# The Divergence of Evangelical and Process Theologies: Is the Impasse Insurmountable?

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I endeavour to identify how Process theology approaches the diverse traditions and theologies that are typically identified as Evangelical.[1] By Evangelical, I have in mind what is labelled as such in the American context, although most of my comments will hold true of the thought and practices of Evangelicals worldwide. Evangelicalism is a broad socio-theological movement, and the dogmatic claims made by its members are quite diverse. Considering this, Evangelicalism is an essentially contested tradition, and within it an intense debate and contest about how best to develop and explain its essential ingredients occurs.[2]

Because who should be identified as Evangelical and what counts as Evangelical theology are hotly contested issues, I begin by noting how process theology might consider five affirmations that many would consider the core of Evangelicalism.[3] These five characteristics of Evangelical thought provide orienting concerns from which one might gauge various affinities and disparities that Evangelical theology might have with Process theology. I will look at the fifth affirmation, having to do with the doctrine of God, in greater detail than the others. In that discussion, I address in particular the dialogue that has emerged between process theology and a way of Evangelical thinking called "Openness Theology."

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The first affirmation at the core of Evangelical piety and theology is this: The Bible is principally authoritative for matters pertaining to salvation. At first glance, this affirmation may appear to be a major point of contention between Evangelicals and Process thinkers. Although those influenced by process thought have made important contributions to biblical studies,[4] one rarely if ever hears Process theists characterized as "back to the Bible" advocates or proponents of *sola scriptura*. In fact, many biblical scholars with ties to Process theism have been at the forefront of identifying ways in which some biblical passages have actually undermined the well-being of women, nonhumans, and ethnic minorities.

More than a few Evangelicals have suggested the Process theology subverts the biblical witness because they believe Process theology considers philosophy its most authoritative source. Ronald Nash, in a book of essays he edited written primarily by Evangelicals who oppose Process theology, argues that "most process theologians appear to have a highly selective biblical hermeneutic. Scripture is welcomed as authoritative when it agrees with [process] panentheist opinions. But when Scripture conflicts with panentheist beliefs, it is conveniently ignored or casually discarded."[5] Generally speaking, Evangelicals have suggested that Process scholars place more emphasis upon reason and contemporary experience as sources for constructive theology than they do the biblical witness.

But when considering a Process approach to Evangelicalism's core belief about the authority of the Bible, perhaps a more interesting question might be asked: "*Must* the principal authority of the Bible be a source of contention between Evangelical and Process theists?" Although Process theists may or may not have typically looked to the Bible as authoritative for matters of salvation, Process thought as such does not require one to reject the Bible as supremely authoritative for such matters. There is nothing at the core of Process thought that prevents a Process theist from claiming that one document or individual is more effective in revealing who God is and what salvation entails.[6]

Even if a Process theist were to take Scripture as supremely authoritative for matters pertaining to salvation, the questions of interpreta-

tion would still need to be addressed. Within Evangelicalism a wide range of interpretive techniques, practices, traditions, and rules are adopted. For instance, Anabaptists typically interpret Scripture differently from Wesleyans, and both groups interpret Scripture differently from those in Calvinist traditions. And, just as there is no uniform hermeneutic within Evangelicalism, biblical scholars with a Process orientation differ among themselves on interpretive concerns. (For guides to ways in which biblical scholars with a Process orientation address issues of hermeneutics, see Farmer 1997 and Fretheim half of Fretheim and Froehlich 1998.)

A second core affirmation of Evangelicalism is that a conversion from sin, made possible by Jesus Christ, is necessary for full salvation. The issues of salvation typically lead to asking whether Christianity is the only religion offering salvation.

