belief and ethics based on secular principles can be recognised and as Baruch Brody suggests, policies can be sought which accommodate these differences.\textsuperscript{7} The recent technological advances using the human embryo emphasise this point, with the embryo being the focal point for religious concerns about ‘human identity, dignity and manipulation’, since embryo manipulation is the ‘point of access’ for human ‘self-modification’. Because religious communities are a reminder of the broader public context of the debate, public policy must take religion into account. Religious communities can therefore be a voice in the public sphere by expressing their normative beliefs and convictions that inform their moral standpoint, in contrast to the domination of secularisation that negates any role for religion in the public arena.\textsuperscript{8}

One emphasis of religion that could provide a means of relating both the religious and the secular views of bioethics is spirituality, a ‘constitutive dimension’ of being human in both anthropological and religious understandings of personhood.\textsuperscript{9} The spiritual dimension of humanity has been identified as the main distinction between humans and other forms of life, allowing humanity to have a personal relation with God.\textsuperscript{10} Furthermore, in his recent analysis of human uniqueness using an interdisciplinary approach, J. Wentzel van Huyssteen identifies religious belief as one of the ‘earliest special propensities or dispositions’ of modern humans detectable in the archaeological record. Religious awareness and behaviour therefore is central to human uniqueness and must be considered a typical human behaviour.\textsuperscript{11} Within the Christian tradition, a personal relationship with


\textsuperscript{7} Brody, "Religion and Bioethics," 45.


the Creator God is central to what it means to be fully human as expressed by St Augustine, ‘You made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you’.\textsuperscript{12}

Even though spirituality is recognised as central in defining what is meant by personhood, defining spirituality itself remains a difficult issue both within and outside of Christianity. One common aspect to the understanding of spirituality in both secular and religious terms is the emphasis on spirituality as a dynamic process of lived experience. For Christianity however, the historical separation of moral theology from systematic theology, and later the separation of the spiritual from both, resulted in spirituality defined in terms of the inner person rather than related to the moral life.\textsuperscript{13} This separation of the spiritual and the moral has begun to close in the twentieth century leading to a re-engagement of spirituality with both systematic theology and Christian ethics. As a result, the spiritual life is the life of the whole person directed towards God, grounded in historical-cultural context, and relates to what a person does with what they believe.\textsuperscript{14} Therefore, the reconnection of spirituality with practical living and ethics provides an avenue of connection with secular bioethics, as society faces new issues in relation to the use of biotechnology that challenge our views of nature, humanity, and the role of humanity within creation.

1.1 Biotechnology, Bioethics, and Spirituality in New Zealand.

Within New Zealand, an approach was recently developed where bioethical decisions are made with regard to cultural, ethical and spiritual guidelines. The origin of this position is found in the Royal Commission on Genetic Modification which included a recommendation to extend the “Hazardous Substances and New Organisms” legislation (HSNO, section 68) to include ‘cultural, ethical and spiritual issues’ as grounds for ministerial jurisdiction. This recommendation developed because concerns within these


three areas ‘underlay much of what we heard about genetic modification and biotechnology’, and was included in the 2003 “New Organisms and Other Matters Bill” (NOOM) which sought to redress deficiencies in the HSNO act. As a result, the Minister for the Environment obtained “call-in powers” based on cultural, economic, environmental, ethical, health, international and spiritual concerns.

Research into public perceptions of biotechnology has also highlighted the role of spirituality within the New Zealand consciousness, and in particular spiritual values dominated by Māori and especially Christian spirituality. In terms of Christian spirituality, importance was placed on:

1. Understanding humanity as the beings made in the image of God with a stewardship role in creation.
2. Understanding God as the Creator.
3. The idea of “playing God” with respect to nature.
4. Understanding the concept of original sin.

Particular emphasis was placed on the concept of ‘unforeseen consequences’ in relation to the distinction between the Creator and created humanity and the propensity of humanity to make mistakes. As a result, it was suggested that ‘spiritual values are more deep-rooted and culturally engrained than scientific rationality’, especially in relation to Judeo-Christian spirituality. Confirmation of these findings occurred in a larger survey-based study that intentionally asked questions about God in relation to biotechnology. As Table 1 identifies, a high proportion of the 701 returns held some form of spiritual belief. The general trend identified in the study was a more negative attitude towards biotechnology in those who believed people have a soul, believed in life after death, and believed that humanity has a stewardship role, compared to the more positive attitude in those who do not hold these


17 Coyle et al., "Public Understandings of Biotechnology," 78-85, 90-91, 96 and 98. As Coyle et al., suggests Christian and Māori belief systems are distinct yet overlapping within New Zealand. See page 78.
beliefs. As a result, ‘having spiritual beliefs was for many a conditional factor that goes along with having a negative attitude towards biotechnology’ and ‘having spiritual beliefs effectively means having concern for maintaining God’s order of things’. Therefore, spirituality was identified as having an ‘anchoring effect’ in which a religious/spiritual worldview resulted in a firm view towards biotechnology that is less likely to be changed.\footnote{18}

Table 1. \textit{Religious beliefs and biotechnology}.\footnote{19}

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<th>Spiritual Belief</th>
<th>Percentage with Belief</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in a personal God</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in sin</td>
<td>62.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People are made in the image of God</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People have a soul</td>
<td>68.9*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is life after death</td>
<td>41.8*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Playing God” also brings the possibility of making mistakes</td>
<td>64.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanity is responsible for the welfare of other living things</td>
<td>44.4*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlates to a more negative attitude towards biotechnology compared to those without this belief.

Because of the emphasis in New Zealand on indigenous rights as stated in “The Treaty of Waitangi”, Māori populations were surveyed resulting in two broad approaches to biotechnology being identified. The first was a pragmatic approach similar to that seen in non-Māori, in which a lack of acceptance based on perceived risk was countered by the desire to save human life and the right for individual choice. Secondly, there was a distinctive culturally derived approach in which whakapapa and mauri were the most commonly referred to cultural values, with biotechnology perceived as having a negative effect on these values. Perceived negative impacts on cultural values resulted in a more negative view of biotechnology. Common to both approaches was the desire for biotechnologies to be both spiritually and physically safe.\footnote{20}

\footnote{18} Quotes were taken from Cook \textit{et al.}, "New Zealand Public Acceptance of Biotechnology," 67-68. \footnote{19} Data taken from Ibid., 37-38, 47, 56, 60, 67-68 and 70-71. 701 questionnaires were received from a nationally distributed survey of 2000 questionnaires. See page xiii. \footnote{20} Mere Roberts and John R Fairweather, "South Island Māori Perceptions of Biotechnology," in \textit{AERU Research Reports no. 268} (Christchurch: Lincoln University, 2004), 74 and 75.
Overall, within New Zealand there is a greater acceptance of biotechnology for biomedical use compared to other uses such as environmental or agricultural.\textsuperscript{21} One biomedical example in particular, the treatment of Alzheimer’s Disease using human embryonic stem cells (hES cells) derived from spare (frozen) IVF embryos, highlighted the role of personal experience in determining the validity of this technology. Personal experience of such a condition led to a greater possibility of acceptance of this technology even if there was dislike for using embryos in research, because people were able to relate this context to their own experience. Also noted was a change in attitude toward the use of embryos when people realised that the spare IVF embryos were destined for disposal. Concerns expressed about the use of hES cells ranged from the need to practise caution especially in relation to future consequences, fears about commercial exploitation and the profit/glory motive of companies/scientists, and the potential benefits. Many ethical issues were also raised such as informed consent, choice, taking a life to save a life, the distinction between embryos with or without the potential to produce life, and when is an embryo deemed to be a “baby”. Therefore, the use of hES cells proved the greatest contrast between the benefit for humanity and the process used to provide that benefit, as well as the greatest social implications in terms of our understanding of what it means to be human.\textsuperscript{22} In a larger survey-based study, the use of hES cells for the treatment of Alzheimer’s achieved 50% acceptance, with 30% of participants identifying that this condition was familiar to them.\textsuperscript{23} Within Māori populations, approval or disapproval of stem cell research was evenly divided with special importance being placed on the saving of lives.\textsuperscript{24}


\textsuperscript{22} Hunt, Fairweather, and Coyle, "Public Understandings of Biotechnology in New Zealand," 69-84, 113 and 123. In this study of 117 people (via focus groups), 27% found it acceptable compared with 24% who found it unacceptable. Of the 5 biotechnologies assessed, the use of hES cells ranked second in acceptability. See pages 69 and 122.

\textsuperscript{23} Cook et al., "New Zealand Public Acceptance of Biotechnology," 29 and 34-36. A recent series of discussion groups held by “Toi te Taiaro: New Zealand Bioethics Council”, has found that stem cell extraction from “spare” IVF embryos would be generally acceptable because they would be destroyed anyway. Ethical considerations identified were: emphasis on potential benefits, when does life begin, consent, whakapapa, and the use of alternative sources. See Toi te Taiaro: New Zealand Bioethics Council, \textit{Attitudes to Embryonic Stem Cell Research in New Zealand} (2006 [cited August 18 2006]); available from http://www.bioethics.org.nz/publications/stem-cells-attitudes-feb06.

\textsuperscript{24} Roberts and Fairweather, "South Island Māori Perceptions of Biotechnology," 66, 71 and 74.
The recent discussion on genetic modification and bioethics in New Zealand has resulted in a response from mainstream Christian denominations. In particular, the Anglican, Methodist, and Presbyterian Churches formed a collaborative bioethics council to inform the Church, the wider community, and the Government on Christian perspectives in bioethics. In 2000, the “InterChurch Commission on Genetic Engineering” was formed to provide a Christian response to the Royal Commission on Genetic Modification. Following the governmental Royal Commission, the InterChurch Commission was renamed the “InterChurch Bioethics Council” (ICBC) in 2002 and was given a broader brief to raise issues relevant to the cultural, ethical, spiritual, and theological issues in the use of biotechnology in New Zealand.25 In relation to cultural significance within New Zealand, “The Treaty of Waitangi” forms the central document in which our bicultural partnership is recognised. The ethical criteria within bioethics are often described in terms of autonomy, beneficence, justice, and non-malificence.26 The area of “spirituality” however remains ill-defined as a criterion for bioethical decision-making.

Even though spirituality now forms part of the ethical criteria within New Zealand legislation, there is currently no framework for the application of spirituality to bioethics outside of the spirituality associated with Māori culture. As identified in the research by Lincoln University, within New Zealand culture Christian spirituality remains an important aspect to any discussion on bioethics, and so this research has been undertaken in association with the ICBC in order to provide a framework for relating spirituality to bioethics. In order to do so it is necessary to define what is meant by the terms “Spirituality” and “Christian Spirituality”, highlighting the contemporary emphasis on the integral relationship between Christian spirituality, theology, and morality [see Chapter 2]. If Christian spirituality is to have a voice within the public debate on bioethics, it must engage with the scientific worldview that dominates the public arena. In this context, I will seek to identify how Christian spirituality relates to and informs biological science through broadening the scientific understanding of knowledge, and by providing an emphasis on the

25 Currently the ICBC has nine members with a wide range of knowledge and experience, including medical, scientific, ethical, theological, educational and cultural expertise. I have been a member of the ICBC since 2002. For information on the ICBC see http://www.justice.anglican.org.nz.
sacred [see Chapter 3]. The fourth chapter of this thesis emphasises the practical nature of discussing Christian spirituality and bioethics by outlining the current Christian approaches used in the topical issue of hES cell research. Finally, in Chapter 5 I propose a narrative based approach utilising the concept of journey as a metaphor relevant for both religious and scientific worldviews that can be used in relating Christian spirituality to bioethics. Significantly, journey as a metaphor provides the categories of past, present, and future that form the basis for a spiritually infused bioethical decision-making process, which will be discussed in relation to the case study on hES cells. Within the Christian context, these categories place specific emphasis on the Christian story and its understanding of creation and God’s continuing creative activity that leads to a consideration of our future hope in God. Because of the emphasis given to “The Treaty of Waitangi” as a foundational document in the formation of New Zealand society, the categories of past, present, and future derived from the metaphor of journey will also be identified as compatible with indigenous cultural beliefs.
Chapter 2.
Defining Spirituality.

Christian ethical reflection uses many resources, from the Bible, to theology, to metaphysics. All of these resources could be considered spiritual; however a clear understanding of spirituality and Christian spirituality is needed in order to provide a clear framework for the use of Christian spirituality in bioethics. In this context, spiritual resources can be used primarily to emphasise the relationship between humanity and God as well as identifying the type of people we are created to be, in contrast to positions that seek to justify a particular course of action. This chapter will seek to define both spirituality and Christian spirituality, and then identify the relationship of Christian spirituality to both theology and ethics. As a result, a working definition of spirituality that can be used in bioethical reflection will be determined, emphasising practical lived experience and the re-engage ment of spirituality with both theology and morality.

2.1 Spirituality.

The notion of “spirituality” identifies a paradox in terms of human self-knowledge where humanity is both a product of nature and spirit. As a result, humanity has the unique ability via the human spirit to stand outside the creaturely self and the world, in what is termed ‘self-transcendence’. Therefore, although not an exclusively Christian idea, spirituality can be understood in broad terms as; ‘the development of the human capacity for self-transcendence in relation to the Absolute’, or as the ‘conscious involvement in the project of life integration through self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives’. In relation to defining spirituality three levels can be observed. First, there is the existential level that accounts for a person’s lived experience by which they display the unique human quality of reaching beyond everything experienced in the world in the search for fulfilment.

30 These three levels are taken from Principe, "Towards Defining Spirituality," 47-49.
and meaning. In this context spirituality becomes, ‘the way in which a person understands and lives within his or her historical context that aspect of his or her religion, philosophy or ethic that is viewed as the [highest quality] to lead to the fullness of the ideal or perfection being sought’. Second is the formulation of teaching about the lived reality either as tradition, formal doctrine or as practical works. Third, the scholarly study of the first two levels especially related to the history of various understandings or schools of thought. The result is an understanding of spirituality on a personal, doctrinal and academic level respectively.

Rather than being a static term, the understanding of spirituality has changed over time especially in relation to spiritual practice. Within Judaism and early Christianity, spirituality identified the polar tension between God and humanity resulting in attitudes and practices that emphasised how the divine pole impacts on the human subject. The Hellenistic influence emphasised a relational process as the human pole feels its way toward God via praxis such as gnosis (knowledge), asceticism, contemplation, devotion, and piety. In modern terms, emphasis is placed on the socio-cultural content rather than Western rationalism, resulting in spirituality being understood as a dynamic relationship between the divine spirit and the human spirit. As a result, in the contemporary context spirituality is a broad term that touches the very core of human existence, emphasising the holistic involvement of the whole person and our interconnection with the rest of the planet.

The central question in the spiritual quest is the search for meaning centred on practical lived human experience, so that spirituality could be defined broadly as ‘that which gives meaning to life and allows us to participate in the larger whole’. The larger whole also includes nature itself, which for many is an inspiration for praise of the Creator God and

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31 van Huyssteen, Alone in the Universe? , 140. Pannenberg call this “exocentricity”. The physiological basis for transcendence is human imagination resulting from the interconnectedness of different cognitive domains leading to ‘cognitive fluidity’. See page 194-196.  
leads to a growing understanding of our interconnectedness with nature. Rather than the modern idea of nature being a self-subsistent, self-enclosed system, a spirituality of nature can be embraced by understanding nature as a living entity of power and beauty that overshadows humanity. Furthermore, humanity can approach nature as wondrously given, bestowed as true creation so that we encounter nature as a whole and recognise nature’s beauty and integrity. These issues will be further explored in Chapter 3.2. For many, the lived spiritual experience still involves practices that produce beneficial psychological results such as self-esteem and a sense of community as people gather to undertake these practices. Spirituality is also linked to culture in which the social, economic and political context shapes our interpretation of our lived existence. Therefore, there are only ‘spiritualities-in-culture and cultures-in-spiritualities’, so that culture and spirituality both inform and critique each other.

2.2 Christian Spirituality.

The Christian understanding of spirituality has its basis in biblical thought. The Hebrew word for Spirit - ruach, meaning breath or wind, was translated by the Apostle Paul into the Greek term pneuma/pneumatikos. The Greek was later translated into Latin (spiritus/spiritualis) which forms the basis for the Christian understanding of spirituality (Latin; spiritualitas). For Paul, spirit/spirituality referred to two ways of life; life under the influence of the Spirit of God, or a life opposed to the Spirit’s influence, so that a spiritual person was one in whom the Spirit dwells. Within today’s context, Western theology has seriously reflected on the role of human experience and the effect of culture on praxis,

35 Lesniak, "Contemporary Spirituality," 11-12. The Psalms in particular utilise nature as a source of praise. For example, see Psalm 8; 19; 36:5-10; 42:1; 84; 104; 139:13-16.
37 Lesniak, "Contemporary Spirituality," 12.
resulting in the move to a more dynamic understanding of spirituality with an ecumenical emphasis on shared Christian heritage. Sheldrake highlights four main differences in contemporary Christian spirituality over the later twentieth century:\footnote{Sheldrake, "What Is Spirituality?", 37-38. With regard to point 1 and in terms of spirituality in general, the focus has not been exclusively Christian.}

1. **Christian spirituality is not exclusively focused on one particular Christian tradition.**
2. **Christian spirituality has closer association with theology, without the prescriptive application of absolutes.**
3. **Christian spirituality is not focused on perfection but looks more to the complex mystery of human growth in relation with the Absolute.**
4. **Christian spirituality seeks to integrate all aspects of human life and experience including ethics and morality.**

As a result, contemporary Christian spirituality attempts to integrate human religious values rather than maintain an exclusive interest in the component parts of “spiritual growth”. The result is a secular-dialogic, in which spirituality is located within the experience of the everyday world, and where spiritual theology and practice occur on the frontier between contemporary experience and tradition.\footnote{Ibid., 22 and 38. In particular the engagement of spirituality with the secular is a response within postmodernism, especially in relation to the emphasis on human experience. See Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality and Theology: Christian Living and the Doctrine of God* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 1998), 6-13.}


Sandra Schneiders provides a similar definition such that Christian spirituality is a lived faith that identifies ‘the horizon of ultimate value as the triune God revealed in Jesus Christ to whom Scripture normatively witnesses and whose life is communicated to the believer by the Holy Spirit making him or her a child of God’.\footnote{Schneiders, "Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality," 17 and 25. Schneiders refers to Romans 7:6; 8:2, 6, 10-11; Galatians 6:8.}

Even though Christian spirituality itself is very broad in its expression, all forms ‘ultimately flow from the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ’, in the desire to
follow and imitate Christ. Therefore it is Jesus who is the central figure in the spiritual life, keeping us aware of the uniquely personal God and the intimate relationship of love between the spirit of the believer and God’s Holy Spirit. The result is the ‘bringing together of the fundamental ideas of Christianity and the whole experience of living on the basis of and within the scope of the Christian faith’, in a dialectic tension between religious experience and religious tradition.

2.2.1 Christian Spirituality and Theology.
As the above definitions of Christian spirituality suggest, there is an intimate connection between our human attempts to talk about God (theology) and the desire to live spiritually, where theology attempts to incorporate the spirituality of the age. Theology expressed by statements of belief and symbols forms the ‘basic narrative horizon’ for spiritual experience of God. Within early Christianity through to the Patristic period, the basic narrative horizon followed the Pauline understanding of spirituality, focusing on biblical theology and its moral teachings. This ascetical form of mystical theology united reflection and prayer with the whole of life, reaching its peak in monastic theology. However, a more systematic approach to theology developed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries resulting in the separation of the spiritual and the material, under the influence of dualistic Hellenism. As a result, spirituality became a subject of enquiry in its own right opposed to the material world, a process that continued so that by the seventeenth century, spirituality was emphasised in praxis relating to Christian perfection and theology was understood within the expanding scientific realm of enquiry as a form of objective knowledge. By the end of the nineteenth century, “spirituality” had gone from religious discourse, replaced by the term “spiritual theology”.

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47 Sheldrake, *Spirituality and Theology*, 22. Sheldrake also talks of ‘fundamental frameworks of belief’ and ‘boundaries of understanding’ which he describes as Trinitarian, pneumatological and ecclesial. See pages 52 and 61.  
Even though the twentieth century has seen a resurgence in spirituality based on the perspective of experience, contemporary Christian spirituality has regained its close connection with theology rather than relying on experience alone. In this context, spirituality becomes the ‘conjunction of theology, prayer and practical Christianity’, where the lived relation to God is realised within a concrete tradition.\textsuperscript{49} The Christian doctrine of the Trinity provides a good example, where the understanding of the relational nature of God has resulted in more relational expressions of Christian spirituality both socially and ecologically. Overall, the current emphasis on theology and spirituality results in a ‘process of correlation’ between theological beliefs and personal and institutional factors to produce a ‘creative and dynamic synthesis of faith and life’, where ‘theology embraces, informs and sustains spirituality’.\textsuperscript{50}

\textbf{2.2.2 Christian Spirituality and Ethics.}

A significant feature of the re- engagement of contemporary spirituality and theology is the growing area of theological ethics, which is of particular importance for the current discussion on bioethics. As a dynamic process of lived experience, Christian spirituality looks for new expressions in the context of today as Christians strive to live faithfully to the Christian message that is connected to the thinking and expressions in our Christian heritage through tradition. Therefore, the unity between contemporary Christian spirituality and theology reflects the increasing unity between the moral and spiritual life, so that the spiritual life is the life of the whole person directed towards God. As a result, theological ethics emphasises the inseparable nature of Christian spirituality and ethics, an understanding present in the early church but separated during the Enlightenment by Immanuel Kant.\textsuperscript{51}

In the context of Christian spirituality, the connection between spiritual and moral praxis is most clearly understood when the spiritual life is identified as a moral life lived in response to God’s call in Christ. The resulting emphasis is placed on the implications for actions and


\textsuperscript{50} McGrath, \textit{Christian Spirituality}, 9 and 27. Sheldrake suggests a useful 3-dimensional image to explain this relationship, where a wheel (theology) rotates around an axel (spirituality) that in the third dimension also points outwards into another dimension. See Sheldrake, \textit{Spirituality and Theology}, 89.

the character required for religious commitment, while theological ethics provides a deeper understanding of the Gospel’s demands.\(^52\) Within this connection, is the recognition of worship as God makes Godself known in worship. This has been highlighted in the recent *Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics* that uses worship as a hermeneutic for understanding Christian ethics. As suggested, worship is the praxis of Christianity and provides a universal emphasis of unity that focuses on where people are headed.\(^53\) This link between ethics, worship, and community is seen in their definition of Christian ethics:\(^54\)

Christian ethics is therefore a discipline that seeks to help Christians fulfil all righteousness from and within the Trinitarian God of Jesus Christ. And it is a practice that takes place in the context of need and in the spirit of expectation that God will make [Godself] known through the faithful pursuit of [God’s] will.

Although spirituality and ethics are not synonymous, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit grounds the relationship where spirituality in its widest sense includes behaviour and attitudes but is not reducible to these aspects alone. The Holy Spirit is a guide and leader that enables God’s people to recognise God at work, shaping and empowering them to reflect God’s character in the world.\(^55\) As Archbishop Rowan Williams suggests, spirituality ‘must touch every area of human life’ so that contemporary spirituality integrates both religious and human values.\(^56\) Therefore, spirituality can be seen as the main source of ethics, which within a Christian context has been expressed by Colin Gunton as: ‘If God’s purpose is for the redemption and perfection of the creation, all human action will in some way or other involve the human response to God that is ethics’.\(^57\) The theological basis for this view is the revealed knowledge of God and God’s character that is the ground of Christian character. Therefore, ethical behaviour is ‘an act and actualisation

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\(^{52}\) Spohn, “Christian Spirituality and Theological Ethics,” 269-270.


\(^{54}\) Ibid., 15.

\(^{55}\) Ibid., 18.

\(^{56}\) Rowan Williams as quoted by Sheldrake, Spirituality and Theology, 57-58.

of faith’\textsuperscript{58} because ‘we become what we do’.\textsuperscript{59} This ethical response to God will also reflect both individual and communal responses to ‘envision wholesome possibilities’ and ‘take the actions that will enhance human health and global well-being’\textsuperscript{60}. As a result, the relationship between spirituality and ethics is a summons to live in God’s new world now; a new world begun with the resurrection of Jesus and continued by the power of the Holy Spirit. This summons involves the ‘thoughtful encounter between Christ-followers, bound together in community, already practiced in a discerning way of life, dedicated to seeking the kingdom, with the new issues demanding Christian response’ based on the moral vision and character of the Christian faith.\textsuperscript{61}

In considering the relationship between Christian spirituality and ethics, I would suggest two aspects of similarity between Christian spirituality and bioethics in particular. First, both Christian spirituality and bioethics emphasise lived experience/practical issues while embracing the deeper theological/philosophical issues, but not focusing solely on them.\textsuperscript{62} Second, is the manner in which Christian spirituality and bioethics relate to their respective theoretical knowledge. In moral philosophy, morality relates to the fundamental questions about how a person should live their life and provides the rules that enable the making of moral choices. Ethical theory is the study of these moral judgments and choices in order to understand the important values or beliefs of an individual or society, resulting in the derivation of theories by which determinations of “good/right or bad/wrong” are made.\textsuperscript{63} Because bioethics deals with practical issues rather than pure theory, Rachels suggests that “interplay” describes the relation between ethical theory (knowledge) and bioethics (praxis). His model of biology (knowledge) and medicine (praxis) shows this interplay, in which knowledge informs the praxis, and in the process of praxis, new insights are gained.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{59} Spohn, “Christian Spirituality and Theological Ethics,” 274.
\end{flushleft}
which then informs knowledge. In a similar manner, there is a parallel between theology (knowledge of God) and spirituality (lived praxis of humans in relationship with God), where theological understanding (doctrine) informs and undergirds spiritual practice including ethics, which when lived out provides new experiences of God that in turn informs theology. Again, the archetypal example of this process is the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, a doctrine developed in relation to the worship of God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### 2.2.3 Christian Spirituality, Ethics, and the Bible.

