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**A REFORMED ASSESSMENT OF THE
REVITALIZATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE
TRINITY BY FOUR LEADING TWENTIETH
CENTURY PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN**

By

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Summary

Dissertation Title: A reformed assessment of the revitalization of the doctrine of the Trinity by four leading twentieth century theologians.

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Since Schleiermacher, in nineteenth century, liberal theologians neglected the doctrine of the Trinity. However, on the basis of the Hegelian influence, leading 20th century theologians, Barth, Moltmann, Jüngel and Pannenberg revitalized the doctrine of the Trinity. This revitalization was however based on a re-interpretation of the Nicene theology, in which vital elements of Nicene theology and its reformed affirmation were altered by their approach to the doctrine of the Trinity. Reformed doctrine of the Trinity is based on the Nicene formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity. In order to make a reformed assessment of this revitalization of the doctrine of the Trinity, one first has to attend to its Nicene formulation.

Nicene theologians interpret the doctrine of the Trinity on the basis of the Scripture against heresies. Athanasius confirms not only the Son's 'homoousia' with the Father, but also the Spirit's homoousia with the Father. In this regard, Athanasius protects the deity of the Son and the Spirit. Basil and the two Gregories follow Athanasius. They also apply the term '*homoousia*' to the Spirit. Especially, the Cappadocian theologians set the following formula of the doctrine of the Trinity: One essence, three *hypostaseis*. For them, according to the particularity of their attributes, the Father, the Son and the



Holy Spirit are distinguished, however, according to their common essence, there is one God. Their main idea is that the three *hypostaseis* are equally God. They focus on the deity of the Son and the Holy Spirit against Arians and Pneumatomachians. They strongly emphasize the unity of nature or essence of God on the basis of the priority of *theologia* over *economia*.

1. Karl Barth's starting point is the revelation of God. For him the doctrine of the Trinity is three repetitions of God himself: Revealer, Revelation, and Revealedness. Barth identifies the the immanent Trinity with the economic Trinity. From this, his Christology always refers to the *ensarkos Logos*. And he uses the term 'Seinsweise' instead of the term 'person'.
2. For Moltmann, the content of the doctrine of the trinity is the crucifixion of Christ itself, and the form of the crucified one is the Trinity. He focuses on the passibility of God. He also identifies the immanent with the economic Trinity. His social understanding of the concept of divine Person is based on panentheism.
3. As with Moltmann Jüngel concentrates on the 'death of God'. For him, the theology of the death of God is based on Luther's theology of the cross. The Christian doctrine of the triune God is the epitome of the story of Jesus Christ. With Barth and Moltmann he identifies the immanent Trinity with the economic Trinity.
4. Pannenberg's doctrine of the Trinity implies the divine self-disclosure in Jesus Christ. His Christology is 'from below. And Pannenberg's concept of person is the reciprocal relationship between persons.' He confirms the identification of the immanent Trinity and economic Trinity.
5. Modern understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity on the basis of Panentheism differs from the Reformed tradition which emphasizes the distinction between



the immanent Trinity and economic Trinity, and uses the notion of person as a metaphor of the distinction.

The doctrine of the Trinity is closely connected with the Church since it is constituted by the Triune God. Therefore, the implications of the doctrine of the Trinity are important for practical church life.

KEY TERMS

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Church(ecclesiology) | 2. Economic Trinity | 3. Filioque | 4. Identification |
| 5. Immanent Trinity | 6. Mission | 7. Perichoresis | 8. Person |
| 9. Reciprocal relation | 10. Trinity(Triune) | | |



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Abbreviation

Book	
AA	Ad Ablabium(Quod non sint tres Dei)
AEus	Ad Eustathium
AM	Adversus Macedonianos
AS	Ad Serapionem
CA	Contra Arianos
CEu	Contra Eunomium
DIV	De Incarnatione Verbi
DSS	De Spiritu Sancto
Or	Oratio
PG	Patrologia Graecae

Journal	
ATJ	The Ashbury Theological Journal
CTJ	Calvin theological Journal
EQ	Evangelical Quarterly
ET	Evangelische Theologie
GOtR	The Greek Orthodox theological Review
IJST	International Journal of Systematic Theology
JCTR	Journal for Christian Theological Research
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
KUD	Kerygma und Dogma
NZfsTuR	Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie
NZsT	Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie
SiR	Studies in Religion
SJT	Scottish Journal of theology
WTJ	Westminster Theological Journal



The Bible			
Old Testament		New Testament	
Gen.	Genesis	Mt.	Matthew
Ex.	Exodus	Mk.	Mark
Lev.	Leviticus	Lk.	Luke
Num.	Numbers	Jn.	John
Deut.	Deuteronomy	Acts	Acts
Jos.	Joshua	Rom.	Romans
Jdg.	Judges	1 Cor.	1 Corinthians
Ruth	Ruth	2 Cor.	2 Corinthians
1 Sam.	1 Samuel	Gal.	Galatians
2 Sam.	2 Samuel	Eph.	Ephesians
1 Ki.	1 Kings	Phil.	Philippians
2 Ki.	2 Kings	Col.	Colossians
1 Chr.	1 Chronicles	1 Thess.	1 Thessalonians
2 Chr.	2 chronicles	2 Thess.	2 Thessalonians
Ezr.	Ezra	1 Tim.	1 Timothy
Neh.	Nehemiah	2 Tim.	2 Timothy
Est.	Esther	Tit.	Titus
Job	Job	Phlm.	Philemon
Ps.	Psalms	Heb.	Hebrews
Prov.	Proverbs	Jas.	James
Eccl.	Ecclesiastes	1 Pet.	1 Peter
Cant.	Song of Songs	2 Pet.	2 Peter
Isa.	Isaiah	1 Jn.	1 John
Jer.	Jeremiah	2 Jn.	2 John
Lam.	Lamentations	3 Jn.	3 John
Ezek.	Ezekiel	Jude.	Jude
Dan.	Daniel	Rev.	Revelation
Hos.	Hosea		
Joel	Joel		
Amos	Amos		
Obad.	Obadiah		
Jon.	Jonah		
Mic.	Micah		
Nah.	Nahum		
Hab.	Habakkuk		
Zeph.	Zephaniah		
Hag.	Haggai		
Zech.	Zechariah		
Mal.	Malach		



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preliminary remarks

The question “Is it possible to speak about God?” is important for the inquiry towards the understanding of God. Several positions have been taken in history in the attempt to answer this question: theism, deism, atheism, pantheism and agnosticism. Atheism denies the existence of God. The atheist argument is really against theism (Hodge 1982: 444). Stocker (1996:140), however, indicates that Nietzsche, who is a prominent atheist, overcomes atheism by abandoning the idea of the traditional God, namely the Christian God. It implies that Nietzsche does not deny the existence of a god, but of the Christian God. However, his concept of god differs from that of the Christian faith.

According to Christian theism, especially of reformed theology, God can be known partially, but it is impossible for man to have full knowledge of Him who is exhaustive and perfect in every way (Berkhof 1996[1938]: 30). Christian theism maintains that it is possible to speak about God on account of his revelation. It requires the language of faith. According to Jüngel (1989: 19), the language of faith presupposes revelation, and the language of faith is characterized by *metaphoria* (Jüngel 1989: 24), since the revelation of God to humans takes place in the limited medium of human language of God. Metaphor plays an important role to understand God through the interpretation of the Bible, because, as Jüngel points out, it is true that without ‘*analogia nominum*’ (or theological metaphor) there is no adequate (proper) language of God (Jüngel 1989: 58).

Revelation reveals that there is a relationship between God and human beings. The way in which human beings were made according to the Bible indicates the possibility of their speaking about God. The concept of ‘*imago Dei*’ (the image of God) in which man was created in the beginning helps to understand human beings in their personal existence with the personal God. It does not imply that this personal relationship with God can reveal God’s being. As Ott (1974: 3) points out, God is not the same as a human person.



Ott (1974: 3) contends that all those terms in which the Bible clearly speaks of God in his relationship to man have a symbolic character. All terms in which the Bible speaks of God are not directly accessible to the senses. Therefore, some kinds of comparison have to be used, which is technically described as a metaphor or an analogy (Thurmer 1985: 14). Although God speaks and reveals Himself in human language, this does not imply that human language about God is the same as God Himself. According to Vincent Brümmer, however, if our talk about God is identical with our talk about human beings (his creatures), it would not be possible to avoid an anthropomorphism which fails to do justice to God's transcendence:

The question about the semantic limits of talk about God seems to present us with a dilemma. If, on the one hand, the words that we use to speak about God have the same meaning as when we use them to talk about people, this implies that God shares certain characteristics with his creature. This would entail an anthropomorphism which fails to do justice to God's transcendence. We also fail to avoid this kind of anthropomorphism by merely accepting a quantitative difference between God and his creature (Brümmer 1992: 43-44).

It is possible to depict God by the concept analogy or metaphor, which suggests that human beings can understand God partially by contemplating the similarity to the picture of human beings. According to Need (1995: 243), 'metaphor constitutes an important element of human speech about God also; its double element yields a tensive interaction'. Metaphor plays an important role in human language and thought as a model of explanation. This, however, does not imply that these models do not reach their limits at a certain point (Brümmer 1992: 61).

Although the metaphor is a way to understand God's self-revelation, McGrath (1997: 247) argues that 'the Scripture has to be the primary source for doctrinal reflection within the Christian church. There is no other way of access to the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ.' The Christian believes that God is different from the philosophical God. The Christian God cannot be understood through human understanding, with



metaphor or rhetoric philosophical concepts alone, but has to be illuminated by God's revelation in the Bible. This implies the true *analogia fidei* as *analogia scripturae* through the work of the Holy Spirit (Hodge 1988: 95)¹.

In the history of the Christian church, there have been many metaphors used in the Christian doctrine, with which the church attempted to explain God. The doctrine of the Trinity is one of them. However, although Christian doctrine uses metaphorical language, the doctrine of the Trinity guards against falsehood, fiction, and fairy tales.

The word 'Trinity' implies that God is one nature and three *hypostaseis* (or persons). It is difficult for human beings to understand the expression 'one and three'. However, the doctrine of the Trinity has been accepted as the orthodox doctrine by mainstream Christianity.

¹ According to Heppie (1950: 36), 'the analogy of faith is the argument from general dogmas which contain the norm of all that is to be taught in the church. At the same time, it must be insisted that not only what plainly confronts us in the vocabulary of H. Scripture, but also what is derived as a necessary conclusion from it, must be regarded as the content of Scripture and as the truth of revelation.' He adds 'The certainty that regenerated Christians at all times attain to a right understanding of Scripture is thus comfort which only exists for faith' (Heppie 1950: 40). Professor Wethmar (2002: 290) mentions that 'what is important is to have, whatever term one uses, determined by the insight that dogma is an integrative concept accommodating the full richness of the Christian faith. The insight that the Christian faith cannot be restricted or reduced to either knowledge or law but that it is a comprehensive reality encompassing knowledge, trust and obedience was rediscovered and emphasized by the Calvinist Reformation, and this was done on the basis of the rediscovery of the fact that the Bible is not characterized by obscurity but by clarity. This clarity is not primarily of a semantic but of a religious nature. The Bible asserts its own authority through the work of the Holy Spirit'; Bavinck (1997[1951]: 294) says 'the Bible is neither a statute book nor a dogmatics-text but it is the source of theology. As word of God not only its exact words have binding authority but so have also all conclusions that are properly derived from it. Furthermore, neither study of Scripture nor theological activity is at all possible unless one uses terms that do not occur in the Bible. Not only are such terms used in connection with the doctrine of the Trinity but in connection with every doctrine.'



The doctrine of the Trinity is closely connected to Christology (McGrath 1994: 250). Christology plays an important role in the understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity, since the Son, who is both God and human being was born in the world for the salvation of men. The doctrine of the Trinity encompasses the doctrines of God, Christology, and Pneumatology. It explains that there are three persons in one God. However, the key to the doctrine of the Trinity is Christology, since the incarnation of Christ provides the way to understanding the doctrine of the Trinity. It implies that the relationship between the two natures of Christ (human nature and divine nature) would be the core of the doctrine of the Trinity.

In the controversy surrounding the doctrine of the Trinity, the understanding of the relationship of two natures of Christ was an important issue. The Church needed to explain the relationship between God and man: some denied that Christ is God; others denied that Christ is a perfect man. The Son had to be both true God and true man to explain both the nature of God and the redemptive work of Christ on earth.

The history of the doctrine of the Trinity is important. The doctrine of the Trinity has a long history which goes back to the early Church's interpretation of the Bible. Therefore, it is necessary to survey its history to understand its meaning in modern theology.

The phrase 'two natures in one Person' was a problem among the interpreters of the Bible, which led to the early councils. In the case of the Nicene council (AD 325), Arius, who was an elder of the Baucalis congregation in Alexandria, caused problems by his stance towards Alexander, who was the bishop of Alexandria. Arius was of the opinion that Alexander taught Sabellianism (Socrates, I. 5. 3). The problem, however, was that Arius's dominant idea was the monotheistic principle of the Monarchians (Berkhof 1991[1937]: 84; Koehler 1951[1937]: 153).

The council of Nicea (AD 325) decided on the term '*homoousia*' which implies the consubstantiality of nature in the three Persons of the Trinity to describe the divine unity. After Alexander, Athanasius emphasized this term for the understanding of the



Trinity to underscore the soteriological understanding, that is, the salvation of humans (*propter nostram salutem*). This term was emphasized to reject Arius' denial of the deity of Christ. Kelly (1975: 227-229) says that Arius' understanding of Christ followed three points: a) the being or essence of the Godhead cannot be shared or communicated, b) as a creature the Son must have a beginning, c) the Son can have no communion with, and indeed no direct knowledge of, His Father. Philip Schaff (1970: 643) points out that Arius' thought is based on deism and rationalism. Therefore, Arius' viewpoint was condemned as heresy at the Nicene council.

Against Arians who denied that the Son can be a Person having the same nature with the Father Athanasius maintained that the Son is same-nature (ὁμοουσιος) with the Father and also defended the homoousia of the Holy Spirit (Kelly 1975[1958]: 258). The Cappadocians sympathized with the position of Athanasius (Kelly 1975[1958]: 258).

Bienert (1997: 188; Kelly 1975: 260-261) says that instead of the term '*homoousia*', St. Basil used the term '*homotimon*,' to indicate that the Holy Spirit enjoys the same worship and adoration as the Father and the Son. St. Basil considers the *homoousia* as the main idea for understanding the Trinity (Schütz 1985: 59) in the terms of the salvation of man. For Gregory of Nazianzus, although the Holy Spirit would be the Spirit of Christ, the *nous* of Christ, and the Spirit of the Lord (Or, 31, 29: 328), he calls the Holy Spirit 'the Lord Himself.' It indicates the same meaning as the term '*homoousia*.' In fact, Gregory of Nazianzus also considers the *homoousia* as the main idea of the Trinity (Schütz 1985: 59)². Gregory of Nazianzus 'followed Athanasius even more explicitly in his focus on the incarnation as the keystone of salvation' (Norman 1980: 214). Gregory of Nyssa (1958: 39-40), in his book: *Quod non sint tres Dei*, states that God does not have three deities, but '*koine tes phuseos*' which is the same as the term '*perichoresis*' or '*homoousia*.' Gregory of Nyssa never used the noun *perichoresis* but for the Christological concept he used the verb '*perichoreoo*.' The verb describes

² See Studer (1985: 187), Anders als Basilius scheute sich Gregor von Nazianz nicht, den Heiligen Geist Gott und Homoousios zu nennen.



the relationship between two natures in one person. With it he describes the two natures of Christ, his divine nature through the incarnation, his human nature. The meaning of the term '*perichoresis*,' however, is metaphorical language about God.

Though the term '*perichoresis*' originated in Christology, it was also applied to indicate the unity of the essence of the Trinity and of their *homoousia*. As far as the unity of essence is concerned, the doctrine of the *filioque* also takes an important place in the understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity. The East and the West differed on the *filioque*. In the West, the *filioque* was the logical implication of the doctrine of the Trinity. In the East, however, it was rejected.

The Church Fathers used the metaphorical term *perichoresis* to explain the biblical concept 'God,' who is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. According to them, this doctrine was the true interpretation of the Bible, expressed in metaphorical language. Although they used different terms (three persons in one essence) for the biblical metaphor (The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit) they believed that it expressed the same. McGrath (1997: 146) points out that in the patristic and in the modern age, 'the doctrine of the Trinity identifies the God of Christianity, and clarifies his relation to potential rivals'.

Bruce Marshall³ says that in modern theology, the doctrine of the Trinity is central to any recognizably Christian belief system (Marshall 2000: 5). It indicates that the doctrine of the Trinity became the centre of modern theology as well. Many modern theologians, however, reinterpreted the doctrine of the Trinity in multifarious ways. They developed their own understanding of this doctrine along philosophical, sociological, psychological ways. There are philosophical influences on the doctrine of the Trinity in the modern theology, especially on the epistemological understanding of the relation between the terms 'being' and 'God,' the concepts 'the person of God,' and 'the act of God.'

³ See, pp. 17-49



O'Collins (1999: 156) points out that the philosophical input from philosophers (Descartes, Kant, and John Lock) influenced the modern understanding of 'person' as self-awareness and freedom. This notion readily produces what looks suspiciously like tritheism, when applied to the doctrine of the Trinity. In fact, the twentieth-century theologians wrestled with the agenda set by Hegel and with his contribution to specific issues (Ford 1989: 12). They have been implicitly or explicitly influenced by him. Modern protestant theologians like Barth, Jüngel, Moltmann, and Pannenberg have also been influenced by Hegel's thought in the development of the doctrine of God. According to O'Collins (1999: 158-159), Hegelian thought has its impact on Jürgen Moltmann's social theology of the Trinity. And certain aspects of Hegel's thought do 'appear to be central to Pannenberg's doctrine of God' (Jansen 1995: 193). Pannenberg, following the example of Hegel, looks for 'a pattern of union and self-differentiation in the Christian concept of God as a Trinity' (Fulljames 1993: 276). For both Moltmann and Pannenberg, 'the theological content has to be represented in philosophical terms' (Jansen 1995: 66).

The term 'dialectical' placed Barth in the sphere of Kierkegaard's philosophical method rather than with Hegel (Grenz & Olson 1992: 67). However, the term 'dialectical theology' does imply 'a mixture of philosophical thought borrowed from thinkers ranging from Plato to Kant and Kierkegaard' (Brown 1969: 251). 'Most of the neo-orthodox theologians stand in the Kantian tradition and accept Kant's critique of natural theology' (Livingston 1971: 340). Jüngel interprets Barth in the light of the Hegelian concept of the 'relation of opposites', of union and distinction, of self-correspondence in the lower medium (Bradshaw 1988: 56). Karl Barth was influenced by Hegel's thought as well (Ahlers 1989: 41).