Process thought is at odds with Evangelical theologies that are exclusivistic. Inherent in the basic Process understandings of God and God's relation to the world is the claim that God self-reveals to *all* peoples. While Evangelicals have not typically embraced a thoroughgoing pluralism that says that any religious tradition is as good as Christianity, some traditions within Evangelicalism have adopted an inclusivist position. In fact, Evangelicals in the Wesleyan theological tradition have typically affirmed that God's prevenient grace provides a measure of light for salvation to all peoples.[7] While Process thought affirms the Evangelical tenet that salvation can be found in Jesus Christ, it only sharply disagrees with particular traditions within Evangelicalism that make claims about Christianity's exclusive truth to the absolute exclusion of salvific truth in other religious traditions (for a discussion of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism, see Mann 2003).

A third affirmation that lies at the core of Evangelicalism is the one: Christians should be active in the midst of a decadent culture, attempting to evangelize and transform it. One of the characteristics of Evangelicals is their evangelistic fervour to spread the good news of Jesus. And Evangelicals believe that the spreading of this gospel is necessary in part because so many in this world live in sin. It is not uncommon for Evangelicals to talk of overcoming the world and being in the world and not of it.

Process theology affirms this Evangelical tenet. Like Evangelical theologies and practices, Process traditions typically emphasize the importance of transformation, both individual and corporate. But Process theologians themselves typically differ from Evangelicals about what needs to be done to transform a decadent culture and, furthermore, what particular features of culture *cause* decadence. Evangelicals typically align themselves with the conservative, socio-political side of various cultural-ethical issues; Process theists typically align themselves with the progressive/liberal side. For instance, Process theists have generally been supportive of the push to recognize Christian ordination status for homosexuals. Evangelicals have generally thought that such ordination would not be step forward in the transformation of culture.

When it comes to evangelizing and transforming culture, perhaps one could summarize the substantive disparity in this way: both Process and Evangelical theists want to increase the common good, but theists in these traditions generally have differing ideas about what needs to be done to increase overall flourishing. In theory, however, an Evangelical might embrace Process theology while also affirming conservative socio-political positions.

"Process theology" and "liberal Christianity" are not synonyms, although most Process thinkers to date have sympathies with liberal Christianity. It may be that some Evangelicals have distanced themselves from Process thought due chiefly to the social and political views of particular Process thinkers rather than due to core notions of Process theology itself. Core notions of Process theology itself, however, transcend the conservative-liberal split.

The fourth affirmation I find at the core of Evangelicalism is that Christian formation (labelled variously as "Christian spirituality," "holiness," "discipleship," "Christian morality," "growth in Christ," etc.) is indispensable to the Christian life. This affirmation is probably the one least explored by those engaged in the Process-Evangelical dialogue. At its best, process theology joins Evangelical theology in offering conceptual resources for accessing and embodying habits of holiness. While Process theologians may disagree with Evangelicals about which specific disciplines and behaviours are most conducive to the

promotion of abundant life, both traditions recognize the importance of developing various virtues in response to God's call to creative transformation.

One particular branch of Evangelicalism—the Pentecostal-Charismatic arm—may be a key conversation partner with regard to the issue of Christian formation in the Evangelical-Process dialogue. While the majority of Christian Process theists have been more comfortable adopting forms of worship and religious expression typical of mainline denominations, Process theism offers conceptual tools to Pentecostals and Charismatics who wish to speak of direct encounters with God.

Most Process theologians affirm that all individuals directly perceive God through nonsensory perception. According to Process theism, all Christians intuit, albeit variably, God's call and power. In other words, the claims of Pentecostals and Charismatics to be in direct communication with God find a sophisticated philosophical basis in Process philosophy. In fact, such genuine experiences of God might be expected from individuals who are intensely attuned to God's moment-by-moment calls to action (for a discussion of how a Process conception of nonsensory perception might be helpful for the Evangelical Wesleyan doctrine of prevenient grace, see Oord 2000a; 2000b).