**The New Testament.**

Central to the Christian moral vision is the role of the Bible in providing moral authority as the normative self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ, and in providing the appropriate ways to respond to Christ. In this context, the New Testament forms the lens for reading the whole canon, where the death and resurrection of Jesus is the decisive act of God for salvation. The Bible therefore provides requirements for dispositions and behaviour, but more significantly provides the narrative example of Jesus who is the exemplar of self-sacrificial love. Through his life, words and deeds, Jesus showed his disciples how to live as members of the Kingdom of God, both now as a future hope, while placing the onus on individuals and communities to apply the principles from his teachings to their particular circumstances and concrete situations. The moral life for the first disciples was then a response to the divine in-breaking, where the joyful turning to God in repentance was the initial step. The coming of God's kingdom inaugurated by Jesus also represented the promised time of covenant renewal. Associated with the renewed covenant was the

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renewal of the heart, so that the inward state led to outward praxis. Jesus’ moral teaching therefore becomes Kingdom praxis, providing guidance for the disciples living as citizens of the Kingdom of God, within their present age. For Jesus, the priority was to seek God’s Kingdom, and so he challenged the standards of society with the standards of the Kingdom that reflected both individual and communal transformation.68 By gathering communities, the early disciples were able to understand and develop Jesus’ vision of the Kingdom, so that they could ‘even contribute to the well-being of those who [were] commonly thought of as enemies’.69 The four Gospel records therefore reflect this community emphasis by retelling the moral teaching of Jesus through the filter of the early Christian congregations, so that each Gospel writer presented the moral teaching of Jesus with his own interests and emphasis, resulting in a complementary ‘mosaic of New Testament approaches’.70 All these accounts provide important perspectives on the moral teaching that Jesus gave his disciples and together become mutually corrective. In this context Jesus becomes a paradigmatic norm, so that ‘even after faith in Christ, the New Testament goes back to Jesus, and has to go back to Jesus, precisely to safeguard true faith in Christ’.71

The Old Testament.

Even though Jesus provides the centre for biblical ethics, Richard B. Hays suggests New Testament ethics must be done in the context of the whole biblical canon, in which the New Testament.

69 Perkins, "Jesus and Ethics," 64-65. Also see Cahill, "Kingdom and Cross," 160.
70 Colin Hart, The Ethics of the Gospels, vol. 111, Grove Ethical Studies (Cambridge: Grove Books, 1998), 23. The theme of Matthew’s Gospel is surpassing righteousness, where the Law of Moses is fulfilled in Jesus. This gospel is viewed as the most ethical, providing both principles and guidelines, and emphasising standards and judgement. The Gospel of Mark focuses on discipleship, with Jesus stating blunt, complex or ambiguous principles, which the reader must then apply. Luke’s Gospel, has a particular concern for the poor and oppressed, where the ethical teaching of Jesus is contained in stories and appears more flexible than in the other two accounts. The Gospel of John does not appear to contain much in the way of direct ethical teaching, but focuses on the quality of life within the Church community so that the Christian life is defined by faith not by ethics. Central to this gospel however, is the distinctive ethic of life in Christ's name, which is formed and informed by love. See Hart, The Ethics of the Gospels, 22-23. Verhey, "New Testament Ethics," 58-60. Also See Matthew 5:17; Mark 8:34; Luke 4:18; John 20:31.
71 Jon Sobrino as quoted in William C Spohn, "Jesus and Christian Ethics," Theological Studies 56 (1995): 107. Even though it is not possible to identify with certainty which sayings originated from Jesus himself, ‘…it is possible to believe that a particular story or saying bears a true and authoritative testimony to the work or teaching of Jesus without being necessarily sure it actually happened as described’. See Hart, The Ethics of Jesus, 3 and 5.
Testament is in dialogue with the Old Testament. Within the Old Testament, there is significant emphasis on ethical living within in the wisdom literature traditionally comprised of the books of Proverbs, Job, Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes) in the Hebrew Bible and the Apocryphal books of Sirach and The Wisdom of Solomon. A unique feature of wisdom literature is the subject matter that deals only with human experience in the good world created by God. Kathleen O’Conner describes this as spirituality for the ‘market place’, the place where wisdom and folly compete for human loyalty. Therefore, this form of literature deals with ordinary human life in order to teach people how to cope with the daily struggles they face, and to provide instructions for right living which can be described as a ‘way to stand in the world’. Wisdom literature does this by taking a holistic view of life that views the ‘outer and inner life, individual and community life, and God and the world as inextricably intertwined’. In doing so, wisdom is about character formation, virtue, human responsibility, and moral integrity, where individuals are to emulate the justice of God and are accountable to others and ultimately to God. At the heart of wisdom is a theology of creation that identifies God as the Creator who is present with people at all times and in all places. In response to God as the creator of all reality, is the virtue of trust in which, ‘The fear of the Lord’ is the beginning of all wisdom and presupposes faith. Therefore, within the modern context of biotechnology, wisdom ‘challenges science to recognise its proper place in the scheme of knowledge, as one facet of knowing among others’, as part of human wisdom understood as a cognitive process dealing with perceived universal truths. In this context, human wisdom is part of the natural wisdom of creation, grounded in the wisdom of God that was present at the beginning of creation (Proverbs 8:22-31), and is identified as a gift that reaches beyond human capacity.

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74 O’Conner, *The Wisdom Literature*, 13 and 15.
76 Murphy, *The Tree of Life*, 16 and 111-121. The repetition of this motif in Proverbs 1:7, 2:10, 9:10 and 31:30 forms an inclusio for the whole book of Proverbs.
**Bioethics and the Bible.**

Within the new context of bioethics, Christians face the new challenge of discerning how to use Christian resources that can be considered “ancient”, as a voice in this new area of knowledge. In the context of biotechnology, Gareth Jones identifies four possible approaches to the use of the Bible: 1, as a complete guide; 2, as the major of many sources; 3, as the one of many sources; 4, as irrelevant. It is the third of these that he holds, suggesting that Christian contributions are unique when committed to the dignity and worth of every human through the melding of practical assistance and essential Christian values.78

Even though for Christian ethics the moral teachings of Jesus form a paradigm that provides scenarios for action, it is possible to discern the correct pattern of behaviour and extend the paradigm to new situations. In doing so, scripture is ‘freed up to offer signposts in areas not on the original map’79 in which the paradigms are utilised in an analogous sense to that indicated in the Bible.

A key aspect to using the Bible in an analogous way is the use of imagination in which the sayings of Jesus create a new vision in new situations so that the ideal can be lived out in reality. This reality is not just about the lives of individuals but also reflects the context of community derived stories.80 Richard Hays suggests that biblical ethics requires ‘imaginative analogies’ that allow the biblical stories to speak into our historical context. Therefore, the use of the Bible is a process of ‘metaphor making’ in which imaginative links can be inspired by the Holy Spirit. Metaphors lead to the juxtaposition of our world and that of the text, resulting in ‘metaphorical conjunctions’ where two contrary images are brought together in a process of imaginary connection that reorientate perceptions and reconstruct meaning, resulting in ‘imaginative correlations’.81 Both positions 2 and 3 suggested by Jones, recognise that the moral questions surrounding biotechnology were never in the view of biblical ethics at the time of writing and so require other sources along side the Bible. These positions are compatible with the emphasis on imagination by Hays, in which normative appeals to scripture occur in the ‘paradigmatic mode’ or through

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81 Hays, The Moral Vision of the New Testament, 298-306. For Hays, the shaping of Christian community is the key role of biblical ethics, where interpretation is a communal activity.
‘symbolic world construction’. Therefore, the narrative framework of the New Testament provides the means to interpret present experience when analogies for action are discerned under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{82} The understanding of narrative will be expanded later in reference to developing a process for bioethical decision-making [see Chapter 5.1]. Position 4 suggested by Jones, implies that Jesus had nothing to say about these issues and so has nothing to say in respect to biotechnology today.

Glen Stassen and David Gushee also propose several aspects to Christian ethics that reinforce the view of Gareth Jones in support of position 1-3, while negating position 4. They suggest that although the context is different, the basic biblical narrative remains the same so that the ‘theological basic-convictions dimension’ remains unchanged. Therefore, the basic theological understanding of the Christian faith is still applicable in the context of biotechnology. Furthermore, the transformative nature of the Gospel remains so that the follower responds to God in obedience. In this context, Jesus is the exemplar of the Christian life in relation to the norms of justice and love that are applicable in all situations. In particular, the healing activity of Jesus was motivated by many of the same concerns that motivate biotechnology today, and so the attitude of Jesus to illness, death and healing is still relevant. Finally, Christian ethics utilises the resources of the Bible, tradition, science, and experience, and reflects a community-based expression of ethics in response to new challenges.\textsuperscript{83}

\section*{2.3 Summary.}

Spirituality and Christian spirituality are dynamic processes of self-transcendence within the context of daily, lived experience. For Christian spirituality, the whole of human life is lived in relationship with the Creator God, in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, a dynamic relationship exists between Christian spirituality and the theological understanding of God within Christianity. The developing field of theological ethics also identifies the re-engagement between theology and contemporary Christian spirituality, where the spiritual life includes the moral life both individually and

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 303-304.
\textsuperscript{83} Stassen and Gushee, \textit{Kingdom Ethics}, 253-254. Here I have briefly summarised and amalgamated their six points.
communally. Within such an ethic, the example of Jesus forms the paradigm for moral action, in which imagination provides the means to following Jesus in the new context of today’s world.

As previously suggested, spirituality is linked to culture so that both spirituality and culture inform each other. Within the current context, science plays a major role in defining Western culture. The development of modern science has resulted in the removal of religion, and more specifically Christianity from the public sphere of moral discourse. In order for Christian spirituality to function as a criterion in the field of bioethics, it is now important to identify how Christian spirituality both relates to and informs science, the medium of foundational knowledge in biotechnology.

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84 See footnote 38.
Chapter 3.
Christian Spirituality and Science.

Biotechnology is a defining feature of our modern life, as scientific knowledge is applied to manipulate biological processes and the environment. To understand fully how Christian spirituality can inform bioethical decision-making, it is necessary to identify how spirituality can engage and interact with the scientific worldview, the dominant feature of Western culture and the foundational knowledge for biotechnology. There is common ground to base such an interaction because both science and spirituality look for the depth-structure of reality and involve the human search for values, meaning and truth. Furthermore, both share the belief that the world is ‘characterised by regularity and intelligibility’.\(^8\) As a result, science and Christian spirituality can together search the deeper layers of reality, motivated by the passion for truth and so make sense of the world in which we live. In this search, religion can gain a deeper knowledge and sense of wonder for creation through science, and science avoids becoming pointless and even destructive by taking on ‘significance and direction from a religious affirmation concerning meaning and value of human existence’.\(^8\) Therefore, I am suggesting that spirituality engages with science in two areas - *knowledge* and *sacredness* – in which an emergent view of science provides space for spirituality within the public arena of bioethics.

In order to determine how a spiritual understanding of knowledge and sacredness can inform a discussion on Bioethics, I am going to use the science-religion typology developed by Willem Drees that identifies nine areas of interaction based on three challenges to religion posed by science and three characteristics of religion (Table 2). The usefulness of this typology is that it broadens the areas of discussion away from the traditional categories of conflict, independence/separation, dialogue/partial integration, and integration (Table 2, 1a), and identifies both the experiential and traditional aspects of

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religion as significant. Therefore, dialogue with science moves from a discussion purely about knowledge \textit{per se} and includes categories such as ‘appreciation of the world’, ‘experience’, and ‘tradition’, all of which have a close connection with the understanding of spirituality. Within this context, I will therefore focus on the relationship between religion and science identified in sectors 1b, 1c and 3c, in order to discuss how spirituality relates to science and ultimately bioethics.

\textit{Table 2. A classification of areas for discussion concerning the relationship between religion and science.}{\textsuperscript{88}}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge posed by science.</th>
<th>Character of Religion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3a. Religions as products of evolution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. New Views of knowledge</td>
<td>1b. Philosophy of science and opportunities for theology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2c. Ambivalence of the world and implications for the concept of God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3c. A basis for hope. Or religions as local traditions without universal claim.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although I accept the usefulness of Drees’ typology, his overall metaphysics however falls short of truly identifying the spiritual. Drees adopts a form of ontological naturalism that he suggests does not have to be atheistic but can reflect the created integrity of the natural order. The divine is the primal cause, and so he distinguishes his ontological naturalism in terms of integrity provided by and dependent upon a transcendent creator, in contrast to the

\textsuperscript{87} These four categories or variations there of, are used by a number of writers in science and theology. For a good summary of various positions see John Polkinghorne, \textit{Science and Trinity: The Christian Encounter with Reality} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 1-32. These four categories were first developed by Ian Barbour. For a good introduction see Ian G Barbour, \textit{When Science Meets Religion: Enemies, Strangers or Partners?} (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2000).

self-sufficient naturalism of atheism. As a naturalist however, Drees views the natural world as all there is to know, a world without any separable supernatural realm thereby rejecting the view of God acting within the contingencies of the natural world. In this context, religion is a natural evolutionary outcome of bio-cultural evolution and equated with a form of natural wisdom, so that evolution has resulted in a being with imagination and the ability of self-transcendence ultimately leading to notions of the divine. Although I can accept that humanity’s ability to relate to God requires a level of brain function determined by evolution and that human existence is an embodied existence, the naturalist stance however rejects any understanding of divine revelation and therefore God’s role in the process. I would suggest that Drees’ view of God is best described as deistic, where God is identified as the transcendent creator but is removed from having an ongoing presence. In contrast however, even though the typology developed by Drees is useful, I will be suggesting in Chapter 5 that Christian spirituality affirms God’s continuing and active role in the natural world, especially through the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, as followers of God in the journey of life, we can live in the present where human character and wisdom is infused and extended by the wisdom of God, so that our daily lived experience includes a daily experience with the living God present to us.

3.1 Knowledge.

A central feature of the typology produced by Drees is an expanded view about human knowledge. Of particular importance is the autonomous view of nature resulting from the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century that produced a ‘separation of knowledge of the world and knowledge of the spirit’. The origin of this separation was René Descartes (1596-1650 AD) who proposed an understanding of knowledge that separated matter and spirit, so that the unity of the natural world was understood through universalisable principles. As a consequence, divine revelation became a separate realm of knowledge dependent on the God of truth, and the natural world was opened for exploration through

90 Laurel C. Schneider, "Setting the Context: A Brief History of Science by a Sympathetic Theologian," in Adam, Eve, and the Genome: The Human Genome Project and Theology, ed. Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, Theology and the Sciences (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 17. Schneider suggests that this distinction was in fact a politically motivated distinction. See pages 32-36.
scientific methods as expressed in Isaac Newton’s mechanical universe. The rise of modern science therefore challenged the dominant position of Christianity in providing an account of reality. As a result, scientists of the seventeenth century observed the reality of nature in a detached sense compared to that of the medieval mystics. The search for truth also changed from religious insight (subjective) to scientific fact (objective), resulting in the understanding of theology as describing symbolic truth rather than ‘divinely revealed concrete truth’. Significantly, this change also resulted in the loss of Christian doctrine as a vital presupposition for science. In particular, the desacralisation and historification of the natural world (space, time, and matter) within the Judeo-Christian worldview provided the foundation for the development of science. As Roger Trigg has suggested, since the time of David Hume there has been a loss of the religious assumptions critical in the formation of modern science, especially in relation to the Christian doctrine of creation which under girds the Christian view of nature as ordered and rational, and of human reason as a God-given gift.

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93 Quote taken from Deane-Drummond, Biology and Theology Today, 28-29. Also see Matthew Fox and Rupert Sheldrake, Natural Grace: Dialogues on Creation, Darkness, and the Soul in Spirituality and Science (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 79-80. Science is now recognised to include the role of the scientist as subject, so that science is also recognised to include subjective truth which some see as evidence of the sacred, the embodied spirit and mind. See Langdon Gilkey, "Nature, Reality, and the Sacred: A Meditation in Science and Religion," Zygon 24, no. 3 (1989): 297 and 293-295. Fox and Sheldrake, Natural Grace, 177-180.

94 Harold W Turner, The Roots of Science: An Investigative Journey through the World’s Religions. (Auckland: The DeepSight Trust, 1998), 54, 59-60, 76-83 and 159-174. Also see Harold W Turner, "Recasting Established History ‘the Roots of Science’." in Science and Christianity: Festschrift in Honour of Harold Turner and John Morton, ed. L. R. B. Mann (Auckland: University of Auckland Centre for Continuing Education, 2001), 149-176. There is also a connection with the Islamic tradition within which the works of Plato and Aristotle where preserved and developed. See Schneider, "Setting the Context," 25-28, Turner, The Roots of Science, 112-118. However, Turner identifies an internal opposition within Islam based on the absolute nature of Allah’s free will, the lack of a distinction between Creator and creation, and the retaining of a geocentric Platonic system. Therefore, a “modern science” failed to develop. Not all historians however accept this position. Also see Schneider, "Setting the Context," 29-31.

Modern scientific knowledge has now taken on the mantle of true knowledge, a realist position that studies a reality independent of humans and independent of human attempts to find out about reality. As a result, science enlarges and changes our view of the known world offering images that differ from manifest images, including images produced through religious belief. This is particularly true of the natural sciences that build on previously acquired knowledge, and extend knowledge into new domains as well as extending our understanding in pre-existing domains, therefore modifying our views.\(^96\) Within this view of modern scientific knowledge, it is important to acknowledge that scientific realism is not unqualified and should be considered as a provisional human construct. Therefore, scientific knowledge is limited or incomplete knowledge that cannot give a full picture of reality, and as a result scientific enquiry produces ‘limit questions’ which are beyond science to answer.\(^97\) These limit questions call for philosophical and religious/spiritual reflection so that reality can be seen as a whole.

There also needs to be a distinction made between science as a method of explanation, and the historical combining of science with the general movement of the Enlightenment. Failure to understand this distinction, results in the commonly perceived conflict between religion and science (Table 2; 1a, i). The combining of science with the Enlightenment led to science becoming, ‘not only a method of studying the laws of nature or a canon of methodological agreements but a general movement of rationality against dogmatism and religious teaching’.\(^98\) The Enlightenment critique of religion as a ‘primitive, pre-rational worldview’,\(^99\) resulted in Christianity being displaced by science in providing meaningful explanations of existence and humanity, and the Church being displaced from its central


\(^97\) Drees, *Religion, Science and Naturalism*, 17-18 and 50. One example of limited knowledge is the understanding of “dark matter and dark energy” which comprises the majority (96%) of mass and energy in the universe and is unknown to science. See Deane-Drummond, *Wonder and Wisdom*, 21-22 and 36.

\(^98\) Harald Walach and K. Helmut Reich, "Reconnecting Science and Spirituality: Toward Overcoming a Taboo," *Zygon* 40, no. 2 (2005): 426. Science is defined as ‘a way to understand the natural makeup of the world by means of rational methods of inquiry’ or a ‘canon of methods for how to best gain experience and derive knowledge about our world from that experience. See pages 425 and 430 respectively.

position of privilege in society. 100 This is particularly relevant in relation to secularism, which assumes that science is the ‘epitome of human rationality’, 101 therefore the public sphere is ruled by the rationality of science not religion, so that Western culture can now be considered ‘scientistic’, because a world without science would be unthinkable. 102 The result was the new dogmatism of scientism, the metaphysical belief that truth is only obtainable through science in which scientific knowledge provides the ‘most profound and accurate knowledge’, and provides ‘the paradigm for true knowledge’ (Table 2; 1b). 103

Two areas of critique against scientism can be identified. First, Roger Trigg focuses on the assumptions of empiricism, the belief that human experience is the only source of knowledge, and logical positivism that leads to the belief that science can verify everything.


102 Ibid.: 5. Trigg, Rationality & Science, 2-3. The word ‘Scientific’ is taken from Andy F Sanders, “Missiology, Epistemology, and Intrapiditional Dialogue,” in To Stake a Claim: Mission and the Western Crisis of Knowledge, ed. J Andrew Kirk and Kevin J Vanhoozer (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1999), 56. Secularism is an ideological position that moves against tradition belief systems and views humanity as fully autonomous and as the ultimate measure of existence based on experience. Assumed within secularism is the belief that a theistic worldview is irrelevant so that only secular belief provides the fundamental view of reality, purpose and morality, therefore as a society becomes more secular it becomes more irreligious. Andrew Kirk suggests three features of secular belief that enforce this position: religion and religious practices become private not public; morality becomes independent of religion; the quality of life is not dependent on meeting spiritual needs. Kirk also mentions the central concepts within secular belief as suggested by Hall and Giebson: Reason; Empiricism; Progress; Toleratation; Individualism; Relativism. Kirk also suggests that secular belief shares features in common with religion. In this context, Harold Turner states that secular ideology becomes a substitute for religion. See J Andrew Kirk, Mission under Scrutiny: Confronting Current Challenges (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 2006), 30, 32-33, 37-38 and 46. Vinoth Ramachandra, Faiths in Conflict? Christian Integrity in a Multicultural World (Downers Grove (IL): InterVarsity Press, 2000), 141. Smith, Mission after Christendom, 19. Harold W Turner, Frames of Mind: A Public Philosophy for Religion and Cultures (Auckland: The DeepSight Trust, 2001), 52-53.

For Trigg, science is not the only means of studying reality, so you can accept reality independent of our conception, but reject the sole identification of reality with scientific investigation. Furthermore, both empiricism and logical positivism fail to acknowledge the requirement for metaphysics, without which, there is no basis for understanding the order observed in nature that forms the basis for science itself, because ultimately reality did not have to be as it is. As a result, complementarity identifies that multiple versions of the truth, including spiritual versions, are necessary to make sense of the world, because as the uncertainty principle in quantum physics suggests, we can never know all aspects of reality because our perspective of the world changes.

Secondly, two other assumptions within scientism are the principle of “materialism”, where matter is the ‘fundamental reality of the universe’, and “reductionism” where all phenomena will eventually be explained by the actions of the material components. Reductionism however occurs in two forms, methodological and ontological. Scientific methodology as described by Drees utilises “methodological reductionism” where higher levels of complexity are analysed in terms of lower levels of complexity. This process is a ‘theologically benign…[but] a scientifically fruitful technique’, however the danger is that insufficient attention is given to the organisation of the constituent parts. “Ontological (metaphysical) reductionism” in contrast, is a philosophical position in which complex systems are described by their constituent parts and by doing so ‘everything worth saying about them has been said’. One problem with this position is the modernist position of seeing the universe as ‘self-subsistent – standing entirely on its own, fully operational and intelligible, independent of anything outside itself’. Nature then becomes ‘a faceless surface’ that reflects human possibilities, ‘the product of our own hands’. Another, consequence of ontological reductionism is “genetic fundamentalism” where, ‘the gene is

all-powerful’. The tendency of extreme reductionism is to produce determinism, where human life and actions are an inevitable consequence of biochemical properties. However, determinism and rationality are incompatible because determinism denies the possibility of a free ranging rationality and therefore the possibility of reason capable of both transcendence and truth.

3.1.1 Emergence: Engaging Christian Spirituality and Scientific Knowledge.

The above discussion emphasises the difference between scientific methodology and philosophy in order to question the validity of any scientific ontology that denies the possibility of God. For Christian spirituality to engage with science however, it needs to account for new knowledge generated by science that results in biotechnological application and the resulting ethical questions. For this to occur, integration (Table 2; 1a, iv) provides the best approach especially where the new knowledge provided by science can be included in the truth of religion. Furthermore, a deeper understanding of what “knowledge” means has a significant role in justifying a legitimate place for spirituality within the bioethical dialogue (Table 2; 1b).

Both integration and understanding knowledge are critical in the engagement of Christian spirituality with the new dynamic vision of the universe provided first by physics in the late twentieth century called Emergence. The understanding of emergence is a way to integrate cosmology and evolution, in which the universe is characterised by inherent unity, diversity, and complexity, a view very different from the previous mechanistic

110 Conway Morris, Life’s Solution, 323. This view is especially prevalent in the work of Richard Dawkins, where the gene is the principle of survival, and organisms are viewed as ‘gene survival mechanisms’ for the ‘selfish gene’. Furthermore, Dawkins has extended the Darwinian theory to a meta-narrative, where there is the need to determine a cultural equivalent to genes – the ‘meme’. Religion then becomes a prime example of a meme. See Alister E McGrath, Dawkins’ God: Genes, Memes, and the Meaning of Life (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 38, 41-42 and 119-129. Alister McGrath highlights the fact that “memes” are purely hypothetical.


112 Trigg, Rationality & Science, 83. As has been suggested, these metaphysical positions go beyond the boundaries on science, since ‘science is method, not a metaphysics’. See Haught, Deeper Then Darwin, 112.
worldview. Therefore, emergence is a fundamental characteristic of natural history and produces *Emergence Theory* as a more adequate philosophy of science. Philip Clayton identifies four basic claims of emergence:  

1. Reductionism is a false philosophy for science.
2. Empirical reality exists in multiple levels, and that over time new emergent levels emerge.
3. Emergent wholes are more than the sum of their parts and require new types of explanation adequate to the new level.
4. Emergent wholes produce new types of causal interactions.

The emerging universe is characterised by an evolving system of systems in the form of a nested hierarchy where parts exist within wholes, which are themselves parts within more complex wholes. Within an emerging world, new realities or properties come into existence over time by self-organisation, resulting in an increase in complexity so that the ‘system-as-a-whole’ influences the behaviour of the parts at the higher levels of complexity through ‘top-down’ causality. The universe therefore is an open and unpredictable process because the emerging properties although constituted by their lower level components are not reducible to the sum of their parts. Furthermore, the universe is characterised by ‘emerging relations’, an interrelation between the components and an interrelation between the entity and the environment. For the scientific disciplines, the view of an emerging universe characterised by increasing complexity alters the way the...

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116 Arthur Peacocke, *Evolution, the Disguised Friend of Faith* (London: Templeton Foundation Press, 2004), 70-71 and 77. The converse relationship is bottom-up causality where the constituent parts define the behaviour of the whole.

various disciplines understand knowledge. Paul Davis points to the misconception that the laws of physics provide the fundamental level of order and instead points to the creativity of emerging complexity at the macro-level, rather than simplicity and order at the micro-level.\textsuperscript{118} The hierarchy of complexity then leads to a coordinated approach to scientific knowledge at the various levels of complexity, where the concepts and explanations for the higher-level wholes are not reducible to those used for their constituent parts resulting in a non-reductionist epistemology.\textsuperscript{119} Today many scholars propose a ‘holistic epistemic network’ to describe a variety of disciplines studying increasingly complex systems, including the disciplines of science, theology and spirituality. Each epistemic level utilises an analogous methodology of theory construction and testing. Although the knowledge from the lower levels places epistemic constraints on the upper levels, the upper levels still produce ‘new and irreducible properties and processes’.\textsuperscript{120} The effect is an interrelation of knowledge and a recognition of truth \textit{via} the different disciplines, so that science and religion can be seen as ‘mutually interdependent’ with the central issue being the relationship between the truth of science and the truth of religion.\textsuperscript{121} As a result, the new knowledge from science can inform spirituality through providing ‘amazing new visions of nature’\textsuperscript{122}, and spirituality provides reflection on notions of meaning and the limit questions produced by science.\textsuperscript{123}


\textsuperscript{122} Fox and Sheldrake, \textit{Natural Grace}, 177.