According to Willis (1987: 34-38), the doctrine of the Trinity in Barth's theology has a relationship with Feuerbach's understanding of God in both its negative and positive aspects. It is possible to analyse Barth's understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity in the light of Feuerbach's philosophy. Through Willis' study, it is clear that Barth's thought was based on revelation when he speaks about God, but he responded to Feuerbach's philosophy, which was a critique on Christian theism (Willis 1987: 27). In



the relationship with Feuerbach (both in negative and positive terms), Barth affirms Hegel's understanding of God in order to criticize Feuerbach's understanding of God, because Feuerbach, as Kantian, criticizes traditional theism or Christian faith in God, as well as Hegel. Feuerbach criticized 'Hegel's approach that takes an absolute standpoint by beginning in thought' (Willis 1987:30). Feuerbach criticizes the entire modern philosophy from Descartes and Spinoza onwards as well (Willis 1987: 29).

Hegel's philosophy reduces 'the ontological, epistemological and moral transcendence of the Absolute simply to the all-inclusiveness of the whole in contrast to its parts' (Henry 1964: 72). In contrast to classical theism, Hegel 'reinterprets the doctrine of the Trinity and intratrinitarian relations so as to provide a foundation for the relation between God and the world' (Jansen 1995: 95). Grenz and Olson (1992: 36) says that 'three moments of the divine reality are at work in the process of the actualisation of the unity of the divine and human- somewhat analogous to divine persons bound up with the Christian concept of the Trinity.' According to O'Collins' criticism (1997: 157), if God is the world, as Hegel suggests, God cannot give the world salvation. Ultimately, his concept of God differs from traditional belief in the doctrine of the Trinity.

Barth, Jüngel, Moltmann, and Pannenberg are closely connected with the doctrine of the Trinity. Actually, as Stanley J. Grenz (2004: 33-106) demonstrates, they are the German theologians of the renaissance of trinitarian thought in the twentieth century on the basis of the thinkers in the nineteenth century like Schleiermacher and Hegel.

Their common issue in the doctrine of the Trinity is the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ in history (Geschichte) since he is identical with God himself as triune God. For Barth, the doctrine of the Trinity is a response to Feuerbach, who is atheist. Jüngel (1971: 381) says that for Barth theism and atheism play a parallel function. That the doctrine of the Trinity, which formulates the mystery of the identification of God with Jesus is mentioned as the expression of the historicity of God already in the Prolegomena of his Dogmatics, proves that every wider statement about God is already a statement about men (Jüngel 1971: 382).



Barth's understanding of the Trinity was the starting point of the views of the other three theologians. As Willis (1987: 97) points out, for Moltmann, the triune God who acts for human suffering by suffering is not that of traditional theism. Because Jesus Christ who was crucified on the cross is one of three persons in the Trinity, God suffers with human beings (Willis 1987:98). This God responds to human beings and to atheism that criticizes the abstract God of traditional theism. For Moltmann (2002[1972]: 232), the content of the doctrine of the Trinity is the crucifixion of Christ itself. And the form of crucified one is the Trinity (Moltmann 2002[1972]: 232-233).

As is the case with Moltmann, Jüngel rejects every form of metaphysical understanding of God (Courth 1993:276). As DeHart (1999:43) mentions, 'Jüngel understands the modern notion of the "death of God" and thus the phenomenon of modern atheism to be closely linked with the concept of God's "non-necessity" within the worldly or human horizon.' Therefore Jüngel, like Barth, is 'interested in the history of Jesus Christ as the concrete starting point for exegetical methodology and dogmatic substance' (Davidson 1997: 160). The slogan 'the death of God' must therefore be understood to mean 'the death of the metaphysical God', which is discredited both by the critiques of atheism and by a trinitarian conception of God (McGrath 2005[1994]: 219).

In Pannenberg's doctrine of God, the atheistic critique against theism which 'turns any attempt to deal with the question of God dogmatically into an exercise in religious subjectivism (Schwöbel1989: 268)' plays an important role. As Schwöbel (1989:268) points out, this atheistic critique of theism is the motive of his 'reflection on the question of God.' 'The crucial point of the atheistic critique is the assertion that the concept of God is not necessary for a complete and meaningful understanding of human existence.' This is in opposition to the background of Pannenberg's anthropological reflection in the understanding of God (Schwöbel1989: 268).

Pannenberg's doctrine of the Trinity implies 'the divine self-disclosure in Jesus Christ' (Grenz 2004: 95). For Pannenberg, faith in Jesus is bound to the conviction of the presence of God in him (Greiner 1988:39). As McGrath (2005[1994]: 195) points out, his Christology 'from below' could build up 'new possibilities to Christian apologetics'.



Schwöbel (1989:283) mentions that ‘Pannenberg intends to present his trinitarian theology as an attempt at resolving some of the traditional difficulties of Western theism, and emphasizes the necessity of retaining the monotheistic emphasis of the Western tradition.’

Pannenberg regards the doctrine of the Trinity as ‘a new approach for the solution of some of the crucial problems of the traditional conception of the doctrine of God’ (Schwöbel 1989:275). For Pannenberg, atheism supplies a way to understand God as being strongly anthropological, parallel to the question about God is the question about men (Greiner 1988: 45). Today, the field of argument between theology and atheism is anthropology (Greiner 1988: 45; Hendrickson 1998:1⁴).

The four theologians’ understanding of God is closely connected in their response to the atheistic critique of theism. The doctrine of the Trinity plays an important role in their theological understanding since Jesus Christ as one of the Trinity provides the answer to the atheistic critique. They are interested in the economy of salvation. Therefore, they accept the Hegelian concept of the identity between the economic and the immanent Trinity (although they understand this from different angles), and they reinterpret the notion of the ‘divine person’ differently from the traditional understanding.

In comparison with the traditional doctrine of the Trinity, modern protestant theologians (Barth, Moltmann, Jüngel, and Pannenberg) reject the traditional concept of ‘person’ of God (Jansen 1995: 67). Barth provides ‘three modes of being’ for the Trinitarian being of God. It displays a threefold repetition and mutuality for all God’s operations. As Jonker points out, Barth’s term ‘three modes of being’ does not imply modalism (Jonker

⁴ According to Hendrickson(1998:1), ‘This having been said, that the who concerning God begins with answering the who concerning humanity, can the Christian theologian answer the question who concerning humanity without referring to the who of God? Here is the place for Christology. Christian theology and anthropology can be bound together in Christology. This binding together of anthropology, theology and Christology creates tensions.



1983: 113)⁵. The reason behind the accusation of modalism is the conviction that Barth does not put forward the independence of the divine Persons clearly (Jonker 1983: 112). However, the danger of Karl Barth's method of grounding and deriving the concept 'three modes of being' from the 'single act' of the divine being, have become manifest (Roberts 1980: 88). Although Barth's criticism of the phrase '*Vestigium Trinitatis*' would be based on denying natural theology; his rejection of the phrase is been 'historical scapegoating' (Cunningham 1998: 31-35). The phrase '*Vestigium Trinitatis*' does not imply the possibility of the negative aspect of natural theology in Augustine's concept, but the possibility of knowledge of God through the natural revelation, as the Bible holds in Rom 1: 20. It implies the phrase '*semen religionis*' in Calvin's understanding (*Institutes* I, iii, 1; McGrath 1994: 234).

According to Jansen (1995: 66), Moltmann's thought is based on his concern with suffering and liberation. In Moltmann's theology, the concept '*perichoresis*' is used for an understanding of the social doctrine of the Trinity. In eastern theology, the term '*perichoresis*' differs from Moltmann's understanding of it. The term '*perichoresis*' implies that 'the oneness, or the *communio personarum divinarum* is to be considered as *homoousia*, as ivso,thj and as pericw,rhsij evna,llhloj'(Hepp 1950: 113). The term '*perichoresis*,' as understood by John of Damascus, who was the first to use the noun '*perichoresis*' was 'trying to make a final end to all possibility of the tri-theistic conceptions,' (Jonker 1981: 19) as Eastern theology held the inherent danger of tri-theism. The term '*perichoresis*' was not used for the social doctrine of the Trinity, but to explain the unity of essence, and avoiding the accusation of 'tri-theism'. According to Ted Peters (1993: 184), 'the social doctrine of the Trinity, though increasingly popular, is wrongheaded. What attracts social Trinitarians is the category of community rather than personality for understanding God.'

Pannenberg is more concerned with the theological and philosophical inadequacy of classical theism in view of contemporary thought (Jansen 1995: 66). For Pannenberg, the purpose of the doctrine of the Trinity is the development of an ontology which

⁵ Louis Berkhof holds that Barth's term 'three modes of being' is not be Sabellianism.



includes both the infinite and the finite, the eternal and the temporal, God and the world (Fulljames 1993: 276). However, he does not look for any meaning in the traditional language of ‘generation’ and ‘spiration’ (Fulljames 1993:276). Pannenberg rejects the traditional starting point for the understanding of God which is based on the unity of God. For Pannenberg (1988: 325), the induction into the plurality of persons from the concept of essence of God leads into the difficulty of both ‘modalism’ and ‘subordinationism.’ As Miller & Grenz (1998:133) points out, ‘this approach views God as primarily a single acting subject, rather than the cooperative working of three persons. So Pannenberg (1977:29) criticises Barth in the sense in which he (Barth) develops in his concept of revelation the doctrine of the Trinity as the expression of the subjectivity of God (*Subjektivität Gottes*) which constitutes the root (*Wurzel*) of the Trinity, not as their result. Pannenberg (1988: 355-357; Olson 1990:200) follows the notion of the identity of immanent Trinity and economic Trinity which comes from Rahner’s axiom: *Die ökonomische Trinität ist die immanente Trinität und umgekehrt*. For Pannenberg, as Miller & Grenz (1988:133) points out, ‘whatever can be said about immanent Trinity must flow out of our understanding of the economic Trinity, that is, out of the activity of the triune God in the divine economy.’

In summarizing, their (Barth, Moltmann, Jüngel, and Pannenberg) rejection and revision of the traditional doctrine of the Trinity results from their emphasis on the identity of the ‘immanent trinity’ and ‘economic trinity’, and the concept ‘person’. According to Olson (1990:178), ‘they (Pannenberg, Moltmann, and Jüngel) are all convinced that the classical doctrine of the Trinity has failed to bridge the gap between the being of God and world of time and history, because of the separation and the traditional strong distinction between the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity.’ Actually they see Rahner’s thesis of the identity of immanent and economic Trinity (Rahner’ rule) as providing a significant turning point in modern Christian thinking about God. While each developed this thesis in his own way, Pannenberg believes that it has not yet been adequately worked out (Olson 1990: 178). This identity is closely connected to their Christology as ‘Christo-nomism’ or ‘Christo-centrism.’



Their (the four leading twentieth century theologians) starting point is the humanity of Christ⁶ that is closely connected to anthropology. It is the so-called ‘Elevation-line Theology’⁷. The identification of the immanent and economic Trinity⁸ as their starting point weakens the reason for the incarnation of the Son of God to forgive the sins of man. Every modern understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity stem from the economic Trinity on the basis of the humanity of Christ in contrast to the so-called ‘speculative notion of God’, which is based on the traditional distinction between immanent and economic Trinity. Suh (1982:293) says that ‘the contemporary elevation-theologians argue that the creation-mediator is only the earthly and glorified Jesus of Nazareth, thus rejecting the traditional application of this term to the eternal Son.’ He (1982: 293) adds that ‘accordingly, modern theology wants to be concrete, starting with the historical Jesus and ending with Him. This historical person is the creator-mediator and redeemer. The pre-existence of Christ is no longer seen as a manifestation of His eternal Sonship in the sense of the classical dogma but is reinterpreted as an indication of His cosmic significance.’

⁶ In the case of Pannenberg, this implies the term ‘from below’ in his Christology (McGrath 1994:195; Miller & Grenz 1998:133).

⁷ Suh (1982:292) mentions that “the contemporary elevation-line theology exhibits some common characteristics: Its consistent emphasis upon the glory in the eschaton through the works of Jesus Christ, its stress upon the self-condescending love as the major character and quality of God, the importance of the historical Jesus, and His significance for the creation in connection with and apart from His redemptive works. Other points of agreement are: their qualification of sin as an episode, participation in the divine being or deification as the final stage of the development of the creation, the provisional and imperfect creation, a more subordinate place for the idea of the glory of God as it is at stake in the creation and sometimes a speculative element in their thinking appealing to the eternal counsel of God.”

⁸ Bray (1993:187) says about Rahner’s view that ‘One difficulty with this is that it opens up a gap between the immanent and the economic Trinity. It seems that Rahner is prepared to insist on the existence of a personal relationship between God and human, but not within the Godhead. This viewpoint is not new of course, but it has always been rejected in orthodox theology because it suggests that God requires a being outside himself in order to manifest his love, and that therefore he is not perfect in himself. It is most unlikely therefore, that his trinitarianism will survive long, since in so many ways it seems to be little more than a return to earlier positions which have long since been superseded.’



In this regard, modern protestant theologians distorted the doctrine of the Trinity with the presupposition of an anthropological starting-point, which is in response to atheistic critique, and the concept 'person' as relationship or society. They focus on the earthly Christ, the crucified one on 'the history of Jesus and on the love of God', but 'does not take into consideration sufficiently the reality of sin and guilt' (Suh 1982:294) ⁹.

In this process, they weaken the significance of human sin. The orthodox understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity and Christology according to the Bible is closely connected to human sin. The doctrine of the Trinity is closely connected with Jesus Christ the Son of God. This, as motioned early, implies that Christology takes an important role in understanding the doctrine of the Trinity, since the Son of God was born in the world for the Salvation of men. The reason why the Son of God becomes a human being is because of the sins [transgressions] of human beings (Athanasius *DIV*, 4). Actually, Jesus' first sermon in Mt 4:17 is his call to repentance¹⁰.

1.2 Purpose of study and limitation

The Korean Church has a 100 year's history. However, the Church does not teach the doctrine of the Trinity. Although many pastors (church leaders) and church members confess it, they only regard it as a tradition. However, what is a more serious problem is that they are influenced by the modern understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity, in spite of their reformed tradition. On the basis of this modern influence (panentheism and the social understanding of person and Church), the Church becomes a social group, which is spiritually powerless. The purpose of this study is to help the Korean Church to

⁹ Suh (1982:294) says 'If God would be presented as the one who only loves, by what standards and criteria could His love be measured and recognized as love? If God would not execute any judgment upon the sinful world, could He still be recognized as God? If salvation would not be made from and against sin, and divine condemnation and judgment, then it means that salvation is nothing else than protection and release from chaos or metaphysical force. Therefore, Jesus Christ is portrayed in modern elevation-theology as having come into the world in order to elevate it, even to the divine being.'

¹⁰ Suh (1982:295) says that the New Testament takes sin so serious that the work of Jesus Christ could not be considered without human sin.



be confirmed in the reformed tradition by being concerned about the orthodox understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity, since the Korean church is generally in line with the reformed tradition of Calvin, H. Bavinck, C. Hodge, L. Berkhof, etc. As the traditional reformed approach to the doctrine of the Trinity is closely connected to the Nicene tradition in this regard, it is necessary to attend to this tradition first. The reformed reception of the doctrine of the Trinity was subsequently rejected by the early modern theology of the Enlightenment period. One of the most salient developments of twentieth century theology is the revitalization of trinitarian theology.

The second part of this study will therefore be an analysis of the revitalization of the doctrine of the Trinity by four leading protestant theologians. It is generally accepted that Barth, Moltmann, Jüngel and Pannenberg made significant contributions in this respect. This study will deal with these theologians' understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity. The hypothesis of the study is that this revitalization was accomplished by a re-interpretation, in which a vital element of the original Nicene tradition and its reception in reformed theology was altered: The third part of our study will therefore focus on an assessment of this revitalization from a traditional reformed perspective.

As this study is furthermore undertaken with a view to give an account of what the implications of a reformed approach to the doctrine of the Trinity is for practical church life, especially in the Korean Church, we will also attend to this matter.

In regard of methodology, this study will therefore focus not only on the theological and historical aspects of the doctrine of the Trinity, but also on Christian praxis for 'the church, which has her origin in the triune God' (Wethmar 1997: 418). This study applies the hermeneutical method in systematic theology which requires the interpretation of texts and the explanation of their present-day relevance. This study therefore works with the presupposition that the Nicene theology rendered a faithful interpretation of the Biblical witness regarding the Triune God and that the reception of this interpretation by the traditional Reformed theology, represented by authors like Calvin, Bavinck and L. Berkhof was equally valid. Our hypothesis therefore is that this



reception was not superseded by the twentieth century positions of Barth, Moltmann, Jüngel and Pannenberg.



PART I: THE PATRISTIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE TRINITY

2 THE BEGINNING OF THE CONTROVERSY

In the controversy surrounding the Trinity, Arius, who was an elder of the Baucalis church in Alexandria, attacked Alexander the bishop of Alexandria. Arius, whose dominant idea was the monotheistic principle of the Monarchians (Berkhof 1991[1937]: 84)¹¹, thought that Alexander taught Sabellianism. The historian Socrates who succeeded Eusebius wrote:

A certain one of the presbyters under his jurisdiction, whose name was Arius, possessed of no inconsiderable logical acumen, imagining that the bishop was subtly teaching the same view of this subject as Sabellius the Libyan, from love of controversy took the opposite opinion to that of the Libyan, and as he thought vigorously responded to what was said by the bishop (Socrates, Ecclesiastical History, I. 5).

At the council of Nicea (AD 325), the ecumenical Church condemned Arius (Kelly 1975[1958]: 231-232) for his denial both of the Son as real God, and that the Son is 'homoousios' with the Father.

2.1 Arius' doctrine of the Trinity.

¹¹See Koehler (1951[1937]: 153), 'Arius became a student of Lucian of Antioch...Arius learnt Aristotelian Philosophy from Lucian and from him on strictly held to the idea of aseity 'avge,nnhton ei=nai' very sharply. From the Origen Arius learnt to restrict the idea of aseity 'avge,nnhton ei=nai' to the Father only. Because of that, the Son did not emanate from the Father, but was independent. But the Son 'became' at the top of the creature.