Process thought can do more, however, than simply provide a basis for conceptualizing the divine origin of ecstatic religious experience—as intellectually important as that is. It can also provide Pentecostals and Charismatics with tools for qualifying their claims about what God has revealed to those with ears to hear. Because Process thought includes the speculation—for a variety of reasons, not least being the problem of evil—that God cannot unilaterally determine any creaturely state of affairs, it also provides a basis for being cautious about claims that God desires particular actions. Rather than absolute certainty with regard to knowing God's call for how to act in one situation or another, Process thought suggests that the convictions of individuals should lay along a range of degrees of confidence. One may be extremely, somewhat, or hardly confident that God desires a particular action. This tool of qualification prevents one from equating God's

Word absolutely with one's own words, without denying that one can possess a degree of confidence that God desires some particular course of action instead of another. It is this confidence of God's direct leading that, from a Process perspective, Pentecostals and Charismatics rightly champion.

I turn to the fifth Evangelical affirmation, which has to do with how one conceives of God. Most Evangelicals would affirm the following statement: God is perfect in love, almighty, without beginning or end, one (although Trinitarian), personal, free, omniscient, the creator and sustainer, both transcendent and immanent in relation to the world, the ground of hope for the final victory of good over evil, and the proper object of worship.

It is here that the conversation—perhaps mostly mutual criticism—has been most intense. (For Evangelical criticisms of Process thought, see Nash's two-volume *Process Theology*, 1987; for a critique of Evangelicalism from someone sympathetic to Process thought, see Gier 1987.) Process theology calls for conceptions of God that are often at odds with Evangelicalism's Reformed theological traditions (especially Calvinism). In particular, the notions of divine omnipotence, omniscience, and temporality proffered by Process theists oppose conceptions that those in the Reformed tradition typically regard as orthodox. Process theists deny that God can unilaterally determine any creaturely state of affairs; Reformed theologies stress such theological determinism. Process theists deny that God knows actual future events, because the future is not yet knowable. Reformed Evangelicals typically believe that God knows actual future events, because God is a nontemporal being who sees all of time in an eternal now. While Process theists can agree with Reformed Evangelicals with regard to the formal aspects of affirmation five I listed above, Reformed Evangelicals and Process theists strongly disagree with how each of these formal terms are best understood.

Evangelicalism, however, is comprised of many groups and individuals that embrace theological underpinnings other than those whose source is the Reformed tradition. In particular, Arminian, Wesleyan, and Pentecostal traditions share many general theological affinities with Process thought.[8] The most fruitful theological interac-

tion between Process theists and Evangelicals comes from Evangelicals who describe their theological position as the "Open View."[9] In their 1994 landmark book, *The Openness of God*, Clark H. Pinnock and co-authors laid out an Evangelical position that shares several affinities with Process theology.[10] These authors argue that their position is more theologically faithful to the broad biblical witness than other theological options in the Evangelical tradition.[11] If Open Evangelicals are correct about their faithfulness to Scripture and if the affinities that their view shares with Process theism are grounded, in this theologically faithful interpretation, perhaps, as I suggested earlier, the principal authority of Scripture for matters pertaining to salvation need not be a stumbling block in the Evangelical-Process dialogue.[12]

Clark Pinnock's words of justification for offering the Open view of God might just as easily have been spoken by a Process theist. Pinnock argues that, "theological integrity and the credibility of the concept of God in our time are both at stake. It is difficult to believe the conventional model of God because of its intellectual contradictions and lack of existential appeal" (Pinnock 2001, 118). Pinnock continues by noting that, "apologetically, the open view of God embraces a modern understanding of reality as dynamic not static" (2001, 118). Open theists join with Process theists in identifying the metaphysics at the heart of classical theism as inadequate. Pinnock speaks of "excessive Hellenization" that has caused numerous conceptual distortions in formal Christian theologies (2001, 101). Rather than eschew constructive philosophy altogether as many in recent years have (unsuccessfully) attempted to do, Open theists look to relational categories for philosophical support.

Process theists share the Open intention to talk about God's actual existence and how that existence affects all reality. It also speculates and offers provisional statements about who God is and what this divine being is doing. The Process and Open approach to theology differs from those that merely discuss community beliefs, linguistic referents, or parts of symbol-systems. As John B. Cobb, Jr. puts it, "Evangelicals and process theologians are both concerned about the way things are....Because process theology is proposing ideas about questions that are real questions for evangelicals and claiming continu-

ity between its answers and biblical ones, a good many evangelicals take it seriously" (Cobb, Jr. 1997).