Emergence and the Human Person.

Emergence theory is proving especially fruitful in considering the human person, and the relationship between science and a theistic worldview. Biologically, the highest level of emergence is human personhood, where the mind (mental properties) emerges from the most complex biological structure known – the human body and brain. Humanity is therefore continuous with evolutionary history - being made of the same matter and energy, while also being discontinuous as a qualitatively different being.¹²⁴ In a recent study of human uniqueness, J. Wentzel van Huyssteen provides a good example of emergence, and in particular provides a greater appreciation of the role of spirituality/religious imagination within human evolution. The central feature of van Huyssteen’s work is his approach based on transversality, a non-hierarchical, multi-perspective approach to human knowledge. This approach accepts a plurality of human knowledge and identifies ‘the voices of science, theology, religions, and art as different but equally legitimate ways of looking at the world’. Therefore, within a transversal approach to knowledge, theology shares in the standards of interdisciplinary discourse as an equal partner with science as they both converge on commonly identified problems.¹²⁵ The central presupposition to this approach is a holistic view that identifies humans as embodied persons, and as such are the locus of rationality in contrast to a rationality based on abstract ideas. This position accepts the physical evolution of Homo sapiens¹²⁶ as one unique node of biological inevitability,¹²⁷ but points to the unique human ability of transcending the biological origins resulting in the uniquely human activities that compose human culture such as art, science, and religion. The result is that the ‘human person has emerged biologically as a centre of self-awareness, religious awareness, and moral responsibility’.¹²⁸ Therefore, Homo sapiens can be considered a new entity, a qualitatively distinct being compared to the rest of creation, an understanding

¹²⁴ Clayton, "Panentheism," 88. Clayton, "The Emergence of Spirit," 295-296. Peacocke, Evolution, the Disguised Friend of Faith, 75-77. Evolutionary history involves an initial singularity from which all matter is derived and from which biological history has developed since we are ‘all creatures of stardust, formed from the ashes of dead stars’. See Polkinghorne, Science and Trinity, 69. Edwards, Breath of Life, 13-15.


¹²⁷ Conway Morris, Life's Solution, 303, 310 and 312. Haught, Deeper Than Darwin, 155.

¹²⁸ van Huyssteen, Alone in the Universe?, 10, 55-59, 70, 99, 147. Quote is taken from page 147.
intrinsically linked to the linguistic capacity of humanity. It is language that is thought to have led to the unique human imagination through ‘cognitive fluidity’, where the various domains of the human brain freely interacted resulting in imagination and the symbolic revolution seen in cave art from 60,000-30,000 years ago.\(^\text{129}\) Most significantly, in using a multi-disciplinary approach, van Huyssteen has identified the naturalness, meaningfulness, and rationality of religious imagination and religion in human experience, where embodied humanity transcends its biological origin in the search for fulfilment and meaning.\(^\text{130}\) This position is supported by Philip Clayton, who suggests that the search for meaning is a ubiquitous human activity, therefore religiosity is ‘intrinsic to human existence to the world’.\(^\text{131}\) As van Huyssteen continues, ‘we make sense of our world by producing symbolic ones that include real and imaginary creatures, myths and beliefs’, so that religion therefore is one of the earliest special properties of modern humans detectable in the archaeological record.\(^\text{132}\)

**Emergence, Spirituality, and Theology.**

In the context of an emergent view of knowledge, the naturalness of religious imagination ‘challenges any viewpoint that would want to see religion or religious imagination as esoteric, or as an isolated faculty of the human mind that developed later’, because the unique human characteristics of consciousness, languages, symbolic mind and behaviour directly relate to religious awareness and religious behaviour. Therefore, it is possible to talk of a predisposition to religious belief as ‘one of the most complex and powerful forces in the human mind, one of the universals of human behaviour’.\(^\text{133}\) Philip Clayton goes even further by suggesting that emergence supports theism, whereby the religious object is more than a bundle of emerging properties as suggested by agnosticism. As an ‘upwardly open’ system, the world at its most complex manifests aspects of divine influence, revealing the

\(^{129}\) Ibid., 190-191 and 194-236. ‘Cognitive fluidity’ is a concept taken from Steven Mithen.


\(^{131}\) Clayton, "The Emergence of Spirit," 297-298.

\(^{132}\) van Huyssteen, *Alone in the Universe?*, 175, 192. Quote is taken from page 175. van Huyssteen at this point uses the work of Ian Tattersall who suggests, ‘because every human society, at one stage or another, possesses religion of some sort, complete with origin myths that purportedly explain the relationship of humans to the world around them, religion cannot be discounted from any discussion of typical human behaviours’. See page 192 and 203.

\(^{133}\) Ibid., 203, 213, 240 and 260-261. Quotes taken from pages 203 and 240 respectively.
possibility of a self-revealing divine agent. As a result, “God” is not less of an agent in the world as humans, but is everything that humanity is, yet infinitely more.\textsuperscript{134}

As suggested by Drees’ typology and the above discussion, new views of knowledge as suggested by emergence also lead to opportunities for theology (Table 2; 1b). Emergence has resulted in a renewed emphasis on the immanence of God as Creator, the living God who is continually active ‘in, with and under’ the creative natural processes.\textsuperscript{135} The theological understanding of human personhood has also been deepened, with personhood now defined in terms of psychosomatic unity including physical, mental, and spiritual capacities. In particular, the spiritual capacities allow humanity to relate personally to God, the ultimate reality, the source and ground of all existence.\textsuperscript{136}

Ted Peters suggests five points that I believe outline a Christian response to an emergent scientific metaphysics that can function as a starting point for an integrated spiritual-scientific perspective, aspects of which will be further developed in Chapter 5:\textsuperscript{137}

1. \textit{Integrative Wholeness} emphasises that the whole is more than the sum of its constituent parts, and where everything is related. For evolution therefore, the emergence of living organisms transcends its biochemical makeup and so integrative wholes (organisms) develop over time. This view integrates the non-reductionist approach of emergence and a holistic epistemic network in relation to knowledge and organisms. Here the specifics of an organism reside in wholes, whereas wholes emerge from parts and therefore have different properties from the individual parts.\textsuperscript{138}

2. \textit{Holism and Temporality} suggests an epigenetic view that rejects the notion of a completed creative act but stresses emergence. Therefore, a progressive/continuous creation is emphasised as a creative process.

\textsuperscript{134} Clayton, "The Emergence of Spirit," 302-303.
\textsuperscript{135} Peacocke, "Articulating God's Presence," 143-144 and 152.
3. *God creates from the future* and not from a past event. The result is that natural history is understood as a pull from the future so that creation can become something new and exist in hope. For Arthur Peacocke, this hope is in the continual relationship of creation with God, where God’s purposes are bought to fruition and contrasts with the cosmological predictions of a future without hope.\(^{139}\)

4. *God creates by integrating into wholeness* where God’s redemptive work draws contingent and free beings into a harmonious whole.

5. *God’s faithfulness is expressed through law.* The result is that creation *ex nihilo* exists alongside creation *continua* to provide both continuity and creativity.

These five points are compatible with the scientific view of emergence thereby affirming the scientific endeavour and avoiding the metaphysical reductionist tendencies of scientism. Furthermore, there is also a connection with Christian spirituality in which the interconnection and creativity of creation is emphasised, and the biological explanations of our existence are understood within a framework of hope not determinism. The result is the reconnection of spirituality and science through engaging in the common goal to understand reality based on an ‘experiential, intuitive, holistic grasp of reality, realised by consciousness turning back on itself and touching reality experientially’.\(^{140}\) Therefore, both science and spirituality function together in providing new visions of reality and reflections on ultimate meaning.

### 3.2 Sacredness.

In relating science to spirituality we enter the realm of the sacred, where the interiority of nature as an organic, living spiritual entity is recognised,\(^{141}\) and where science provides a new and greater appreciation of the world that can then be reflected upon theologically without making nature a product of human construction (Table 2; 1c). I am suggesting that sacredness is discerned in four areas; the wonder, depth, mystery, and hope of creation.

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\(^{139}\) Peacocke, *Evolution, the Disguised Friend of Faith*, 154-156.

\(^{140}\) Walach and Reich, "Reconnecting Science and Spirituality," 437.

Scientific enquiry has increased our sense of wonder at the universe leading to ‘new and wider concepts of reality’.\(^{142}\) However as previously suggested, scientific enquiry as a limited form of knowledge produces limit questions at the boundary of knowledge, when nature as a reality transcends our inquiry and allows for other avenues of explanation. From a naturalist position, limit questions represent the mystery of the universe which lead to a sense of wonder and gratitude about reality.\(^{143}\) It is this mystical sense of awe and wonder in nature that often occurs in childhood and provides the inspiration for becoming a scientist, an inspiration that gets lost in the ‘process of emotional distancing’ through reductionism.\(^{144}\) Limit questions also lead to metaphysics, which includes theological reflection resulting in wonder and gratitude to God for creation and our existence. As Celia Deane-Drummond suggests, purely scientific wonder fails to appreciate the religious roots of wonderment which links transcendent and natural wonder.\(^{145}\)

The sacredness of the natural world also relates to the depth of knowledge, including the notion of truth. The search for truth is shared by both religion and science, therefore depth invites both religious and scientific readings of human knowledge.\(^{146}\) In relation to spirituality, evolution provides a case in point, where the deeper patterns of evolution (emergence, complexity, convergence) identify the world as underpinned by deeper commonalities, a ‘genuine creation’.\(^{147}\) John Haught suggests that the universe may be though of in-depth as a story filled with ‘promise’ where the promise of life and evolution were present at the ‘cosmic dawn’. Haught produces a metaphysics of promise where ‘a promising God who opens up the world to the future is the ultimate explanation of evolution’, so that the fundamental meaning of the evolving universe is found in the carrying of a promise. Evolution therefore is both ‘adaptation and anticipation’, as God

\(^{145}\) Deane-Drummond, *Wonder and Wisdom*, 55. The first 2 chapters provide a good discussion on wonder in the natural world. Chapter 7 looks at the biblical, philosophical, and spiritual view of wonder.
\(^{147}\) Conway Morris, *Life's Solution*, 20, 290 and 303.
awaits the world in this unfinished universe.\textsuperscript{148} The notion of depth is also reflected in the order exhibited in nature, a central presupposition of the natural sciences. An orderly nature also implies the contingent nature of existence and order, pointing to a non-contingent ground or cause. Theologically, orderliness is understood to result from God’s character (rationality) in the act of creation and as McGrath suggests, it could have been another way.\textsuperscript{149} There is however a paradox where the order identified with the laws of nature, which operate in analogous ways in the different dimensions of nature, also includes spontaneity and openness so that order plus change/novelty produces order.\textsuperscript{150} As Rupert Sheldrake suggests, in terms of living organisms order is reflected in habit - the normal mode of living. Evolution therefore involves the interplay of habit and creativity that produces new habits (order).\textsuperscript{151} An understanding of order is also linked to an understanding of value, where the ultimate traits of things provide a deep ground of value which has always been identified as sacred. The result is the intuition of a ground of permanence and value amid change, so that order has traditionally identified the “ought” for human action, so that ‘what we are required to do to be human is fixed by the ultimate yet natural order of things’.\textsuperscript{152}

The search for depth/truth/knowledge shared by religion and science leads to a view of nature as “mystery” in which an understanding of power and order includes traces of the sacred.\textsuperscript{153} For Gilkey, the sacred aspects of reality (unity, meaning and value) are indicated in the intuitions necessary for science (power, life, order and unity). The sacred nature of these intuitions he suggests have been lost in our secularised world, so that compared to archaic religions who viewed nature as the ‘source and ground of our being’, nature has been placed at a level below humanity.\textsuperscript{154} In particular the view of nature as “power”

\textsuperscript{148} Haught, \textit{Deeper Than Darwin}, 53, 63, 128 and 142-144. In suggesting that God awaits this world, John Haught draws on Moltmann who suggests that waiting is the highest form of interest in the other.

\textsuperscript{149} McGrath, \textit{Nature}, 220-233.


\textsuperscript{151} Fox and Sheldrake, \textit{Natural Grace}, 175-177.

\textsuperscript{152} Gilkey, "Nature as the Image of God," 496-497.

\textsuperscript{153} Gilkey, "Nature, Reality, and the Sacred," 287 and 296. Also see James Yerkes, "Toward a New Understanding of Nature, Reality, and the Sacred: A Syllabus," \textit{Zygon} 33, no. 3 (1998): 438-439. Gilkey suggests that one product of nature is “spirit” defined as self awareness. In his definition of nature, Yerkes distinguishes between natures “one” and “two”, which appear too reductionist in my view. His initial definition of nature as “mysterious” meaning ‘the ultimate mysterious source and ground of all that has had and will have the power to exist and evolve’ does not leave much room for God as ultimate source.

produces unity at the most fundamental level of being and value, where as a stream of energy and matter, power connects the past, the present, and projects itself into an open future. Power functions in a dynamic process, converting itself into energy and then into matter, leading to the forms in our reality, including humanity. In doing so, power functions differently at different levels, resulting in the property of ‘vitality’ at the level of life. As such, matter becomes ‘more than matter’, an emergent property dependent on the unity of the organism including the notions of meaning, purpose, and the fulfilment of goals. One example is the arrival of sentience in humanity as a being sharing the terrestrial creation, which points to the mysterious as matter transcends its biological properties. For humanity then, power also includes knowledge and therefore the demand for constraint, discipline, and sacrifice in the utilisation of power.

Finally, as Drees suggests, an appreciation of the world provided by science can relate to the traditional character of religion that provides a basis for hope (Table 2; 3c). Hope is a central feature of Christianity, identified in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, an event with universal and eschatological significance. Christian hope contrasts with the scientific predictions of a cosmological future without hope, where the universe will end either in fire or by freezing which as Peters suggests, highlights the dissonance between theological and cosmological eschatology. Furthermore as Celia Deane-Drummond suggests, a sense of wonder at the vastness of the universe is just as likely to produce fear as it is comfort and gratitude. Therefore, religious wonder joined with hope is distinguished from natural wonder without hope. These issues will be further developed in Chapter 5.5.

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156 Ibid.: 492.
3.3 Summary.

This chapter has attempted to highlight that science and spirituality can function and inform each other, through providing a wondrous picture of nature’s complexity, and by reflecting on limit questions produced by science and the notion of meaning itself. The typology developed by Willem Drees, identifies significant areas of interaction within which spirituality and science can engage. Significantly, this typology has allowed a discussion of knowledge in which scientific and spiritual knowledge can both be validated and integrated. The emergent view of science in particular identifies spirituality as a central feature of what it means to be human, and provides a broader definition of knowledge where spirituality becomes a justified perspective in considering scientific knowledge and the ethical framework surrounding scientific practice and technology.

A central feature of the interrelationship between Christian spirituality and science is the recovery of the sacred within the created order, a position that provides a balance to the naturalistic ontology of science. By emphasising the sacred dimensions of nature, the notions of wonder, depth, mystery, and hope provide the ground where spirituality and science can engage and enhance each other. As a result of this discussion, I would suggest that religion/spirituality must be included in the public discourse relating to matters of science. This is especially true in area if bioethics, where scientific knowledge and the application of that knowledge lead to limit questions regarding meaning, values, and purpose that require metaphysical reflection.
Chapter 4.

Case Study: Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research.

The intent of this work is to understand how spirituality can inform the bioethical decision-making process. As outlined in the Chapter One, the current legislation within New Zealand emphasises, cultural, ethical, and spiritual criteria. However, although Christianity remains a significant determinant in the acceptance of biotechnology, spirituality remains an ill-defined concept. In Chapter Two I have determined that the emphasis of spirituality in general is on practical lived experience, an emphasis also found in Christian spirituality where followers strive to live faithfully in response to their experience of God. Within the context of bioethics, Chapter Three identifies Christian spirituality as a legitimate partner in dialogue with science within the public sphere, a position that goes against the naturalistic philosophical approaches emphasised since the Enlightenment.

The next step in the journey to understand the role of Christian spirituality in bioethical decision-making is to understand current Christian approaches to bioethics. To do so, I have selected hES cell research as a case study that provides unique challenges to bioethics in the areas of human personhood, the boundaries of research, public acceptance, and the balance between beneficence (benefit) and non-malificence (non-harm). Human embryonic stem cell research also represents a new frontier in scientific investigation where many of the ethical issues relate to the source of the stem cells. The two main sources currently available are adult stem cells, and embryonic stem cells, and as Gareth Jones suggests science can not demonstrate the benefit of one source over the other.\footnote{Jones, "Responses to the Human Embryo," 199-200.} The source of stem cells also raises spiritual questions especially relating to beliefs about the origins of personhood. Within Christianity these beliefs represent a range of positions reflecting the positions of many Christian denominations. As such, hES cells represent a frontier that requires both biblical and theological reflection in conjunction with the ethical.
4.1 Defining Human Embryonic Stem Cells and Ethical Options.

Human embryonic stem cells (hES cells) represent one of the many recent advances in the knowledge of human development, biotechnology and biomedical intervention, and as such raise many ethical and spiritual issues. First isolated in 1998, hES cells are the cells derived from embryos up to 14 days old (see Table 3) and have the unique ability to replicate indefinitely. More importantly, as undifferentiated cells they have the potential to grow into any other tissue type and so could provide cures for many physical and degenerative conditions. Such research and treatment however involves the destruction of human embryos. Human embryonic stem cells can be scaled in terms of their ability to differentiate, ranging from: totipotent – cells capable of forming every cell type and can become a human being; pluripotent – can develop into any of the three major tissue types (endoderm, mesoderm, ectoderm); tissue-specific (multipotent) – present in adults and committed to making one type of cell, but can be transferred to another cellular location and change into another cell type. The central distinction between totipotent and pluripotent relates to the ability of totipotent cells to form the placenta (from the trophectoderm) and hence produce a viable pregnancy. Ethically there are seven basic policy options available for hES cell regulation, with counties supporting each of the options:

1. No hES cell research.
2. Allow research only on stem cells from existing stem cell lines.
3. Allow research on stem cells harvested from “surplus” IVF embryos created for fertility treatment.
4. Allow research on stem cells created by IVF for the purposes of research.
5. Allow research on stem cells harvested from embryos produced by SCNT (cloning).
6. Allow research on stem cells produced by IVF or SCNT and then genetically modified.

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7. Allow research on stem cells harvested from embryos by SCNT into non-human oocytes.

Table 3. *Human embryonic development and stem cell derivation.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terminology</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embryo</td>
<td>First eight weeks of development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-implantation Embryo</td>
<td>First 2 weeks of development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zygote</td>
<td>Single cell resulting from the fertilisation of an egg. Divides up to 8 cells (Blastomeres)</td>
<td>Totipotent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blastomeres (up to 4 days)</td>
<td>Division of the zygote to 8 smaller cells. Each cell is a blastomere.</td>
<td>Each cell is totipotent. As cell division increases above 8-16 cells totipotency is lost and the cells become pluripotent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blastocyst (5-7 days)</td>
<td>Mass of cells with an inner cavity. Outer cells (trophectoderm) become the trophoblast on implantation and form the placenta. Inner cell mass (ICM) of undifferentiated cells, a number of which form the new individual.</td>
<td>The intact blastocyst is totipotent <em>in utero.</em> <em>In vitro</em> the blastocyst can be considered ‘potentially totipotent’. The ICM cells if removed from the blastocyst are pluripotent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 days</td>
<td>Current time limit to embryo research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive streak (15-16 days)</td>
<td>A transitory developmental structure that develops into the neural plate from which arises the beginning of the nervous system in the third week of gestation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer (SCNT/Cloning)</td>
<td>Reprogramming of adult cell DNA by transferring this DNA into an unfertilised egg (with nucleus removed). Can then develop to produce blastocyst and embryonic stem cells.</td>
<td>In reproductive cloning the artificially produced blastocyst is theoretically transferred into a uterus and can develop into an individual. When the blastocyst is maintained in a laboratory the harvested stem cells are pluripotent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The basic secular approach to hES cells derivation is to view the early embryo as a mass of human tissue with no distinct moral value distinct from any other human tissue. As a result, the early embryo can be used for research and therapy with no moral difficulties.

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164 This information was derived from Jones, “Responses to the Human Embryo,” 202-204.
outside of the normal respectful treatment of human tissue, because it is considered to be one among several types of human being that lack personhood capacities and so do not have the same status as fully human persons. The basis for this philosophical view is a definition of personhood based on ‘individuals who enjoy something comparable, in relevant respects, to the type of mental life that characterises normal adult human beings’. In the case of embryos, foetuses, or even new-borns, the requirement for even rudimentary consciousness as a basis for personhood is lacking and so these forms are not considered as “persons”. Therefore, neither membership to the human species or even potential personhood leads to a special moral status.\footnote{Michael Tooley, "Personhood," in \textit{A Companion to Bioethics}, ed. Helga Kuhse and Peter Singer (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 117 and 124. This philosophical definition of personhood is attributed to John Locke, and as David Jones suggests can be used to justify infanticide, a position contrary to the Christian tradition. See David Albert Jones, \textit{The Soul of the Embryo: An Enquiry into the Status of the Human Embryo in the Christian Tradition.} (London: Continuum, 2004), 221-222 and 241-242.}

As a result, a utilitarian approach justifies action based on an assessment of risks and benefits, which will include continuing research necessary for the establishment and improvement of the technology. In this context ‘consensus morality’ identifies 14 days as the point after which individualisation occurs, and before which experimentation can proceed (policy options 4-7).\footnote{Mary Warnock, "Experimentation on Human Embryos and Fetuses," in \textit{A Companion to Bioethics}, ed. Helga Kuhse and Peter Singer (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 390-394.}

In contrast however, the central religious question in the ethical debate on hES cells has focused on the derivation of the totipotent or pluripotent hES cells. The over-riding concern has been the protection of the early embryo so that non-malificence takes precedence over beneficence (policy option 1), a view supported by many Christian denominations.\footnote{Ted Peters, "Embryonic Persons in the Cloning and Stem Cell Debates," \textit{Theology and Science} 1, no. 1 (2003): 58-60. Peters, \textit{Science, Theology and Ethics}, 185.} Views that accept the need to benefit humanity (policy options 3 and 4) are still found in Christianity, while policy options 5-7 are currently opposed by most Christian denominations. Other religious traditions also vary in their approach. Orthodox and Reformed Jews see the embryo as ‘mere water’ until the fortieth day of development, after which the foetus is considered part of the mother and harm is prohibited. This position would support policy option 3 and reflects the imperative to heal (Deuteronomy 30:20). Islam accepts the use of already existing embryos, while some Buddhists and
Taoists reject hES cells research because they identify personhood with conception. The Hindu faith accepts a 14 day limit and so would accept policy option 3.\textsuperscript{168}

### 4.2 Christian Perspectives on Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research.

#### 4.2.1 Old Testament.

In order to understand Christian perspectives on the various ethical options previously stated for hES cell research, it is first important to explore the biblical view on the understanding of “life”. Two major positions have been identified, the first of which emphasises a link between an understanding of life and breathing (Genesis 2:7). As a result, life or personhood is associated with the point at which a premature baby can survive.\textsuperscript{169} However, as medical science advances, intervention allows even younger premature babies to survive, thereby fulfilling the mandate to do good wherever possible. Furthermore, Genesis 2:7 also highlights the dual aspects of God’s creative action in both body formation and in the giving of life. Therefore, as David Jones suggests this dual action ‘encompasses the whole development of the human being from the very beginning’ and does not provide a mandate for such a clear distinction.\textsuperscript{170}

The second Old Testament position views conception, pregnancy and birth as stages of one continuous process. Fertility in this case is understood as God’s blessing conferred on a community, where pregnancy is seen as a relational blessing, with God identified as the central agent of pregnancy. The human decision to end a pregnancy was therefore understood to result from broken relationships with God or other people, with God opposing the human decision to end a pregnancy especially when ended for the benefit of the offender (Hosea 9:10-14). Therefore, conception and pregnancy are understood in terms of community and blessing rather than defining the onset of personhood. In this context, harm of a foetus is a culpable manifestation of violence in terms of community relations, however the status of the foetus is different to that of a free Israelite and that of a slave (Exodus 21:12-14 and 20-25). IVF provides a new ethical situation requiring biblical

\textsuperscript{168} Shrier and Shrier, "Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research," 40-41. Reactions to hES cell research within Buddhism varies.

\textsuperscript{169} Stassen and Gushee, Kingdom Ethics, 217. On this point their discussion is focused on the abortion issue; however their biblical understanding of the embryo is relevant for hES research.

\textsuperscript{170} Jones, The Soul of the Embryo, 15-16.
reflection, which Cahleen and Paul Shrier suggests, involves a community even if not in utero. As a result, they restate the ethical question as, ‘what kind of people do we need to be to artificially create and care for embryos as children’, leading to the rejection of any hES cell research that destroys human embryos (policy option 1). These two major Old Testament perspectives shift the focus away from understanding when life begins and individual rights, to the rights and obligation of a religious community. Both perspectives affirm God as universally sovereign and so reject any action that interrupts the conception, pregnancy, and birth process.

David Jones however provides a good reminder about limiting biblical interpretation by identifying three traditions of interpretation for Exodus 21:22-25. The Rabbinic tradition interprets these verses as demanding capital punishment for the death of a pregnant woman but not for causing a miscarriage. In contrast, the Septuagintal tradition that forms the basis for early Christian reflection, emphasises the state of the foetus and distinguishes between an “unformed” infant resulting in punishment by a fine, and harm to a “formed” infant resulting in a punishment by the life-for-life principle. The use of “formed” reflects the image of God concept in Genesis 1 and is identified as 40 days of development. Finally, the evangelical tradition that emerged from the Reformation interpreted these verses as referring to premature delivery in the first instance rather than miscarriage. Therefore, harm resulting in a premature delivery was punishable by a fine, where as harm resulting in a miscarriage was punishable by the life-for-life principle. Significantly, both the septuagintal and evangelical traditions included the unborn as a subject of possible harm, while all three excluded access to abortion, except in the rabbinic tradition where abortion was permissible only when required to save the mothers life.