Arius was influenced by Origen (Koehler 1951: 153). He changed and developed Origen's theology (Lohse 1978: 55). According to González (1984: 269), he was 'a disciple of Lucian in Antioch and who, like his teacher, presented the left wing of Origenism'.

Arius's thought originated from absolute monotheism (González 1984[1970]: 270). He just focused on the fact that God is the 'one and only' as *monad* (Pelikan¹² 1971: 194). He propagated 'the form of extreme Christology, which denies that the Son of God (Christ) is real God' (Pelikan 1971: 196). Because 'the fundamental premise of Arius' system is the affirmation of the absolute uniqueness and transcendence of God' (Kelly 1975[1958]: 227), the being or essence of the Godhead could not be shared or communicated. Therefore Arius confesses that He (the Son) is a creature of God (*kti,sma tou/ qeou/*) and has a beginning (Seeberg 1936: 41; Loofs 1959: 184). As Philip Schaff points out, his thinking can be regarded as 'deism' and 'rationalism' (Schaff 1970: 643). Kelly summarizes Arius' theology, as follows:

1) The Son must be a creature, a *kti,sma* or *poi,hma*, whom the Father has formed out of nothing by His mere fiat. 2) As creature the Son must have had a beginning. 3) The Son can have no communion with, and indeed no direct knowledge of, his Father. 4) The Son must be liable to change and even sin (Kelly 1975[1958]: 227-229)

Arius sought scriptural support in order to protect his own ideas (Berkhof 1991[1937]: 84-85). His scriptural proofs for the Son as inferior to the Father were Prov 8:22(*septuaginta*); Mt 28: 18; Mk 13: 32; Lk 18: 19; Jn 5: 19; 14: 28; 1 Cor 15:28(Berkhof 1991: 85). Especially, 'Col 1:15' '*ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως*' played a decisive role. Arius confirmed that the phrase '*πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως*'¹³ indicates that the Logos is one of the creatures.

¹² Moreover, according to Pelikan (1971: 200), 'Arianism was accused of being polytheistic, despite its rigid monotheism, by Athanasius and Hilary through Marcellus of Ancyra and Boethius.'

¹³ See, Oberdorfer (2002: 65).



This understanding stems from a part of Origen's understanding (Lohse 1978: 36). Hodge (1982: 452) points out that in spite of his acceptance of the 'distinct personality of the Son, his eternal generation, and calling freely him God', Origen 'would not admit his equality with God' in the sense that 'the Father, alone, according to him was $\omega\tilde{\nu}\tilde{\nu}\tilde{\nu}$, the Son was simply $\omega\tilde{\nu}\tilde{\nu}$, the Son was $\omega\tilde{\nu}\tilde{\nu}$ evk $\omega\tilde{\nu}\tilde{\nu}$ / and not avuto $\omega\tilde{\nu}\tilde{\nu}$.'

However, Bavinck (1997[1951]: 280) explains Origen's view by quoting his *Contra Celsus* (VIII, 12, 13) 'the Father and the son have all the divine attributes in common: It is not true that besides God we also worship the Son, but in God we worship the Son.' In this sense, Origen affirms the unity and equality. Widdicombe (1994: 69) explains 'God as Father must have a Son in order to be what he is, and the Son as Son must have a father in order to be what he is'. The fatherhood of God and the generation of the son must be closely connected with each other (Widdicombe 1994: 70). This implies that 'the concepts of the eternal fatherhood of God and the eternal generation of Son also play an essential role in Origen's understanding of God's nature in another way' (Widdicombe 1994: 71).

Widdicombe (1994:78) argues that Origen proceeds step by step towards 'the idea that the Father and the Son share the nature of divinity equally, and are differentiated only by the fact that one is Father and the other Son, and that it is the nature of the relationship that defines their difference.' There would be little doubt that Origen's notion of eternal generation has had an influence on the Eastern Church. In the Eastern Church, Origen was the first theologian to have used the term *homoousia* (Crouzel, 1989:187)¹⁴ to describe the relation between the Father and the Son. His basic assumption is that the Father and the Son are correlative terms (Widdicombe 1994: 69).

Crouzel (1989: 188) states that for Origen the Son is both subordinate and equal to the Father. McEnhill & Newlands (2004: 26) says 'that it seems that the philosophical and theological terminology employed by Origen was not yet sufficiently technically clarified for him to give a precise and distinct meaning to his understanding of the

¹⁴ See. Fortman (1972: 56); Kelly (1975[1958]: 130).



divine nature.’ However, Arius confirms an extremely negative understanding of Origen’s thought (Ohlig 1999: 64). Therefore, he claims that the Son is Vallo, trij kai. ano, moioj kata. pa, nta th/j tou/ patro.j ouvsi, aj kai. ivdio, thtoj (CA¹⁵ I, 6). This implies that ‘although he was called God, he is not true God, he is just God by name by participating in grace’ (Kelly 1975[1958]: 229).

Bobrinskoy (1999: 221) says that ‘at the time of Athanasius, *ousia* and *hypostasis* were still synonyms’. It is true that the two words often are regarded as having the same meaning (Prestige 1981 [1936]: 184). Kelly (1975[1958]: 229) contends, ‘Arius could speak of the holy Triad, in speciously Origenistic language, as consisting of three Persons’. However, the Cappadocians’ battle was ‘against the extreme Arian, who insisted on the triplicity of hypostaseis, in order to prove their contention that the *hypostaseis* were unequal’ (Prestige 1981 [1936]: 242). Therefore, Ohlig (1999: 65; Adam¹⁶ 1977[1966]: 221) argues that the concept ‘Trias’ holds a monarchianistic sense, but does not mean a trinitarian structure of God himself in Arius.

2.2 The Excommunication of Arius

Alexander attacked the doctrine of Arius with all the means at hand (González 1984[1970]: 272), and convoked a synod in which almost a hundred Egyptian bishops were present, and which condemned and deposed Arius in AD 320 (Walker 1985[1919]: 132). Arius went to stay with Eusebius in Nicomedia. Eusebius received Arius in his diocese and granted him his protection in spite of the protests of the bishop of Alexandria. Thus, the dispute became a schism that could affect the whole church (González 1984[1970]: 272). Arius wrote to Eusebius:

That the Son is not begotten, nor a part of the unbegotten in any way, nor

¹⁵ Contra Arianos

¹⁶ ‘Wohl hielt Arius an dem Begriff der heiligen Trias fest, aber eine Trinitas konnte er nicht anerkennen; er lehrte eine Dreifaltigkeit, aber keine Dreieinigkeit. Innerhalb der Dreifaltigkeit bestanden für sein Auffassung Wesensunterschiede’ (Adam 1977[1966]: 221)



[formed out] of any substratum, but that he was constituted by [God's] will and counsel, before times and before ages, full (of grace and truth), divine, unique, unchangeable. And before he was begotten or created or ordained or founded, he was not. For he was not unbegotten. We are persecuted because we say, "The Son has a beginning, but God is without beginning." But this is what we say, since he is neither a part of God nor [formed] out of any substratum. For this we are persecuted, and you know the rest (Hall 2002: 36).

As mentioned in Arius' letter, the son was 'constituted by [God's] will and counsel, before times and before ages, divine, unique, unchangeable.' For Arius, the Son is begotten, however, for him, the meaning of begetting does not differ from creating (Bobrinskoy 1999: 221).

Constantine, the emperor of Rome, 'gathered the bishops by the same method he had applied with the Donatist issue in the West to solve the problem of Arius. He proceeded, therefore, to summon all the bishops of the empire to the city of Nicaea in Asia Minor' (Walker 1985[1919]: 134). This was 'the Nicene council' (AD 325), the first universal council of the church (Walker 1985[1919]: 134). The main idea of 'the Nicene council' demonstrates that the Son is real God and that the Son is 'homoousios' with the Father (Berkhof 1991[1937]: 86.). In this council, Arius was anathematized.

3 ATHANASIOUS' THEOLOGY

Athanasius (AD 295-373) was born in Alexandria. As young man, Athanasius grew up within the order of the Imperial Church (Von Campenhausen 1998[1960]: 69). Von Campenhausen (1998[1960]: 69-83) depicts Athanasius as one of the ecclesiastical politicians of the fourth century. He was placed in the middle of the fourth century controversy. 'His repeated exiles and returns serve as a weather vane to show which way the doctrinal and political winds were blowing' (González 1984[1970]: 299). He



was a ‘Church man’ and a pastor rather than a systematic or speculative thinker (González 1984[1970]: 300).

Athanasius was not fighting on behalf of a philosophical problem but on behalf of the Christian religion itself, on behalf of the revelation of God (Bavinck 1997[1951]: 281-282; Schaff 1970: 643). He based his theology on the ‘revelation’, and he defended a ‘supernatural and theistic Christian faith’ (Schaff 1970: 643).

3.1 The doctrine of the Trinity as a response to Arius

Athanasius followed Origen’s ‘logos-Son’ (eternal generation of the Son) as Alexanderian (Loofs 1906: 238). But he did not compress the Christian faith in an exclusive and philosophical system characterized exclusively and philosophically like the other Alexandrian theologians (Clemens, Alexander) (Hägglund 1990[1983]: 60).

3.1.1 The incarnation of the Word for sinners

In ‘*De Incarnatione Verbi*’, Athanasius addresses the concept of ‘the deity of Christ’ and the salvation through the Son (Olson 1999:167). Meijering (1974[1968]: 40) points out that Athanasius’ aim was to defend the incarnation of the *Logos* against the objection of the Jews and the Greeks. Athanasius defended the incarnation of the Word and the divinity of the Word in terms of the wrong concepts of Jews and Greeks (Meijering1974: 41).

Athanasius ‘has to deal with creation in order that the reader may know the reason of the incarnation’ (Meijering 1974: 41). For Athanasius (DIV 1), the Father created the world as the Creator through the *Logos* who created it in the beginning. However, the *Logos* is none other than the Creator, God himself, because, if the possibility of creation is from ‘things’ that belong to creature, He could not be the creator and maker of heaven and earth. If so, God is just a technician (DIV 2). For Athanasius, therefore, this *dhmiourgo.j* must be the creator who is the essential Godhead, since the creation



belongs to the Creator (DIV 2). Kelly (1975: 243) says that for Athanasius ‘the Word could never have divinized us if He were merely divine by participation and were not Himself the essential Godhead, the Father’s veritable image’.

Athanasius (CA II, 70)¹⁷ connects the Son’s deity to the deification of human beings. For him, if the Son of God is a creature, he cannot deify human beings, and human beings cannot stand before God. His starting point stems from the question ‘why God became a human being?’ Athanasius’s main object was the salvation of human beings (dia. th.n h`mete,ran swthri,an¹⁸). For Athanasius

The term incarnation demonstrates not only that his main interest is salvation of humanity, but also that he is accepting points of the received ecclesiastical tradition. Although Athanasius was fighting against ‘homoiousianer’, the reason of this was because he concentrated on the salvation of human beings through his whole theology as pastor (Alvyn Pettersen 1995:109).

3.1.2 The reason for the Incarnation

Athanasius was convinced that the reason why the Son of God had to come to this world was the sin of human beings (Rudolf 1986: 78). Athanasius (DIV 4)¹⁹ confirms that transgressions [sins] of men caused the *Logos*’ love of (toward) human beings, so that he came to us to make the Lord known among human beings. According to Kelly’s translation (1975: 284), ‘we ourselves were the motive of His incarnation; it was for our

¹⁷ Ouk a;n de. pa,lin Veqeopoih,qh kti,smati sunafqei.j o` a;nqrwpoj(evi mh. qeo.j h=n Valhqino.j o` ui`o.j(kai. ouvk a;n pare,sth tw| patri. o` a;nqrwpoj(evi mh. fu,sei kai. avlhqino.j h=n autou/ lo,goj o` evndusa,menoj to. sw/ma (CA .II. 70).

¹⁸ This statement is a phrase of the ‘Nicene Creed’

¹⁹ ... h` h`mw//n para,basij tou// Lo,,gou th..n filanqrwpi,,an evxekale,,sato(w[ste kai,, eivj h`ma//j fqa,,sai kai.. fanh//nai to..n Ku,,rion evn avnqrw,poij(.) Th//j ga..r evkei,nou evnswmatw,sewj h`mei//j gego,namen u`po,qesij(kai. dia. Th.n h`mw/n swthri,an evfilanqrwpeu,sato kai. evn avnqrwpi,nw| gene,sqai kai. fanh/nai sw,mati) (DIV, 4)



salvation that He loved man to the point of being born and of appearing in a human body'. For Athanasius, human sin has provoked the incarnation (Meijering 1974: 42). Therefore, his Christology begins with discussion of the sin of human beings.

With the regard to the concept of incarnation, the word 'restoration' plays an important role for Athanasius (Ritschl 1964: 40-44). The purpose of the Son's incarnation and restoration is to protect the Father's work from being destroyed. Athanasius (DIV 8) declares that He (the Son) took on a body, which is not different from ours, so that the work of the Father, by which He made mankind, would not be destroyed²⁰. Although He is the power who is *demiourgos* of the universe (this implies creator here), in the virgin He prepared for himself a temple (DIV 8²¹).

Athanasius 'distinguishes carefully between what belonged to the Word in his eternal being and what belonged to Him as incarnation' (Kelly 1975[1958]: 286). He says

[I]t is necessary for us to pre-examine, so that if we see Him working or speaking divinely through the instrument of his own body, we know that He is God who did this. And again if we see him speaking and suffering as a human, we may not fail to understand that he became a man with flesh (CA III, 35; NPNF², vol 4)²³.

²⁰ ... i`na mh.. to. geno,,menon Vapo,,lhtai(kai.. eivj avrgo.n tou// Patro..j to.. eivj avnqrw,,pouj e;rgon auctou// ge,,nhtai(lamba,,nei e`autw//| sw//ma(kai.. tou//to ouvk avllo,,trion tou// h`mete,,rou)

²¹ ... aucto.j ga.r dunato.j w;n kai. dhmiourgo.j tw/n o[lwn(evn th// Parqe,nw| kataskeua,zei e`autw| nao.n to. sw//ma,(

²² A select library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, *Second series*.

²³ Tau/ta avnagkai,wj proexhta,samen, i`na, evan i;dwmen aucto.n div ovrga,nou tou/ ivdi,ou sw,matoj qeikw/j pra,ttonta, ti h; le,gonta, ginw,skwmen o;ti Qeo.j w;n, tau/ta evrgavzetai\ kai. pa,lin, eva.n i;dwmen aucto.n avqrwpi,nwj lalou/nta h; pa,sconta, mh. avgnow/men o;ti sa,rka forw/n ge,gonen a;nqropoj



For Athanasius (DIV 10)²⁴, the primary cause of the incarnation of the Saviour is that believers do not die ‘like the condemned [‘ouvke,ti ga..r nu//n w`j katakrino,menoi avpoqnh,skomen’] but as risen ones we await the general resurrection of all [‘w`j evgeiro,menoi perime,,nomen th.n koinh..n pa,ntwn avna,,stasin’]. Therefore human beings can be saved, and look forward to the resurrection. Bobrinskoy (1999: 223) points out that ‘the first period of Athanasius’ doctrinal labor is placed in its entirety under the aegis of the defense of the divinity of the Logos, and of the affirmation of the fullness of the salvation granted in the incarnation of the divine Word.’ Athanasius (DIV 16) persuades that the Word himself is not only man, but also God, the Word and wisdom of the true God²⁵. Insofar as the doctrine of salvation is concerned, Athanasius struggles with the Christology of Arius since salvation through a creature is not possible (Rudolf 1986: 85).

3.1.3 The renewal and the recreation of man’s knowledge of God

In Meijering’s paraphrase of chapter 11-13 of ‘DIV’ (Meijering 1974[1968]: 46), Athanasius treats the understanding of both ‘the destruction of death’ and ‘the restoration of eternal life’. After this ‘Athanasius goes on to elaborate on the renewal of the lost knowledge of God’ (Meijering 1974[1968]: 46). For Athanasius, man as *imago dei* (creation after God’s image) could know God, but ‘forsook this knowledge of God and turned to idolatry’ (Meijering 1974[1968]: 46). Therefore God provided man with a new way to know Him, viz., through the harmony of the universe (Meijering 1974[1968]: 46).

²⁴ ouvke,ti ga..r nu//n w`j katakrino,menoi avpoqnh,skomen(avllV w`j evgeiro,menoi perime,,nomen th.n koinh..n pa,ntwn avna,,stasin(h;n kairoi/j ivdi,oij dei,xci o` kai. tau,thn evrgasa,menoj kai. carisa,menoj Qeo,j. Aivti,a me.n dh. prw,th th/j evnanqrwph,sewj tou/ Swth/roj au[th)

²⁵ ... u`pe,balen e`auto.n dia. sw,matoj fanh/nai o` Lo,goj(i[na metene,gkh| eivj e`auto.n w`j a;nqrwpoj tou.j avnqrw,pouj(kai. ta.j aivsqh,seij auctw/n eivj e`auto.n avpokli,nh| (kai. loipo.n evkei,nouj w`j a;nqrwpon aucto.n o`rw//ntaj(diV w-n evrga,zetai e;rgwn (pei,sh| mh. ei=nai e`auto.n a;nqrwpon mo,non(avlla. kai. Qeo.n kai. Qeou/ avlhqinou/ Lo,gon kai. sofi,an)



Athanasius uses the words ‘to renew’ and ‘to recreate’ for ‘a new way of knowing Him.’ Van Haarlem, according to Meijering (1974[1968]: 49), distinguishes between both words: ‘to renew’ implies ‘an apologetic and philosophical idea,’ and ‘to recreate’ means Scriptural one (Meijering 1974[1968]: 49). According to Meijering (1974[1968]: 49), for Van Haarlem, ‘the philosophical idea predominates in the *Contra Gentes* and the scriptural one in the *De Incarnatione Verbi*.’ According to Meijering (1974[1968]: 49), it is impossible ‘to agree with this distinction and the suggestion that in the *De Incarnatione Verbi* the influence of Scripture is stronger than in the *Contra Gentes*.’ Anatolios (1998: 75) says that ‘in the context of the narrative of human sin and corruption, the incarnation is conceived as a renewal of the knowledge of God, which implies restoration of a relationship of full participation by the created *nous* in the divine *Logos*.’