Atop the list of theological affinities shared by Open and Process theists is the conviction that love should be the principal theme in Christian theology.[13] Richard Rice, who assumes the task of offering biblical support for the open view advanced in *The Openness of God*, claims that the open view expresses two basic convictions that Scripture supports. First, love is the most important quality humans attribute to God. Second, love is more than care and commitment; it also involves sensitivity and responsiveness (Rice 1994, 15). From a Christian perspective, says Rice, love is the first and last word in the biblical portrait of God (1994, 18). When one enumerates God's qualities, one must not only *include* love on the list, but, to be faithful to the Bible, one must put love at the *head* of that list. A doctrine of God faithful to the Bible must show that all God's characteristics derive from love (Rice 1994, 21). "Love, therefore, is the very essence of the divine nature," argues Rice (1994, 19). He notes elsewhere that "Process thought is often described as a metaphysics of love, an attempt to develop a full-fledged metaphysical system from the fundamental insight that God is love. The open view of God shares this emphasis upon the priority of love" (Rice 2000, 183-184).

Openness theists follow Process theists in rejecting some traditional doctrines of God, because they believe that some classic theologies have characterized God as an aloof Monarch removed from the world's contingencies. "The Christian life involves a genuine interaction between God and human beings," says Pinnock. "We respond to God's gracious initiatives and God responds to our responses...and on it goes" (Pinnock 1994a, 7). Open theists embrace the notion that God is like a loving parent who, as Pinnock puts it, possesses "qualities of love and responsiveness, generosity and sensitivity, openness and vulnerability" (1994b, 103). God is a person who experiences the world, responds to what happens, relates to humans, and interacts dynamically with creatures. God's experience changes in the divine give-and-take of interactive relationship.

What gets Pinnock and his Open cohorts tangled in the roughest of intra-Evangelical tussles is their denial of divine exhaustive foreknowl-

edge of free creaturely actions.[14] Like Process theists, Open theologians like Pinnock argue that "God knows everything it is possible to know, but this cannot include future free decisions because they cannot in principle be known by simple definition. If they could be known, they would not be free" (1987, 325). This uncertainty upon God's part establishes that the future remains open, not completely certain. Their belief that the future is in some sense genuinely open is one reason these Evangelicals label their position the "Open" view of God. (Boyd presents a very accessible book-length defence of Open theism's denial of exhaustive foreknowledge in Boyd 2001. Hall and Sanders, 2001, debate the issue in *Christianity Today*.)

Hand-in-hand with the Open denial that God knows exhaustively the actual future is the denial that God is nontemporal. Open theists join Process theists in claiming that we best conceive of God as temporally everlasting rather than timelessly eternal. Conventional theism's notion that God is nontemporal implies that deity is totally actualized, immutable, impassable, and outside of time and sequence. The idea of God as temporally everlasting, by contrast, means, says Pinnock, that, "the everlasting One is active and dynamic through all of this flow" and that "the past, present, and future are real to God" (1994b, 120).

In his monograph, *Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God's Openness*, Pinnock (2001, 142-43) provides a list of convictions that Process and Open theists hold in common: "We:

- make the love of God a priority;
- hold to libertarian human freedom;
- are both critical of conventional theism;
- seek a more dynamic model of God;
- contend that God has real, not merely rational, relationships with the world;
- believe that God is affected by what happens in the world;
- say that God knows what can be known, which does not amount to exhaustive foreknowledge;
- appreciate the value of philosophy in helping to shape theological convictions;
- connect positively to Wesleyan/Arminian traditions."[15]

Given these affinities, Pinnock acknowledges that "conventional theists often characterize the open view as a form of process thought." His additional remark indicates the political ramifications of this characterization: "in an evangelical context, [that] is tantamount to proving it heretical without any further ado" (2001, 141).