There are other Old Testament verses which are also commonly used to support the protection of the embryo and which follow from the mandate to not kill another human being (Genesis 9:6). These verses can be understood as retrospective statements of God’s care that are extended to God’s care during embryonic life, so that the human being is

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believed to be created, valued and known by God (Job 10:8-12, 31:15; Psalm 9:10, 22:9-10, 51:5, 139:13-16; Isaiah 49:1; Jeremiah 1:5). As suggested, the emphasis in these verses is on God’s grace and knowledge, so that they represent prayers of gratitude for God’s grace rather than expositions on the value of embryonic human life.\textsuperscript{173} However, David Jones suggests that a central aspect to these verses is the call of God on the prophet’s life that exists from conception, an interpretation also identified in the New Testament in relation to the call of Jesus and Paul. Furthermore, the notion of “call” has been extended to the whole of humanity who is called to fullness of life in Christ.\textsuperscript{174}

\textbf{4.2.2 New Testament.}

Relevant references in the New Testament, include the understanding of Jesus and John \textit{in utero} (Luke 1:14-2:38), which for some means that embryonic life has value because it was part of the incarnation process. For David Jones the Lucan birth narratives highlight a radical demonstration of God’s power and presence that leads to the theology of Jesus’ full humanity and divinity. As he suggests ‘the aim of arguing from the embryonic Christ to the embryonic human being …[is] to illuminate the embryos theological significance, and hence its ethical significance’.\textsuperscript{175} However as others have suggested, the central feature of the birth narratives is the ‘joy of God’s presence to deliver’ through the birth of Jesus rather than focusing on \textit{in utero} personhood.\textsuperscript{176} Other New Testament sources include Colossians 1:16-17, Ephesians 1:3-5, and Galatians 1:15, which reflect on God’s involvement in the creation of all things and in the call of people before the foundations of the world. However, the use of such verses represents a reinterpretation of Biblical texts in light of modern biological language rather than relying on the biblical text alone.\textsuperscript{177}

One further issue surrounding the use of human embryos and hES cells is the use of technology for the benefit of humanity. The use of human embryos and hES cells can be


\textsuperscript{174} Jones, \textit{The Soul of the Embryo}, 8-14 and 125.

\textsuperscript{175} Ibid., 125-139. Quote taken from page 139.

\textsuperscript{176} Stassen and Gushee, \textit{Kingdom Ethics}, 219. As J C Peterson notes, Luke uses the same word for children throughout (Luke 1:41, 44; 2:12, 16; 18:15) and so is not addressing the question of when a human being begins. See Peterson, "Is a Human Embryo a Human Being?," 80.

\textsuperscript{177} Jones, “Responses to the Human Embryo,” 215.
seen to fulfill the mandate to treat others as we would want to be treated ourselves, so that in healing we express the desire for healing ourselves (Matthew 22:34-40, Mark 12:28-34, Luke 10:25-37; Galatians 5:13-14; Philippians 2:3-8). However, the doing of good must also be balanced with the means through which good is done, so that the biblical mandate to not do evil so as to produce good must also be considered (Romans 3:8). As a result, in considering technology, motive, human desire, and worldview must be considered. As Daryl Sas suggests, technology has a lure for secular society as the means of providing freedom from pain and suffering, as well as the freedom to be fully human as defined by humanism (freedom and independence). Technology also promises happiness defined in terms of comfort and physical pleasure, however often technology conceals the true risks and masks the symptoms, including the inevitability of death. From a biblical perspective, technology is suggested to be part of humanity’s fulfillment of the mandate to fill and subdue the earth (Genesis 1:28) within the context of God’s continuing presence, activity, and Lordship. However, three limits are suggested for the use of technology: obedience to biblical law; motivation by biblical love; consequences measured by biblical justice. With reference to hES cells, Sas suggests that these criteria would conclude that stem cell technology is unethical when it involves the destruction of an embryo (policy option 1). This argument relies on a definition of personhood which originates at conception, so that biblical law identifies the embryo as a person, love demands that one person cannot be sacrificed for another, and justice places the life-giving needs of the embryo over and above the patients need for healing or the relief of suffering. Overall, even though it is difficult to determine a precise biblical perspective, Stassen and Gushee summarise five biblical points about the beginnings of human life that point to general principles rather than specific mandates that are suggestive of a more conservative approach with regard to hES cells research.

179 Stassen and Gushee, Kingdom Ethics, 257-259. Technology can develop a religious character in the attempt to produce ‘techno utopianism’.
181 Stassen and Gushee, Kingdom Ethics, 220. They stated six points, with the sixth relating more to the abortion issue and so I have not included it.
1. The human child is a deeply-to-be-desired creation and gift of God.
2. The Bible recognises the mystery and majesty of the process of foetal development and articulates God’s role in forming the unborn child.
3. God has knowledge of those who will be born even before they are born.
4. The developing child in the womb was treated as worthy of some legal protection in Old Testament law.
5. The incarnation began with the miraculous conception of Jesus and not just his birth.

4.3 Christian Perspectives on the Moral Status of the Embryo.

Extrapolating from the various biblical perspectives, is the theological interest in human embryo research and hES cells centred on the moral status of the human embryo and personhood. Two main positions can be identified within current Christian thinking. The first theological position as expounded by Gilbert Meilaender, Glen Stassen and David Gushee, and David Jones, favours banning hES cell research (policy option 1), because the embryo has the same status and dignity as every other human person. This argument is based on the unique human genetic identity of the embryo and the intuition all persons, including Jesus Christ, start their existence as such an embryo.\(^{182}\)

4.3.1 Full Moral Status.

_Gilbert Meilaender_ sees the human being is a single being with a continuous history that can be broken down to three trajectories: Beginning; Zenith; Decline. Advances in embryology relate to the “beginning” trajectory and identify the embryo as having a developmental “top-down axis” so that an embryo represents the beginning phase as an underdeveloped, integrated self-developing whole, capable of continued development that characterises human life, and not as a featureless collection of cells. Meilaender defines his position on the three major policy options by first suggesting there is a problem with using

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\(^{182}\) This would be the current position of the Roman Catholic Church. Peters, "Embryonic Persons," 63. Here Peters draws on the work of Norman Ford who identifies this approach with Pope Pius IX in 1869. Previously, the traditional view was that “person” did not occur until several weeks after conception. David Jones however rejects this view and states that the Christian tradition from the early church until the nineteenth century has ‘repudiated abortion at any stage of pregnancy’, while offering different penance as a means to reconciliation. See Jones, _The Soul of the Embryo_, 72-74.
the language of respect when bringing life into the world in order to destroy it. Using the ‘inflexible principle’ it is suggested that utter helplessness demands utter protection and so the destruction of embryos is unacceptable. Secondly, Meilaender rejects the notion of spare embryos as a justification to gain from their death, which he believes assumes they are destined to die for the benefit of others. Thirdly, in reflecting on the use of cloning, Meilaender uses Augustine as the basis for a way of life in which the relief of suffering is not the overriding imperative compared to faithfulness to, and hope in God - a position that contrasts with the modern belief in medical progress.\footnote{\textit{Meilaender}, \textit{Bioethics: A Primer for Christians}, 30, and 112-119. This position I suggest is compatible with the Old Testament position where God rejects the death of foetuses for benefit. The ‘inflexible principle’ was developed by Hans Jonas.} 

\textit{Glen Stassen and David Gushee} provide another example that gives the embryo full moral status. Although accepting that biotechnology raises moral questions that ‘never appeared in the horizon of biblical ethics’, they emphasise that the biblical narrative is true and applicable. As a result, they accept a full view personhood for the embryo because it prevents any gaps from developing between the concepts of human being and human person. In doing so, they adopt the precautionary principle\footnote{See footnote 189.} so that in matters relating to the inclusion or exclusion of a developing human being, they suggest to using caution and so prefer to attribute too much personhood rather than too little. Foetal life therefore represents potential personhood, a divine creation and a gift from God, and so the use of frozen embryos or the creation of embryos for research represents the manipulation and destruction of human life at its earliest and most defenceless stage. The Christian call to provide transformative measures wherever possible is therefore limited by the prohibition against the destruction of a human person. They do however provide a good reminder that embryos are not the only source of stem cells, and so research effort into other stem cell sources is needed.\footnote{\textit{Stassen and Gushee}, \textit{Kingdom Ethics}, 221-224, 253 and 260-262. Quote taken from page 253.} In taking this position, Stassen and Gushee seek to utilise the biblical narrative, but seem to ignore their own understanding of Old Testament law which itself does distinguish between the unborn and the born human being.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, 217-218. Admittedly they do point to difficulties in knowing the true meaning of the Hebrew.}

The work of \textit{David Jones} also provides a thoughtful overview of biblical and theological interpretations about the moral worth of the human embryo. He admits that for most of
Christian history the context for the theological understanding of the embryo has been the issue of abortion, however in his view the theological position throughout Christian history has consistently been that the embryo be considered as a human being whose soul is implanted at conception. As a result, we should ‘protect life with utmost care from conception’ because the embryo is a new creature called into existence by God to be a child of God.\footnote{Jones, \textit{The Soul of the Embryo}, 213, 234 and 240-251. Quote taken from page 244.}

### 4.3.2 Gradually Emerging Personhood.

The second theological position identifies personhood as a gradually emerging property of the embryo so that each stage of development represents quantitatively different properties culminating in “personhood”. This view points to differing developmental stages as important and often takes a relational view of development that emphasises specific events such as cellular differentiation and implantation. Several examples of an emergent position are represented by; Gareth Jones, Celia Deane-Drummond, Ted Peters, Brent Waters, and Gene Outka.

First, \textit{Gareth Jones} emphasises the central role of the environment rather than focusing on the moral status of the embryo, a position that contrasts with that of Gilbert Meilaender who ignores the requirement of a uterine environment for pregnancy. For Jones, the blastocyst is part of the human community and never exists in isolation, even \textit{in vitro}, therefore emphasising dependence and comparative worth. As a result, environmental factors are significant determinants of the fate of blastocysts and the obtaining of hES cells, allowing Jones to distinguish between blastocysts within an environment ‘congenial to further development’ (inherent plus environmental potential) and those in an environment ‘hostile to further development’(inherent potential). Central to this position is the absence of trophectoderm and the uterus \textit{in vitro}, which results in no possibility of producing a human individual. Therefore, \textit{in vitro} blastocysts can only be considered ‘potentially totipotent’ rather than ‘actually totipotent’ in contrast to the \textit{in utero} environment. This distinction means that hES cells obtained from \textit{in vitro} blastocysts are identified as pluripotent and so avoid the ethical issues around using cells capable of producing a human person (totipotent). Furthermore, Jones suggests intent is also significant in that the
creation of hES cells for therapeutic or research purposes is a process that links the creation and the destruction of blastocysts. In contrast, the use of spare IVF embryos created through fertility treatment separates the creation and the destruction of blastocysts. In both situations however, the in vitro environment means that there is no possibility for the production of new life. Theologically, Jones suggests that this distinction would indicate that God is not committed or relational to every blastocyst. In terms of possible policy options involving hES cells, Jones prefers policy option 3 - the use of spare IVF embryos for stem cell production, because in this scenario there is a procedural separation between the decision to discard and subsequent decision to donate for research. This position also uses embryos that are considered ‘potentially totipotent’ (inherent potential) due to their in vitro environment, and so does not involve tissue that has the full potential to become a human being. Jones also identifies that policy option 3 is the closest to the natural situation where only approximately 30% of fertilised embryos go on to produce human individuals, and also fulfils the Christian mandate to do good where ever possible while still treating the embryo with care and respect.188

Celia Deane-Drummond uses a virtue-based approach that is distinct from the traditional approaches used to determine the right or wrong of an action based on positive or negative consequences. The use of virtue ethics emphasises prudence (deliberation, judgement, action) to counter any negation of social justice and the competitive nature of biotechnology. In doing so, prudence functions as an extension of the precautionary principle which states, ‘where insufficient data exists to assess potential risks with large consequences and a fair probability, it may be appropriate to take countermeasures in advance of the data’.189 Prudence in this case allows time for adequate preparation and deliberation, rather than focusing on short-term gains that is included in the notion of “folly”. Prudence also includes both familial and political aspects. In relation to familial

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188 Jones, "Responses to the Human Embryo," 218-222. Jones, "Why Should Cloning and Stem Cell Research Be of Interest to Theologians?," 87-89 and 91-94. A similar distinction is provided by Andrew Dutney who uses a relational view based on implantation as the key event. An in vitro embryo is therefore not a human being and so surplus IVF embryos would be able to be used for hES cell production. See Andrew Dutney, "A Christian Case for Allowing the Destruction of Embryos in Stem Cell Research," in Stem Cell Research and Cloning: Contemporary Challenges to Our Humanity, ed. D Gareth Jones and Mary Byrne (Hindmarsh: ATF Press, 2004), 97-100. J C Peterson also suggests that having potential is not the same as already being that thing. See Peterson, "Is a Human Embryo a Human Being?", 83.

considerations, the example of hES cell research via IVF or cloning identifies that these technologies still produce an embryo that is implicitly life giving and so the ethical question relates to the prevention of a possible human life rather than “personal” harm to the embryo. Therefore, the embryo remains connected in terms of familial relations based on what these cells might become. With regard to the political aspects of prudence, there needs to be a balance between intention and the means to achieve the desired end, so that a good end also requires good means. Policy-making however becomes difficult, with any attempt at regulation being seen to favour one side of the debate over another. Within the New Zealand context, a recent example of prudence was the moratorium on genetic engineering, resulting in public consultation and the adoption of “controlled release” as a regulatory category (see Chapter 1.1).

Another point made by Deane-Drummond, is the distinction between the good envisaged in reproductive technology and that envisaged by hES cell technology. In adopting a gradualist position, the embryo still has status and value but not the full status of personhood, while human dignity is afforded upon implantation. Therefore, Deane-Drummond rejects the conservative stance of personhood from conception but argues for the value of early human life by distinguishing between ‘being human’ and a ‘human being’, a position that defines genetic identity, where personhood cannot be reduced to defining genetic characteristics, although these are fundamentally important in subsequent development. Deane-Drummond also rejects the creation of embryos for hES cell collection, research, and disease treatment, but would accept the use of spare IVF embryos as long as these where not deliberately produced surplus to requirements (policy option 3). As she notes, many IVF embryos are not viable, with viability defined as the strong possibility of implantation, yet these can provide a source of hES cells within an understanding of distributive justice in relation to health resources.190

Ted Peters discusses the moral status of the embryo by suggesting that if it could be shown that individual dignity is not violated in using hES cells, then beneficence should be used to improve human health and well-being. For Peters, the current Christian views on the human embryo emphasise dignity and protection over any possible benefit from embryo derived hES cells, an imbalance he seeks to redress. The understanding of dignity in this context follows the view of the European Enlightenment originating with Immanuel Kant where a person is an end in itself and not a means to an end. Therefore, dignity relates to intrinsic individual value and morally protectable personhood, which although secular criteria, has its roots in the Christian understanding of person as an object of God’s love. In a unique approach Peters suggests that human identity is located in God’s future so that dignity (self-worth) is not innate but is obtained through a loving relational existence. Dignity therefore has a proleptic structure that is future orientated, whereby dignity in relation to the embryo is conferred on someone who has not yet experienced or claimed it for themselves. As a result, dignity is an expression of future hope for the other, which for the Christian, is the final eschatological dignity in which the image of God is brought to fulfilment through God’s saving activity.

For Peters, Kingdom ethics involves the conferring of dignity and the invitation to claim dignity as a prolepsis of dignity’s future fulfilment in God, rather than ‘archonic reasoning’ that gives preference to the point of origin in providing ethical concern. This view then negates any position that relates individuality/personhood to genetic uniqueness as grounds for moral protection. In this context, dignity is relational before it is innate, which in the Christian understanding of humanity as the bearers of God’s image, is related to the communitarian view of God as Trinity. As a result, dignity is derived more from destiny than origin as a consequence of the resurrection and the resulting union with Christ. The practical outcome from this approach is that we can live in anticipation of this hope by conferring dignity (love) to others through beneficence, the bioethical correlative to loving your neighbour. For Peters this theologically informed beneficence reframes bioethics to include God’s vision to heal the world as indicated in Luke 10:29-37, where love defines the healing task in terms of the needs of the neighbour. This argument therefore provides a
greater emphasis on beneficence in supporting stem cell research and the 14-day limit on embryo research because there is no violation of human dignity (policy option 3). 191

_Brent Waters_ provides a variation on Ted Peters’ position, where neighbour-love suggests that the use of spare IVF embryos is ethical because it fulfils the mandate to care for those in need. For Waters, it could be argued however that the embryo is also our neighbour, because neighbour is a ubiquitous character of human existence – we all have neighbours of all different types and proximity. Therefore, he suggests that to be human is to treat our fellow beings as our neighbours (Luke 10:29-37), with an overriding concern for the weak and innocent. Central to this view of neighbour-love is the sacrificial dimension modelled by Christ, where ones own self-interest is sacrificed for the needs of others. Waters however also distinguishes a hierarchy of neighbours with different associated moral requirements, therefore in this context it is permissible to sacrifice the needs of one neighbour for the needs of another neighbour. 192 Although this position does not provide a clear option for decision making, it does reframe the understanding of the embryo so that any consideration of neighbour means that the use or destruction of embryos must be considered in a more relational context. As Waters suggests, the embryo must still be treated relationally as our neighbour, even if it is a neighbour with lower moral requirements.

Proponents of emerging personhood are more likely to allow stem cell harvesting from spare embryos while often rejecting the creation of embryos for research. It could be argued that using spare embryos is still a form of using a human entity as a means to an end, and is therefore unethical. In defending his ‘middle position’, _Gene Outka_ provides a valid argument that separates these two scenarios. Outka utilises the notion of “potential” in a similar fashion to Gareth Jones by distinguishing between what the foetus “is not yet” (prior to twenty weeks), from what the foetuses “are”. By focusing on what foetuses are, he affirms the importance of conception which results in an entity with a ‘power underway’


that includes the ‘existent capacity to acquire in the future’ various characteristics attributed to personhood, especially after implantation and the formation of the primitive streak. Therefore, the foetus has ‘irreducible value’ in its own right, a concept linked to the presumption that upon conception the entity will develop to term.

Although this position would seem to be against human embryonic research, Outka then extends the ‘nothing is lost principle’ suggested by Paul Ramsey to qualify his position. Outka equates the frozen (spare) embryo and the third party/parties who will benefit from treatment with Ramsey’s categories of the innocent who will die anyway (spare embryo), and the other innocent who will be saved (third party). Therefore, nothing is lost in using spare embryos for the creation of stem cells and less is lost, or at least someone is saved, in the process. In the case of the frozen embryo that will never be implanted there is an absence of prospects for these innocents, while there is the possibility of enhancement for other third-party innocents. Again, in a similar approach to Gareth Jones, there is the key distinction in the case of spare IVF embryos where creation and destruction are not linked because the intent was to enhance fertility and not the creation of spare embryos, although freezing and subsequent destruction is a foreseeable consequence if the embryos are unused. Third-party benefit in this case is after the fact and requires parental consent and not the intentions of scientists (policy option 3). In contrast, the creation of embryos for research embraces destruction as a necessary part of the process and so instrumentalises embryos. Irreducible value therefore has priority over third-party benefit, so that embryos can not be created in a situation that embraces their destruction from the start (against policy option 4). Furthermore, the absence of prospects is crucial in ensuring that the spare embryo is not being used as a means to an end, because to use the criteria of “end” in the case of frozen embryos with no hope of implantation and where freezing and discarding are the only two alternatives, is to honour ‘perpetual potential’ rather than realising potential. In a similar manner to Ted Peter’s discussion on dignity, Outka distinguishes love for a perpetually frozen embryo without self-awareness as having ‘less prospective room’ than love for an embryo in utero that will acquire self-awareness.193

4.4 Summary.

This discussion on hES cell research identifies several approaches to Christian ethics that differ from secular approaches, ranging from an emphasis on biblical principles with a variety of interpretations, to a virtue–based approach, to emphasising an emergent view of personhood, and utilising the standard ethical criteria of beneficence and non-malificence within a Christian framework. Therefore, it is clear that within Christian ethics there are a number of justified positions that focus particularly on the moral status of the embryo and the use of technology to benefit those in need (policy options 1-3). However, the question remains in what ways can Christian spirituality broaden and deepen the bioethical decision-making process? This question will now be addressed using a narrative approached based on the metaphor of journey that is compatible with disciplines of spirituality and science, and provides an ethical framework for bioethical decision-making from the perspective of Christian spirituality.
Chapter 5.


In the previous chapter, hES cells was used as a case study to highlight Christian approaches to a significant bioethical issue. Although the various approaches used drew on differing aspects of the Christian tradition, none could be identified as utilising principles based on Christian spirituality *per se*, which is the aim of this work. The previous chapters have laid the foundation for applying the area of Christian spirituality to the context of bioethics, by first defining Christian spirituality so that fundamental ideas of Christianity are brought together in dialogic tension with the whole experience of living within the Christian faith [see Chapter 2.2]. Therefore, Christian spirituality identifies the need for the Christian life to engage with the current context in which every sphere of life is within the realm of God’s care. The re-engagement of Christian spirituality and ethics is of particular relevance as Christians strive to live faithfully in the present context and display Christian character that is grounded in God’s character. In this context the example of Jesus forms a paradigm for action that requires imagination so as to live faithfully in the present. Christian spirituality is also consonant with the emergent view of science, therefore providing an argument for an integrated view of knowledge and a re-capturing of the sacred within the scientific perspective of nature, as well as the concept of spirituality regaining a place in public dialogue [see Chapter 3].

In order to determine how Christian spirituality can be integrated within bioethical decision-making, it is necessary to utilise a category of understanding that can incorporate the Christian worldview, the scientific worldview, and a framework for ethical decision-making capable of adapting to the new situation of biotechnology. The requirement of metaphor, analogy, and imagination within biblically based Christian ethics is suggestive of a narrative framework for interpretation and action [see Chapters 2.2.2 and 2.2.3]. I am suggesting that a narrative approach provides a category of understanding that can be used to incorporate Christian spirituality within bioethical decision-making. In order to develop this argument, I will first outline the narrative approach, and then propose the use of *journey* as a narrative metaphor through which Christian spirituality can be related to bioethics. In particular, the categories of *past, present, and future* that exist within the
proposed understandings of narrative and journey provide the means for a spiritual perspective on bioethics, a position that will be tested using the case study on hES cell research. Finally, within the context of New Zealand it is important to explore the connections between the Christian worldview and those held by Māori, the indigenous culture of New Zealand. Bioethical decision-making in New Zealand utilises the three-fold framework of cultural, ethical, and spiritual [see Chapter 1.1], and so any bioethical framework based on Christian spirituality needs to relate to Māori understandings of existence. It is my view that journey as a metaphor fulfils this criteria, which I will demonstrate through the categories of past and present.

5.1 The Narrative Approach

A basic characteristic of human existence is that all humans are storytellers, recounting history and testimonies in the form of story/narrative to indicate truth. As a result, narrative history is the basic genre for human action. In a basic form, narrative consists of a connected description of action (events, situations) and of suffering, which through the plot moves or unfolds to a point thereby displaying how behaviour is purposeful. Therefore, a narrative is ‘an account of characters and events in a plot moving over time and space through conflict towards resolution’, where the past and the future are brought into coherence with the present to provide meaning. The concept of narrative involves a ‘web of interlocking patterns’, in which events are elements within a complex of relations, so that the narrative helps to understand events by locating them within larger meaningful patterns. Therefore, the narrative provides understanding through ‘configurational understanding’ by the relation of the part to the meaningful whole. In any narrative a

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variety of patterns are simultaneously enacted that weave events and characters into a whole, thereby transforming and extending the pattern. As a result, configurational understanding relies on the similarity between the narrative and daily experience so that events and characters are organised into meaningful patterns without losing their individual nature or implying necessity.\(^{197}\) The notion of character is also contained within the understanding of narrative, where character refers to the cumulative source of human actions and passions that unfolds in the narrative. Narratives therefore probe the source of human action by displaying the interconnection between actions and passions that develops character, and allows for assessing some characters better than others. This produces coherence in life by releasing us from destructive alternatives, allowing us to see current distortions, keeping us from resorting to violence, and identifies how meaning transcends power. Therefore the test for any narrative is the sort of person it shapes.\(^{198}\)

Finally, what makes the narrative approach so powerful is the significance of the story that provides the meaning. Significance is the relationship between the story and the world of the reader/listener, where a significant story penetrates and transforms the world and life of reader/listener. Michael Root identifies two types of relationship, where first a narrative has an illustrative relation to the life of the reader/listener by illustrating truths within the story and showing how these truths relate to the reader/listener. Second, with particular reference to the Christian story, Root proposes the notion of a ‘storied relation’ where the life and world of the reader/listener and story form one world and one story so that the reader/listener is included within the Christian story. These storied relations do not deal with general truths, but rather mediate between the story and the reader so that inclusion within the story becomes primary.\(^{199}\)

\section*{5.1.1 Narrative and the Sacred.}

As a cultural form that expresses the coherence of life through time, narratives find their fundamental form in the context of sacred stories that create a sense of self and world.\(^{200}\) Stephen Crites distinguishes ‘sacred story’ that moulds consciousness from ‘mundane

\(^{198}\) Hauerwas and Burrell, "From System to Story," 177-180 and 185.
\(^{199}\) Root, "The Narrative Structure of Soteriology," 265-266.
story’ that articulates reality, with both forms mediated by experiencing ‘active consciousness’ which is in a rudimentary sense narrative in form. Therefore, ‘stories give qualitative substance to the form of experience because it is itself an incipient story’.201 Within the Christian faith, a narrative approach exists in biblical understandings where the Bible is understood to be ‘cast in the form of story’, and that the early Christians are identified as storytellers.202 H Richard Niebuhr in particular, identified that within the Christian faith, “story” gives meaning to events in history. The biblical revelation of God was therefore our internal history of God’s relationship with us, rather than an external history observed from the outside and communicated as normative knowledge. Internal history therefore provides value, meaning, and unity because the past resides and is retold through memory and the future represents potential. Both past and present are then associated with each other in the present. As Niebuhr suggests, ‘the inspiration of Christianity has been derived from history it is true, but not from history as seen by a spectator; the constant reference is to subjective events, that is to events in the lives of subjects’. Furthermore, Niebuhr identifies external history as the medium of embodiment in which internal history exists and comes to life. Therefore, the biological history represented by objective fact is necessary for the internal history to exist in relation to meaning, value, and unity.203 As a result, biblical theology can be understood as a ‘proclamation of the story of God’s redemptive actions in history’,204 in which the Bible can be read as story and one’s own story can be told on the basis of the biblical story.

Recently, NT Wright also identifies the narrative form of Scripture by viewing the complete biblical canon as the narrative of God’s project of justice; God’s setting the existing creation to right by dealing with evil – including death and suffering - through Jesus.205 For Wright, history is neither ‘bare fact’ nor ‘subjective interpretation’, but is ‘the

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201 Ibid., 72.
204 Grenz and Olson, 20th-Century Theology, 276.
205 Wright, Evil and the Justice of God, 42-46, 51 and 58.
meaningful narrative of events and intentions’. Therefore, the Bible declares that all authority belongs to God revealed in Jesus Christ and the Spirit, and as a whole can be read as a story of God’s sovereignty in the renewal of all creation. Here we have the one Creator God; the presence of evil in God’s creation; Israel as the people through whom God’s Kingdom would come and who expressed their world view through the medium of story; and Jesus as the full presence of God’s kingdom who accomplishes what scripture has pointed to, as told through the Gospel narratives.