T. F. Torrance (1988: 303) says that ‘Athanasius’s approach to the knowledge of God was strictly through the Son and not otherwise.’ According to Kelly (1975[1958]: 245), Athanasius says that ‘the Son is the image of the Father; [The Son] is the brightness and the Father the light. Hence anyone who sees Christ sees the Father, “because of the Son’s belonging to the Father’s substance and because of His complete likeness to the Father”’. Kelly’s description differs from that of Torrance as the image of the Father implies the same nature as the Father

In Meijering’s (1989) exegesis of the Athanasius’ *De Incarnatione Verbi*, on the [second] reason of the incarnation of Christ (chapter 11-13), he states that the creation after the image and likeness (*nach dem Bilde und Gleichnis*) of God implies that man is the image of the image of God namely (Christ). When man is aware of the particularity of their essence, they have the right understanding of God and because of it they live in happiness. The understanding of God is described, in fact, as a part of the image of God (Meijering 1989: 108). According to Athanasius (DIV 11), God knew that man is insufficient to know a ‘Maker (Creator)’ or have a ‘notion of God’. So God gave them (men) the same image as our Lord Jesus Christ and created them in the likeness of own



image: that by his own grace the image may be understood (DIV 11) ²⁶. So if man, who was created by God, does not know his creator, he is only an animal (DIV 11). But man was too foolish to sustain God's grace, wandered away from God, and defiled his own soul (DIV 11). Through the fall, man lost the possibility to attain to eternal life, and in this regard, changed his own essence (Meijering 1989: 109). According to Frances Young (1983: 70), this part demonstrates man's irrationality. She states that for Athanasius in *Contra Gentes* and *De Incarnatione Verbi* 'men could not be *logokoi*, once they had lost the *Logos* of God; they were reduced to the level of beasts, and worshipped idols in bestial form; indeed idolatry is the proof of man's irrationality.' She argues that 'men could not have regained full knowledge of God without their share in the *Logos*' (Young 1983: 70). There is one solution which is to renew God's image in men. The revelation of God was a prime necessity for salvation (Young 1983: 71).

Meijering (1974[1968]: 49), though, shows that Athanasius uses different sources of man's knowledge of God in *De Incarnatione Verbi* 11-13: 1) by his creation in God's image, 2) through the creation, 3) through Scripture, and 4) through the incarnation. Contrary to Van Haarlem's view, Athanasius refers to the first three sources of knowledge. Having treated the three major arguments of *Contra Gentes*, in his *De Incarnatione Verbi* 1-5, Athanasius discusses the restoration of the eternal life, which man had lost together with his knowledge of God, in *De Incarnatione Verbi* 6-10 (Meijering 1974[1968]: 49). The incarnation of the Word is necessary, for it is impossible for men to restore salvation (renewal and restoration of the knowledge of God) by themselves (Meijering 1974[1968]: 50). Then, Athanasius turns to the restoration of the knowledge of God and discusses the fourth stage of this knowledge. Meijering concludes:

There can be no doubt that in the *Contra Gentes* and in the *De Incarnatione*

²⁶ ... avgaqo,j w;n(th/j ivdi,aj eviko,noj auvtou/j tou/ Kuri,ou h`mw/n VIhsou/ Cristou/ metadi,dwsi, kai. poiei/ tou,touj kata. e`autou/ eivko,na kaq v o`moi,win\ ina dia. th/j toiau,thj ca,ritoj th.n eivko,na noou/ntej(le,gw dh. to.n tou/ Patro.j Lo,gon(dunhqw/sin e;nnoian di v auvtou/ tou/ Patro.j labeli/n(kai. ginw,skontej to.n poi.j th.n zw/si to.n euvdaimona kai. maka,rion o;ntwj bi,on)



Verbi Athanasius is following a well preconceived scheme, and that he develops his arguments with great consistency and harmony. By working with the typically neo-orthodox Protestant separation between Biblical kerygma and philosophy Van Haarlem sees contradiction in Athanasius of which Athanasius himself was not conscious.’(Meijering 1974[1968]: 50)

3.1.4 Homoousia

The term ‘generation’ plays an important role in Athanasius’ theology. He (CA I, 9) says, the Son is ‘natural and genuine Son from the Father, and it is the same with *ousia* [His own ‘*ousia*’] as the Father. The Son is neither ‘*kti, sma*’, nor ‘*poi, hma*’, but a particular ‘*ge, nnhma*’[from Father’s *ousia*]’²⁷. Athanasius sees that ‘Father’s being was never incomplete, needing an essential feature to be added to it; nor is the Son’s generation like a man’s from his parent, involving His coming into existence after the Father. Rather, the Son is God’s offspring’ (Kelly 1975[1958]: 243-244)

For Athanasius, the ‘*ge, nnhsij*’ of God differs from that of humans, since God is neither like a human being, nor is the Father from a father (CA I, 21)²⁸. Athanasius affirms that as the Father is always the Father, (in this sense) the Father would never become the Son at any time, like this, the Son is always the Son (in this meaning) the Son would not become the Father (CA I, 22)²⁹. He also emphasizes that God’s ‘*ge, nnhsij*’ differs from human’s again in another phrase of CA I, 28.

[B]ecause it is not necessary to compare the ‘*ge, nnhsij*’ of God with the nature of human beings, and to consider that His Son is the part of God or

²⁷ Ui`oj avlhqino.j fu,sei kai. gnh,sio,j evsti tou/ Patro.j(i;dioj th/j ouvsi,aj auptou/))) avll v i;dion th/j tou/ Patro.j ouvsi,aj ge,nnhma)

²⁸ VEpi. de, th/j qeo,tthoj ouvk e[stin ou;toj\ ouv ga.r w`j a;nqrwpoj o` Qeo,j\ ou;te gar path.r evk patro,j evsti\].

²⁹ `Wj ga.r o` Path.r avei Path.r, kai, ouvk a;n pote ge,noito Ui`oj, ou;te o` Ui`oj avei Ui`oj evsti, kai. ouvk a;n pote ge,noito Path,r



wholly...God is not like a human being(CA I, 28)³⁰

The Son of God, who is not from nothing (without), but from the Father, has the nature of a '*ge,nnhma*' (CA I, 27). This implies that the Son as '*ge,nnhma*' of God is *o`moousioj tw/ Patri,*, since, as Alvyn Petterson (1995: 156) points out, for Athanasius, the sense of offspring (*ge,nnhma*) and homoousion is one³¹. Although Athanasius emphasizes the idea of '*ge,nnhma*' in opposition to Arius' '*kti,sma*', the word '*ge,nnhma*' illustrates that Athanasius' intention is closely connected with the Son's consubstantiality with the Father³². Athanasius regarded the term '*homoousia*' as 'containing within itself the true and proper solution of that problem also' (Prestige 1981: 213). It is true that the word '*homoousios*' excludes 'any partitions or divisions within the Godhead' (Petterson 1995: 156).

Although Athanasius does not use the term '*homoousia*' in his early work, 'later Athanasius increasingly uses this term, often in terms of the Eusebian formulation of the Son as "like the Father" (*homoiousios*)' (Kelly 1975[1958]: 246). Athanasius uses the term *homoousios* in oppsition to the Arian Logos that was a creature (Petterson 1995: 156). '*Homoousios* seems to be saying that the Son is not a creature' (Petterson 1995: 156). For Athanasius (CA I, 9), the Son is neither '*kti,sma*' nor '*poi,hma*', but a particular '*ge,nnhma*' of the Father's essence. He is true God, being *homoousios* to the

³⁰ [Oti de. ouv dei th,n tou/ Qeou/ ge,nnhsin paraba,llein th/ tw/n avnqrw,pwn fu,sei(kai. nomi,zein th.n me,roj ei=nai tou/ Qeou/ to.n Ui`o.n avtou/(h; o[lwj ti paqoj shmai,nein th.n ge,nnhsin(fqa,santej me.n ei;pomen evn toi/j e;mprosqn(kai. nu/n de. ta. auvta, famen\ ouvke;stin w`j a;nqropoj o` Qeo,j)

³¹ See De Syn . 42

³² According to Prestige (1981[1936]: 219), 'the employment of homoousia by Athanasius to express substantial identity was a new development in the Greek language.' In fact, the term '*homoousia*' did not originate from Athanasius' invention, but was used for the purpose of excluding Arianism in the Nicene council (Prestige1981 [1936]: 219).



true Father [consubstantial in the essence of the true Father]³³. ‘The idea of Sonship is central to Athanasius’ soteriology’ (Widdicombe³⁴ 1994:223).

3.2 Holy Spirit

Athanasius’ pneumatology appears in the letter to *Serapion* (AS, 529-676)³⁵ in which his primary aim is his defense of the deity of the Holy Spirit. He takes issue with Arians, Sabellians and the Pneumatomachi. Sabellians deny that the Trinity has ‘three hypostaseis’ in one *ousia*, Arians deny the deity of the Son, and the Pneumatomachi deny the deity of the Holy Spirit.

The heresies of the Pneumatomachi and Arians held the view that the Holy Spirit was not only a creature, but also one of the serving spirits (AS 1, 1)³⁶. Athanasius had to prove that the Holy Spirit was not a creature, nor a serving spirit like an angel. Athanasius used Jn 15:26 to defend the deity of the Holy Spirit (AS 1, 6; 3, 1).³⁷

The Holy Spirit is not an angel, nor a creature, but of God’s own deity (AS 1, 12)³⁸. Athanasius also uses the concept of ‘*homoousia*’³⁹ and implies ‘*perichoresis*’⁴⁰ in his

³³ ouvk e;sti kti,sma ou;te poi,hma, (all v i;dion th/j tou/ Patro.j ouvsi,aj ge,nnhma) Dio. Qco,j evstin avlhqino,j(avlhqinou/ Patro.j o`moou,sioj u`poa,rcwn)

³⁴ According to Widdicombe (1994: 147), ‘the Fatherhood of God, the Sonship of the son, and their soteriological significance are the central topics in many of Athanasius’ writing.’

³⁵ Athanasius, Ad Serapionem, Migne 26, 529-676,

³⁶ Athanasius, Ad Serapionem, Migne 26, 1, 1, p. 532. lego,ntwn auvto. mh. mo,non kti,sma, avlla. kai. tw/n leitourgikw/n pneuma,twn e[n auvto. ei=nai kai, baqmw/ mo,non auvto. diafe,rein tw/n avgge,lwn.

³⁷ Athanasius, Ad Serapionem, Migne 26, 1, 6, p. 541; 1,33, p. 608; 3, 1, p. 625. In thoses pages Athanasius defends the deity of the Holy Spirit because Jesus promised to send the the Holy Spirit, as the Paraclete (evgw pe,myw u`min para. tou/ Patroj) and proceeds from the Father(para. tou/ Patro.j evkporeu,etai).

³⁸ Athanasius, Ad Serapionem, Migne 26, 1, 12, p. 516. to. a;ra tou/ Qcou/ Pneu/ma ouvk a;n ei;h a;ggeloj(ouvde. kti,sma(avll v idion th/j qco,tthtoj auvtou/)



defense of the deity of the Spirit. He advocates the deity of the Holy Spirit against the heresies. It is with the view to 'our salvation' (Young 1983:77; Bienert 1997: 186) that the Holy Spirit deifies⁴¹ human beings through Christ's accomplishment. The Holy Spirit is not separated from the Son, but is also himself in Christ, as the Son is in the Father (AS 1, 14)⁴². In AS 1, 17⁴³, Athanasius confirms that the Holy Trinity is not divided but of the same nature. The Holy Spirit is not a creature but God.

In AS 4,3⁴⁴, Athanasius states that the Spirit is given and sent by the Son (from the Son), as the Son is the only begotten Son. In the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, there is one deity; it means that the Holy Spirit is not different from the Son's nature and Father's deity.

According to Anatolios (1998: 118), for Athanasius, God's creative work is not conceived as external to God's being but as internal to God's being. God's creation is eternal creation. In the distinction between 'theology' and 'economy,' the former is

³⁹ Hägglund (1990: 63) displays 'Athanasius lehrt auch die Homousie des Geistes'; See- Torrance (1993: 8-9); Kelly (1975: 257-258).

⁴⁰ He does not use this term but the meaning of Perichoresis appears in his writings. He applies this meaning to the Holy Spirit as Trinity. The origin of the Holy Spirit is included in this terminology. See Meyer (2000: 396; 401); See Longergan (1976: 103-104); See Dragas (1993: 57).

⁴¹ This deification is through the incarnation of the Son. In his book 'contra Arianum II, 70', he says that our deification is from the nature of the Logos of the Father. In 'Ad Serapionem,' he sustains that the Holy Spirit deifies human beings because he is the nature of God.

⁴² Athanasius, Ad Serapionem, Migne, 26, 1, 14, p 565. ο[ti ουv δι|ρει/το tou/ Ui`ou/ to.

Pneu/ma(avll v evn Cristw/| h=n kai. αυτο.(w[sper ο` Ui`ou/ evn tw/| Patri,

⁴³ Athanasius, Ad Serapionem, Migne, 26, 1-17 p. 572. ... i[na to. avdai,reton kai. ο`mofue,j

avlhqw/j th/j a`gi,aj Tria,doj diamei,nh|

⁴⁴ Athanasius, Ad Serapionem, Migne, 26, 4,3 , p. 641. Kai. ga,r ο` Ui`o,j i[dion th/j ouvsi,aj kai. th/j fu,sewj tou/ Patro,j evsti ge,nnhma(kai. tou/to e;cei to. shmaino,menon) Kai. to Pneu/ma de. lego,menon tou/ Qeou/(kai. evn αυtw/| ο[n(ουv xe,non evsti. th/j tou/ Ui`ou/ fu,sewj(ou;te th/j tou/ Patro,j qeo,thtoj) Dia. tou/to ga,r evn Tria.di(evn Patri.(kai. evn Ui`w/|(kai. evn αυtw/| tw/| Pneu,mati(mi,a qeo,thj evsti.(kai. evn αυth/| th/| Tria,di e[n evsti to. ba,ptisma(kai. mi,a h` pi,stij



conceived as internal to God's being and the latter is external to God's being. For Athanasius, 'theology' has priority over 'economy.' 'The priority of "theology" over "economy" is the priority of divine generation over creation' (Anatolios 1998: 122).

Although the dual procession of the Holy Spirit is not clearly stated by Athanasius through his understanding of '*perichoresis* and *homoousia*,' and 'the priority of the "theology" over "economy"' it is possible to deduct his view on the origin of the Holy Spirit. Meyer (2000: 400-401)⁴⁵ points out that according to Athanasius the Holy Spirit 'proceeds from the Father through the Son' and that 'through' means 'from'. Implicitly the dual procession of the Holy Spirit is deducted from these concepts. Athanasius's primary targets, though, are Arianism, the Pneumatomachians, and Sabellianism, heresies that deny the deity of the Holy Spirit. He does not attack the filioquism, nor does he advocate it. However, it does not mean that he does not believe in the idea of the procession⁴⁶ of the Holy Spirit (Petterson 1995: 184), since implicitly it is impossible to deny that the deity of Holy Spirit is 'from the Father and the Son', or 'from the Father through the Son' (Fortman 1972:75).⁴⁷ Because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Christ (Bienert 1997:186). He therefore affirms the filioque.

4 BASIL'S DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

⁴⁵ Meyer (2000: 400-401) says that 'He argues that the Spirit must proceed from the Father and the Son, or from the Father through the Son. In short, filioque and per Filium expressions are roughly equivalent.'

⁴⁶ Petterson (1995: 184) argues that 'Athanasius does not use the term "procession" and its cognates in a strict sense, Athanasius, though using these terms of the Spirit in both his essential life and his ministry and not at all of the Son, does not contrast "procession" with "being begotten." He uses the term 'procession' to indicate the deity of the Holy Spirit from the Father as well as from the Son. Because the Holy Spirit is not alien to the Son and he is "homoousion" with the Father as the Son is "homoousios" with the Father.'

⁴⁷ Fortman (1972: 75) states that 'yet if we regard what is implicit, rather than what is explicit, in these letters, we are justified in claiming that the procession of the Spirit through the Son is a necessary corollary of his whole argument.' (Fortman quotes Prestige's writing)

In the early Church, the doctrine of the Trinity was formulated as one ousia in three hypostaseis (Prestige 1981: 169). According to Lienhard (1999: 105) ‘Basil of Caesarea was the first to attempt to distinguish explicitly between ousia and hypostasis’ (Oberdorfer 2002: 75; Prestige: 234; Lohse 1978: 69). The Homousia and hypostatic independence of three divine Persons were clearly taught by Basil (Kraft 1991: 170).

4.1 The terms ‘ousia’ and ‘hypostasis’

As successor to Athanasius, Basil followed the Nicene faith. In fact, as Davis (1987:111) states, ‘in Basil, Athanasius found a worthy successor’. However, Anastos (1981: 69) points out that ‘the major problem for the theologians of the Early Church was to explain how the three Persons of the Trinity could be regarded as one God, not three. The solution of the dilemma was found in the orthodox definition of the divine *ousia* with its three *hypostaseis*’.

Prestige (1981[1936]: 228) says that ‘he(Basil) probably thought, according to the principle of the solidarity of the human race, that the whole of human nature is presented in each individual man, so that his argument from particular men afforded a not entirely inadequate illustration of the unity of God.’ He adds that ‘he(Basil) certainly seems to imply that the only fact which constituted the several hypostases of the godhead was that Fatherhood, Sonship and Sanctification, and that, apart from these ‘idiomata’ of presentation, the ousia of the three Persons was identical’. Prestige says

... while He recognized two distinct hypostaseis[the Father and the Son], he still maintained the unity of God, “as image”, he writes, “the Son reproduces the exact model without variation, and as offspring He preserves the homousion”. The image-metaphor guarantees so to speak, the identity of form between the Persons, and the offspring-metaphor guarantees the identity of matter (Prestige 1981[1936]: 229)

Prestige (1981 [1936]: 229) says that for Basil, the concept ‘one *ousia*’ does not imply “two separated objects” produced out of one, but an identical character of the *ousia* is to be accepted’. For Basil

The identity of the divine *ousia* in the several Persons is therefore not a matter of their belonging to a single species, but of their several expression unimpaired of an identical single *ousia*, which is concrete, incapable of any limiting or qualifying relation and exhaustive of the content of the being of its several presentations (Prestige 1981 [1936]: 229- 230).’

As mentioned in the section on Athanasius, these terms have raised some confusion, because even Athanasius used these terms without distinction in some of his writings. As Prestige (1981: 167) points out, ‘elsewhere Athanasius (Ad Afr, 4) lays it down that hypostasis means “being”(ousia) and has no other significance than simply “ that which exists”; the hypostasis and the being mean existence, for it is, and it exists’. He adds

Both hypostasis and *ousia* describe positive, substantial existence, that which is, that which subsists; to. o;n, to. u`festhko,j. But *ousia* tends to regard internal characteristics and relations, or metaphysical reality; while hypostasis regularly emphasizes the externally concrete character of the substance, or empirical objectivity. Hence, with regard to the Trinity, it never sounded unnatural to assert three hypostaseis, but it was always unnatural to proclaim three *ousiai*; although some writers, as will appear hereafter, occasionally use *ousia* in a sense approximating to that of hypostasis, definite examples of the reverse process are not often to be found (Prestige 1981: 188).