Open Evangelical theists are to be commended for understanding Process thought—both aspects that they appreciate and aspects that they reject—much better than most contemporary Evangelicals.[16] Some criticisms of Process thought rendered by Open theists, however, might be shown to be less consequential than Open theists believe. For instance, one important difference between Open theism and Process theism is the God-world relationship each supposes. Process theists suppose that God necessarily relates to some realm of non-divine individuals or another. Open theists suppose that God's relations with the world are essentially accidental, such that at one time God existed apart from any world whatsoever. Pinnock implies that, to exist, the God of Process theism requires some world or another: "The openness view...denies the process conviction that God is ontologically dependent on the world and that God always has and must have a world to experience. [God] does not need a world in order to be God" (Pinnock 2001, 145). Richard Rice describes the Process doctrine of the God-world relation in this way: "Without a creaturely world, God would have no actuality and hence no existence" (2000, 185).

While Rice and Pinnock are correct that classic Process texts, such as Alfred North Whitehead's *Process and Reality*, can be interpreted as stating that God could not exist without some world or another, this claim opposes the core Process notion that God exists necessarily. After all, a being that exists necessarily requires nothing else in order to exist. The point of the more robust form of Process theism is not that God cannot exist unless some world or another exists. Rather, the point is that a metaphysical scheme supposing that God necessarily (involuntarily) and everlastingly relates to some world is preferable to a scheme that claims that God's relations to the world are accidental (wholly voluntary) and provisional. If Process theists were to attack the Open conception of the social Trinity by claiming that, to exist,

this social Trinitarian God requires intra-Trinitarian relations, Process theists would commit this same conceptual error. After all, Open theists believe that God exists necessarily. In short, both Open and Process theists affirm that God necessarily exists such that nothing could end God's existence. At issue is the comparative strength of the two different metaphysical visions concerning *with whom* and *by what mode* God relates.

The classical Christian doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* often arises in the Open-Process dialogue about God's mode of relation to the world.[17] Process theists reject this doctrine on a variety of grounds, not the least of which is its implications for the problem of evil.[18] If God at one time possessed the power to create unilaterally from absolutely nothing, God would always retain essentially the ability to determine unilaterally. The God capable of exercising total control through unilateral determination is culpable for failing to prevent the genuine evils that occur in life. As David Griffin puts it, "The doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*...[implies] (1) that the creatures have no inherent power with which to offer any resistance to the divine will, and (2) that there are no metaphysical principles, inherent in the nature of things, descriptive of the kinds of relations that necessarily obtain either between God and the creatures or among the creatures themselves" (2001, 115; offering in this chapter a sustained discussion of *creatio ex nihilo*; see also the book-length rejection of *creatio ex nihilo* in Keller 2003). Given these implications, the problem of evil remains insoluble (a point I have also made in Oord 2001; 1998). In order for God to be exonerated for failing to prevent genuine evils from occurring, God must not possess the ability to withdraw or override the power for freedom that creatures inherently possess.

The concept of divine unilateral power implied in *creatio ex nihilo* also has implications for how one understands God's activity in biblical inspiration, evolution, the oppression of women and minorities, and the sanctioning of political authorities. Process theists wonder, if God can totally control any event and if crystal-clear unambiguous revelation would assist humans in securing salvation, why isn't the Bible crystal-clear, unambiguous, and inerrant? Or, if God can unilaterally determine events, why did God allow a multi-billion year evolu-

tion, complete with manifold nonhuman suffering? Or, if God can totally control events, why has God permitted the oppression and domination of women (especially by Westerners) and minorities? Or, finally, if God can unilaterally determine any course of events, does this mean that present and past political regimes are divinely sanctioned?

Some Open theists are cognizant of the difficulties that arise for the problem of evil and other matters when they affirm *creatio ex nihilo* and the doctrine of divine power that it implies.[19] They continue to affirm this Church doctrine, however, for a variety of reasons. For instance, Open theists believe that accounting for various miracles recorded in Scripture requires this traditional creation doctrine. As David Basinger puts it, "God not only created this world *ex nihilo* but can, and at times does, intervene unilaterally in earthly affairs" (1994, 156; see also his influential work, *Divine Power in Theism*, 1988). Pinnock argues that, "certain events in world history can be the special effects of divine activity" (2001, 147). The miracle of Jesus' resurrection "goes beyond persuasion," Pinnock continues, "God brought it into effect unilaterally without consultation" (2001, 148). Open theists also contend that the type of power necessary for *creatio ex nihilo* supports an eschatology that guarantees God's eventual victory over evil.