Not only does the Bible utilise narrative as a central means of writing, but Christian systematic theology also utilises narrative in order to arrive at a ‘systematic particularity of the story’, in which each theological locus attempts to do justice to the whole overarching story while focusing on one aspect. Theology uses narrative language to express direct experiences, which implies that narrative is the original language of theological expression. Narrative theology ‘seeks to utilise the concept of story and the human storyteller as the central motif for theological reflection’, in which faith means the ‘joining of our personal stories with the transcendent/immanent story of a religious community and ultimately with the grand narrative of the divine action in the world’. The divine story therefore is articulated by faith communities yet transcends our individual stories, and is present both within world history and in the ongoing story of faith. In the formulation of Christian doctrine, each aspect displays simultaneity by either explicitly or implicitly involving other doctrine and thereby utilising different aspects of the overarching story. David Ford describes this as a journey where each doctrine moves through a series of dialectic encounters with other doctrines to provide the systematic particularity of the story in terms of past, present, and future. Therefore, Christian truth is communicated primarily

207 Ibid., 139-144, 215-223 and 371-403. See also Wright, Scripture and the Authority of God, 17-25, 84-86 and 89-95. The result is a multi-layered approach which Wright describes as a five-act model: Creation (Genesis 1-2) act 1; Fall (Genesis 3-11) act 2; Israel (the story of Israel from Abraham up to Jesus the Messiah) act 3; Jesus is the climatic act 4; the New Testament including us is the fifth act which presupposes the other 4 and moves toward its final destination.
210 Grenz and Olson, 20th-Century Theology, 271.
through narrative in order to inform the performance of the Christian life through worship, community, prophetic speech, and action in the historical present.\textsuperscript{211} Soteriology, the theological reflection of Jesus’ saving action, exemplifies this pattern of theology, where structure and explanatory power is a function of its narrative form. In a narrative understanding of soteriology, human existence is identified by two states, the first being one of deprivation through sin, and the second being one of release through salvation in which Jesus is the event that transforms state 1 (sin) into state 2 (salvation). The task of theology therefore is to show how the reader is included within the salvific story.\textsuperscript{212}

\textit{5.1.2 Narrative and Ethics.}

Within Christian ethics, narrative connects spirituality and ethics by reflecting on the biblical grand narrative of creation, fall, redemption, and new creation.\textsuperscript{213} Drawing out the ethic expressed in the biblical narrative leads to an ethical approach to narrative theology that emphasises key themes, especially virtue, character, and community.\textsuperscript{214}

Narrative is the basic genre for identifying selfhood, where the unity of self resides in the unity of the narrative that links the process of birth, to life, to death. However, the narrative of self is constrained by the self playing a subordinate part in the narratives of others, in which both individually and corporately there is a shared concept of future possibilities. As Alasdair MacIntyre suggests, ‘the unity of a human life is the unity of a narrative quest’, where asking “what is good for me” and “what is good for humanity” and participating in this quest produces the moral life. In this context, the virtues provide the dispositions that sustain practices and achieve the goods internal to the practices, and sustain the relevant quest for the good while enabling us to avoid harms.\textsuperscript{215} Central to MacIntyre’s understanding of virtue is the concept of narrative history, the basic genre for characterising human actions where the self is understood as a unity linking life to death. A lived narrative has a teleological character in which individual and corporate lives are lived in the light of conceptions of a possible shared future. Therefore, virtues ‘sustain us in a relevant

\textsuperscript{212} Root, "The Narrative Structure of Soteriology," 263 and 266.
\textsuperscript{213} Robin Parry, "Evangelicalism and Ethics," in \textit{The Futures of Evangelicalism: Issues and Prospects}, ed. Craig Bartholomew, Robin Parry, and Andrew West (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2003), 165-166 and 189. The whole of Parry’s contribution reflects this view.
\textsuperscript{214} Grenz and Olson, \textit{20th-Century Theology}, 278-281.
\textsuperscript{215} MacIntyre, "The Virtues," 91, 99 and 101-104.
kind of quest for the good, by enabling us to overcome the harms, dangers, temptations and
distractions which we encounter, and which will furnish us with increasing self-knowledge
and increasing knowledge of the good’. This seeking for the good is more than an
individual quest for we inherit a variety of expectations and obligations that form our
‘moral starting point’ and is part of our moral particularity. Therefore, the narrative of my
life has a relational character, being embedded in the story of the communities from which I
obtain my identity. As a result, the virtues sustain the relationships required for the
practices as well as relationships to the past, present, and future, and in doing so sustain the
traditions that provide the individual and the practices with a historical context.216

A significant point in the use of narrative in relation to morality is that narrative is a form
of rationality, thereby giving credence to a narrative account of morality. The standard
account of morality assumes objectivity, so that moral judgements achieved using
impersonal rationality are free of subjective beliefs. Moral concerns are therefore regarded
from the perspective of the observer and defined as problems that can be solved using
rational science to evaluate alternative solutions. However, as Stanley Hauerwas and David
Burrell suggest, ‘ethical objectivity cannot be secured by retreating from narrative, but only
by being anchored in those narratives that best direct us toward the good’. They suggest
that the majority of decisions are innate rather than rational, and as such, reflect character
acquired through beliefs and dispositions, not rationality. In this context, narrative forms
us to have one type of character rather than another so that our stories determine what
moral considerations matter. All our notions are narrative-dependent so that behaviour
makes sense within our own story, where narratives provide the patterns of integrity that
allows us to determine how our behaviour fits within our ongoing pattern.217

Narrative also contrasts with modern individualism by identifying that the story of an
individual’s life is embedded in the story of others and in the communities from which the
individual derives their identity, so that the self includes a specific past - a history that bears

216  Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study of Moral Theory*, 2nd ed. (London: Duckworth, 1985), 204-225. MacIntyre suggests and additional virtue of having an ‘adequate sense of the traditions to which one belongs or which one confronts’. Therefore the two central concepts for a traditional account of virtue are narrative unity and practice. See page 223 and 226.

217  Hauerwas and Burrell, "From System to Story," 159-163, 166-171 and 177. Quote is taken from pages 161-162.
In this context, a community is defined as ‘a group of people who have come to share a common past, who understand particular events in the past to be of decisive importance for interpreting the present, who anticipate the future by means of a shared hope, and who express their identity by means of a common narrative’. For Christians this entails being a ‘community capable of hearing the story of God we find in the scriptures and living in a manner that is faithful to that story’. Therefore, the Bible functions in a moral sense as the means to remember the stories of God for guidance in individual and corporate lives. As James Gustafson suggests, ‘narratives function to sustain the particular moral identity of a religious (or secular) community by rehearsing its history and traditional meanings, as these are portrayed in scripture and other sources. Narratives shape and sustain the ethos of the community’. Furthermore, we live in the context of several communities, and therefore we need to live by the story of more than one community.


The purpose of a narrative approach is to provide meaning to present existence through the significance of the narrative, determined by the relationship between the story and the world of the reader/listener. Identifying common elements between a narrative and the present context enables the narrative to inform and transform the present. Within biblical ethics, the making of metaphors in response to new contexts ‘is a mode of creating dissonance of thought in order to restructure meaning relationships’. Therefore, a common metaphor is a means to utilise a narrative approach within contemporary ethics [see Chapter 2.2.3]. I am suggesting that the metaphor of *journey* provides such a concept for relating Christian spirituality and bioethics, in which *journey* is meaningful both for Christian spirituality and science. This is because Christian spirituality and science both

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218 MacIntyre, "The Virtues," 107-108. Tradition is defined as a ‘historically extended, socially embedded argument’ sustained in by the practice of virtues.

219 George Stroup as quoted by Grenz and Olson, *20th-Century Theology*, 283.

220 Ibid., 280.

221 James Gustafson as quoted by Hauerwas and Jones, "Introduction," 2.

presuppose a historical narrative, a concept that is vital for identity formation, the making of meaning, and a sense of dignity.223

5.2.1 The Metaphor of “Journey” in Christian Spirituality.

In relation to Christian spirituality, the biblical record identifies the metaphor of journey within historical events such as the journey of Abraham to Canaan (Genesis 12-14), the journey of Israel under Moses in the Sinai desert (Exodus 12:33-40:38 and the books of Deuteronomy and Joshua), and the journey to and from exile.224 Within the New Testament the understanding of journey is typified by the travelling ministry of Jesus culminating in his final journey to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51), and in Paul’s missionary journeys recorded in the Book of Acts. The New Testament also identifies the spiritual life of the Christian as a journey moving from captivity to freedom resulting in a new life in Christ. Central to this journey of faith is the process of discipleship, the call to follow Christ (John 21:22) as seen in the first Christians who where called the followers of “the way” (Acts 9:2; 24:14).225 Discipleship is a life transformed by the Holy Spirit to the will of God, a life shaped by the example of Jesus in whose likeness disciples are made, and a life lived in response to the love of God in which love for God and love for neighbour are inexorably linked.226 For the writer of 1 John, discipleship is described as ‘[walking] in the light’ (1 John 1:7) which further emphasises the journey motif in faithful Christian living. Discipleship also includes participation in the life and politics of the Church and involvement in the restorative action of God - all of which centre on worship.227 As a result, the call to discipleship informs the ethical journey amidst the uncertainties and problems of life.

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223 Sheldrake, "Spirituality and History," 42.
5.2.2 The Metaphor of “Journey” in Science.
In relation to science, journey is also a relevant metaphor because the combination of the story of the universe and the story of evolution produces a new worldview that is described in narrative form. This narrative provides a view of evolutionary progress as a journey leading to the formation of stars, planets, and ultimately life. Significantly, the recent description of evolution in the work of Simon Conway Morris emphasises the concept of journey in the metaphor of ‘evolutionary navigation’. Conway Morris understands evolution in terms of convergence, the propensity of life to navigate to rather precise biological solutions in response to adaptive challenges. As he suggests, evolution navigates across the infinite ‘multidimensional hyperspace’ of biological possibility, to the specific biological solutions. Therefore, the cosmic process of evolution from beginning in the singularity termed the “big bang” to the present, is a journey in which the entire ‘foundational economy’ of the universe must be just right in order for life to develop.229

Another aspect in the journey of evolution is the emergence of more complex worlds evident in geological time. The work of Stuart Kauffman in particular highlights the journey of self-organization leading to the production of complexity, novelty, increased diversity, and co-evolution. Furthermore, as Kauffman has demonstrated using computer models, complex systems have the propensity to spontaneously generate a higher degree of order (self-organisation). Kauffman views this progression as a story that we must tell as it unfolds, and suggests the depths to the evolutionary story are only just being realised with ‘life doing something far richer than we have dreamed’.230 Conway Morris and Kauffman however come to different conclusions: Conway Morris suggests that ‘life may be a universal principle, but we can still be alone’, however Kauffman suggests that life is

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228 For a good example of the narrative form of science see Edwards, Breath of Life, 9-13.
expected and universal.\textsuperscript{231} The sense of evolutionary progression from simplicity to complexity, from non-living to living implied in the work of both Conway Morris and Kauffman is compatible with the metaphor of journey as more complex systems develop and sentience emerges.

From a spiritual perspective, evolution can also be understood as a journey, as seen in the previously described work of J. Wentzel van Huyssteen [see Chapter 3.1.1] where evolution can be understood as a holistic, belief-gaining process.\textsuperscript{232} Terence Nichols is another who identifies a spiritual connection within an evolutionary worldview, by critiquing the dismissal of progress as a philosophical category from evolutionary thinking, resulting in evolution being thought of as a ‘random walk, driven largely by chance’. In the context of a Christian worldview where the goal or endpoint is envisaged eschatologically, Nichols suggests evolution can be viewed as a journey, ‘culminating in the reconciliation of all things in Christ’.\textsuperscript{233} Furthermore, these spiritual interpretations of evolution imply that journey as a metaphor in science has ethical implications, implying a relational aspect to science that identifies the deeper connections or commonalities within the universe, and so provides the link between care for creation and care for humanity.

\textbf{5.2.3 “Journey”: The Past, Present, and Future.}

As a metaphor that provides a level of understanding that is relevant for both theology/spirituality and science/bioethics, journey presupposes useful categories for bioethical consideration; the past, the present, and the future. In the context of Christian spirituality, this is significant because these categories correlate to the spiritual categories of creation (past); continuing creation (present), and eschatological hope (future) contained within the biblical meta-narrative. Furthermore, the narrative emphasis on identity and meaning can also be determined using these temporal categories, thereby providing a narrative means for ethics. Within a scientific perspective, the forming of identity through mental images of the past, present, and future, is a product of humanity’s higher consciousness leading to self-awareness and symbolic meaning.\textsuperscript{234} From a spiritual

\textsuperscript{231} Conway Morris, \textit{Life's Solution}, 328. Kauffman, \textit{Prolegomenon to a General Biology} ([cited August 3 2006]).
\textsuperscript{232} van Huyssteen, \textit{Alone in the Universe?}, 312.
\textsuperscript{234} van Huyssteen, \textit{Alone in the Universe?}, 267.
perspective, St Augustine’s reflections on memory in the book *Confessions* highlight the connection of experience and the modalities of *past, present, and future* that interconnect in the experiencing consciousness. Memory provides coherence by providing three temporal aspects to present experience: a present of things past (memory); a present of things present (direct attention); a present of things future (anticipation). The distinction between past as the determinant aspect and anticipation as an indeterminate aspect, means that present experience embraces the whole of life unified by a narrative form that provides a sense of personal identity by providing continuity of experience over time. Therefore, conscious experience in the present entails the embodiment of a person living in the world, where action and experience meet, with memory providing the depth of experience and anticipation providing the trajectory of action. Significantly, memory and anticipation are largely social aspects.\(^{235}\)

The categories of *past, present, and future* also function within the dialogue between Christian spirituality and science. Willem Drees identifies these categories as a means of moral guidance in terms of past traditions, present science, and future consequences. I agree with Drees’ assessment that a unique feature of the religion and science dialogue is to bring the categories of *past, present, and future* into the conversation, however as he suggests none of these three alone is sufficient. In the context of this work where Christian spirituality is the specific focus, Drees’ specific comments on religion are of interest. He suggests that *past* religious traditions are useful, not as sources of guidance in decision-making but rather in supporting the commitment to choices already made. Furthermore, traditions as moral guides also have problems including the loss of plausibility of the tradition and the contextual distance between the tradition and today. His suggestion is to understand the experiences and concerns of the original context and appropriate these in today’s context. However, Drees dismisses as ‘abstract’ central theological claims that I believe undergird Christian spirituality.\(^{236}\) In particular, the doctrine of the Trinity is central to the Christian understanding of God, creation, and knowledge of the world within a relational framework, and as I will develop in the context of Christian spirituality, cannot be dismissed [see Chapters 5.3.1, 5.4.1, and 5.5.1].

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\(^{235}\) Crites, "The Narrative Quality of Experience," 73-80, and 87.

In relation to the *present*, Drees suggests that science can be a guide especially in relation to factual knowledge about the world. However, the present also needs to recognise the past because new theories about present experience are also related to old theories.\(^{237}\) There is also a problem in assuming that science is neutral and is the only means to knowledge as discussed in Chapter 3.1. In contrast to the view of Drees, I am suggesting that spirituality can provide a guide to morality within the present, because the Christian faith provides a distinct perspective on God’s continuing action in creation and humanity’s role in this creative process that undergirds ethical decision-making. As will be developed further, the role of humanity in God’s creative process places an emphasis on human character through reflecting on the virtues as ethical criteria focusing on ethical living in the present.

Finally, Drees identifies the *future* as the final category in which consequences can provide guidance for the decision-making. A consequential perspective alone however is insufficient because there is no means to provide value for the consequences, and consequences alone do not motivate action. As a result, Drees calls for past tradition to compliment perspectives on future consequences. In particular, theology is a means of engaging with the idea of making the world a better place that addresses the vision and values of the past and helps to articulate the judgments for the future.\(^{238}\) Within the Christian tradition, eschatology articulates the reflection on the future, which has the primary effect in the present of providing hope [see Chapter 5.5.1].

### 5.2.4 Summary.

In summary, within a narrative framework the metaphor of *journey* provides a concept that is relevant to both Christian spirituality and science. Significantly, *journey* provides the means for Christian spirituality to inform bioethical decision-making through the three broad categories of *past, present*, and *future*. Given the unknown nature of many procedures and experimentation within the biological sciences, and the recognition that past connections and future concerns are highly relevant concerns in decision making, these categories provide a holistic outlook rather than focusing on the immediate results or consequences. In particular, our identity as human beings is formed by our past –both

\(^{237}\) Ibid.: 370-371 and 373-374.

\(^{238}\) Ibid.: 371-372 and 374-375.
cultural/social and physical inheritance, so that we can live in the present and look to the future.

The following sections will seek to outline what is meant by *past, present, and future* from the perspective of Christian spirituality, and to determine the related ethical criteria from each that can be used in bioethical decision-making. The usefulness of each category will then be determined with reference to the case study on hES cell research, and the cultural context of New Zealand.

## 5.3 The Past.

The idea that the universe is a creation that has been ‘given’ is a fundamental religious idea across all peoples outside of Western Europe and its sphere of influence, and provides a foundation for spirituality [see Chapter 2.1].[^239] Within the context of Christian spirituality, the Christian doctrine of creation is a distinctive worldview that forms the basis of how God, humanity, and the whole of creation are understood. It is my contention that the Christian doctrine of creation is a necessary presupposition for relating Christian spirituality and bioethics. In particular, the understanding of the ultimacy of God as Creator and the notion of relation/relatedness provide the framework for bioethical principles based on the notion of *past* presupposed in the metaphor of *journey*.

### 5.3.1 God as Creator in Christian Spirituality.

At the centre of the Christian faith and the lived experience of spirituality and ethics is the understanding of our *past* that determines a specific view of creation. The Christian understanding of creation is centred on the Judeo-Christian belief that God is the ‘Creator’, the sole agent of creation.[^240] The relationship between God and creation is expressed in covenantal terms, where God in the act of creation ‘brought into existence a world other than himself…[and] will not hold himself apart from it or be known except in relation to

[^239]: Colin E. Gunton, *The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study*, Edinburgh Studies in Constructive Theology (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 1-2. McGrath, *Christian Spirituality*, 36. As previously mentioned the understanding of creation has also provided the basis for science [see Chapter 3]. The notion of “givenness” is emphasised by Bruce Foltz. The failure to see the givenness of nature is a failure of spiritual vision that is both ‘odd and modern’, and is understood as foolishness. Foltz, “Nature's Other Side,” 330 and 337-338.

the world he has made’. Because God is primarily characterised as love (1 John 4:8 and 16), creation is understood as the outflow of God’s love in an act of self-giving and sustaining love, the result of God’s free and sovereign will so that creation is seen as ‘very good’. In creating, God freely decided to not exist alone, but rather to exist in fellowship with a reality that is truly distinct from Godself. This distinction between God and creation is expressed in the understanding of creation ex nihilo - creation out of nothing, in which God does not rely on anything outside of Godself, and is therefore truly sovereign and free. In the act of creation God also has given creation freedom – the time and space to become itself, through what Karl Barth describes as ‘God’s patience’. Therefore, the act of creation can be seen to have two purposes; to create something that is intrinsically of value, and to make something valuable in itself because it is created to serve God’s glory. From the human perspective, creation ex nihilo emphasises the improbability and contingent nature of our existence, our finitude in which participation in the life of God is limited by our material existence.

The covenantal understanding of God’s creative act means that through the ‘purpose of his Holy love’, God has willed to bring a creaturely realm of heaven and earth into existence. Therefore, it is in this creaturely realm that God chooses to share with the creature the communion of love that is the Trinity, through a covenantal framework of grace. This highlights the distinctly Christian interpretation of faith in terms of the Trinity as articulated in the Nicene-Constantinople Creed, and is distinguished from other

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243 Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, 43 and 46. As McGrath summarises, the doctrine of creation ex nihilo has four distinctive features: God is affirmed as being all powerful; no other exists before God; the mode of creation is conscious, ordered, deliberate, and purposeful; the Creator is free of any limitations. See McGrath, *Nature*, 166 and 194. Gunton, "The Doctrine of Creation," 41. Colin E Gunton, *The Christian Faith: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 17.
monotheistic religions because of its Christological orientation.\textsuperscript{248} In terms of spirituality as a practical expression of faith, the Trinity provides an account of God’s divine action in and through creation in concordance with the experience and witness of the community of faith, and provides the central framework for the Christian life.\textsuperscript{249} Central to this understanding of God is the relational interpretation of the Trinity in which relationality is the defining feature of God’s being centred on love. God, defined as Father, Son, and Spirit is ontologically one God existing in communion, where the particular “persons” are understood as “persons” or “other” only in relation.\textsuperscript{250} Therefore, the triune Creator who is ontologically relational exists in relationship with creation, so that God’s love for creation reflects the love within the Trinity.\textsuperscript{251} Furthermore, in Trinitarian terms creation is understood to have occurred through Christ the creative “Word” (John 1:1-18; Colossians 1:15-20), so that through the incarnation, God became human, the Creator became a ‘creature in time’\textsuperscript{252} in which Jesus Christ is the ‘oneness of Creator and creature’.\textsuperscript{253} Christ is the perfect example of human nature, and the fullest expression of God's intent for humanity being both the image of God and the norm for true divinity and true humanity.\textsuperscript{254} Therefore, God shares in the creaturely existence and God’s relation with the world is identified as personal.\textsuperscript{255} Within the Trinitarian framework there has also been a re-emphasis on the Holy Spirit’s activity at the beginning of God’s creative act as the “Lord and Giver of life”, highlighting the universal role of the Holy Spirit and of

\textsuperscript{248} Ibid., 203-204. The Nicene-Constantinople Creed: ‘one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible, one Lord Jesus Christ through whom all things have been made, and the Holy Spirit the Lord and Giver of Life’. McGrath, \textit{Nature}, 187.


\textsuperscript{251} McGrath, \textit{Christian Spirituality}, 52.


\textsuperscript{253} Barth, \textit{Dogmatics in Outline}, 48 and 54-55.


\textsuperscript{255} Colin E Gunton, \textit{Christ and Creation, The Didsbury Lectures} (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), 76. The incarnation also provides the basis for God’s eternal economic purpose that has been brought to its redemptive fulfilment in Christ. See Torrance, \textit{The Christian Doctrine of God}, 204.
The Holy Spirit is pictured as the breath of God breathing life into and empowering the universe in all its stages, and as God’s immanent power ‘enabling all creatures to be and to become’. As a result, God’s creative act is aligned with God’s further works in which through the Son and Spirit, God is continually involved in the world in order to provide the ‘institution, preservation and execution of the covenant of grace’ [see Chapters 5.4 and 5.5].

**Humanity in Christian Spirituality.**

A spiritual interpretation of creation also provides a spiritual understanding of humanity in relation to God, and in relation to the whole of creation. Within the Judeo-Christian view of God as ‘Creator’, humankind is understood as the climax of God’s creative activity, as the only creature made in the image of God (*imago Dei*). Here the image comprises the whole person: personality; self-determination; rational thought; the capacity for relationship. As Joel Green identifies, the biblical record supports a monistic view of the *imago Dei* where the image of God is the whole human life, rather than a fragmentation of human personhood into a body-soul dualism in which human uniqueness and the *imago Dei* are identified only in the possession of a soul. As a result the *imago Dei* can be considered as our whole embodied existence, a view compatible with non-reductive (emergent) scientific conclusions about human personhood [see Chapter 3.1]. The pre-eminent position, dignity, and worth ascribed to humanity within the biblical worldview then relates primarily to function and position rather than appearance and form, and especially the human ‘capacity and vocation for community with God’.

The *imago Dei* provides the Christian basis for understanding human nature, and humanity’s relationship with God, with others, and with the created world, based on a

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261 Green, "Scripture and the Human Person," 63.
three-fold interpretation of imago Dei as “relational”. First, integral to humanity’s relationship with God is an understanding of redemption, the restoration of the relationship between God and humanity. In this context, all of humanity falls short of reflecting God’s image through human sinfulness, which can be understood as the ‘violation of relationship’ between humanity and God, between human beings, and between humanity and creation. Redemption of this relationship has occurred through the redirection of creation by Christ who came to restore the imago Dei in humanity, and through whom we can live as the image-bearers of God. Therefore, to be human is to be human-in-relationship-with-God, the Creator and Redeemer, and underlies the basic task of Christian spirituality.

Secondly, as the imago Dei, humanity mirrors God’s divinity as “other” only in “relation”, as witnessed in our human relationships which are an external expression based on partnership of the relational nature of the triune God. Therefore, humans are defined as persons in terms of relationship with others, rather than a definition based on individuality that emphasises separation from others.

Finally, the concept of imago Dei identifies humanity’s relationship with creation in terms of distinctiveness and role. In terms of distinctiveness, the biblical account of human creation (Genesis 2) identifies humanity’s continuity with the earth, where humanity as the imago Dei has a particular and specific relationship with the Creator that is distinct from the rest of creation. Within this relationship humanity is to bear witness to God’s acts, and only humanity can witness to Christ as God’s partners who can knowingly and freely respond. In this context, freedom is a relational concept for humanity, and is limited by the existence of fellow creatures and the sovereignty of God. Therefore, human freedom is

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262 Gunton, The Triune Creator, 11. The three main interpretations are: the substantive; the functional; the relational. For a good outline of all three see, Millard J Erickson, Introducing Christian Doctrine, ed. L Arnold Hustad, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 172-175.
265 Gunton, The Christian Faith, 43.
267 Barth, Dogmatics in Outline, 49. Gunton, The Christian Faith, 39. McGrath, Nature, 197. Tanner, "Creation and Providence," 125. As Barth suggests ‘[Humanity] is the place within creation where the creature in its fullness is concentrated, and at the same time stretches beyond itself; the place where God wishes to be praised within creation, and may be praised’. See Barth, Dogmatics in Outline, 54.
‘an imperfect mirroring of the divine freedom’ and is ultimately freedom to decide for God in obedience, a position that relates to the unique human property of morality. Distinctiveness also relates to humanity’s innate spiritual dimension, as creatures endowed with the quality of “spirit” that enables creative engagement with the world [see Chapter 2.1]. One aspect to the notion of “spirit” is the human soul that operates out of and through our physical structure, a special creation of God pointing to our relationship with God as witnessed in the man Jesus. The human mind is also involved in human spirituality, providing the unique ability to recognize and represent the patterns of the world. It is postulated that this ability originates in the correlation between the mind of God, the rationalities of the created order, and the human mind as created in the image of God.