According to Prestige (1981: 186), for Basil, the word *ousia* implies ‘a single object of which the individuality is disclosed by means of internal analysis, an object abstractly and philosophically a unit’, instead, the word ‘*hypostasis*’ implies that ‘the emphasis lays not on content, but on externally concrete independence; objectivity in relation to other objects’ (Prestige 1981: 169).



However, for Basil, as Alston (1999: 186) points out, ‘the distinction between ousia and hypostasis is the same as that between the general and the particular’⁴⁸. Basil states in letter 214, 4

[I]f it is necessary for us to say in short what we think (decrees), we will say: What the common (generic idea) is to the particular, this ousia (substance) is to the hypostasis (person). Therefore each one of us participates in the common term of ousia (essence)... So even here, on the one hand, the term of ousia is common (generic), like goodness, divinity, or any similar attribute; on the other hand, hypostasis is perceived in the special property of fatherhood, or Sonship, or of holy power (Basil, letter 214, 4; NPNF2, vol 8).⁴⁹

Basil adds

[I]f they describe that the *prosopa* (Persons) are *anhypostata* (without hypostasis), it is *ipso defacto* an absurd doctrine; as they confess, if it is agreed that the *prosopa* exist in real hypostasis, then they must be enumerated, in order that the principle of *homoousion* may be guarded in the oneness of deity (the unity of the godhead), and that full knowledge of the holiness of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, in the complete and whole hypostasis of each of those called, may be proclaimed (Letter 214, 4;

⁴⁸ See Basil’s letter 236.6 (Behr 2004: 298) ‘The distinction between essence and hypostasis is the same as that between the general and the particular; as for instance, between the animal and the particular human...’

⁴⁹ Eiv de. dei/ kai. h`ma/j to. dokou/n h`mi/n evn bracci/ eivpei/n(evkei.noj evrou/men(o[ti o;n e;cei lo.gon to. koino.n pro.j to. i;dion(tou/ton e;cei h` ouvsi,a pro.j th.n u`po,stasin) [Ekastoj ga.r h`mw/n kai. tw/| koinw/| th/j ouvsi,aj lo,gw| tou/ ei=nai mete,cei(kai. toi/j peri. auvto.n ivdiw,masin o` dei/na evsti kai. o` dei/na) Ou;tw kakei/ o` me.n th/j ouvsi,aj lo,goj koino,j oi-on h` avgaqo,thj(h` qeo,thj(h; ei; ti a;llo nooi/to\ ~H de. u`po,stasij evn tw/| ivdiw,mati th/j patro,tthoj(h; th/j ui`o,tthoj(h; th/j a`giastikh/j duna,mewj qewrei/tai.

NPNF2, vol 8; see Prestige 1981: 228).⁵⁰

Against the Sabellians, Basil (Gregory of Nazianus and Chrysostom) says that the Sabellians reduced the godhead to a single *prosopon*, though it appeared under three names (Prestige 1981: 161). So Basil accuses the Sabellians of maintaining three *prosopa*, in the sense of masks or stage characters in the several letters (Prestige 1981: 161).

4.2 The Doctrine of the Trinity

The essence of the Cappadocians' doctrine is that the one Godhead exists simultaneously in three modes of being, or *hypostaseis* (Kelly 1975: 264). Basil explains implicitly the doctrine of the co-inherence⁵¹, or '*perichoreisis*', of the divine Persons (Kelly 1975[1958]: 264). It is clear that he does not explicitly use the term '*perichoreisis*', but it is possible to deduce it from his statement.

For the Son is in the Father, and the Father in the Son: since such as is the latter, such is the former, and such as is the former, such is the latter; and herein is the unity. So on the one hand, according to the peculiarity of the persons, one and one: on the other hand, according to their common nature, both are also one (DSS 18, 45, 208; NPNF2, vol 8) ⁵².

⁵⁰ Eiv me.n ou=n avnupo,stata le,gousi ta. pro,swpa(auvto,qen e;cei o` lo,goj th.n avtopi,an\ eiv de. evn u`posta,sei ei=nai auvta. avlhqinh/ sugcwrou/sin(o[o`mologou/si(kai. avriqmei,twsan(i[na kai. o` tou/ o`moousi,ou lo,goj diafulacqh/ evn th/ e`no,thti th/j qeo,thtoj kai. h` th/j cuvsebei,aj evpi,gnwsij Patro.j kai. Ui`ou/ kai. avgi,ou Pneu,matoj(evn th/ avphrtisme,nh| kai. o` lotelei/ e`ka,stou tw/n ovnomazo,menwn u`posta,sei khru,sshtai)

⁵¹ Ep. 38. 8. pa,nta ga.r ta. tou/ Patro.j evn tw/| Ui`ow/| kaqora/tai) kai. pa,nta ta. tou/ Ui`ou/ tou/ Patro.j evstin\ evpeideh/ kai. o[loj o` Ui`oj evn tw/| Patri. me,nei(kai. o[lon e;cei pa,lin evn e`autw/| ton Pate,ra\ {Wste h` tou/ Ui`ou/ u`po,stasij oivonei. morf. kai. pro,swpon gi,netai th/j tou/ Patro.j evpiginw,sketai\.

⁵² Ui`o.j ga.r evn tw/| Patri,(kai. Path.r evn tw/| Ui`w/|\ evpeidh. kai. ou-toj toiou/toj(oi-oj



Davis (1987:114) insists that ‘Basil and Gregory laid stress on the distinction with that unity, the former sharply distinguishing the one *ousia* and the three *hypostaseis* (modes of existence).’

For Basil, it is necessary to confess that the Father is God (or God the Father), the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God (PG 32, Letter 8:2, 248)⁵³. It means that the Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God. Basil does not only follow the Nicene term ‘*homoousia*’ for the Father and the Son only, but also applies it to the Holy Spirit following Athanasius.

Basil saw that the Son is consubstantial with the Father as his offspring. As with Athanasius Basil regards the term ‘offspring’ as homoousion with the Father. Basil affirms the Nicene confession

[I]n this, the Son is confessed to be consubstantial [*homoousios*] with the Father, and to be [naturally] of the same nature as the One who begot Him (*o` gennh,saj*). Light, therefore, of light, God of God, Good of Good, and these all things were confessed by those church fathers, and by us now... (PG 32, Letter 159,1; NPNF2, vol 8)⁵⁴.

Like Athanasius, Basil’s ‘*ge,nnhsij*’ is closely connected with term ‘*homoousia*’.

[T]herefore, in confessing the identity of nature, we accepted the consubstantiality [*homoousion*], but we avoid the composition of the Father, [since] the One who was God the Father in substance [*ousia*] has begotten the One who was God the Son in substance [*ousia*]. For thereupon the

evkei/noj(kavkei/noj oi`o,sper ou-toj\ kai. evn tou,tw| e[n. [Wste kata. me.n th.n ivdio,ta tw/n prosw,pwn(ei-j kai. ei-j\ kata. de. to koino.n th/j fu,sewj(e[n oi` avmfo,mteroi

⁵³ de,on o` mologe/n Qeon to. Pate,ra(Qeo.n to.n Ui`o.n (Qeo.n to. Pneu/ma to. a[vion\

⁵⁴ vEn h-| o` moou,sioj ovmologe/i/tai o` Uio,j tw/| Patri.(kai. th/j avth/j u`pa,rcwn fu,sewj h[j o` gennh,taj. Fw/j ga.r evk fwto,j (kai. Qeo.n evk Qeou/(kai avgaqo,n evx avgaqou/(kai. ta. toiau.ta ta,nta(u`po, te tw/n a`gi,wn evkei,nwn w`mologh,qh (kai. u`f v h`mwn nu/n(



homoousion is proved. For God in essence [*ousia*] or *substance* is *homoousios* (co-essential or consubstantial) with God in essence or substance [*ousia*] (PG 32, Letter 8: 3⁵⁵, NPNF2, vol 8) ⁵⁶

When Basil argues against people who deny the deity of the Son and the Holy Spirit, he says that the baptism has been given us by the savior in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (PG 32, Letter 159: 1, NPNF2, vol, 8). And we glorify the Holy Spirit together with the Father and the Son in the conviction (it persuades us) that He is not separated from the divine nature (PG 32, Letter 159: 1, NPNF2, vol, 8).

For Basil, the Son is not a creature. If the Son is not a creature, He is consubstantial with the Father (PG 32, Letter 8:9). The Son is generated from the Father in the sense that He is *homoousios* (consubstantial) with the Father (PG 32, Letter 8: 3). This demonstrates, as Prestige (1981: 242) points out, that ‘the doctrine of the Cappadocians was substantially the same as that of Athanasius, from whom they had learned it.’ For Basil, the Holy Spirit works for ‘the Salvation of human beings’ (Luislampe 1981:158) and ‘the holiness of the human beings’ (Luislampe 1981:170). This implies that Basil’s understanding concentrates on the soteriological and ontological point following Athanasius.

For Basil, the baptismal formula illustrates the co-glorifying of the three *hypostaseis* (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) (PG 32, Letter 159: 1). As Prestige (1981: 244-245) says, ‘there remains the supplementary particularity with a view to the clear distinction of the hypostaseis.’ For Basil, ‘the fact that these three particularities merely represent modes in which, as has been said, the divine substance is transmitted and presented, was expressed by the phrase *tro,poj u`pa,rxewj*, ‘mode of

⁵⁵ According to Kelly, this letter’s author is probably Evagrius (Kelly, 264)

⁵⁶ Tauto,thta de. th/j fu,sewj o`mologou/ntej(kai. to. o`moou,sion evkdeco,meqa(kai, to. su,qeton feu,gomen(tou/ kat v ouvsi,an Qeou/ kai. Patro.j to.n kat v ouvsi,an Qeo.n kai. Ui`o.n gegennhko,tou) vEk ga.r tou,tou to. o`moou,sion dei,knutai) ~O ga.r kat v ouvsi,an Qeo.j tw/| kat v ouvsi,an Qew/| o`moou,sio,j evstin) (PG 32, Letter 8: 3



existence' (Prestige 1981: 244-245). The word *hyparxis* means, in the simplest sense, existence (Prestige 1981: 245). Prestige contends

It is therefore possible to argue that when the phrase 'mode of *hyparxis*' is applied to the divine Persons, it may, at least in the case of the second and third Person, originally have contained a covert reference not merely to their existence, but to the derivation of their existence from the paternal *arche* (Prestige 1981: 245).

'The term seems to have been rescued by Basil from the schools of logic, and subsequently adopted generally into the theological tradition' (Prestige 1981: 245-246).

According to Torrance (1989: 314), 'he held that, far from being alien to the divine nature, the Holy Spirit has an ineffable mode of existence (*tro,poj u`pa,rxewj*) as *u`po, stasij* in the indivisible *koinwni, a* of divine nature with the Father and the Son.' For Collins (2001:146), thus *tropos hyparxeos* might equally be translated 'mode of existence' or 'mode of obtaining existence'. However, since the Persons of the Godhead are understood to be coeternal and coequal, the meanings of the two translations effectively coalesce (Collins 2001:147). The Cappadocian used the term 'mode of *hyparxis*' to describe the divine hypostases.

The term "mode of *hyparxis*" was applied, from the end of the fourth century, to the particularities that distinguish the divine Persons, in order to express the belief that in those Persons or hypostaseis one and the same divine being is presented in distinct objective and permanent expressions though with no variation in divine content (Prestige 1981: 249).

For Basil, 'the Spirit is a living *ousia*, the Lord of sanctification, whose relationship to God is disclosed by His procession, but the mode of whose *hyparxis* is preserved ineffable' (Prestige 1981[1936]: 246).



4.3 The Holy Spirit

The Cappadocians's main contribution is the emphasis on the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit with the Father. As Kelly (1975[1958]: 258) points out well, 'if Athanasius took the lead in defending the *homoousion* of the Spirit, the task was completed, cautiously and circumspectly, by the Cappadocian fathers. At the council of Constantinople in 381, the consubstantiality of the Spirit was formally endorsed' (Kelly 1975[1958]: 263).

Basil emphasizes the hypostatic independence of the Holy Spirit (Bienert 1997: 186.). In the early days as bishop, Basil refrained from the statement about the divinity of the Holy Spirit (Davis 1987: 113). However, after breaking with his old mentor, the Pneumatomachian Eustathius of Sebaste, he was more explicit to use the concept of divinity of the Holy Spirit (Davis 1987: 113).

Basil uses the term '*homotimon*,' by which the Holy Spirit enjoys the same worship and adoration as the Father and the Son, instead of the term '*homoousia*' (Bienert, 1997:188; Kelly 1975: 260-261). But the Holy Spirit does not stand outside the divine *ousia*, because, according to Basil, the Holy Spirit is not a creature, but 'he is able to set free, live and sanctify' (Studer 1985:184). Therefore the Holy Spirit works for 'the salvation of human beings' (Luislampe 1981:158) and 'the holiness of the human beings' (Luislampe 1981:170). For Basil, in fact, this '*homotimon*' means '*homoousia*' (Luislampe 1981: 181). Basil says

[Y]ou say that the Holy Spirit is a creature. But all creatures are the servants of their creator: for all things are your servants, he says. And if He is a servant, and He has the holiness acquired newly; everything that has the holiness acquired newly is not able to admit (susceptible of) evil. But the Holy Spirit, that is holy according to the *ousia*, has been called 'foundation of holiness'. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is not a creature. And if He is not a creature, He is *homoousios* (consubstantial) with God (PG 32, Letter 8: 10).



As Anastos (1981: 132-133) says, ‘the Holy Spirit was acknowledged to be God, *o`moou, sion* as well as *o`mo, timon* with the Father and the Son’.

As far as the aspect of the procession of the Holy Spirit is concerned, Basil states that ‘the Holy Spirit proceeds from God not as a creature, nor is He generated like the Son, but as breathing from the mouth of God’⁵⁸ (DSS 18, 46). The Spirit’s character is ‘procession.’ That is different from the Son’s generation (Lohse 1978: 69). Basil confirms this procession in the sense that the Spirit has the same deity as God.

For Basil, there is no filioque or dual procession of the Holy Spirit. He does not explicitly state that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. The procession of the Holy Spirit differs from generation. He does not even say that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father only (he used John 15:26 for the purpose of the protection of the deity of the Holy Spirit), but says that the Holy Spirit is from God (*w`j evk tou/ Qeou/ proelqo, n*)(DSS 18, 46). This implies the procession of the Holy Spirit *from God*. It can mean ‘from the Father and from the Son’ according to his doxology (DSS 1, 3)⁵⁹: ‘to the Father through the Son with the Holy Spirit’. It sounds like the

⁵⁷ Kti, sma le, geij to. Pneu/ma to. a[gion. Pa/n de. kti, sma dou/lo, n evsti tou/ kti, santoj\ Ta. ga.r su, mpanta(fhsi(dou/la sa,) Eiv de. dou/lo, n evsti(kai. evpikthton e;cei th.n a`gio, thta\ pa/n de, o[evpi. kthton e;cei th.n a`gio, thta(ouvk avnepi, dekte. n evsti kaki, aj\ to. de. Pneuma to. a[gion(kat v ouvsi, an o[n a[gion. phgh. a`giasmou/ proshgo, reutai\ ouvk avra kti, sma to. Pneu/ma to. a[gion. Eiv de. mh. kti, sma(o`moou, sion evsti tw/| Qew/|)

⁵⁸ Basil of Caesarea 18, 46, p. 210.

Kai. ou, k evnteu/qen mo, non th/j kata. th.n fu, sin koinwsi, aj ai` avpodei, xeij(avll v o[ti kai. evk tou/ Qeou/ ei=nai le. getai\ ouvc w`j ta. pa, nta evk tou/ Qeou/(avll v w`j evk tou/ Qeou/ proelqo, n\ ouv gennhtw/j w`j o` Ui`o, j(all v w`j Pneu/ma sto, matoj auktou) Pa, ntwj de. ou; te to. sto, ma me, loj(ou; te pnoh. luome, nh to. Pneu/ma\ avlla, kai. to sto, ma qeoprepw/j...

⁵⁹ Basil of Caesarea, 1, 3, p. 78. ‘ avmfot, rwj th.n doxologi, an avpoplhrou/nti tw/| Qew/| kai. Patri, (nu/n me. n meta. tou/ Ui`ou su. n tw/| Pneu, mati tw/| a`gi, w|(nu/n de. dia. tou/ Ui`ou/ evn tw/| a`gi, w| Pneu, mati ...



concepts of ‘homoousia’ and ‘perichoresis.’⁶⁰ Basil’s prepositions (*evk(dia, (evn or eivj)*) can all freely be changed with reference to the *hypostaseis*. The strict application of the prepositions requires that the proposition ‘evk’ is only applied to the Father, ‘*di,a*’ only to the Son, and ‘*evn or eivj*’ only to the Holy Spirit. He says that ‘it is these careful distinctions, derived from unpractical philosophy and vail delusion, which our opponents have first studied and admired, and then transferred to the simple and unsophisticated doctrine of the Spirit, to the belittling of God the Word, and the setting at naught of the Divine Spirit’ (NPNF2, vol 8; DSS 3, 5). Basil (DSS 6, 15) mentions that the relation between three Persons of the Trinity in the Bible is not ‘up and down’, but ‘right and left’. According to Prestige (1981[1936]: 259), ‘Basil (CEu 3, 4) maintains that the deity of the Holy Spirit is indicated by the fact, on which he enlarges, that the energy of the Holy Spirit is co-ordinate with that of the Father and the Son.’

5 GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS

Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa repeat and extend Basil’s theology (Kelly 1975[1958]: 261). Their emphasis lies on the unity of the three Persons in the Trinity (Ritschl 1981: 56).