Process theists might respond, however, that divine unilateral determination (i.e. metaphysical coercion) is not required for the creation of the world, the triumph of good over evil, or the occurrence of miracles. David Ray Griffin presents this line of argumentation. Griffin argues that the idea that God only creates persuasively is more plausible given the age and pain-ridden evolution of the world. He suggests that the Big Bang beginning of our universe through the divine persuasion of chaotic elements, however, "would produce quasi-coercive effects" (2000, 30). After this initial activity bringing order out of chaos, God would not be capable of quasi-coercion due to the evolution of increasingly complex power and freedom in those with whom God subsequently relates. Griffin also defends his belief that (1) God will ultimately be victorious over evil and (2) salvation can be experienced in a life beyond bodily death (Griffin 2000, 36-38). It is

important to note, however, that his vision is not based upon his belief that this victory can be unilaterally guaranteed by God; victory can be gained only through divine persuasive love. Finally, Griffin turns to evidence from parapsychology to argue that events traditionally considered miracles caused by divine unilateral determination could rather be understood as events in which God's persuasive call, alongside the extraordinary powers of certain humans, instigates astonishing occurrences (2000, 23).

A glance at core notions of Open theism when compared with core notions of Process theology suggests that affinities are many and the prospect for mutual transformation promising. Perhaps a way forward in this interaction is to address the metaphysics and logic of a claim that each prizes highly: "God is love." Both theologies consider God in relational love categories. Both theological trajectories wish to affirm that God's nature or essence is love.

Process theists wonder whether the Open claim that God's essence is love is valid given the Open claim that God does not essentially or necessarily love the world. "If divine compassion for creatures is purely voluntary, not inherent in the very nature of who God is," argues Griffin in criticism of the Open view, "we cannot say that God simply *is* love" (2000, 17). John B. Cobb, Jr., suggests that this emphasis upon God's voluntary love leads to unwarranted anthropomorphism, because it implies that God's will precedes or controls the divine nature (Cobb and Pinnock 2000, xiii). In order for love to be God's essence, God's actions must arise involuntarily from the divine nature. The abstract features of God's nature were not chosen, according to Cobb's preferred formulation, but these features are true of God by definition.

Open theists, however, endorse the widely assumed notion that love requires freedom. We don't typically think someone loving if that one is required to give a gift rather than freely doing so. Besides, it seems odd to express praise and gratitude to someone who acts by necessity rather than freely. Pinnock describes the position this way,

> Imagine a happily married couple. Having a baby is something they could freely choose to do and they would certainly love it. But one must say that, while their love for the child expresses their love for

> one another, they are not required to have a child in order to love. God's love for the world expresses his loving essence too, but it is not a necessary expression of his essence.... Putting it bluntly, God's nature would be complete and his love fulfilled even without a world to love. (2001, 145)[20]

To the Process criticism that God's social attributes, e.g., love, require a world to which God must relate, Open theists reply that the God they envision should be considered socially loving, because deity expresses love in the everlasting relations of intra-Trinitarian life. (I discuss these details in more length in chapter eight of Oord forthcoming.) Pinnock explains the Open position in this way: "we hold that God is ontologically other than the world and in a certain sense 'requires' no world. God does not have to relate to some other reality because he is internally social, loving and self-sufficient" (Pinnock 2001, 145).

A partial resolution to the debate may emerge in the Process notion of divine dipolarity that Open theists such as Richard Rice accept. Rice argues that because "God's love *never* changes, God's experience *must* change" (1994, 48). In light of dipolarity, it might be said that the fact *that* God expresses love is a necessary and involuntary aspect of the divine nature. God did not choose this abstract characteristic; it comprises one element of who God is by definition. However, *how* God expresses love is free choice on God's part. God decides how to express love when considering and feeling how the world has responded to God in the past.[21] A worshipper need have no qualms about expressing praise and gratitude to the God who freely chooses the manner in which divine love is revealed.