The notions of freedom and morality mentioned above connect spirituality with the specific role for humanity within creation. This is based on the understanding of Ancient Near Eastern culture where the concept of image was associated with representing a god on Earth. Within this context, humanity can be understood to be created ‘as our image, to be our image’. Rikki Watts utilises this view within the metaphor of ‘creation-as-temple-palace’ to describe humanity’s function as the installed image-bearers of God within creation. Humans are therefore ‘pictographs’ of God rather than ‘portraits’, with a representative function to look after creation on behalf of God. As a result, the term “dominion” (Genesis 1:26) is understood as “stewardship”, meaning to look after the creation which God has entrusted to us. For some however, stewardship is inadequate and still views nature as a resource, so other metaphors have been explored to develop a

268 Quote taken from Barth, Dogmatics in Outline, 47. Also see Gunton, The Christian Faith, 45. Powell, Participating in God, 86.
more Christological focus of what it means for humanity to function as the *imago Dei*, such as; shepherd, partners, priestly service, Christ-centred service and servanthood, and created co-creator.

### 5.3.2 Ethical Implications.

#### A. Ultimate and Penultimate.

The Christian understanding of creation identifies God as the sole Creator and Lord, the ultimate source of life and existence. In contrast, humanity is a created being made in the image of God, a creature who can through grace participate in the work of God by taking on a penultimate role. The distinction between God and humanity has been expressed by Dietrich Bonhoeffer as the dialectic between the “ultimate” and “penultimate”, a dialectic that is only reconcilable in Jesus. For Bonhoeffer the ultimate is Christ, the justifying word of God received by grace. The penultimate are the things ‘before the last’ in the worldly realm that prepare the way for the ultimate, and include acts of social action that point to God and establish certain definite conditions. Therefore, the penultimate take on an ethical relationship with the ultimate when done in love ‘for the sake of the ultimate’. The notion of “ultimate” also supports what Bruce Foltz calls an ethic of ‘givenness’. Because God is the creator and nature has an inherent givenness, this calls for a deep sense of respect for the integrity of creation that includes environmental and bioethical considerations as the integrity of nature exists outside of human construction.

Neil Messer uses this distinction in relation to bioethics by suggesting that through acting within the creaturely limitations of our freedom, biotechnology can have a penultimate role but not an ultimate role in overcoming our human limitations. Therefore, the penultimate is

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a call to action in the journey of faith, where faithful action is motivated by God’s love and we are called to help people to receive God’s love.\textsuperscript{279} The penultimate is also a call to radical dependence as humanity realises its place in the created order and our reliance on the power and providence of God.\textsuperscript{280} As a result, human action is always an activity against the backdrop of the ultimate as we move forward in life, in the service of others and within our natural limitations. As Messer suggests, we need to discern what limits we can and are called to transcend, and what limits we cannot or should not try to overcome.\textsuperscript{281} The result is human action characterised by critical reflection and humility, in which sacrifice and restraint are the overriding determinants of ethical action.\textsuperscript{282}

\textit{Human Embryonic Stem Cells Reconsidered.}

In relation to the case study on hES cell research, the distinction between ultimate and penultimate activities is useful in considering the past attitudes within society in order to see the connection with present situations. In this context, the use of the Bible reflects our understanding of God’s ultimate activity and our interpretation of past tradition, and the abortion debate highlights attitudes to penultimate human activity.

As previously indicated, the Bible is an important source from our past tradition that informs Christian spirituality and Christian Ethics [see Chapters 2 and 4]. Using the Bible as the major source or as one of many sources represents a faithful use of Scripture within the Christian tradition that reflects an understanding of both the biblical and current context. The previous discussion about biblical views of pregnancy [Chapter 4.2] identified pregnancy as God’s blessing to a community rather than to an individual. For those who identify personhood with conception this blessing occurs at the specific joining of egg and sperm. However, natural fertilisation results in a 70% loss of fertilised embryos, a situation that suggest the notion of blessing can only be identified with implantation and the recognition of pregnancy. Furthermore, the possibility of twinning in the period up to 14 days suggests that the concept of individuality in relation to the embryos can only be

\begin{footnotesize}
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    \item\textsuperscript{280} Radical dependence is an affection described by James M Gustafson. See Spohn, "Christian Spirituality and Theological Ethics," 278.
    \item\textsuperscript{281} Messer, "Human Cloning and Genetic Manipulation," 11.
    \item\textsuperscript{282} Cahill, "Creation and Ethics," 14.
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considered after this point. The use of science and technology in IVF for infertile couples can also be considered a blessing, since our greater knowledge of human development is used to benefit those in need, in which the kingdom of God can be lived in the present with the relieving of suffering and the conferring of dignity. The category of past within the metaphor of journey however qualifies what is meant by blessing. From the perspective of Christian spirituality, God is the provider of blessing, but blessing once conferred also requires responsibility so that blessing produces limited freedom. Central to this limitation is the understanding that God is Lord over all, so there is a responsibility to act prudently with the blessing that God bestows upon us. Therefore, we still need to recognise the distinction between the ultimate saving activity that is God’s alone, and penultimate human activity that includes medical benefit and the use of technology. This distinction is a reminder that human existence is limited and so there are boundaries in activity that humanity should not cross. For some, the use of human embryos is one such boundary for others the use of human embryos is to be undertaken only with extreme caution and respect because issues of human value are determined by God as Creator and not by humanity as the created being made in the image of God.

In addressing issues relating to human penultimate activity, for many the hES cell debate contains overtones of the previous debates surrounding abortion. However, there are significant differences which negate a comparison that need to be addressed so as to distinguish the issues clearly. First, the abortion debate revolved around the competing rights of the unborn child and the mother. No competing issue of rights exist with hES cells, however the rights or lack of rights of the embryo and parental rights are considered in terms of consent. Second, in the abortion debate the foetus was in utero, with all the environmental factors required for a successful pregnancy. For hES cells this criterion is absent in vitro. Third, in the abortion debate the foetus was identifiable only after many weeks of gestation, where as for hES cells, manipulation or research occurs at the pre-implantation stage (14 days maximum) so there is no possibility of implantation and pregnancy. Finally, abortion involves the removal of the future that the in utero embryo is already in the process of attaining, a future that is lacking for frozen embryos. This distinction between possible futures is especially relevant in terms of parental hopes and

grief. The loss of a pregnancy in the latter stages naturally produces a greater sense of grief related to the loss of the child, as opposed to the loss of one's hope for having a child.\textsuperscript{284} I believe this can be extended in the case of spare IVF where the sense of loss is associated with loss of one's hope of having a child and is a decision made by the potential parents, rather than grief for a specific child, thereby distinguishing between the two situations.

\textbf{B. The Relationality of Creation.}

From both a Christian and scientific perspective, creation is distinctly relational. In the context of Christian spirituality, the relatedness of creation is grounded in the relationality of God so that universe is understood in terms of ‘nature-as-creation’.\textsuperscript{285} The relationality of the created order also identifies a specific role for humanity as the \textit{imago Dei}, a role based on humanity’s relationship to creation and to God. As previously suggested, a Christian response to the reductionism inherent in biological science is to emphasise wholeness, where the role for humanity is in the making of wholes [see Chapter 3.1]. The extension of this principle is to see creation as a whole so that a lack of care for creation results in a lack of care for ourselves. In this context, ‘As long as the universe is unfinished, so also is each of us….Our personal redemption awaits the salvation of the whole.’\textsuperscript{286} Therefore, we cannot talk of an individual or even a species journey but must always consider the communal journey in which all of life is interrelated. For humanity this broadens the ethical considerations away from autonomy and individualisation to a community based approach that also includes the rest of creation as a vital part of our ecological community. This position is compatible with the scientifically determined relationality grounded in common origins both cosmic and biological, where the whole of the universe shares a common history in which the commonality of matter highlights relatedness [see Chapter 3.1.1]. The resulting ‘deep-seated interconnectivity’ in the fabric of the universe that corresponds to a ‘web-like character of interconnected integrity’, is


\textsuperscript{286} Haught, \textit{Deeper Than Darwin}, 155.
consonant with the relational understanding of the Trinity – the source of all created reality.\textsuperscript{287}

\textit{Human Embryonic Stem Cells Reconsidered.}

The Christian understanding of God and creation emphasises relationality as an ontological character of God and the universe. This position is consonant with the emergent view of the universe that also emphasises interconnection [see Chapter 3.1.1]. The developing scientific view of emergence also leads to a gradualist view of human development [see Chapter 4.3.2]. To this effect, personhood can be seen as an emerging relational property, so that the pre-implantation embryo while ‘being human’ is not a ‘human being’, but still has status and worth and so must be treated with respect.\textsuperscript{288} As suggested previously [see Chapter 4.3], relationships are important \textit{in vitro} and \textit{in utero} in determining dependence and comparative worth. Therefore, the notion of human community suggests treating embryos with absolute respect, a view reflecting their position in the human developmental journey. However, the present environment does indicate a distinction between “potential” and “actual” personhood, and “being human” and a “human being”. By accepting an emergent/gradualist view of human personhood [see Chapters 3.1.1 and 4.3.2], the ethical distinction is not the violation of relationship in terms of doing harm to the embryo, but suggests the issue of preventing access to a life-giving environment is more central. Within a relational (communitarian) context, this decision would reflect a broader range of concerns and will include the care for others who are in need, thereby sometimes justifying the use of embryos for research.

\textit{C. The Relationship Between Spiritual and Cultural Criteria.}

Because of the unique bioethical decision-making process in New Zealand, any bioethical decision-making process based on Christian spirituality must also relate to Māori cultural values [see Chapter 1.1]. The category of \textit{past} within the metaphor of \textit{journey} provides a significant connection because for Māori, you must look to the past to move forward into the future. The theological emphasis of \textit{past} as a bioethical category focuses on the understanding of God as Creator, a position with strong connection to the Māori view of

\textsuperscript{287} Polkinghorne, \textit{Science and Trinity}, 74-75. Biology also highlights that life is underpinned by deeper commonalities. See Conway Morris, \textit{Life's Solution}, 303.

\textsuperscript{288} Deane-Drummond, \textit{Genetics and Christian Ethics}, 254.
creation. For Māori, Io is the creator god, the first cause, and the universe is seen as a continuous, dynamic, and open creation - an integrated whole. As a consequence history is an on-going linear process but without a final goal, and each human is an event, a created object within ‘the ongoing procession of nature’. In this context, the temporal and material are subordinated to the eternal and spiritual respectively, in which time is a continuous stream and the temporal denotes processes and events that occur within the cosmic process. Time is therefore only relative and not abstract, so that foresight is meaningless without hindsight.289

Like the emphasis on relationality previously described, the Māori worldview also emphasises the interconnectedness of the universe. For Māori, interconnection is suggested by the word whakapapa that represents an ecological epistemology of descent. In this understanding, everything - animate and inanimate - is connected forming a ‘taxonomy of the universe’ descended from the same ancestral and ultimately divine primal origin. Whakapapa provides the epistemological framework that situates everyday knowledge (mataurangi) and esoteric knowledge (wananga) leading to wisdom. In this framework, place and knowledge are inseparable, resulting in both tribal heritage and local environment sharing the same whakapapa. The result is a continuity of relationships and processes that leads to ethical responsibilities within tribal society, and between humanity and all living and non-living components of the natural world.290 The narratives of relation are defined in narrative terms rather than genetic identity, producing “ecological” genealogies that include non-living members and allow for membership of multiple genealogies. As a result, the genealogies are only intelligible by way of accompanying narrative, thereby identifying origins and relationships as well as moral imperatives.291 In my opinion, the moral imperatives derived from whakapapa are consonant with the scientific view of emergence


290 Roma Mere Roberts and Peter R Wills, "Understanding Māori Epistemology: A Scientific Perspective," in Tribal Epistemologies: Essays in the Philosophy of Anthropology, ed. Helmut Wautischer (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 45-50, 62 and 67. Literally whakapapa means ‘to place in layers, one upon the other’, so that to know your whakapapa is to know yourself.

291 Mere Roberts et al., "Whakapapa as a Māori Mental Construct: Some Implications for the Debate over Genetic Modification of Organisms," The Contemporary Pacific 16, no. 1 (2004): 12-23. In one example the genealogy of the kūmara (sweet potato) that includes the rat (kiore) and the caterpillar Agrius convolvuli.
and the Judeo-Christian understanding of the *imago Dei*, both of which identify humanity as both connected to, and unique within creation [see Chapters 3.1.1 and 5.3.1].

For Māori, interconnectedness is based on their understanding of mauri, the force that interpenetrates all things to bind them together leading to unity in diversity that originates from *Io*. As Peter Mataira suggests, ‘All created order possessed mauri by which they cohere in nature, human – as united body/spirits – are of a higher order requiring the acknowledgement of mauriora (life-enhancing principles), which in turn entailed greater responsibilities’. ²⁹² It is my suggestion that mauri and mauriora can be understood as compatible concepts to the Holy Spirit and divine wisdom, sustaining and leading creation towards fulfilment in God and infuses human character thereby enabling human potentials to reach to greater levels.

Finally, for humanity to have mauriora is to have responsibilities, an understanding also reflected within Christianity through the understanding of stewardship as the *imago Dei*. Within New Zealand legislation (Resource Management Act, 1991) the word kaitiakitanga has been used to describe traditional Māori guardianship over natural resources. As Māori Marsden and Te Aroha Henare suggest, guardianship is more correct than stewardship because stewardship denotes ownership, whereas guardianship implies user rights not ownership. ²⁹³ I would like to suggest that kaitiakitanga is comparable with stewardship in the Christian understanding of *imago Dei*, where ownership is by God and guardianship is humanity’s role on behalf of God. Furthermore, kaitiakitanga also relates to the value of care (manaakitanga), which involves reciprocal care of others and is also extended to the natural environment. ²⁹⁴

### 5.3.3 Summary.

The category of *past* within the metaphor of *journey* emphasises the foundational view of God as Creator, an understanding that determines the Christian view of God, humanity, and creation. God’s act of creation is an act of love in which God shares with creation the love


within Godself, and humanity is identified as the *imago Dei* with a special role within the created order. Therefore, human activity including biotechnology is a penultimate activity that is to serve the purposes of God when undertaken in an attitude of love and radical dependence. The category of *past* also emphasises the ontologically relational understanding of the universe/creation found in science, Christian spirituality, and the Māori worldview. The interconnected nature of creation means that humanity must care for the whole of creation in order to care for itself, which identifies a communal rather than an individual ethic. The category of *past* clarifies the ethical debate on hES cell research by identifying how the biblical perspective on human development can be interpreted in the current context, as well as identifying the differences between the hES cell and abortion debates. The emphasis on relationality suggests that the use of embryos, especially unused frozen spare embryos, may be permissible without violating the dignity of the embryo.

### 5.4 The Present.

From the perspective of Christian spirituality, an understanding of creation has implications for the present, as God’s transforming creative activity continues and is experienced today. As a fundamental property of the human condition, spirituality emphasises this lived experience of God within the present [see Chapter 2]. Within a narrative approach based on the metaphor of *journey*, the category of *present* reflects our experience of life now, to be lived in congruence with, yet distinct from our past, and in anticipation of our future. Even within our secular culture, there is a growing awareness of an increase in religiosity/spirituality, in which the cultural separation of Church and State has given religion/spirituality at the level of individual consciousness room to flourish. 295 Therefore, space exists for dialogue in order to identify the common ground on which this mutual interaction can occur, in which ethics can provide spirituality a language to make spiritual

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practices publicly intelligible. In addition to the historical connections between science and Christianity [see Chapter 3], the commonly held belief that the world is characterised by regularity and intelligibility results in both looking for the depth-structure of reality, including the human search for values, meaning, and truth. As a result, both together can search the deeper layers of reality motivated by the passion for truth and so make sense of the world in which we live.

5.4.1 The Continuing Action of God in Christian Spirituality.

For Christian spirituality, an understanding of the present must account for God’s continual action within the present reality of existence. Even though creation is understood as a once-only action of God, God’s continuing presence is recognised as sustaining creation’s existence. As Torrance suggests, in sustaining the creation God is revealed as “personal” because, ‘he loves it, upholds it and blesses it and coordinates its continuing creaturely existence with his own ever-living uncreated existence, as the one source of all being and order, all existence and rationality’. Creation is therefore dependent on God as its source, a view expressed in the understanding of *creatio continua* (continuing creation) where creation moves towards its eschatological completion and is judged ‘very good’. The notion of a continuing creation does not deny the goodness of God’s creative act, but identifies that creation is to become something else, perfected in and through Christ as a “new creation”. In this future, God’s providence sustains the world in a process where creation can be seen as ‘God’s project’, which is re-orientated to its ‘proper end’ through the resurrection of Jesus. Providence also denotes God’s gracious day-to-day involvement in creation, as the God who is actively concerned for the continuing life of the world which was created. Therefore as Torrance suggests, God has ‘graciously bound himself to the creation even in its fallen condition, and has assumed the fearful cost of its redemption,

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298 Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God*, 211-212. Hefner suggests God ‘is faithful to the creation that has come into being by God’s own intention’. See Hefner, *The Human Factor*, 43. Ted Peters suggests that even though the whole of cosmic history is viewed as a single divine act of creation, God’s creative work is still being drawn to completion. See Peters, *Science, Theology and Ethics*, 89-91.
299 Peters and Hewlett, *Evolution, from Creation to New Creation*, 158-161. Peters and Hewlett do not however see creation as a once-for-all event, but see it as an ongoing process where divine activity provides the world with an ‘open future’.
reparation and preservation upon himself’. In doing so, God ensures that the world continues over time, and directs the world for a loving purpose.  

Within the theology-science dialogue, the understanding of creatio continua and the increasing scientific emphasis on emergence [see Chapter 3.1], has resulted in a greater theological emphasis on the immanence of God, where God is actively and personally creating ‘in with and under’ the natural processes. The result is a dialectic between God as the transcendent Creator and God as the immanent Creator in which the world is dependent upon God yet remains ontologically distinct, thereby having an open future in which God is present to all the possible futures. Theologically, this means that Christ’s redemptive act is seen to include not just humanity as the imago Dei but all of creation, in what can be understood as the final perfection of cosmic history. Through the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, God reveals his humble and self-emptying love for the whole of creation, life and the cosmic process in the process of kenosis, the ‘self emptying of Christ in taking on human life and in turn, the suffering of God with humanity’. Therefore, God exists in a kenotic sustaining relationship with creation through the outpouring of love where, ‘God descends into the deepest layers of the evolution process – embracing and suffering along with the entire cosmic story – not just the recent human chapters’.

At the centre of the understanding of kenosis is the cross of Christ where ‘the incarnate God truly shares to the uttermost in the travail of creation’, so that amidst the suffering of our present existence there is the assurance that God truly understands because of the divine

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303 Peacocke, Evolution, the Disguised Friend of Faith, 78-80.
presence in the cross and passion of Christ. Through the cross of Christ, God enters into the suffering of all life and offers the possibility of redemption. In doing so, the fullness of God’s power is displayed not in a coercive manner but is displayed as self-emptying love on the cross, the supreme act of divine power not the depotentiation of God’s power. Kenosis is therefore the fulfilment of God’s power, as God the Father expresses through God the Son complete love for creation through self-limitation and sharing the creaturely existence, which as an act of relational power is unlimited.

Within a Trinitarian context, the theological engagement with emergence has further highlighted the continuing activity of the Holy Spirit as the means by which God upholds and is present to the whole creation, an image captured in the view of the Spirit as the ‘breath of God’. Upholding involves not only the inanimate creation but includes the Holy Spirit’s ‘companioning each creature with love’, to bring forth newness of life even within a world of death and suffering. As Denis Edwards suggests, ‘The Holy Spirit can be thought of as the power of becoming, the power that enables the self-transcendence of creation in the emergence of the universe and evolution of life on Earth’. In this view creation is not static but rather the Spirit as the giver of life operates within creation and leads creation towards its fulfilment and perfection in achieving the purposes of God, the perfection of the complete work of creation.

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307 Polkinghorne, *Science and Trinity*, 73, 109 and 113. Quote is taken from page 73. Gunton also emphasises that kenosis shows how everything that Jesus is and does, is both the act of God and of someone fully human. See Gunton, *Christ and Creation*, 86.


311 Ibid., 172. Also see pages 34, 46-48, 117.

5.4.2 *A Wise and Virtuous Journey.*

The metaphor of *journey* not only implies God’s role in the journey from creation to new creation, but also emphasises the importance of humanity and humanity’s role in this process. The perfection of creation means a transformation of creation into what God intended from the beginning, including a spiritual aspect for the followers of Christ on the journey of discipleship, as they are transformed into the likeness of Christ. As a result, transformation results in the formation of Christian character that is spiritually attuned to God and modelled on Christ. As previously suggested a narrative approach to ethics places specific emphasis on the notions of character, community, and virtue [see Chapter 5.1.2].

Character is the way of living out the normative nature of the Christian life which is developed throughout our history and formed in the context of communal Church life, so that the Christian life is ‘the progressive growth of the self into the fuller reality of God’s action in Christ’. Christian character includes distinctive moral requirements typified by the virtues including wisdom, so that both individually and communally the emphasis is on what type of person/people I/we will be on the journey. Christian character is therefore of central importance in relating Christian spirituality to bioethics since both relate to lived experience and the type of person/people we want to become. In this context, character moves ethical decision-making away from the right or wrong of action and towards the type of person/people we want to become.

Both character and virtue form a fundamental part of spirituality and so are vital in understanding what it means to become fully human. The notion of “virtue” relates to ‘what enables a person to become truly human within a commitment to Christ and the action of grace’, and “character” refers to the human agent considering ‘what [he/she] should be if we are to become fully human persons’. In this context, character refers to the inner personal identity not specific acts, so that actions become acts of self-determination that form the person to meet future situations in a particular way. As a result, the free choices we make through particular action are part of the freedom to choose what

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sort of person we will become.\textsuperscript{315} Character also requires knowledge to act in one manner and not in another and if properly formed, provides a transition from the past to the future on the journey of life in order to make the future in the right kind of way. Stanley Hauerwas notes that having character is the common meaning of virtue, where virtues are understood to be traits of character expressed in all times and situations, and are needed for successful living.\textsuperscript{316}

The reflection on virtues has been a fruitful pursuit from Greek antiquity and provides a connection between Christian and secular morality, as well as connecting the past and the present.\textsuperscript{317} There has been a recent change from the predominant emphasis on moral law determined by human reason which focuses attention on what is the right action to do, and back to virtue-based ethics in moral theory focusing primarily on character.\textsuperscript{318} As a system of ethics, virtue ethics makes six claims in evaluating action:\textsuperscript{319}

1. The emphasis is on the agent’s character, where righteousness is central in that an action is right if it is what a virtuous agent would do in the circumstances.
2. Goodness is prior to “rightness” so that first it must be established what is good before accounting for what is right.
3. The virtues are irreducibly pluralistic intrinsic goods with no one underlying value.
4. Virtues are objectively good independent of desire, and are connected to essential human characteristics.
5. Some intrinsic goods are agent-relative, for example friendship, which then adds more moral weight.
6. Acting rightly does not require a maximisation of the good, so that the agent can aspire to the level of human excellence without having to be the very best.

\textsuperscript{316} Hauerwas, \textit{Vision and Virtue}, 53-54.
A virtue is defined as ‘an acquired human quality, the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve the goods which are internal to practices, and the lack of which effectively prevent us from achieving such goods’. For Aristotle, the New Testament, and Thomas Aquinas, successful living or “the good life” is a presupposition to the concept of virtue and is identified as a specific human telos, either natural (Aristotle) or supernatural (New Testament and Aquinas), as well as presupposing the capacity for wise judgement of the genuinely good. Virtues therefore have a dual focus of orientating a person’s character towards the good, and the application of knowledge to this good in concrete situations. As a result, a virtuous person is identified as ‘one who lives life in accordance with the good and who cultivates the practice of virtues through his or her decisions and actions’.

*The Historical Understanding of Virtue.*

Central to the recent engagement with virtue ethics has been the historical understanding of virtue, especially in the work of the Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BC), and later Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 AD) who provided the first synthesis between the philosophical (Aristotelian) and theological understandings of virtue. In Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* (325 BC), virtues are defined as those characteristics that enable and individual to achieve eudaemonia, the good identified as blessedness or well-being, happiness and prosperity, which is both local/specific, and cosmic/universal. For a human life to be lived at its best requires the exercise of virtues, which are dispositions to act and feel in particular ways, so that the telos of a human life is not a goal but rather a certain kind of life. For Aristotle a virtue is the mean between two vices, the more or less of a particular characteristic and requires judgement for its exercise. Judgement occurs through the exercise of the central virtue phronēsis, an intellectual virtue meaning the exercise of judgement in particular cases, and without which the exercise of all other virtues of character can not occur. Aristotle therefore distinguishes between the intellectual virtues acquired through teaching and virtues of character acquired through habitual action. As a result ‘excellence of character and intelligence (practical intelligence/practical wisdom) can

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not be separated’, so that the central virtues are all related to each other so that you can not have one without the others.\textsuperscript{323}

Following the Aristotelian understanding of virtue as a stable disposition that inclines a person to act in one way and not another, Thomas Aquinas provided a new distinction compared with the previous Christian understanding of theological and political virtues.\textsuperscript{324} He retained the identification of the three theological and four cardinal, but incorporated them in the distinction between infused virtues (equated with the theological virtues) that exceed the creaturely capacity and so are infused by God’s grace, and acquired virtues (equated with the political/cardinal virtues) that are obtained by human effort \textit{via} reason and are virtues in a limited sense. These two categories are distinguishable in terms of desired end, where the infused virtues are directed towards union with God, whereas the acquired virtues are directed towards the attainment of human good as determined by reason. All of the virtues presuppose prudence for their application, allowing the agent to choose the action in accordance with the overall concept of goodness. To these categories, Aquinas added “infused cardinal virtues”, which are cardinal virtues infused with charity (love) and so are directed to a different end, identified as union with God. Aquinas therefore distinguished between two principles of operation: nature informed by reason directed to the end of naturally attainable happiness; and grace that is directed toward supreme happiness through personal union with God. There is therefore a central integrity to human nature whereby the virtues are appropriately orientated in themselves and to each

\textsuperscript{323} MacIntyre, \textit{After Virtue}, 147-156 and 175. Rachels, \textit{The Elements of Moral Philosophy}, 173 and 177-180. Quote taken from MacIntyre page 154. Later the Roman philosopher Cicero (106-43 BC) followed Aristotle’s identification of a virtue as ‘a disposition to act in accordance with right reason’ and produced the four-fold distinction of the cardinal virtues – prudence (practical wisdom), justice, courage and temperance which are central to the moral life and form the basis of ethical decision-making. See Porter, \textit{"Virtue Ethics,"} 98-99. Prudence is the highest of the cardinal virtues and is the ability to recognise the good and to apply it in each particular context; Courage (fortitude) strengths the will and regulates fears; Temperance manages the passions and moderates the sensual desires; Justice works towards fair and honourable relationships in society. See Hogan, \textit{"Virtue,"} 636.

other, so that an agent acts through the coordination of a diverse set of capacities which are perfected by grace.\textsuperscript{325}

\textit{The Unity of Virtues.}

As Alasdair MacIntyre suggests the historical consideration of virtues provides a wide ranging and sometimes incompatible list of characteristics that can be considered virtuous.\textsuperscript{326} However he considers there to be a unifying concept of virtues\textsuperscript{327} in which three stages can be determined, where each later stage presupposes the earlier stage and in doing so modifies and reinterprets the earlier stage while retaining it as an essential constituent, so that “practice” presupposes “history” and both presuppose “tradition”. These stages I suggest also support the notion of \textit{journey} by implying the categories of \textit{past, present,} and \textit{future} through which the \textit{present} provides the foundation for the \textit{future} while both presuppose and extend the \textit{past}. First, MacIntyre refers to “practice” as the arena in which virtues are exhibited and in terms of which they receive their primary definition. Practice is used in a special sense meaning:\textsuperscript{328}

any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which \textit{goods internal} to that form of activity are realised in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence…with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.