5.1 The doctrine of the Trinity

For Gregory, when we say that there are three hypostaseis in God, it is impossible to understand that ‘there are three gods, because the distinction is not referring to the divine essence but to the distinct characteristics of the *hypostaseis*’ (Papademetriou 1994: 3). God is a true Trinity, whose Persons are equal in every way. The Trinity has a common principle, a common essence, and a common power (Papademetriou 1994: 3). Studer(1993: 145) says that for Gregory, ‘the three *hypostaseis* are to be distinguished

⁶⁰ It is clear that he does not use the term Perichoresis but it is possible to deduce it from his sentences. See Basil of Caesarea, 18, 45, p. 208 (Uì`o.j ga.r evn tw/| Patri,(kai. Path.r evn tw/| Uì`w/|\ evpeidh. kai. ou-toj toiou/toj(oi-oj evkei/noj(kavkei/noj oi`o,sper ou-toj\ kai. evn tou,tw/| to. e[n. Kata. de. to koino.n th/j fu,sewj(e[n oi` avmfomteroi] .



without separation, indeed it unified in distinction; for the divinity exists in the three and the three are one being, in which the divinity exists'. For Gregory, 'the Trinity is a dynamic and soteriological experience, the beauty of God experienced in the liturgy of prayer and expressed in the Church's confession of praise' (McGukin 1994:18)

Gregory confirms that there is a common essence in each *hypostasis*, this common essence implies the nature of God (Kelly 1975[1958]: 265). In Or 6: 22, Gregory says that 'adorable unity in trinity, and trinity recapitulated in unity; entirely venerable, entirely regal, of the same throne and glory, transcendent and timeless, uncreated, invisible, untouchable, uncircumscribable. It has inner order known to itself alone, but to be venerated and equally adored by us. It alone enters the Holy of Holies while all the creation remains outside' (McGukin 1994: 17).

Although the three *hypostaseis* are different in number, their *ousia* is not divided (Or, 29, 2). Gregory argues

...so that and though numerically distinct there is no severance of essence. Therefore, a unity having from all eternity arrived by motion at duality, found its rest in Trinity: And this is for us the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Or 29, 2, See NFPF2, vol 7)⁶¹.

Gregory regards the *homoousia* as the main idea of the Trinity (Schütz 1985: 59).⁶² And in his doctrine of the trinitarian convergence to unity, Gregory even begins to sketch out the shape of the doctrine of *perichoresis* (McGukin 1994: 23). Gregory is the first theologian to use the term *perichoresis* to employ this for the two natures of Christ (letter 101)(Norris 1991: 50)

⁶¹ ..., w[ste ka;n avriqmw/] diafe,rh|(th/| ge ouvsi,a mh. te,mnesqai) Dia. tou/to mona.j avp v avrch/j(civj dua,da kinhqeí/sa(me,cri tria,doj cvsth) Kai. tou/to, cvstin h`mi/n o` Path.r (kai. o` Uí`o,j(kai. to. a[gion Pneu/ma\

⁶² See Studer (1985: 187): „Anders als Basilius scheute sich Gregor von Nazianz nicht, den Heiligen Geist Gott und Homoousios zu nennen.“



Gregory (Or 29, 3) contends that the doctrine of the Trinity is not restricted to the time in which human beings live, but beyond time. It is meaningless to use the term in time, since the Trinity is non-time. Since the three *hypostaseis* work in the non-time, therefore, the three *hypostaseis* are eternal. As McGukin (1994: 27) points out, ‘Gregory emphasizes two key elements in this understanding of the Father as *avrch*, and *aivti,a* of the Godhead. The first of these is that the act is timeless; it has no temporal beginning, duration, or end, although it has an origin of logical order in the eternal Person of the Father.’ According to Fortman (1972: 77), for Gregory, the Son differs from creatures as he declares that the Son is ‘the maker of time and is not subject to time’. Gregory uses the term ‘incarnation’, which he took from Origen (Liébaert 1965:89). It plays an important role in his Christology.

The incarnation is closely connected with the doctrine of the ‘two natures’ of Christ. The controversy about the two natures of Christ started in the Eastern Church. There were two schools of thought: Antioch emphasized the human nature of Christ, while Alexandria focused on the divine Christ (Boer 1976: 167). Actually, the tension between the Alexandrian school and Antioch stems from the relation between humanity and deity, especially, as Grenz (2000: 295) points out, the possibility of the union of two natures in one Person.

The problem of the doctrine of the ‘two natures’ in one Person did not only start with the Arians (Eunomius), but also with Apollinarius of Laodicea who was a defender of the Nicene term *homoousion* (Brown 1984: 160). According to Seeberg (1936:52), Apollinarius accepted the perspective of Lucian and of Arius’ teaching that the Logos is not *evnanqrwph,saj*, but *sarkw,qeij* according to the platonic trichotomy. Apollinarius therefore denied the ‘true and proper humanity of Jesus Christ’ (Berkhof 1991[1937]: 102).

In the trichotomy of Apollinarius, Christ had a human *sa,rx*, and *yuch,*, but not a human ‘*nou/j*’ (Koehler 1951:160). The Logos took the place in the place of human nous (Koehler 1951: 160). Kelly (1975: 291) says that ‘he put forward an extreme



version of the Word-flesh Christology.’ Apollinarius’ doctrine of the incarnation identified ‘one nature’ of Christ, and he never stops to be against the doctrine of ‘two natures’ which [dominates among] the Antiochians (Kelly 1975: 293).

Gregory of Nazianzus supported the doctrine of ‘two natures’, the divinity and humanity explained substantially united in the God-man (Kelly 1975: 298). Gregory of Nyssa emphasised the unity of both natures through the activity of the one and the passivity of the other (Seeberg 1936: 53). Christ’s two natures ‘are distinguished in thought, and can be referred to as “the one”(a;llo) and “the other”(a;llo), but there are not two Persons (a;lloj kai, a;lloj); rather, “They both form a unity[e/n] by their commingling, God having become man and man God”’(Kelly 1975: 297)

Athanasius, St. Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa protected the union of the divinity and the humanity in one Person. They opposed the heresies that deny the divinity of Jesus Christ on the one hand, and deny the real humanity of Christ on the other hand (Berkhof (1991[1937]: 102). The doctrine of ‘two natures’ opposed the heresies, in which Christology was distorted from the biblical understanding (Berkhof (1991[1937]: 101-102). ‘Gregory of Nazianzus followed Athanasius even more explicitly in his focus on the incarnation as the keystone of salvation’ (Norman 1980: 214).

The key to Gregory of Nazianzus’ disputations is the relation between the three Persons, the ‘relationship of the communion of essence which exists between the Father and the Son’ (González 1984[1970]: 321). Gregory’s concept of ‘relation’ does not imply ‘ontological’ status of the innertrinitarian ‘Persons’ as in its later western understanding. For him, it never implies mutual-relationship (*wechselseitige Beziehung*) in which the *hypostaseis* are distinguishable through their mutual-relationship from each other, so that the Son and the Spirit became distinct *hypostaseis* through it (Oberdorfer 2002: 86). For him, it implies that ‘relation’ does not indicate the relational structure as such, but that the concrete relation constitutes an independence of *hypostasis* (Oberdorfer 2002: 86). According to Quasten (1975: 250), ‘there is complete identity among the three divine Persons except for the relations of origin. Gregory uses this



doctrine of relations to prove the coeternity of the divine Persons and their identity of substance against the rationalistic distortions of the heretics. The three Persons have each a property of relation. Their properties are relations of origin'. For Gregory, the relation of the three Persons implies 'one nature'⁶³.

For Nazianzus (Or 31, 8) ⁶⁴, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, but it does not mean that the Holy Spirit is from the Father only, but that the Holy Spirit is neither a creature nor the begotten Son. He (Or 31, 8) ⁶⁵ adds that the Holy Spirit's property is *evkpo, reusij*, that of the Father is *avgennhsi, a*, and that of the Son is *ge, nnhsia*, but it is a mystery of God. He argues that the reason why he uses the word *evkpo, reusij* is to keep 'three *hypostaseis*' in one nature and worthy of the deity in contrast to 'the mixture' of the Sabellianism and tri-theism(Or 31, 9)⁶⁶. Therefore 'for neither is the Son the Father, for the Father is one, but He is what the Father is; nor is the Spirit the Son because He is from God, for there is only one Only- begotten, but He is what the Son is'(Or 31, 9; NPNF2, vol 7)⁶⁷.

⁶³ Gregory of Nazianzus, Or, 31, 9. p. 290. i[na to. avsu,gcuton sw/|zhtai tw/n triw/n u` postasewn evn th/| mia/| fu,sei te kai. avxi,a| th/j qeo,tthoj .

⁶⁴ Gregory of Nazianzus Or, 31, 8. p. 288.

To. Pneu/ma to. a[gion(o[para. tou/ Patro.j evkporcu,etai\ o[kaq v o[son mc.n evkci/qen evkporcu,etai(ouv kti,sma\ kaq v o[son de. ouv gennhto,n(ouvc Ui`o,j\ kaq v o[son de. avgennh,tou kai. gennhtou/ mc,son(Qeo,j. it does not mean that this para. tou/ Patro.j evkporcu,etai is from the Father only.

⁶⁵ Gregory of Nazianzus, Or, 31, 8. p. 288. Ti,j ou=n h` evkpo, reusij* eivpe. su. th.n avgennhsi,an tou/ Patro,j(kavgw. th.n ge,nnhsin tou/ Ui`ou/ fusiologh,sw(kai. th.n evkpo, reusin tou/ Pneu,matoj(kai. Paraphkti,somen a;mfw eivj Qeou/ musth,ria paraku,ptonte\ but it is mystery of God.

⁶⁶ Gregory of Nazianzus, Or, 31, 9. p. 290. i[na to. avsu,gcuton sw/|zhtai tw/n triw/n u` postasewn evn th/| mia/| fu,sei te kai. avxi,a| th/j qeo,tthoj.Gregory of Nazianzus, Or, 31, 9. p. 290. En ta. tri,a qeo,thti(kai. to. e[n tri,a tai/j ivdio,thsin\ i[na mh,te to. e[n Sabellion h=|(mh,te ta. tri,a th/j ponhra/j nu/n diaire,sewj)

⁶⁷ Gregory of Nazianzus, Or, 31, 9. p. 290. Ou;te ga.r o` Ui`o,j Path,r(ei-j ga.r Path,r(avll v o[per o` Path,r\ ou;te to. Pneu/ma Ui`o,j(o[ti evk tou/ Qeou/(ei-j ga.r o` Monogenh,j(avll v o[per o`



5.2 The procession of the Holy Spirit

From Gregory's writings, it is possible to detect something of his thinking about the procession of the Holy Spirit. McGukin argues that 'from antiquity, Latin commentators failed to sustain Gregory's explicit distinction between *avrch*, and *ai:tioj* which he so regularly applied, and so denied the validity of the Father being the '*causa*' of the Son, while allowing that he was the "principium"'. He goes on to state that 'Latin tradition obscured Gregory's causal origination as the inalienable proprium of the Father, and as such the Father's unique personal existence as *avrch*, of the Godhead'(McGukin 1994: 11). McGukin (1994, 11) indicates that the reason why some eminent Latin theologians argue that Gregory taught the *filioque* doctrine, is their neglect of this important point. However, according to Oberdorfer (2002: 86), for Gregory, the terms *qeio, thj, prw/th aivti, a* and *monarci, a* are the synonyms for the unity of the deity (*Einheit Gottes*). As with Athanasius and Basil, Gregory sees the source in the Father, the origin (*Ursache*) or cause (*Urgrund*) of the 'Godhead' of the Son and the Holy Spirit respectively (Oberdorfer 2002: 87). Norris (1991: 46) points out that 'the begetter and the begotten have the same nature since an offspring has the same nature as the parents'. Kelly (1965:265) mentions that 'while all subordinationism is excluded, the Father remains in the eyes of the Cappadocians the source, fountain-head or principle of the Godhead.'

Gregory of Nazianzus says that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father (the *para. tou/ Patro.j evkporeu, etai*)(Or 31, 8), but says the phrase '*ou;te to. Pneuma Ui`o.j(ofti evk tou/ Qeou*'(Or 31, 9): 'The Spirit is not the Son because he is from the God'. The phrase '*para. tou/ Patro.j evkporeu, etai*'(John 15: 26) is the biblical statement about the Spirit's nature in the comparison between generation and procession, the phrase '*ofti evk tou/ Qeou*' is the description which Gregory uses to illustrate the procession of the Holy Spirit. This means that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Godhead. This interpretation explains the statement 'the Holy Spirit comes from the deity of the Father and the Son (although as procession He is not the Son)' or 'the Holy Spirit comes from the Father through the Son (according to the traditional formulation). The Son is closely

Ui`o.j. it is very important for him to understand the **distinction**.



connected to the procession of the Holy Spirit, since the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ (Or, 31, 29, 328)⁶⁸.

6 GREGORY OF NYSSA

Gregory of Nyssa, Basil's brother was also an important figure in the Eastern Church. His theology is rooted in the notions of *homoousia*⁶⁹ and *Perichoresis* as was the case with the other Cappadocians. He extends Basil's doctrine of the Trinity like Gregory of Nazianzus. Oberdorfer (2002:88) points out that Gregory of Nyssa was regarded as the most speculative and the most philosophically skilful of the Cappadocians. He was in fact the greatest Christian philosopher of the Church Fathers (Studer1985: 177).

6.1 His Doctrine of the Trinity

For Gregory of Nyssa the doctrine of the Trinity begins in the baptism formula of Jesus (Courth 1988: 182). Gregory does not use the concepts '*patroth,j*', '*ui`o,thj*' and '*a`giasmo,j*', but Gregory of Nazianzus' terminological solution '*avgennhsi,a*' '*ge,nnhsij*' and '*evkpo,reusij*' for the distinction of the *hypostaseis*(Oberdorfer 2002: 89;Turcescu 2005: 57).

6.1.1 Three Persons but one God

Gregory of Nyssa's main work was to prove that three *hypostaseis* are not three Gods. This problem arose from the phrase '*mi,a ouvsia, treij u`posta,seij*'. Gregory's opponents attacked him as a tri-theist (AEus, 6⁷⁰) with two kinds of accusations: one is

⁶⁸ Gregory of Nazianzus, Or, 31, 29, 328. Pneu/ma Qeou/ legetai(**Pneu/ma Cristou/**(nou/j Cristou/(Pneu/ma Kuri,ou(auvto. Ku,rioj(Pneu/ma ui`oqesi,aj(avlhqei,aj(evleuqeri,aj\ .

⁶⁹ See, Studer (1985:187); See Schütz (1985: 59).

⁷⁰ du,o ga.r kata. tauvto.n evn th/| kathgori,a| th/| kaq v h`mwn proenh,nektai\ e[n me.n to. diairei/n ta.j u`posta,seij(e[teron de. to. mhde,n ti tw/n qeoprepw/n ovnoma,twn plhquntikw/j



the division into *hypostaseis*, the other is that Gregory does not count the names of God in the plural, but proclaims the one goodness, power, and deity and all these things in the singular (AEus, 6). Gregory cursed people who say there are three Gods, because they are not to be judged to be Christians (AEus, 5)⁷¹. According to Nyssa (AEus, 5)⁷², his opponents accuse him that he says one goodness, one power, and one deity when he confesses three *hypostaseis*.

For Gregory, ‘the person or *hypostasis* is also the concourse of the peculiar characteristics’ (Turcescu 2002: 531; 534), and the ‘enumerations of individuals’⁷³ (Turcescu 2005: 66). According to Meredith (1995:109), Gregory contends that the unity of the divine nature is parallel to the unity of human nature. In fact ‘his treatises begin with the account of some unknown critique arguing that such an analogy implied tri-theism.’ It was Gregory’s intention to prove that it does not (Meredith 1995:109). In other words, ‘Nyssa applies reality to the universal idea to explain the divine Trinity better and to refute the accusation of tri-theism’ (Quasten 1975: 286). And for Gregory, ‘number is indicative merely of the quantity of things, giving no clue as to their real nature’ (Kelly 1975[1958]: 268). Willis (1976:287) says that ‘the use of number is permitted when speaking of the *hypostaseis* because there is a basis for the analogy, but in speaking of the *ousia* of God one must insist on an undivided unity’. Kelly (1975[1958]: 267) indicates that for Gregory, men must be regarded as many, because each of them acts independently; however, the Godhead is one, because the three

avriqmei/n(avlla. mi,an th.n avgaqo,thta kai. th.n du,namin kai. th.n qeo,thta kai. pa,nta tau/ta monadikw/j evxagge,llein)

⁷¹ o[ti avnaqemati,zetai par v h`mw/n pa/j o` trei/j le,gwn qeou.j kai. ouvde. Cristiano.j ei=nai kri,netai

⁷² trei/j u`posta,seij o`mologou/ntaj mi,an avgaqo,thta(mi,an du,namin kai. mi,an qeo,thta le,gein h`ma/j aivtiw/ntai

⁷³ According to Seeberg(1936:48), “Die drei Kappadocier brachten die neue vermittelnde Theologie zur Herrschaft, indem sie die Homousie im Geist des Origen interpretierten. Sie gehen aus von den drei hypostaseis oder Prosopa, die als drei individuelle Personen wie Paulus, Petrus, Barnabas gedacht werden.”



Persons do not operate separately from each other. ‘Their activity *ad extra* can only be one, and the divine Persons have it in common’ (Quasten 1975: 286).

For Gregory, ‘the divine action begins from the Father, proceeds through the Son, and is completed in the Holy Spirit; none of the Persons possesses a separate operation of His own, but one identical energy passes through all Three’ (Kelly 1975[1958]: 267; Willis 1976:287). Turcescu (2005: 55) says

Gregory writes that the divine nature common to the three Persons is uncreated, incomprehensible, infinite, uncircumscribed by space, and life giving. No divine Person can be said to be more uncreated or less uncreated than the other two, because “uncreated” describes the substance, and there are no degrees within the same substance (Turcescu 2005: 55; CEu I: 22).