This resolution helps with one aspect of the Open-Process dialogue, but it does not solve the issue that most divides Open Evangelicals and Process theologians: divine power. After all the qualifications are made, neither Process nor Open theists currently appear willing to budge on this issue. While, on one hand, Process theists consider ways in which the theory of divine power they espouse might be portray divine activity as more effective or faithful to the biblical witness, they apparently will not eschew the claim that God cannot unilaterally determine any state of affairs. This claim resides at the heart of their

answer to the problem of evil, the theory of evolution, their interaction with relational feminist theologians, and other concerns. On the other hand, while Open theists are eager to consider ways in which the theory of divine power that they espouse can cohere with a coherent doctrine of divine love, they apparently will not eschew the claim that God *can* unilaterally determine some states of affairs. They believe that Evangelical doctrines of eschatology, Christology, and miracles are undermined if God is conceived as unable to exercise coercive power on occasion. At present, the issue of divine power seems to have created an impasse.

In this essay, I have briefly identified how Process theology approach Evangelical theology. I've noted some affinities and disparities that the two theological traditions share. Perhaps a passage of Scripture serves as an appropriate conclusion to this enterprise. As Process and Evangelical theologians wrestle with how Christians ought to think and live, these words from the great love chapter might be appropriate:

> For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love. (1 Cor. 13:12,13)

## Notes

[1] Timothy P. Weber, considers the definition of Evangelicalism "one of the biggest problems in American religious historiography" (1991, 12).

[2] For more on this, see William J. Abraham, 1984, 9. Some dispense with the task of identifying essential ingredients of Evangelicalism and speak instead of "family resemblances." Unfortunately, however, this practice typically fails to identify what commonality members of this family share.

[3] I offer examples here of those whose list of basic Evangelical affirmations is the same or similar to mine. Affirmation five is excepted from the comparisons I make here, because those who offer their lists of Evangelical core convictions rarely, if ever, include an explicit affirmation pertaining to the doctrine of God. My list of core characteristics is the same as the list given by Martin E. Marty (1981, 9-10). The list Thomas A. Askew offers is the same as well (1987, 41-42). George Marsden, in a volume of essays he edited entitled *Evangelicalism and Modern America*, offers core aspects nearly identical to my own except

that he stresses that God's saving work is recorded in Scripture (1984, ix-x). James Davison Hunter, stresses the inerrancy of the Bible as important for Evangelicals while adding the Second Coming of Christ and the "individuated conception of personal, social, and institutional problems" as characteristic of Evangelicals (1983, 47). However, in his later book *Evangelicalism*, these additional stresses are downplayed (1987, specifically chapter 2). Richard Quebedeaux includes all of the four I suggest except the emphasis upon spiritual growth (1974, 3-4). Donald Bloesch (1983, 5-6, 17-18) follows the same form as Quebedeaux. Jon Johnston also does not include the spiritual growth aspect, although he implies it throughout his work (see his 1980, 20-25). Mark Ellingsen includes as an additional characteristic the notion that Evangelicals are those who explicitly identify themselves as such (1988, 47-48). Alister McGrath's list is the same as mine except that he adds the Lordship of the Holy Spirit (1995, 56).

[4] Published biblical scholars with a process orientation include William Beardslee, Ronald Farmer, Terrence Fretheim, Robert Gnuse, David Lull, and Russell Pregeant. See also Lewis Ford's, *The Lure of God* (1978).

[5] Ronald Nash, 1987. "Panentheism" is a conception of the God-world relationship adopted by many process theologians, in which God has always and necessarily been related to some world or another.