The key is the notion of \textit{goods internal}, such as the development of analytical skills, which are recognised through participation in the specific practice and benefit the whole participating community. In contrast, \textit{external goods} such as rewards become individual property and are objects of competition. A practice also involves standards of excellence and the obedience to rules that require submission on behalf of the participant, especially towards other participants. As a result, standards of excellence are defined in terms of relationships as can be seen in the examples of justice, courage, and honesty. Second, every practice has a history in which practitioners relate to fellow participants and also to

\textsuperscript{326} MacIntyre, \textit{After Virtue}, 181-186.
\textsuperscript{327} See footnote 320 for MacIntyre’s definition of a virtue.
\textsuperscript{328} MacIntyre, \textit{After Virtue}, 187. Words in italics are my emphasis.
those who have participated in the practice in the past. Therefore, a practitioner learns from the achievement and authority of the past, and yet can extend the practice in new directions within the present. In this context, institutions have an exterior role in sustaining the practice. The notion of history also concerns social and political issues were the history of the modern state focused on external goods, is also a moral history in emphasising an individual concept of good and negating virtue. Third, MacIntyre’s account reflects on faithfulness to the moral tradition, especially the interpretation of virtue given by Aristotle and his similarities and differences to it.  

There is one final aspect of virtue ethics that I would suggest provides a link between the immanence of God and the ethical requirements of virtue, the inclusion of kenosis within the framework of virtue ethics. The biblical understanding of kenosis emphasises Christ’s self-emptying and self-sacrificial love for the whole of creation, which provides an ethical model for us to follow in making a sacrifice for the common good [see Chapter 5.4.1]. As George Ellis suggests, a kenotic ethic places power in subordination to love so that we can act in such a way as to see the light of Christ in others, including forgiveness of our enemies. However Ellis suggests that kenosis provides a deeper level ethical mandate than virtue ethics, which he believes focuses on self-interest. In contrast, I would suggest that the emphasis on love in both kenosis and virtue ethics would mean that kenosis can be included in the meaning of charity (love) as the central virtue. This would be especially true for the theological virtues in which charity is infused with God’s love so that human love reaches to greater heights. Also as Ellis suggests, a kenotic ethic is an act of the will that emphasises the willingness to act this way at all times. Therefore, we must be prepared to set aside our own self interest and be able to decide when to act sacrificially or not. In this context a kenotic ethic also presupposes prudence and ultimately wisdom, in which kenotic action can transform the situation and provide a new fulfilment of being when exercised in love.

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329 Ibid., 186-201. As MacIntyre suggests, virtue ethics can be distinguished from a utilitarian approach because utilitarianism does not distinguish between internal and external goods.


Virtue and Biotechnology.

Within the context of biotechnology, a virtue based approach has been suggested to provide a richer emphasis on human character than the four basic principles of biomedical ethics - autonomy, justice, beneficence, and non-maleficence, which can polarise dialogue around the issues of benefit and risk. A virtue-based approach therefore provides a prophetic voice that critiques the current bioethical methodology. Celia Deane-Drummond is one example who utilises Thomas Aquinas in emphasising prudence (practical wisdom) as a central virtue of ‘genethics’ [see Chapter 4.3.2]. As Deane-Drummond suggests, for Aquinas prudential reasoning informs all the other virtues so that prudence provides the means to determine what it is to be virtuous by setting the particular way a virtue should be expressed. Prudence has three elements: memoria (memory), remembering things and events as they really are/were; docilitas (teachableness), listening to advice in a community context; solertia (acumen), the ability to act clearly and reasonably in the face of the unexpected and is informed by both memoria and docilitas. As a result prudence calls for foresight, circumspection, caution and gnōmē (the ability to judge when to depart from the principles called for), so that a specific course of action relates to the particular circumstances and places the good of the community over the good of the individual.

5.4.3 Ethical Implications.
A. Participation.

The understanding of God’s continuing activity within Christian spirituality implies that human activity as the being made in the image of God is a participatory activity in which we share in God’s creative work. As embodied beings; biological/material organisms and creatures made by the Creator God in the image of God, our embodiment implies our worldliness, our connection to the world as we share this terrestrial creation, a view typified by our genetic make-up that leads us into a ‘spiritual community with nature’. Therefore, the notion of embodiment provides a spiritual connection to bioethics since care for humanity also involves care for the world. This position recognises Christ’s

embodiment in the incarnation as a validation of embodied existence, and Christ’s sacrifice as occurring not just for humanity but for the whole of the created order.

Samuel M. Powell points to embodiment leading to two ethical responses that exist in balance: ‘world-transcendence’ that emphasises ethical separation between the Christian community and the world resulting in a distinctive Christian ethical response; ‘participation’, where humanity views the world as God’s good creation while recognising our imperfect condition. The dialectic between these two positions however emphasises participation, where even transcendence is the ground for our participation within God’s creation. In the context of spirituality, our call to participate in the world is a call to live in God’s presence and to participate in what God is doing; as God sustains, upholds and leads creation to fulfilment. I would suggest that participation within God’s world therefore takes on three forms; embodied participation, community participation, and social participation.

1. **Embodied participation** relates to the fact that we are embodied beings, limited by our creaturely finitude yet called by God as the *imago Dei* to participate in God’s continuing creation. Embodied participation is a call to action, where God’s open future for the emerging universe involves humanity being invited to share in God’s activity. Therefore, human action attuned to God through the Holy Spirit can be considered as a “sharing in” God’s creative action, as God calls humanity to help shape creation. The traditional identification of humanity as the primary objects of God’s providential care does not downgrade nature in this context, but rather affirms that creation is to be perfected ‘with and partly through human agency’. In a similar manner, the view of creation as a ‘temple-palace’ emphasises the importance of creation as God’s throne room for which humanity are the stewards. Therefore, humanity’s role is to work with God in the restoration of humanity and creation.

2. **Community participation** reflects the common feature of all Christian ethical reflection that emphasises the importance of the community as the focus of transformation and as the means of transforming the world. As Richard Hays suggests, the shaping of Christian community is the key role of biblical ethics, where interpretation is a communal

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activity. The theological basis for this understanding is the notion of the “Body of Christ” into which we are called as followers of Christ. As Samuel Powell suggests, there is a connection to the past whereby the election of Israel as God’s chosen people is the basis for the Church’s holiness today. For Israel, election as a nation was reflected in the moral behaviour of individual Israelites. In a similar manner, there is a connection between God’s holiness, the Church’s holiness, and the holiness of its individual members. The result is a spiritual and ethical imperative to be holy as the chosen people of God in ‘faithful, obedient response’ to God’s grace, which has called us and made us members of God’s holy people.

3. Social participation refers to Christianity taking its place as a voice within the public sphere, the realm of discourse which Charles Taylor defines as:

a common space in which the members of society are deemed to meet through a variety of media: print, electronic, and also face-to-face encounters; to discuss matters of common interest; and thus to be able to form a common mind about these.

Within the current discussion on bioethics, social participation calls for the validation of Christian spirituality within the public discourse on bioethics currently dominated by science [See Chapter 3]. Not only can religion be considered a natural human behaviour since the origins of Homo sapiens, but spirituality is constitutive of what it means to be human [see Chapter 3.1.1]. Furthermore, there is an understanding of ‘common practical human wisdom’ that is grounded in the wisdom of God as creator. Social participation therefore goes against the historic process of secularisation that has separated the secular sphere from religious institutions and norms and relegated religion to its own sphere. The secularist exclusion of religion from public discourse is unjustified, and merely covers over the growing awareness of spirituality as providing an anchoring effect for views on

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342 Casanova, "Beyond European and American Exceptionalisms," 17. In particular Western Europe is unique as the most deeply secular culture and is the exception rather than the rule in comparison to the USA where secularisation and religiosity co-exist. See Martin, *On Secularization*, 22-24 and 124-125. Davie, "Europe," 65 and 76.
biotechnology [see Chapter 1]. Lisa Sowle Cahill identifies three main traditions within twenty-first century Western culture that have ‘priority, precedence, and presumed authority’ within the current social discourse on bioethics: Science; Economics; and Liberalism. Within such a culture, she proposes five modes of moral discourse through which theology can engage culture and counter the current social traditions.\footnote{Cahill, Theological Bioethics, 27-32 and 35-39. Liberalism is typified by the notion of “tolerance”. See page 31. Her five modes are: Ethical discourse; Policy discourse; Prophetic discourse; Narrative discourse; Participatory discourse. The first four modes presented by Cahill are taken from the work of James M. Gustafson. See James M Gustafson, Intersections: Science, Theology, and Ethics (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1996), 37-54.} In particular, the category of participatory discourse identifies that theological and ethical speech with intellectual coherence produces connective practices, so that shared social practices are transformed in the light of religious inspired visions and values. For Cahill, the emphasis is on an engaging social ethic that connects theology and religion to civil society, resulting in a ‘revolutionary impact’ on the secular traditions of science, economics and liberalism. I am suggesting that the metaphor of journey provides a means of participatory discourse through the categories of past, present, and future, in order to critique or sustain the other ethical criteria of justice and autonomy (policy), beneficence and non-malificence (ethical), all of which can be considered within a participatory discourse.

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Within the context of the present there is the requirement to participate in the God-given activity of healing, restoration, and providing dignity to others as we live as the imago Dei in anticipation of God’s promised future, a future where all will be put right [see Chapter 5.5]. The previous stated ethical implications based on the category of the past identify that the dignity afforded to the embryo is not that associated with full human personhood [see Chapters 4.3.2 and 5.3.2]. In the context of participation as an ethical implication, the concept of dignity determines the need to treat others with respect in the present which as Ronald Cole-Turner suggests, will mean that any ‘permitted but limited research’ will be required to undergo a ‘serious burden of regulation’ as an expression of what respect means in the public and behavioural sphere. As a result, ‘limited or contingent research translates into a public policy of limited use’ in which international agreement provides global...
regulation as a measure of universal respect for the embryo.\textsuperscript{344} Therefore, any sense of “limited research” would prohibit the unrestricted creation of embryos for research, but would consider other sources such as the use of spare IVF embryos as a justifiable means of participation, so as to help those in need.

\textbf{B. Character, Virtue, and Wisdom.}

As previously suggested, both spirituality and bioethics relate to living in the \textit{present} and entail the question of “what sort of person/people am I/are we going to be”. Closely associated with embodied participation is spiritual living through Christian character. Character is expressed in the \textit{present} through virtues, as a means of expressing that creation remains God’s, in which we ‘share in the common structures of God’s creation’.\textsuperscript{345} Virtue ethics provides a framework within which spirituality and ethics are intertwined, especially through God’s continuing activity in creation and the activity of the Holy Spirit. As a result virtue ethics best captures the full dynamics of discipleship by looking at the person as a whole so that character leads to action which in turn reinforces moral identity.

I am suggesting that in the context determining the relationship between Christian spirituality and bioethics, the three elements of prudence; \textit{memoria, docilitas}, and \textit{solertia}, relate to the categories of \textit{past, present, and future} respectively, resulting in a considered response to bioethics in the face of the unknown future which may require a departure from established principles. This is especially the case when considered in the light of God’s wisdom and the activity of the Holy Spirit. Celia Deane-Drummond emphasises the need to include the theological virtues and the activity of the Holy Spirit in providing infused virtues. As a result, God’s grace forms the base for a virtuous life where the believer can attain a higher level of goodness than would be the case naturally, therefore broadening the scope of the virtues.\textsuperscript{346} Again the intellectual virtue of prudence is central because of the


\textsuperscript{345} Powell, \textit{A Theology of Christian Spirituality}, 152-154. Quote is taken from page 154.

\textsuperscript{346} Deane-Drummond, \textit{Genetics and Christian Ethics}, 25-28. For Aquinas, the affective gifts of the Holy Spirit are fortitude, piety, and fear of the Lord; and the intellectual gifts are wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and counsel. These gifts are associated with specific virtues so that fortitude associates with the virtue of courage, piety with justice, and fear of the Lord with hope and temperance. For the intellectual gifts, wisdom is associated with the theological virtue of charity, understanding and knowledge with faith, and counsel with prudence. See page 25 and 26.
relationship between prudence as practical wisdom and prudence as a virtue infused with God’s wisdom which was present at creation, is present with us now, and leads us into the future [see Chapter 2.2.3]. In this sense prudence is an aspect of wisdom, with wisdom acting as an intermediary between the cardinal and theological virtues. For Aquinas (and Aristotle) wisdom is one of the three intellectual virtues, with wisdom taking priority in that it considers the highest and deepest causes.\textsuperscript{347} Intellectual wisdom can be acquired through science as a human achievement, but can also be considered as infused wisdom; one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit that presupposes faith and as suggested by Augustine, is ultimately wisdom about God. As a result, prudence based on human reason as well as wisdom through God’s grace provides an ethic that is aligned with Christian spirituality. The priority of wisdom however produces a wisdom ethic that presupposes the theological virtue of charity (love) and therefore a relational nature, and provides a ‘transcendent theological category in which practical prudence is situated’ by defining the relationship between God, humanity, and creation. Therefore, a wisdom ethic follows the biblical pattern of God creating through wisdom and out of love (Proverbs 8:22-31; also see Chapter 5.3.1), so that God is at the centre of ethical reflection and God’s creation is valued.\textsuperscript{348} In doing so, wisdom also expresses the immanent presence of God within creation so that a virtue ethic based on wisdom and prudence provides a practical means of connecting the past and the present, while taking cautious regard for the future. As Deane-Drummond suggests, this approach is useful when there is no clear right or wrong and so attention is drawn to the character and attitudes of the agent, while wisdom looks to the deeper theological issues and so includes a theological premise for human activity. Therefore, the ’movement of wisdom is from contemplation to right action, from seeking to understand divine realities to human action according to divine truths, which leads ultimately to happiness even in tasks that otherwise might be burdensome’.\textsuperscript{349}

The emphasis on virtue and wisdom provides a connection between the secular and the spiritual, where the requirements for a good life identified in shared social practices are

\textsuperscript{347} The intellectual virtues also include scientia (knowledge) which incorporates “scientific knowledge” and “understanding”.


infused with God’s Spirit. The result is the connection between practical wisdom (prudence) with biblical understandings of divine wisdom so that within Christian spirituality, the understanding of wisdom specifically relates to character in everyday life. Prudence as both practical reason and as a virtue infused with God’s wisdom is central in bridging the categories of past, present, and future. Prudence includes taking council; identifying the experience of the past expressed in memory and tradition, considering the context of the particular experiences in the present, and considering insights (including scientific) as to what the future outcome of the decision might be. These are also associated with caution and foresight so that prudence avoids haste and also over precaution, as well as judging when to move outside of determined guidelines, an important aspect in bioethics where new areas of consideration are developed. Prudence can also act to balance reason, passions, and the will, which is especially important in biotechnology as people consider the implications for family members. As indicted in Chapter 1, personal experience of Alzheimer’s led to a greater acceptance of using spare IVF embryos as a means of treatment. Therefore, the use of biotechnology requires adequate reflection on the passions especially when familial relationships are involved, a context that needs to balance helping those in need and responsibility before God.

Wisdom also provides a connection between the past and the present as a lived reality because the wisdom of God in creating is present now in everyday life. This is clearly seen in the understanding of human freedom which is identified as limited freedom, meaning freedom toward excellence orientated toward the common good, qualified by wisdom, and directed towards God. By adopting a more holistic approach to human freedom, virtue ethics connects character, action, and motive. In particular motive plays an important part in today’s technological world where the motive to care can conflict with other motives such as financial gain and striving for scientific knowledge. The Christian understanding of virtue would then place community concerns such as care and respect ahead of individual motives such as monetary or scientific gain. Within a community ethic, respect plays an important part of our interactions. From a Christian perspective, all of humanity is made in the image of God and so should be treated with respect as bearers of that image,

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and all creatures have an inner purpose given by God which needs to be respected and preserved.

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The concept of participation requires that human activity is consistent with what is understood to be Christian character, since the activity of the Spirit of God touches all aspects of human existence, thereby placing the emphasis not on what we do but on the type of people we are. Character includes prudence which involves the consideration of future unknown consequences and the possibility of future changes in attitudes, so that any procedure should be undertaken with extreme caution and due consideration rather than for short-term benefit. Prudence also provides for the departure from accepted principles in particular situations, especially when new possibilities to help others arise. For the use of hES cells it may then be considered prudent to emphasis beneficence over protection in the context of spare IVF embryos that would be destroyed anyway.

A focus on character also distinguishes between the intent and the disposal of cells, a situation distinguished in the context of IVF and the use of spare embryos, but not in the creation of embryos by IVF for research purposes. As Gene Outka suggests, this distinction places the vital constraint of reluctant acquiescence in the use of spare IVF embryos that should never be taken lightly as we look forward to the time when technology does not require the spare embryos. The use of spare IVF embryos for stem cell production also provides a close proximity to the natural situation, where approximately 70% of fertilised embryos fail to result in a human individual. Therefore, the failure of a spare IVF embryo to produce a person because it has been used to produce hES cells mirrors the situation of natural loss. Furthermore, only in the context of spare embryos have the original gametes been used for their intended purpose, to produce new life. However I accept that this intent can only be modified using an emergent view of personhood, since the appeal to normal biological processes for some would not be convincing.

In discussing virtue ethics and abortion, Rosalind Hursthouse, suggests that virtue ethics negates the normal arguments about rights and embryo status, which are only relevant in

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terms of familiar biological facts. Therefore, the question is, ‘how do these facts figure in the practical reasoning, actions and passions, thoughts and reactions, of the virtuous and the non-virtuous’, and ‘what is the mark of having the right attitude to these facts and what manifests having the wrong attitude to them’, questions which include the biological facts as well as the emotional responses to them. In terms of using spare IVF embryos for hES cell production, references to natural loss, the use of gametes for natural means, and the parental decision not to implant, suggests that any decision must be taken with due care and respect because these spare embryos are associated with the emotional response of hope for a child. However, this is a generalised hope and not hope specific for a particular child and is therefore of a lesser moral weight. In contrast, the creation of embryos for research utilises the same IVF fertilisation process as that involved in hoping for a child, but in this context there is no emotional comparison to hoping for a child that can be considered virtuous. Instead the creation of embryos for research and manipulation is a non-virtuous act that is susceptible to other non-virtuous attitudes such a greed and pride because these embryos are being used as a means to an end.

The emphasis on Christian character also identifies the need to act in love, which includes the kenotic ethic of self-sacrifice. For some it could be argued that the use of embryos could be considered a justifiable self-sacrifice, however as Holmes Rolston has suggested, kenotic action is characterised by the choosing to act in this way, something an embryo cannot do. Therefore, kenotic action is only displayed by those who choose to utilise embryos - the parents or scientist in the context of having children or research, respectively. Kenotic action through self-limitation and self-sacrifice suggests that all possible paths should not be explored, rather humanity should place limits on decisions and actions, and in doing so be transformed more into the image of Christ. As a result, a kenotic ethic would place significant limits on the use of human embryos and prohibit the creation of embryos for research. In contrast, the donation of spare embryos for hES cell research would be a justifiable sacrifice by the “parents”, if the embryos are destined for destruction and not implantation.

352 Hursthouse, "Virtue Theory and Abortion," 205-206. Hursthouse also suggests that being a parent is part of a naturally good human life in general. See page 208.
C. The Relationship Between Spiritual and Cultural Criteria.
Within this discussion on Christian spirituality and bioethics, the focus has been on determining a process for ethical action. I have discussed the use of virtue ethics within the category of the present, which connects with understandings of divine wisdom and the Holy Spirit in terms of Christian character and ethical action [see Chapter 5.4.2]. As a result, humanity is called to live a certain type of life and to participate in God’s work of creation. In terms of the Māori worldview I am suggesting a connection between mauriora as the life force given by Io and ethical action as suggested by the term mana. Mana refers to a spiritual power and authority delegated by the gods to the human agent, thus giving the ability or power to perform certain abilities, so that a person with such gifts and abilities is then to be given due respect.\(^{354}\) In terms of bioethics, I would like to extend the understanding of mana by suggesting that to have life as a gift from God is also to have mana. Therefore, when referring to embryo research, embryos should be treated with utmost respect as entities with God-given mana, understood as the potential for personhood. This would also reinforce the emergent nature of personhood and the relational connection between embryo and the individual. A related concept to mana is tapu, which can have a religious meaning as holy or sacred, or a legal understanding. The endowment of mana is a means of reinforcing tapu (sacredness) which provides sacred boundaries within which power is used for purposes of good virtue, which within Māoridom is reciprocal care (manaakitanga).\(^{355}\) For embryo research, respect (mana) provides a boundary (tapu) where good virtue can be seen as the saving of life (manaakitanga) and therefore provides the justification of using spare IVF embryos [see Chapter 1.1]. Furthermore, I would suggest that the creation of embryo for research purposes would break this boundary and should be prohibited.

\(^{354}\) Mataira, "Mana and Tapu," 101-102 and 111-112. Marsden, "God, Man and Universe," 193-194. Mana is also individual power (manatangata) relating to individual skill and knowledge and is a property of every person to varying degrees, and as a result every person is due respect. See Cleve Barlow, Tikanga Whakaaro: Key Concepts in Māori Culture (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1991), 62. Ritchie, Becoming Bicultural, 55-56. I am intentionally not using manatangata because of the emphasis on individual personhood which I am suggesting is not appropriate when discussing the early embryo.

5.4.4 **Summary.**

The basis for a spiritual emphasis on the present is God’s continuing activity within creation, and the participation of humanity in that activity for the betterment of humanity and the whole of creation. As I have described, participation can occur in three forms, embodied participation where humanity lives out the call of the *imago Dei*; communal participation which emphasises the importance of community; social participation where Christian spirituality is a valid expression within the public arena of bioethics. Central to our human participation is human character typically understood in term of virtue and wisdom. As we live in the present there is an ethical imperative on how we live and act as the people of God, because what we do and how we act forms us as people. The virtues therefore provide a critique of the standard bioethical criteria by emphasising the type of people we are rather than the right or wrong of an action. In light of the debate on hES cells, the virtues call for a considered approach, in which significant limitations are placed on hES cell research while recognising the possible benefits.

5.5 **The Future.**

Within the Christian meta-narrative from creation to new creation, the third ethical category that can be determined from the metaphor of journey is a consideration of the future and final destination. As previously described in Chapter 3, the typology developed by Willem Drees suggests an interconnection within the religion-science dialogue that identifies a basis for hope through the appreciation of the world proposed by science and the religious tradition by which people live their lives (Table 2; 3c). The identification of a basis for hope within this point of interaction provides the essential connection within the context of bioethics. Within scientific realism, the world is a varied and wondrous place produced by natural means. However, to base hope upon the reality proposed by science I would suggest, is ultimately to come against the pointlessness of the future cosmological predictions of freeze or fry.\(^{356}\) Therefore, biotechnology in this context can only function to support life in the present, but in an eternal sense existence is pointless. For Christianity the world is equally wondrous, grounded in God as Creator and continuing under God’s

providential care towards its fulfilment and perfection. In this context, Christian spirituality provides a contrasting position that emphasises hope based on a life in God, whereby human activity now has future significance. As a result, the future influences the psychological dispositions to act, because how you feel about the end influences how you feel about the present world and your attitudes towards making the world a better place.\(^3\)

### 5.5.1 The Future and Christian Spirituality.

For Christian spirituality, an understanding of future (eschatology) has been rediscovered as a central theme that lies at the heart of Jesus’ message of the coming of the kingdom of God, and in the life of the early Christian Church. \(^4\) Eschatology was traditionally defined as ‘the doctrine of the last things’, but is now seen as the basis of the Christian hope for the future, a fundamental characteristic of faith in the God of the Bible that places significance upon the present, and provides the Church with a sense of responsibility for the world. \(^5\)

As David Fergusson suggests: \(^6\)

> Christian hope in the kingdom of God is based upon Christ crucified and risen. These claims stand or fall with the truth of faith in the mission of Christ, in the God of Israel to whom he witnessed and in the activity of the Holy Spirit here and now. Confidence in the future... is a function of faith in God - Father, Son and Spirit – and a way of expressing the significance of faith for the future of the world. Amidst the presence of injustice, suffering and death, Christian faith until the end of time must take the form of hope for the future. Such a hopeful conviction about the end of the world and its people is demanded by belief in creation’s continuing status as loved by God, redeemed by Christ and brought to fulfilment by

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\(^6\) Fergusson, "Eschatology," 241-242. Words in italics are my emphasis.
the Spirit. It is a belief properly expressed not in unwarranted speculation but in prayer, praise and Christian service.