In the case of human beings, Peter, Jacob, and John are called three people although they are in one human nature (Ad Ablabium: AA 38). Gregory (AA 40) goes on to explain that although they are disciples, or apostles, or witnesses, however, there is one humanity in all. For Gregory, ‘we should not speak of a multiplicity of men but of one man’ (Kelly 1975[1958]: 267). In *Ad Simplicium (De Fide)* (DF 65), he emphasizes that just as [it is said that there is] one humanity (*avnqrwpo, thj*) in Adam and Abel, there is also one deity in the Father and the Son. This means, for Gregory, that ‘to speak of “many humans” is a customary abuse of language, since we do not call somebody by the name of his nature but by that which signifies the particular subject’ (Turcescu 2005: 64). Gregory says

[T]herefore, Luke or Stephen is a man, it is not true that if some one is human, he is at all events also Luke or Steven. But the word of the *Hypostaseis* allows the application of the distinction according to the peculiar of each, and is considered as combinations in a number. But there



is one nature (AA 40-41).⁷⁴

Gregory confirms that, although the concept ‘divine Person’ is similar to human person, there is a difference between the divine Person and the human person as far as nature is concerned. For this, Gregory alternates between the term ‘community (*koino, thj*)’ and the term ‘communion(*koinwni, a*)’ (Coakley 1999: 134). For Coakley (1999: 134), ‘this distinction is significant, and crucial to the argument in Letter 38. Gregory is in this letter most certainly not enjoining the unification of separate ‘individuals’ into a ‘community’, as seems to be the model in the analytic discussion of a “plurality model”’. According to Turcescu (2005:58)

Another argument in favor of Gregory’s discussing the communion of divine Persons is to be found in the use of the term *koinwni, a* itself. In this particular work, Gregory uses two terms to express the idea of something that is common: *koinwni, a* and *koino, thj*. Yet whereas the former term is used in reference to substance or nature, the latter is used in reference to the divine Persons. Therefore, Turcescu proposes to render the word *koino, thj* by “community” and the word *koinwni, a* by “communion.” The passage... envisages the “communion of Persons” (Turcescu 2005:58)

This understanding is closely connected with the term *perichoresis*. However, for Gregory, following Gregory of Nazianzus⁷⁵ there is no modern understanding of the relationship concept of person (Turcescu 2002: 537). Turcescu (2002: 537) points out that ‘unlike contemporary thinkers, the Cappadocian fathers were not aware of the dangers of individualism, and perhaps that is why they did not make any efforts to distinguish between Person and individual.’ He adds that ‘they were more concerned

⁷⁴ ;Anqropoj ga.r o` Louka/j h; o` Ste,fanoj(ouv mh.n (ei; tij a;nqrwpoj(pa,ntwj kai. Louka/j evstin h; Ste,fanoj) VAll v o` me.n tw/n u`posta,sewn lo,goj dia. ta.j evnqewroume,naj ivdio,thtaj e`ka,stw| to,n diamerismo.n evpide,cetai kai. kata. su,nqesin evn avriqmw/| qewrei/ta| h` de. fu,sij mi,a evsti,n(

⁷⁵ See Oberdorfer’s description (2002: 86)



with distinguishing between person or individual, on the one hand, and nature or substance, on the other hand, in connection with the Christian God. At that time, the three divine Persons were not properly understood as three different entities while each was one and the same God' (Turcescu 2002: 537). However, Behr opposes Turcescu's concept of 'communion'. He says that 'the "certain continuous and uninterrupted communion" that appears in them is not, therefore, a "communion" or "community" between the Persons, as the analogy of three distinct human agents might suggest, but rather the invariability of the nature that is contemplated equally in each, the continuity of the being of the Father in the Son and the Spirit' (Behr 2004: 420-421)

Ayres rejects the modern interpretation of Gregory's *Ad Ablabium* as 'paradigm of Gregory's supposed commitment to "beginning with divine plurality rather than unity"', or even as 'a paradigm of his supposed commitment to "social Trinitarian analogies"' (Ayres 2002: 446). Gregory's treatise 'That there are not three Gods' is meant 'to point the reader away from speculating about the "social" analogy' and 'towards the very themes as necessary context for exploring the divine unity and diversity' (Ayres 2002: 446). For Behr

There is one God, and one divinity, because there is one "transcendent power," the Father, who works by the Son and in the Spirit, not as three people cooperating together in fellowship, but in terms for which there is no adequate analogy in the created world. Such analogies can provide an illustration for the relationship between identity and difference, ousia and hypostasis, providing a "grammar" of the scriptural account of God, which regulates our own theological discourse, but does not define what God is or what it is to be a divine "person." Any further analysis proceeds not so much by the introduction of new analogies, but by the analysis of how Scripture does in fact speak of the activity of the Father, Son, and Spirit. And this scriptural account only speaks of God in the singular, for there is only one God, the Father, together with his Son and Spirit, acting in a uniquely and incomparably singular manner (Behr 2004: 435).



Gregory emphasized that the one essence or one nature dwells (*mi,a fu,sij ; mi,a qeo,thj kai. ei-j Qeo.j*) in three Persons, *mi,a fu,sij (mi,a qeo,thj; koinh. th/j fu,sewj)*⁷⁶(AA⁷⁷ 39-40; 40-41⁷⁸). This understanding is closely connected with the Cappadocians' doctrine of the Trinity: 'one *ousia*, three *hypostaseis*'. It shows why three *hypostaseis* are not three Gods.

For Gregory, the doctrine of the Trinity is based on the saving faith which the Lord gives us. The Lord gives the saving faith to those who become disciples of the word, of the Father and of the Son, and he adds the Holy Spirit' (AEust 7)⁷⁹. The divine Scripture has to be our umpire and with those who's dogmas are found to agree with the Divine words, the gem of truth will surely come to them (AEus 6)⁸⁰. On the basis of this understanding, it is quite right that 'the defense of the dogma of the Trinity did not rely primarily on the metaphysical identification' (Pelikan 1971:222).

⁷⁶ Behr (2004: 425-426) says that 'Gregory's account of the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son thus differs from what is sometimes spoken of in modern theology as a "Trinitarian perichoresis," in which the emphasis is not the "mutuality and interdependence" of the three persons in a "communion of love," so that each person is what they are by virtue of their relationship to the others, thereby revealing "what God is: ecstatic, relational, dynamic, vital" and, consequently, that "the divine unity" is located neither with the divine substance nor with the person of the Father, but rather "in diversity, in a true communion of persons." Gregory does not speak of a "Trinitarian perichoresis" of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but only of the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son, presumably because this alone has scriptural warrant.'

⁷⁷ Gregory of Nyssa (1958: 46). Kai. civ me.n fu,sewj h=n h` th/j qeo,tthoj proshgori,a(ma/llon a;n ei=ce kairo.n kata. to.n proapodoqe,nta lo,gon e`nikw/j ta.j trei/j u`posta,seij perilamba,nein kai. e[na qeo.n le,gein dia. to. th/j fu,sewj a;tmhto,n te kai. avdiai,reton\; p. 57.- h` de, qei,a fu,sij avpara,llakto,j te kai. avdiai,retoj dia. pa,shj evnnoi,aj katalamba,netai(di,a tou/to kuri,wj mi,a qeo,thj kai. ei-j Qeo.j kai. ta. a;lla panta tw/n Qeoprepw/n ovnomata, tw/n monadi,kwj evxagge,lletai.

⁷⁸ See Behr (2004: 415-416); *EpPet 2*

⁷⁹ Ti,j ou=n o` h`me,teroj lo,goj* paradidou,j o` ku,rioj th.n swth,rion pi,stin toi/j maqhteuome,noij tw/| lo,gw/(tw/| patri. kai. tw/| ui`w/| suna,ptei kai. to. pneu/ma to. a[gion\

⁸⁰ ouvkou.n h`mi/n diaithsa,tw grafh,(kai. par v oi-j a;n eu`reqh/| ta. do,gmata sunw|da. toi/j qei,oij lo,goij(evpi. tou,touj h[xei pa,ntwj th/j avlhqei,aj h` yh/foj



Even Gregory of Nyssa, philosophically the most brilliant and bold of the three Cappadocians, stopped short of providing a speculative solution for the relation of the One and the Three, or of the distinction between the properties of the One and those of the Three. Despite his great debt to Middle Platonism, Gregory did not assign to the Platonic doctrine of universals a determinative place in his dogmatics, which was finally shaped by what the church believed, taught, and confessed. His fundamental axiom was: “Following the instructions of Holy Scripture, we have been taught that [the nature of God] is beyond names or human speech. We say that every [divine] name, be it invented by human custom or handed on to us by the tradition of the Scriptures, represents our conceptions of the divine nature, but does not convey the meaning of that nature in itself”(Pelikan 1971: 222).

6.1.2 Apatheia

In *Contra Eunomium* (CEu), Gregory of Nyssa explains his doctrinal stance against Eunomius. For Eunomius following Arius, Christ can suffer because He is a creature. The two natures of Christ imply ‘two Christs’ (See CEu V(m)). Against it, Gregory (CEu, V(m). 133) declares that Christian doctrine does not preach a plurality of Christ, but the unity of the humanity with the Divinity.

Eunomius argues that if Jesus is God, the subject of the passion is the Godhead, not human nature. Gregory (CEu, VI(m) 135) replies that there can be a difference between the divinity of the Son who can submit to the suffering, and the divinity of the Father who is in absolute impassibility(immunity)(CEu, V(m) 121) ⁸¹. Gregory (CEu, VI(m)

⁸¹ ..., w`j th/j me.n fu,sewj tou/ patro.j kaqarw/j evn avpaqeia diamenou,shj kai. mhdeni. tro,pw| th.n pro.j to. pa,qoj koinwni,an avnade,xasqai duname,nhj(tou/ de. ui`ou/ dia. to. pro.j to. tapeino,teron parhlla,cqai th.n fu,sin(pro.j sarko,j te kai. qana,tou pei/ran ouvkv avdunatou/ntoj evlqei/n(w`j ouv pollh/j ginome,nhj th/j metastasewj(avlla. tro,pon tina. pro.j to. suggene.j kai. o`mo,fulon evk tou/ o`moi,ou metacwrou,shj dia. tou/ ktisth.n me.n th.n avnqrwpi,nhn(ktisth.n de.



135) argues that it is impossible that salvation is attributed to a human being, and it is impossible to accept that the incorruptible and divine nature can suffer and can have mortality. The aim of Gregory's doctrine of the 'two natures' of Christ is the salvation for human beings (CEu, VI(m), 135).

Gregory (CEu, VI(m), 136) says that the divine nature of the Son is impassible and not able to fall, while his human nature could suffer. Kelly (1975[1958]: 299) points out that Gregory 'tended to hold the two natures apart, regarding the logos as the active principle, and the manhood as the passive one, and strongly emphasized the independent character of the latter.' For Gregory (CEu, VI(m), 137), the divine nature (Godhead) works for the salvation of the world through his body. Although suffering belongs to his human nature, it is the work of God. For Gregory, the two-natures in the Person of the Son is necessary.

6.2 The Christology of Gregory

Gregory's Christology is characterized by a sharp differentiation of the two natures in Christ (Quasten 1974: 288). His criticism stems on the one hand from Eunomius' attack on Christ's two natures, and on the other hand from Appollinarius. Kelly (1975[1958]: 293) points out that for Appollinarius, 'He (Christ) is one nature since He is a simple, undivided Person; for His body is not a nature by itself, nor is the divinity in virtue of the incarnation a nature by itself; but just as a man is one nature, so is Christ who has come in the likeness of men'. He thought that 'the Lord's flesh was heavenly in origin and pre-existent' (Kelly 1975[1958]: 294). 'As corollary of this, Appollinarius affirms that Christ's flesh is a proper object of worship' (Kelly 1975[1958]: 294). His understanding caused the Christological controversy about the doctrine of the two natures of Christ.

On the other hand, Eunomians attacked the divinity of the 'Only-begotten'. If the incarnate one is consubstantial with God, it shows that there are two Christs and two

kai. th.n tou/ monogenou/j u` poti,qesqai fu,sin(CEu, V(m) 121).



Lords (CEu V(m)). According to Quasten's interpretation (1974: 288), Gregory argues that 'despite the two natures in Christ, there are not two Persons in him, but one: this is our doctrine, which does not, as Eunomius charges against it, preach a plurality of Christ, but the union of the Man with the Divinity'. Thus there is one Person.

For Eunomius, there is no union between Man and divinity. Therefore, if Christ is crucified and suffered, he is not God but a mere creature (CEu V(m) 121). The nature of the Father is pure *apatheia*, but Christ is created because his nature belongs to the creature (CEu V). The 'Only-begotten' is from a servant to the servants, and created and the nature of the 'Only begotten' to be subjected (*ktisth.n de. kai. th.n tou/ monogenou/j u`potiqesqai fu, sin*) (CEu V(m) 121). Therefore, Christ is just a creature, and is not consubstantial with God (CEu V(m) 121). Eunomians reject that the 'Only-begotten' could be Lord and Christ before his Passion (CEu V(m) 117). Eunomians hold this idea because humans are subjected to death (CEu V(m) 130). Gregory (CEu V(m) 130)⁸² argues that Eunomians hold that human nature is not eternal, nor the divine nature mortal, and since the 'Only-begotten' is a human being, he is neither eternal, nor immortal (CEu V(m) 130).

Gregory (CEu V(m) 127)⁸³ ridiculed the Eunomians as saying stars are black, the sun dark, the heaven low and water dry. Gregory (CEu V(m) 131) maintains that we believe in the union of Christ's humanity and his divinity, and therefore, the cross becomes the glory of the Lord. Therefore, as it is written in Philipians 2: 10-11, every tongue must confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (CEu V(m) 131).

6.3 The Holy Spirit

⁸² evn th|/ tou/ qana,tou pei,ra| o` a;nqrwpoj(kai. ou;te evx avi?diou to. avnqrw,pinon ou;te qnhto.n to. qei/on

⁸³ w`j me,lanaj tou.j avste,raj kai. zofw,dh to.n h[lion kai. to.n ouvrano.n cqamalo.n kai. to. u[dwr xhro,n kai. pa,nta lc,gontaj ta, toiau/ta)



In his letter ‘against the Macedonians’ (AM) and the *Pneumatomachi*, Gregory of Nyssa explicates his Pneumatology. According to Gregory (AM 89)⁸⁴ we confess that the Holy Spirit is of the same status as the Father, and the Son, since the Holy Spirit is from God and from the Son as the Bible says. Turcescu (2005: 109) says that according to Gregory ‘the Holy Spirit is of the same rank as the Father and the Son, that there is no difference between them in anything, except in regard to Person.’ From the testimony of the divine Scripture, Gregory (AM 90) confirms that the Holy Spirit is God⁸⁵. This statement of Gregory responds to his opponents’ assertion that ‘the Spirit was a stranger to any natural communion with the Father and the Son, that he was thus inferior to them on every point, in power, in glory, in dignity, or everything else that is usually ascribed to the divinity’ (Turcescu 2005; 110). About the Holy Spirit, Gregory uses the analogy of a torch ‘imparting its light first to another torch and then through it to a third in order to illustrate the relation of the three Persons’ (Kelly 1975[1958]: 262). For Gregory, the third is just in ‘sequence after the Father and the Son... in all other respects we acknowledge His inseparable union with them; both in nature, in honour, in godhead, and glory, and majesty, and almighty power, and in all devout belief’ (Chang 1983:123).

Gregory of Nyssa states that the procession of the Holy Spirit is closely connected with the Son. As Kelly (1975[1958]: 262) points out ‘He (the Holy Spirit) cannot be separated from the Word.’ Gregory mentions that the Holy Spirit is from God and the Son, and in the same book, he mentions that the Holy Spirit ‘proceeds’ from God and was received from the Son.⁸⁶ For Gregory, the Father is the source (*phgh.*) of power,

⁸⁴ Gregory of Nyssa (1958: 89-90). ... to. pneu/ma to. a[giou(o[ti evk tou/ qeou/ evsti kai. tou/ Cristou/ evsti(katw,j ge,graptai. Here, for Nyssa o` qeo,j is the Father.

⁸⁵ ... th/j qei,aj grafh/j peri. tou/ a`gi,ou pneu,matoj marturi,a(di v h-j qei/on to. pneu/ma to. a[giou ei=nai, te kai. le,gesqai memaqh,kamen

⁸⁶ Gregory of Nyssa, (1958: 97). evk tou/ Patro.j evkporeuo,menon(evk tou/ ui`ou/ lambano,menon .



the power of the Father is the Son, and the Spirit of power is the Holy Spirit (AM 100)⁸⁷.



PART II : TWENTIETH CENTURY RENAISSANCE

7 BACKGROUND OF RIVITALIZATION

The doctrine of the Trinity played an important role in the Church's history. However early modern theologians following 'Kant's Critique' regarded it as unreasonable and unnecessary. For Kant, as O'Collins (1995: 156) points out, the doctrine of the Trinity has no practical importance. There were two interruptions in the continuity of the doctrine of the Trinity: Schleiermacher's view of the doctrine of the Trinity as an appendix, and atheism's critique of traditional theism. Against these motives, a revitalization of the doctrine of the Trinity occurred in the twentieth century.

7.1 Schleiermacher

Schleiermacher is often called the father of modern theology (Brown 1987: 1). He is generally 'reckoned to have been the founder of classical liberalism' (Bray 1993: 50). Actually, Schleiermacher followed 'Kant's critique of the attempt to found belief in God on reason' (Willis 1987: 18). Schleiermacher's position is 'essentially a development of Kant' (Hill 2003: 232).

Schleiermacher's dogmatic theme is 'piety' (Gerrish 1984: 1045). Schleiermacher regards 'piety as an irreducible abstraction' (McGrath 2005[1994]: 20). McGrath adds, 'the essence of piety, the irreducible element in every religion, is to be sought in "feeling" (*das Gefühl*), rather than in intellectual beliefs or moral behavior. This introduction of "feeling" is of particular importance in relation to the Kantian

⁸⁷ Gregory of Nyssa (1958: 100) avlla. phgh. me.n duna,mew,j evstin o` path,r(du,namij de, tou/patro,j o` ui`o.j(duna,mewj de. pneu/ma to. pneu/ma to. a[gion .



epistemology, in that it develops the general Romantic concept of “*das Gefühl*”, into the concept, peculiar to Schleiermacher, of the “feeling of absolute dependence (*das Gefühl schlechthinniger Abhängigkeit*)””. Galloway (1986: 245) says ‘our talk about God, though it is the expression of something more appropriately described as feeling than idea does refer to a reality beyond ourselves’.

Schleiermacher’s doctrine of the Trinity is closely connected with his understanding of piety (Herms 2006: 123). Bray (1993: 50) says that ‘Schleiermacher had little time for classical dogmatics, and reinterpreted Trinitarian theism in a way which we would call psychological, interpreting dogma in terms of religious experience.’

As McGrath (1994: 474; Streetman 1982: 118) points out, Schleiermacher regarded the doctrine of the Trinity as an appendix in his *Christian Faith*. Del Colle (1997: 135) says that ‘the Trinity is more a matter of circumscriptions in the divine being enacted in revelation than intrinsic to the divine essence itself. Therefore while it is clear that nothing less than God is known in the divine economy, it is by no means certain that God is triune apart from his relation to the world in creation and redemption’.