[6] Of course, this raises the question, "What are the core notions of Process theology?" If David Ray Griffin's list of ten core notions of Process philosophy were presupposed, however, there is no essential disagreement between Evangelicals and Process theology on this point. Furthermore, one could claim that Christian Scripture is a source that emerged thanks to what Griffin calls a high degree of "variable divine influence" (2001, 5-7; see especially core notion seven.)

[7] Among Evangelical works that might be labelled "inclusivist" because they affirm the possibility of salvation for the unevangelized, see Clark H. Pinnock 1995, and 1992; Randy L. Maddox 1992; John Sanders 1992; Amos Yong, 1999.

[8] See, for instance Stone and Oord 2001. John Culp (1980) was one of the first Evangelicals to consider positively how Process resources may be helpful to Evangelicals.

[9] The label, "openness of God," was first presented in the title of Richard Rice's Open theism book, *The Openness of God* (1980). Donald Wayne Viney has noted that Charles Hartshorne wrote of God's openness in several publications, but Hartshorne apparently never used the phrase "openness of God."

[10] The book, *The Openness of God* (1994), is divided into five sections, each written by separate authors. Richard Rice provides the "Biblical Support for a New Perspective," John Sanders addresses Christian tradition in "Historical Considerations," Clark H. Pinnock addresses the view as "Systematic Theology," William Hasker provides "A Philosophical Perspective," and David Basinger suggests some "Practical Implications."

[11] Among Openness books that are particularly noteworthy are the following: Gregory A. Boyd (2001), Clark H. Pinnock (2001), Richard Rice (1984), and John Sanders (1998).

[12] Two especially important conferences involved Open and Process theists in face-to-face dialogue. The first, "The Enlightenment in Evangelical and Process Perspectives," was held in 1997, and the second, an Evangelical subsection of the International Whitehead Conference of 1998, produced a variety of fruit, not the least of which is a collection of five essays published in 2000 entitled, *Searching for An Adequate God.*

[13] This emphasis upon divine love is the overriding theme in a book by Wesleyans in dialogue with Process thought entitled, *Thy Nature and Thy Name is Love* (Stone and Oord 2001). It also is the central theme in my forthcoming book, *An Essentially Loving God.*

[14] Pinnock briefly documents this turmoil in the introductory chapter of *Most Moved Mover* (2001). For a monograph-length explication of Pinnock's theological journey, including summaries of some theological tussles, see Barry L. Callen 2000.

[15] For an illuminating discussion of Open and Process theism, see Donald Wayne Viney 1998.

[16] Stephen T. Franklin is an Evangelical who knows Process thought very well and works toward the mutual transformation of Process and Evangelical theisms. Franklin's major work to date is *Speaking from the Depths* (1990).

[17] Michael E. Lodahl provides a chapter-length discussion of what is at stake in *creatio ex nihilo* in his essay, "Creation Out of Nothing? Or is *Next* to Nothing Good Enough?" (Lodahl 2001). Amos Yong is a Pentecostal theologian whose work addresses the value of Process theology for Pentecostal thought. See his exploration of doctrines of creation, "Possibility and Actuality: The Doctrine of Creation and Its Implications for Divine Omniscience" (Yong 2001).

[18] Lewis S. Ford has written numerous reviews and articles on the Evangelical-Process dialogue in a variety of journals. One of his best essays is his review of *The Openness of God* in *Christian Scholars* Review (Ford 1990).

[19] Pinnock acknowledges "that Genesis 1 does not itself teach *ex nihilo* creation but presents God as imposing order on chaos..." (2001, 146). Rather than follow Process thought by speculating that God created from chaotic nondivine entities, however, Pinnock speculates that the chaos of Genesis refers to God's warfare with "rebellious angels" (2001, 146). Although Pinnock likely does not intend this, one might interpret this second speculative move to support the argument that God always faces forces over which God cannot exert total control. For an Open argument concerning the possibility of demonic warfare, see Gregory Boyd 1997.

[20] Gregory Boyd provides a lengthy argument for why the Trinity provides a better relational metaphysics than a Process hypothesis in *Trinity and Process* (Boyd 1992).

[21] I develop this issue in my manuscript, *An Essentially Loving God* (forthcoming).

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