As the above quote suggests, the significance of eschatology for Christian spirituality is to provide hope, a hope grounded in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The result is a ‘dialectical Christology’ where both the cross (death/absence) and the resurrection (life/nearness) identify who Jesus is, in what Meeks describes as the ‘Dialectic of Reconciliation’.\(^{361}\) The eschatological view of the cross-resurrection dialectic also identifies the contradiction between the present (cross) and the future (resurrection), where God identifies with the suffering of the present in the cross, and in the resurrection provides hope that transcends history through a ‘proleptic instantiation’ of the new creation.\(^{362}\) Therefore, eschatology can be understood as the doctrine of Christian hope, grounded in the person of Jesus Christ, and defined as the ‘expectation of those things which faith has believed to have been truly promised by God’, and stands in contradiction with the present.\(^{363}\) As a result, Christian hope is hope in Godself and in God’s future faithfulness and the fulfilment of what was promised.\(^{364}\)

Central to understanding the future is the resurrection, a new act of God that characterises the perfecting of creation through transformation rather than destruction and re-creation, and a definitive event of divine promise where God guarantees the future by enacting it in Jesus. The result is ‘hope for the divinely promised fulfilment of God’s glory in the full freedom and communion of humans as well as the liberation of creation itself from bondage and decay’.\(^{365}\) Within the present, the primary effect of the resurrection is to provide hope in the midst of suffering and death, so that life can be lived in anticipation of the new creation. As Polkinghorne suggests we should ‘embrace a credible hope’ in which the Christian concept of death and resurrection is already manifested in Jesus and shows us the


faithfulness and justice of God.\textsuperscript{366} Therefore, the eschatological perspective shows that the purposes of God will be fulfilled and revealed, and in which humanity and all of creation will participate in the life and glory of God.\textsuperscript{367}

On a cosmic scale, the resurrection is a “yes” to this creation through redemption so that the whole of creation is re-orientated toward its ‘proper end’ through the resurrection of Jesus.\textsuperscript{368} This “yes” affirms the importance of the material universe where the new creation is produced \textit{ex vetere} as the redeeming transformation of the old creation.\textsuperscript{369} As a result the \textit{present} is identified as \textit{creatio continua}, connected to the \textit{future} as creation is ‘[pulled] from the future’\textsuperscript{370} towards its eschatological completion and is judged ‘very good’.\textsuperscript{371} This continuing transformative activity involves both continuity and discontinuity with creation’s present existence in which the whole of history is ‘reconciled, rectified and healed’, and on the basis of God’s everlasting faithfulness, all of creation participates in the life of God.\textsuperscript{372} As a result, the resurrection provides both hope and anticipation of God’s promised \textit{future}, where God’s victory over death identifies mortality as real but not ultimately real, so that God’s purpose for creation is life and not death.\textsuperscript{373} Participation in this context refers to the action of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God who raised Jesus from the dead, and who provides the promise of a renewed and transformed life for all of creation, including every creature. The Holy Spirit is God’s renewing power in creation who enables creation to continue its journey towards its eschatological perfection as the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{369} Polkinghorne, "Eschatological Credibility," 49-50. Here Polkinghorne emphasises that the empty tomb and the bodily resurrection of Jesus indicates the redemption of the material. Christiaan Mostert calls this ‘divine redemptive transformation’. See Mostert, "Theodicy and Eschatology," 118.
\item \textsuperscript{370} Peters, \textit{Science, Theology and Ethics}, 85-86.
\item \textsuperscript{371} Peters and Hewlett, \textit{Evolution, from Creation to New Creation}, 158-161. Peters and Hewlett do not however see creation as a once-for-all event, but see it as an ongoing process where divine activity provides the world with an ‘open future’.
\item \textsuperscript{372} Quote taken from Chia, "Creation and Eschatology," 189-190. Polkinghorne, "Eschatological Credibility," 48. In terms of discontinuity, the eschatological transformation of the universe is thought to involve a change to the laws of nature, a new vision of eternity as a richer understanding of temporality, and the redemption of matter itself. See Russell, "Bodily Resurrection, Eschatology, and Scientific Cosmology," 19, 22, 25-26.
\end{itemize}
“new creation” and enter into the divine life of God. As a result, the Holy Spirit is the power of the future, immanent in the present so that in light of the transformation of suffering and death seen in Jesus, all of creation lives in the promise and hope of perfecting transformation through the activity of the Holy Spirit. In this perfecting capacity, the Holy Spirit suffers along with and lives in solidarity with creation, bringing creation to consummation, healing the broken relationships, and keeping the future open in hope. Therefore, all of creation and every creature exist in the context of God’s love through Christ and in the Spirit as creation is drawn into the life of God, which is the purpose of creation.374

The view of eschatology described so far is described as ‘temporalised eschatology’ in which the future ushers in a new age through progressive historical movement.375 In contrast, Kathryn Tanner suggests a ‘de-temporalised’ eschatology that emphasises hope based on a new and fuller relationship with God as the basis for the future, not a focus on the world’s future state. Eschatology in this context is also ‘spatialised’ in which the new quality of life “in God” infiltrates the present and is the mode of our existence in the present. Therefore, in union with and in imitation of Christ, eternal life as the reality of the kingdom of God is a given for all time and is present with us now.376 In considering Christian spirituality, I am suggesting that ‘temporalised’ and ‘de-temporalised’ eschatology are not mutually exclusive, so that hope includes both the temporal in terms of the “new creation”, and spatial in terms of the “relational”. Of significance is that both forms of eschatology emphasise life in God (or sharing in the life of God) through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, a view consistent with the definition of Christian spirituality as the whole of human life in terms of a conscious relationship with God [see Chapter 2.2].

5.5.2 Ethical Implications.

A. Participation, Anticipation, Action, and Hope.

A feature of both temporalised and de-temporalised eschatology is the call for action as both participation in, and anticipation of life in God. For Tanner, Jesus is the paradigm of the world existence already realised, and his life is the paradigm for life in ministering ‘divine beneficence’. Therefore we are called to actively participate in Christ’s own mission, in which

Eternal life amounts … to an unconditional imperative to action in that this life in God remains an empowering source of our actions for the good, whatever the obstacles and failing of Christians.

By “unconditional” Tanner means that the mandate for action is not affected by considerations of success, therefore we are obliged to act in gratitude to God, a position that has a stronger participatory emphasis. In addition to this participatory emphasis, I am suggesting that temporalised eschatology has a greater anticipatory emphasis where the resurrection ‘throws its light backward illuminating the life lived in expectation of it’. The result is what N T Wright calls ‘inaugurated eschatology, where humanity can live in anticipation of our God-given hope even in the midst of death and suffering.’ Therefore, on the journey of faith we can live by trusting in the ‘God of the future’, the God of hope. Anticipation in this context includes participation because in terms of the Christian understanding of Christ and the Holy Spirit, the goal of God’s purposes is the transformation and perfection of creation, a process of reconciliation that calls humanity as the imago Dei into partnership with God to set things right [see Chapters 5.3.1 and 5.4.3]. Christopher Southgate suggests humanity’s role can include being co-redeemers with Christ the redeemer of the cosmos, and in a similar position N T Wright identifies the cross as a victory in which the redeemed humans can now act as God’s agents in the world. This provides an eschatological orientation to ethics that functions not in the light of deterrent but in the light of hope. As Peters and Hewlett suggest, ‘to be the created co-

377 Ibid., 46, 52-53 and 54. Quote is taken from page 54.
379 Wright, Evil and the Justice of God, 76-78 and 96-105.
380 Peters, Science, Theology and Ethics., 92.
creator is to steward our resources and opportunities in light of our vision of the coming new creation.\(^3\)

As previously described, the participation and anticipation implied by action is a response that needs to be guided by prudence, a virtue that includes caution and foresight [see Chapters 4.3.2 and 5.4.3]. A commonly applied principle that is used in relation to future consequences of action is the ‘precautionary principle’.\(^4\) Therefore, not all action is appropriate and as the precautionary principle states, consideration must be given to possible negative consequences that must be avoided. Another feature of action is the notion of success, a category that Kathryn Tanner suggests should not be a consideration. However, the high cost of biotechnology means that in terms of the appropriate distribution of resources, “success” must be a category of consideration within any understanding of action.

The Christian concept of hope provides an alternate means to sustain participatory and anticipatory action in contrast to the modern philosophy of progress. The concept of progress is a consequence of modern optimism that reframes history as moving towards a perfect society.\(^5\) In the context of modern medicine, this is of particular importance because in medicine you continue to do the right thing even though there is no assurance of success. As a result, progress becomes the ‘substantive story’ required to sustain moral activity in a finite and limited world. The narrative of progress assumes that increasing amounts of human effort is the means required to prevent disease and free us from this dilemma of finitude, thereby moving humanity towards the ideal human life - a life free of suffering even if it involves unethical means.\(^6\) In contrast, the hope provided by the Christian narrative emphasises faithfulness to the God who has been faithful to us, thereby providing a means to critique the locating and doing of good which must be done, a means of discovering our human self, and a means for judging alternative schemes for humankind.

\(^3\) Peters and Hewlett, *Evolution, from Creation to New Creation*, 176.
\(^4\) See footnote 189.
\(^6\) Hauerwas and Burrell, "From System to Story," 188-190.
Human Embryonic Stem Cells Reconsidered.

The future hope of Christianity is a time when there will be no more suffering and death as the fullness of God’s Kingdom is established (Revelations 21). In the present, this future hope provides a mandate for active participation and action that anticipates this future state. Ted Peters utilises such a future perspective so that in his view, humanity can live in anticipation of hope by conferring dignity (love) to others through beneficence [see Chapter 4.3.2]. In contrast to the secular view that emphasises progress, the mandate to allow hES cell research on the basis of providing hope through beneficence, is not unlimited as suggested by the precautionary principle and the virtue of prudence. Furthermore, the distinction between ultimate and penultimate suggests that any human activity, including biotechnology is a penultimate activity [see Chapter 5.3.2]. Therefore, the final establishment of God’s kingdom is an ultimate activity, and so any future perspective must be qualified within our limited human existence.

The use of IVF for research purposes represents a major shift in attitudes away from reproduction and towards making the embryo an object or commodity. Therefore, any activity that seeks to remove the embryo from primarily a reproductive journey would operate against the commitment to participation, anticipation, and action, by negating the primary purpose of IVF fertilisation that is the hope for a child.

B. Future Generations.

The emphasis in Christian spirituality is faithful living in the present, an emphasis particularly relevant to the consideration of future generations. The ethical category future is not to be considered separately from the past and present because all have a strong relational component. In this context, the previous ethical principles of Participation, Anticipation, Action, and Hope, should be qualified by a consideration of the relational understanding of humanity. Therefore, a central consideration in biotechnology involving human subjects is the deep commonalities that identify humanity scientifically as a single species, and theologically as beings made in the image of God. Both the scientific and theological perspectives identify humanity as relational/communal, not a society of individuals, so that ethical implications from an understanding of future must also consider
the future generations for which we have a moral responsibility.\textsuperscript{386} In the realm of genetics this is especially true because, ‘genetic changes stand to set the biological boundaries within which human flourishing takes place’. Genetic changes have the potential to alter not only the external environment, but also the internal genetic make-up of humanity, therefore raising the possibility of redefining what it is to be human. As Celia Deane-Drummond suggests, this could result in a radical break from the past that may separate future generations from their historical context as humans.\textsuperscript{387}

In this context, the human embryo and the technologies surrounding embryo manipulation have a central role to play because the embryo is seen as the ‘point of access’ for any attempts to alter the human species.\textsuperscript{388} As a result, circumspection is required in the development of bioethics, a principle that can be understood in relation to future considerations through three virtues. First, \textit{foresight} is the ability through which future consequences are anticipated, and can be used in considering the needs of future generations. Second, \textit{justice} enables humanity in the present to consider what conditions future generations deserve to inherit in order to enable them to have a full life. Third, \textit{temperance} examines and limits the motives for such research. Therefore, virtue ethics in this context challenges contemporary expression of human autonomy and freedom to the exclusion of other goods, so that human freedom is orientated toward the common good.\textsuperscript{389}

\textit{Human Embryonic Stem Cells Reconsidered.}

Because the human embryo is the entry point for the genetic manipulation of humans, the future as a bioethical category provides a clear mandate for considering the needs of future generations. The removal of inheritable diseases is one benefit that is offered through hES cell research and is a justifiable form of beneficence. The progression towards any form of genetic enhancement however, would be a move away from circumspection. In this scenario, foresight is negated by the desire for short terms gains and the disregard for changing what it means to be human, including our limitations. Justice demands an equal sharing of resources however enhancement would only be available to the wealthy.

\textsuperscript{386} Peters and Hewlett, \textit{Evolution, from Creation to New Creation}, 179.
\textsuperscript{387} Deane-Drummond, \textit{Genetics and Christian Ethics}, 147.
\textsuperscript{388} Cole-Turner, "Religion Meets Research," 12.
\textsuperscript{389} Foresight, justice, and temperance are highlighted by Celia Deane-Drummond as important virtues in relation to future considerations. See Deane-Drummond, \textit{Genetics and Christian Ethics}, 149-152.
Finally, temperance identifies that “progress” in order to defy human limitations is the motive behind enhancement, a position that emphasises individual not communal benefit and undermines the Christian view of the *imago Dei*.

C. *Continuity/Discontinuity.*

The eschatological emphasis on the resurrection identifies this occurrence as a transformational event. As previously suggested, the resurrection is a proleptic event that identifies God’s gifting of a future for creation, and provides hope for creations continued relationship with God, as humanity and the whole of creation is drawn towards its eschatological fulfilment. To use the resurrection of Jesus as the paradigm identifies the conditions of continuity and discontinuity within an ethic based on future considerations. After the resurrection, Jesus was identified as a “person” who eats and drinks (continuity), but was also transformed as indicated by the ability to walk through walls, vanish, and reappear (discontinuity). In this context, the Holy Spirit empowers life for new expressions within an open future, and so through the Holy Spirit it is possible to live in continuity with the *past* and *present*, but also in the freedom to make anew. Therefore, in terms of biotechnology, there should be continuity with the deeply held beliefs about creation and humanity but there is also discontinuity, whereby in the context of new situations there is freedom to decide and act in new ways. This freedom for the new however, is limited by the existence of God and the existence of other creatures. It is freedom to act in radical obedience to God characterised by sacrificial action as we mirror Christ’s divine beneficence. It is also freedom to act in light of God’s future calling-to-account for what we have done, when our ultimate reckoning is with God for the use or abuse of creation which ultimately belongs to God. Therefore as William Spohn suggests, Christian spirituality ‘envisions a fundamental transformation from self-centred existence to theocentric existence’. 390 This is the forward looking and life-long journey of faith, in which individual character is transformed in the likeness of Christ within the community of God.

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**Human Embryonic Stem Cells Reconsidered.**

The previous discussions on hES cells identify many points of continuity with established Christian ethical principles, but also identify points of discontinuity as Christian ethics engages a new context. The emphasis on emergent personhood, the environment of the blastocysts, and on natural embryo loss, can be seen to imply that God is not committed or relational to every blastocyst that is produced naturally or through IVF [see Chapters 3.1.1 and 4.3.2]. For many, this position is discontinuous with the Christian tradition. However, is it reasonable to expect that heaven is full of all the “persons” who are the result of failed embryos or pregnancies? In response, I would have to ask whether there is any distinction between the embryo in vitro and the embryo in utero in God’s eye, because surely the distinction is one based on human intent and action. The only possible distinction from God’s point of view is to focus on “blessing in relation to pregnancy” with the future prospect of life, and “blessing in terms of technology” with the prospect of saving a life that already exists, thereby distinguishing between two very different types of spiritual blessings. However, ultimately this remains a limit question and one of the mysteries of life and of God. The biblical story suggests that God’s knowledge of us is intimate and at a level deeper than we can know ourselves, so it would be my hope that God does consider the embryo both in utero and in vitro. In this context, the justice of God includes a kenotic component, where God takes into account the suffering of all life and offers the possibility of redemption in the perfect new creation. What this means in terms of the status of embryos is known only to God, but our response in the present is to act with best intent, giving full consideration to all the possible positions, and then to act in a manner we believe reflects God’s love for the whole of humanity and creation.

**5.5.3 Summary.**

In using the metaphor for journey as a criterion for bioethical decision-making, the category of future in the Christian sense emphasises hope. Christian hope is based on the death and resurrection of Jesus, an event that envisages the transformation of the old creation in both temporal and relational terms. I have suggested that three ethical considerations stem from a future orientation. First, humanity is called to action by participating in God’s transformative activity and by anticipating in the present God’s goal for creation. Second,
humanity is to consider the consequences of biotechnology on future generations, a process aided by the virtues of foresight, justice, and temperance. Finally, the area of biotechnology is part of our open future that is both continuous, and discontinuous with the past and present. As a result, we can act under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in this open future, as we move towards God’s transformative fulfilment of creation.

In considering the categories of past, present, and future, I have suggested that the use of spare IVF for the creation of stem cell lines represents an ethical use of these embryos [policy option 3, Chapter 4.1]. In doing so, there is a balancing of the view of emerging personhood with the mandate of beneficence to lovingly care for other human beings in need. However, I accept the condition suggested by Celia Deane-Drummond that there must be no attempt to intentionally produce spare embryos for the purposes of research. In contrast, the creation of human embryos via IVF or SCNT for research, including genetic manipulation [policy options 4-7, Chapter 4.1], would be unethical in my view.
Chapter 6.

Conclusion.

Bioethics continues to be a growing and ever-changing field of ethical enquiry, as science continually provides new knowledge and new applications for that knowledge fuelled by society’s desire for biotechnological solutions to life’s problems. It is my suggestion therefore, that any bioethical framework needs to be sufficiently broad so as to cope with the diversity of scientific knowledge and application. Within the New Zealand context, the legislative appeal to cultural, ethical, and spiritual considerations in bioethical decision-making does attempt to provide a broad range of criteria that recognises a wide ethical heritage. However, there is a need within each of these criteria to define the specific bioethical considerations in order for any decision to be made. Appeals to culture within New Zealand focus on “The Treaty of Waitangi” in defining the role of the tangata whenua. The appeals to normative secular ethics emphasises the criteria of autonomy, justice, beneficence, and non-maleficence as the basis for bioethics. In contrast, the area of spirituality has continued to be a difficult category to define and apply to bioethical decision-making. This thesis has attempted to provide an outline of how Christian spirituality can be structured so as to provide specific criteria that inform bioethical decision-making, a structure applied to the case study of hES cell research.

Having outlined a framework for the inclusion of Christian spirituality within bioethics using a narrative approach based on the metaphor of journey, it is necessary to consider how the categories of past, present, and future add new insights to bioethical decision making. This work started with a discussion on the current bioethical criteria in New Zealand and has emphasised throughout a case study focusing on hES cell research [see Chapter 4], a milestone in medical research that has the potential to cure many of the medical conditions affecting society today. As suggested, much of the current bioethical discussion about hES cells focuses on the definition of human personhood and the source of stem cells. It is my contention that the categories of past, present, and future provide a broader bioethical framework within which Christian spirituality can be included in any bioethical debate. What is especially significant is that these categories do not function in isolation but form an interrelated set of criteria so that as a result, the past and future
interact with the present in bioethical decision-making, thereby providing the means to live and decide in the present, in faithfulness to God and in the light of hope.

The approach adopted to articulate the meaning of Christian spirituality and how Christian spirituality can inform bioethical decision making has focused on a narrative approach, whereby the Christian meta-narrative is a journey from creation to new creation. Michael Goldberg identifies three critical issues that any narrative theology must face, which I believe provide a test of the robust nature of the strategy outlined here.392

1. First there is the issue of truth that reflects the relationship between stories and experience. In Chapter 2, spirituality was identified as a very broad concept that reflected the innate human ability for transcendence, and relates to the search for meaning within practical lived experience that allows humans to participate in life itself. A more specific definition was provided by Christian spirituality that defines spirituality within the context of a relationship with the triune God revealed in the person of Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, and attested to in the Bible. As indicated however, Christian spirituality also remains a very broad concept with multiple expressions, so that focusing on the metaphor of journey provides a more refined expression of Christian spirituality that is both faithful to the Christian experience of life and provides categories for bioethical decision-making. The emphasis of Christian spirituality on a daily lived experience of God highlights the importance of a spiritual voice in bioethics, since it has already been identified that the Christian faith has a strong influence on people’s bioethical views and often strengthens their justification for action [see Chapter 1.1].

By understanding the biblical meta-narrative as a journey from creation to new creation, emphasis is placed on the actual event and in particular the activity in which we share and participate. As a result, journey as a metaphor identifies humanity as active participants, where to live is to be in God’s story, the story of the Creator God, the universe and ourselves – God’s creations. To live is also to be called into relationship with God, in Jesus, and through the Holy Spirit - a life of community with God, with creation, and with each other as God’s people that

392 Michael Goldberg as outlined in Grenz and Olson, 20th-Century Theology, 285.
reflects the theological understanding of humanity as the *imago Dei* where every human bears that image. Furthermore, to live as a Christian involves being a follower of Jesus in the *journey* of faith in which we are called to a life of discipleship.

In reflecting on the notion of spirituality it has also been important to identify the growing awareness within the new scientific philosophy of emergence, that spirituality is a fundamental part of what it means to be human. Therefore, this work has attempted to justify the relevance of Christian spirituality in the public dialogue on bioethics, so that spirituality and science can deepen and inform each other in their understanding of nature [see Chapter 3].

2. The second critique of narrative theology is based on an understanding of meaning in order to identify the hermeneutic involved for understanding stories rightly. Primarily, the use of the metaphor *journey* as a basis for Christian spirituality has been important to connect bioethics to the central Christian view of God as Trinity [see Chapters 5.3, 5.4, and 5.5]. As a result, the categories of *past*, *present*, and *future* reflect the central Christian understandings of God’s activity within the world and relate to the traditional theological terms *creatio originalis* (original creation), *creatio continua* (continuing creation), and *creatio nova* (new creation) respectively. Furthermore, the relational view of the Trinity utilised here, not only describes God’s relationship with the whole of creation, but also specifically identifies God’s relationship with humanity, the creature made in the image of God, and also humanity’s responsibility towards creation.

A significant aspect of Christian spirituality is the integration between theology, worship, and everyday living, a view witnessed in theological ethics and the contemporary emphasis on the unity of the moral and spiritual lives [see Chapter 2.2.2]. Therefore, any approach to bioethics based on Christian spirituality must have a basis in Christian worship because of the close association between Christian

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spirituality, ethical living, and worship. One strength of *journey* as a metaphor for bioethics, is that the categories of *past, present, and future* not only reflect the basic Christian understanding of God, but also reflect the meaning of the central act of Christian communal worship, the celebration of the Eucharist (Holy Communion). In this practice, Eucharistic action looks to the past in remembrance of what God has done, particularly in the saving death of Christ; looks to the present and articulates the incarnation of Christ in the lives of the gathered community and in the life of the individual believer; and looks to the future as a foretaste and affirmation of participation in the heavenly kingdom. Therefore, the use of these three categories as bioethical criteria is justified because their usage in this new context reflects the meaning of *past, present, and future* in the Eucharistic celebration.

3. The final critique is based on the understanding of rationality, to see if a narrative theology can avoid the charge of moral relativism. This is especially important in the context of this work, where any scheme based on Christian spirituality cannot be viewed as a means to legitimate the narrative of any preconceived action, or be used to justify anything. There are four points that justify the use of *journey* as a narrative metaphor against the charge of moral relativism.

First, journey is a metaphor common to both Christian spirituality and science. Therefore, journey provides a common language with which Christian spirituality can converse with science [see Chapters 5.2.1 and 5.2.2]. Importantly, rather than closing the gap between science and theology, the use of a common metaphor allows space for both disciplines to exist while maintaining close connections and enhancing each other. As a result, both are justifiable means of expression, and are equal partners in the dialogue on bioethics [see Chapter 3].

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Secondly, the new philosophy of emergence utilises an interdisciplinary approach to knowledge that accounts for the reality of lived experience, an approach that includes Christian spirituality, and has much in common with the narrative approach in theology [see Chapter 3.1.1]. Using typology provided by Willem Drees, I have been able to identify that Christian spirituality and science can have a broad interaction [see Chapter 3]. In this context, spirituality is informed by science about the nature of creation, while at the same time spirituality offers science a reconnection with the sacredness of nature. In particular, the understanding of knowledge as identified by emergence provides space for Christian spirituality to be a voice within the public discourse, a place denied by the philosophy of scientism. Furthermore, the common view of both spirituality and emergence that emphasises the embodied “whole” provides another counter to the reductionist tendencies of modern science.

Thirdly, because of the indeterminant nature of bioethics, it has been necessary to take a broad approach using the metaphor of journey to generate a number of ethical principles in order to identify the importance of Christian spirituality. In this context, the broad approach provided by the metaphor of journey provides a balanced approach that recognises that any decision will include both positive and negative elements that need to be recognised and considered. The categories of past, present, and future incorporate a wide number of theological principles central to the Christian faith and a number of Christian practices identified with both Christian ethics and secular bioethical categories, all of which are taken into account under the banner of spirituality. As a result, new considerations were identified that aid in the bioethical decision-making process [see Chapters 5.3.2, 5.4.3, and 5.5.2]. Therefore, journey as a narrative metaphor reflects the position of ‘middle distance realism’. Middle distance is ‘that focus which best does justice to the ordinary social world of people in interaction’, the perspective of real life, where perspective and content go together. The term ‘middle’ denotes that this position avoids taking too narrow a perspective that would emphasise the dominant view, or too broad a perspective which would subsume the particulars into generalisations. In this context, truth also can also be identified in the ‘middle distance’ thereby avoiding reductionist tendencies or over generalisation. Therefore, a middle distance
perspective can mediate and affirm both realism and idealism, where a ‘realistic
narrative functions is both a ‘finding’ and a ‘fashioning’ in order to do justice to
reality.\textsuperscript{395} As seen in applying the categories of past, present, and future to the issue
of hES cells, the common Christian arguments based on personhood and cell source
are too narrow and restrictive in one direction or the other [see Chapter 4.3].
Instead, these categories provide a middle path that leads to a balanced argument
across a range of issues.

4. Finally, the usefulness of journey as a metaphor can also been seen in the
connection to central Māori cultural values currently used in bioethics. The
importance of both Christian and Māori views on bioethical issues highlighted the
need for a connection between Christian and Māori views [see Chapter 1.1].
Especially within the categories of past and present there are connections to the
important Māori values of whakapapa, mauri and mauriora, mana and
manaakitanga, tapu, and kaitiakitanga. As a result, the expression of Christian
spirituality through the metaphor of journey provides a means of including the
spirituality and values of other cultures, as both utilise a common language in
seeking their common bioethical goals.

In conclusion, Christian spirituality is a justifiable category within a contemporary
bioethical decision-making process. The metaphor of journey provides a means for
Christian spirituality to engage in bioethical dialogue that is both compatible with science,
and functions within an interdisciplinary and multicultural approach. In doing so the
categories of past, present, and future provide a spiritual framework within which new
considerations can be identified and bioethical decisions made. It is my hope that this
approach will be applied to other bioethical issues, both now and in the future.

realism.
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