7.2 Atheism

The modern renaissance of the doctrine of the Trinity reacts against Schleiermacher and liberal theologians, and against atheism. Atheism criticizes theism. Feuerbach criticizes religion as well as speculative philosophy (Willis 1987: 29). According to McGrath(2005[1994]: 46), for Feuerbach, ‘the very idea of “God” was an illusion which men could at least in principle avoid, and, with sufficient progress in self-knowledge, could discard altogether’. For Feuerbach (1989: 207), ‘the secret of theology is nothing else than anthropology- the knowledge of God nothing else than knowledge of man!’ The shift from theology to anthropology influenced the four leading twentieth century protestant theologians which we will discuss both in negative and positive ways. Actually, they responded to this shift on the basis of God’s revelation through the humanity of Jesus. While the criticism of atheists is based on



anthropology, the four theologians focus their study on the Christological anthropology, that is, on the humanity of Jesus.

8 BARTH'S DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

Barth's understanding of the Trinity is closely connected with the structure of his doctrine of the revelation. Revelation is *Dei loquentis persona* (Barth 1940: 320). Barth (1940: 311) mentions that '*Gottes Wort is Gott selbst in seiner Offenbarung. Denn Gott Offenbart sich als der Herr und das bedeutet nach der Schrift für den Begriff der Offenbarung, daß Gott selbst in unzerstörter Einheit, aber auch in unzerstörter Verschiedenheit der Offenbarer, die Offenbarung und das Offenbarsein ist*'.

8.1 The doctrine of the revelation

The doctrine of the Word of God represents his theology as the theology of the Word of God. Barth sees the Word of God as having a threefold form: 1) The Word of God as preached⁸⁸, 2) The written Word of God⁸⁹, 3) The revealed Word of God⁹⁰. The Word of God meets us in threefold form (Weber 1975: 17). However, for Barth, the Word of God does not play a merely static role, but a dynamic one (Grenz 2004: 37). Barth says that in God's revelation God's Word is identical to God Himself (Barth 1940: 321). However, this does not imply that the Bible is identified with the Word of God as it is in the traditional reformed theology. According to Grenz (2004: 37), for Barth, 'the Word of God is not simply proclamation and scripture, but the dynamic of God's revelation in proclamation and scripture.'

8.1.1 The doctrine of revelation

⁸⁸ Barth (1940: 89-101).

⁸⁹ Barth (1940: 101-113).

⁹⁰ Barth (1940: 114-128).



Barth begins with his presentation of the doctrine of the Triune God by linking it closely to revelation (Aboagye-mensah 1984: 142). Leslie (1989: 98) says that 'Barth's primary justification for the theological integrity of the doctrine of the Trinity would be its root in the biblical witness to revelation'. For Barth, the problem of the doctrine of the Trinity stems from the question of revelation posed by the Bible. For this, Barth sets three questions 1) who is the self-revealing God? 2) what does this God do and what does this God work? 3) who is He? The problem of these three similar and also different questions, simultaneously different and also similar answers to these questions is the problem of the doctrine of the Trinity. The problem of the revelation stands and falls above all with this problem (Barth 1940: 319). For Barth, however, 'the particularity of revelation has a Trinitarian ground, since Jesus Christ is revelation: since there can be no second Son of God besides Jesus, there can consequently be only one revelation' (Powell, 2001: 190). The content of revelation or the 'what' of revelation is explained in the *Kirchliche Dogmatik* with the doctrine of the Trinity. God the Holy Trinity reveals: it is also the purpose of the revelation. For Barth, the 'how' of revelation and the 'what' of revelation are not to be separated from each other (Collins 2001: 3).

Meijering (1993: 47) points out that Barth's doctrine of the Trinity answers to the question 'who is the self-revealing God?' It is no wonder that the reader encounters Barth's doctrine of the Trinity right at the beginning of his *Dogmatik*, since it provides the answer to the question about God who reveals himself in his revelation (Barth 1940: 329; Jüngel 1967:14). 'The principle of revelation' is that God reveals himself as the Lord. For Barth, the word of '*Herr-Sein*' of God expresses the powerfulness of his revelation, and thus the possibility of revelation, which is grounded in the being of God (Jüngel 1967: 32-33).

Indeed, the meaning of the doctrine of the triune God in Barth's theology is closely connected with the answers to the questions mentioned above. So, the doctrine of the Trinity in Barth's theology is closely connected with the Word of God as the revelation of God in the Prolegomena of *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik*⁹¹. It proves that Barth regards

⁹¹ According to Moltmann (1973:35-36), these days, the theology of revelation stands in 'antithesis' to



the doctrine of the Trinity as the core of his theology. Dogmatic *Prolegomena* do not take anthropology or philosophy as the basis of his theology (Barth 1940: 41), since *Prolegomena* do not mean ‘die vorher’, but die ‘*zuerst zu sagenden Dinge*’ (Barth 1940: 41; Isidro 1983, 503). Therefore, the criterium for the Dogmatics is developed in the *Prolegomena* of *KD* under the doctrine of the Word of God (Isidro 1983: 503; Weber 1975:14; Grenz 2004: 37)⁹².

For Barth (1940: 328), the doctrine of the Trinity and its roots are grounded in the revelation the Bible testifies to. It is true that, in Barth’s theology, the doctrine of the Trinity follows the doctrine of revelation ‘in its basic outline’ (Jowers 2003: 233). This implies that the doctrine of the Trinity consists in ‘a “necessary” and “appropriate” (*sachgemäss*) analysis of revelation’ (Leslie 1989: 58). Barth begins with this subject in the part of his doctrine of the Trinity.

Three kinds of revelation occur in Barth’s Dogmatics. First, revelation is ‘*Dei loquentis persona*’. However, the revelation of God is not the silent demand (*schweigende Zumutung*) for speech (language), but revelation asks for language by speaking. So, revelation of ‘God himself’ is the possibility of interpretation of the revelation, because revelation is the self-interpretation of God (Jüngel 1967:27). As the self-interpretation of God, revelation is only the root of the doctrine of the Trinity (Jüngel 1967:29). The doctrine of the Trinity is consequently through revelation as the self-interpretation of the doctrine of the Trinity and of the Being of God (Jüngel 1967:27). Barth’s doctrine of the Trinity is christologically grounded (Jüngel 1967: 30). For Barth, the christological ground is informed formally with the concept of God. God has a form in his revelation,

‘natural theology’, since the concept ‘revelation’ in systematic theology is throughout characterized by the acceptance and discussion with the Greek metaphysic of the proof of God.

⁹² Leslie (1989: 53) says that ‘for Barth then the task of prolegomena to theology is to provide an account of its language on the basis of the object which it seeks to bring to expression.’ ‘Nor is the question of existence or an analysis of human being “pre-understanding” the appropriate task of theological prolegomena’ (Leslie 1989: 52). Therefore, according to Jenson (1969: 97), ‘It appears at the very beginning as part of the doctrine of revelation. It appears as prolegomena, as part of the discussion of how and why we are called and able to theologize at all’.



and He reveals himself as a form. This ‘taking- form’⁹³ of God is his self-unveiling (Jüngel 1967: 30). Collins (2001: 46) says that ‘God’s self-interpretation in the event of revelation does not depend on human predication through the use of human language, but on God’s identification and self-interpretation (a) by assuming form in the event of Jesus Christ, and (b) in the secular form of the World of God’.

Secondly, revelation is the event of ‘*Das Wort ward Fleisch.*’ For Barth (1940: 122), revelation implies the phrase ‘*Das Wort ward Fleisch.*’ This phrase is ‘the sign or instrument of God’s self-revelation’ (Mostert 2000:86). Barth found the key for the doctrine of the Trinity and for the understanding (perception) of God in the special *Dasein* of the unique Jesus Christ (Frey 1988: 155). So, revelation as ‘*Das Wort ward Fleisch*’ includes every act of Jesus Christ: creation, incarnation, suffering, and resurrection. God’s act is the deed of his revelation (Körtner 1989: 22). For Barth (1940: 122), revelation does not differ from the Person of Christ and the reconciliation which occurs in him. Therefore Barth characterizes the revelation of God as an act (Körtner 1989: 22). Barth develops his concept of ‘the act of God’ in regard to revelation as an ‘event’ (Ereignis bzw. als Geschehen)(Körtner 1989: 23). The concept of an act implies that ‘God’s Being is understood as Being in Person (*Gottes Sein als Sein in Person zu verstehen ist*)’ (Körtner 1989: 23).

The final concept of revelation would be revelation as ‘encounter between God and man’. Barth (1940: 350) argues that revelation would not be revelation without the historical revealedness of God. For Barth (1940: 350), revelation constitutes the encounter between God and man. According to Collins (2001: 17), for Barth, ‘the characterization of the revelation as encounter ad extra is grounded in the inner life of

⁹³ Offenbarung heißt immer Offenbaren, auch in der Gestalt, auch in den Mitteln der Offenbarung. Die Gestalt als solche, das Mittel, tritt nicht an die Stelle Gottes. Nicht die Gestalt offenbart, redet, tröstet, wirkt, hilf, sondern Gott in der Gestalt. Es entsteht also damit, daß Gott Gestalt annimmt, kein Medium, kein Drittes zwischen Gott und Mensch, keine von Gott unterschiedene Wirklichkeit, die nun als solche Subjekt der Offenbarung wäre (Barth 1940: 339).



the godhead. The category of event as encounter correlates, therefore, both with the revelation of God *ad extra* and with the life of the Trinity *ad intra*'.

In summary, for Barth (1940: 321⁹⁴), the term 'revelation' indicates that there is no possibility for human talk about God. This implies that as far as human beings are concerned God is hidden (Frey 1988: 165). Barth himself identifies the understanding of 'self-revelation' with Anselm's proof for God in his *Fides quaerens intellectum*⁹⁵.

⁹⁴ Gottes Offenbarung ist nach der Heiligen Schrift ein Grund, der keinerlei höheren oder tieferen Grund über sich oder hinter sich hat, sondern der schlechterdings in sich selber Grund ist und also dem Menschen gegenüber eine Instanz, der gegenüber kein Appell an eine obere Instanz möglich ist (Barth 1940: 321).

⁹⁵ Barth's study of Anselm's *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* remains one of the most sensitive attempts to view the argument of the *Proslogion* from the inside (Clayton 1995: 129). When, according to Clayton (1995:131), Barth wrote the *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*, he was much preoccupied with defending the 'scientific character' of dogmatic theology and the legitimacy of confessional theology's presence within the academy. For Barth, Christian theology cannot be an object, dispassionate science, but must be the understanding of God's objective self-revelation in Jesus Christ (Grenz & Olson 1992:68). Therefore, what Barth discovered in the *Proslogion* was what amounted to the only possible necessary and sufficient starting point for dogmatic theology (Butterworth 1990:47).

Barth deals carefully with Anselm's reply to Gaunilo's defence of the Fool (Clayton 1995:131). Barth insists that there is a gap between the believer and unbeliever over which agreement is impossible (Herrera 1979:43). Evans (1980:34) pointed out that Gaunilo attacked Anselm in a spirit of friendly challenge, and he did not seriously want to dispute the existence of God. In fact, when Barth interprets Anselm's book, he does not attack the objections of Gaunilo, of Thomas Aquinas, and above all, of Kant, but rather he sets the proof in the realm of faith (Frey 1988: 122). Barth's book on Anselm demonstrates his general view of the argument as an expression of faith rather than as a serious attempt to convince the Fool that he is wrong (Brecher 1986:38). However, one of the main points of Barth's interpretation is that it helps to explain Anselm's response to Gaunilo (McGill 1968:45). For Barth, according to Brecher (1986:44), 'the role of the Fool is to confirm that only the believer is in a position properly to understand, since he, the Fool, being a fool, cannot but fail so to understand'. Brecher (1986:44) adds that in Barth's view, the 'Fool can without inconsistency continue to think as he does, on the Fool's own level'. Schwöbel (2000:28) indicates that Barth in his book *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* offers a 'reconstruction' of the proof for the existence of God in the *Proslogion* so that he may begin with Anselm's understanding of theology and so develop his own understanding of theology in conversation with Anselm.

Anselm's idea was followed in the prolegomena of the *Kirchliche Dogmatik* (Moltmann 1973: 38).

8.1.2 The philosophical background of revelation

In order to understand the doctrine of revelation in the theology of Barth, it is necessary to notice the philosophical backgrounds, that is, the influence of Hermann, Ritschl, Hegel, and Feuerbach. In fact, they play an important role in the understanding of Barth's theology.

8.1.2.1 Hegel's influence on Barth

Most neo-orthodox theologians follow the Kantian tradition and accept Kant's critique of natural theology (Livingston 1971: 340). However, although Barth follows the Kantian tradition like other neo-orthodox theologians, Barth was influenced by Hegel's thought as well (Ahlers 1989: 41). Bradshaw (1988: 56) says that Jüngel interprets Barth's understanding 'in the light of the Hegelian concept of the "relation of opposites," of union and distinction, of self-correspondence in the lower medium.'

According to Barth (2001[1959]: 377), Hegel's is the philosophy of self-confidence. Hegel affirms Kant's transcendentalism as well (Barth 2001[1959]: 379). Barth (2001[1959]: 395) states that 'Hegel is the most distinct person of the Enlightenment', because he 'brought the great conflict between reason and revelation, between a purely worldly awareness of civilization and Christianity, between the God in us and the God in Christ, to a highly satisfactory conclusion' (Barth 2001[1959]: 395).

In connection with Hegel's philosophy of religion, the doctrine of the Trinity does not mean 'a retrospective adaptation of his philosophy to follow the wishes of the theologians' (Barth 2001[1959]: 400). So, Barth (2001[1959]: 404) regards the Hegelian doctrine of the Trinity as 'coinciding with the basic principles of Hegelian logic,' that is, 'the basic principle of Hegelian anthropology and the Hegelian teaching

of life' (Barth 2001[1959]: 404). Hegel emphatically affirms the positive and historical nature of revelation, the uniqueness of Christ (Barth 2001 [1959]: 405).

Revelation, for Hegel, would be one convenient direction for the understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity (Powell 2001: 116), since God is revelatory: 'God is spirit and therefore revelatory, intrinsically knowable and in fact truly known' (Powell 2001: 116). For Hegel, revelation is equivalent to creation, and another application of revelation is Jesus Christ (Powell 2001: 118). Powell adds

In Jesus Christ, God is revealed because in this name God has again passed out of universality and entered the sphere of a particular being. The example of Jesus Christ makes clear that Hegel understood revelation to be a matter of appearance... Revelation thus points to two modes or elements of God's being: universality, in which God is an object of thought, and particularity, in which God is an object of sensuous perception (Powell 2001: 118).

For Hegel, according to Pannenberg (1997: 274-275), revelation in the unity of God with his creature through the Son's appearance at the Incarnation is at the same time the reconciliation with the world. Hegel found the unity between God and human beings, which is the result of the act of God, in the doctrine of the Trinity, since the trinity is the ground of the self-revelation of God. Powell (2001: 184) says that Barth is regarded as 'an inheritor of the Hegelian tradition, with its emphasis not only on revelation but also on the Trinitarian character of revelation'.

'Both (Barth and Hegel) depart from the customary view [about the triune God] ' and 'both insist that revelation is possible only because God is a Trinity and that God's Trinitarian being is reflected in revelation' (Powell 2001: 184). Richard Robert (1991: 6) points out that 'Hegel's virtual rediscovery of the doctrine of the Trinity subsisting in the divine act and his concept of synthesis are clearly highly significant for Barth and for his understanding of time.'



However, Powell (2001: 192) indicates the difference between Barth and Hegel. The understanding of the content of revelation implies that Barth's view of the Trinity is distinguished from Hegel's. The difference between Barth and Hegel would be that Hegel combines his self-revelation (*Sichoffenbaren*) with the creation of the world, and that he perceives the ground of being of the creation in it (Pannenberg 1997: 257). Bradshaw (1987: 157) comments that 'Pannenberg sees that Barth's intention and procedure is foreign to Hegel's derivation of the Trinitarian idea from the *Geist* or self-consciousness⁹⁶; but he asks whether the very structure of Barth's argument from the phenomenon of revelation in the faithful, is not closely allied to Hegel in the end result'. However, both the concept 'Lordship' which implies God's freedom, and the concept 'independence' play an important role in Barth's understanding of revelation, and two characteristics demonstrate that Barth's thought does not concur with Hegel's theology (Powell 2001: 192; Bradshaw 1987: 157). Powell adds

While Barth's theology of the Trinity and revelation depicts a God who radically identifies with the world, even to the point of becoming a being in the world, at the same time his theology seeks to preserve the utter transcendence of God and the freedom of God to reveal or to abstain from revealing and to create or to refrain from creating. As cannot be mentioned too often or emphasized too strongly, the freedom of God in revelation is associated with God's Trinitarian being (Powell 2001: 192).

⁹⁶ In his footnote, Bruce McCormack (1995: 354) says that 'I mention all of this because of Wolfhart Pannenberg's fascinating, but misguided, thesis that 'Barth took over Hegel's derivation of the doctrine of the Trinity from the concept of the subjectivity of God'. McCormack opposes Pannenberg's understanding of the relationship between Barth's doctrine of the Trinity and Hegel's. Barth's understanding of the subjectivity of God is not regarded as the ideal projection of human subjectivity in relation to an idealistic doctrine of the Trinity. However, Barth's doctrine of the Trinity opposes Feuerbach's in the light of Hegel's understanding, while Barth sharply criticizes Hegel. Ahlers (1989: 41) points out that while 'the intellectual climate of Barth's time was anti-Hegelian, dualistic, neokantian, Barth's thought was so revolutionary, so Trinitarian, Alexandrian, Hegelian.'



This demonstrates 'Barth's correspondence with the idealist tradition's tendency in order to consider the world as a moment within the divine life, by regarding the creation of the world as analogous to, or even identical with the begetting of the eternal Son' (Powell 2001: 193). Bradshaw (1987: 154) affirms that 'it is arguable that Barth's doctrine resembles the Hegelian logic on union and distinction as the heart of all reality and the great synthesis underlying spirit and nature.' Therefore there is little denial that Barth's concept of 'revelation' stems from Hegel's term 'the self-revelation of God' (Pannenberg 1997: 258)⁹⁷.

8.1.2.2 *Ritschl's influence on Barth*

Revelation is very closely connected to Jesus Christ, because revelation is Jesus Christ who became flesh. This, for Barth, implies that revelation has time (Leslie 1989: 128). Here, an important issue occurs: history. In Barth's theology, 'Revelation takes place in history and as history' (Thompson 1991 17). Barth's understanding of the character of the revelation in a historical-centred position is closely connected with typical Ritschlian theology.

Ritschl accepts Kant's rejection of any philosophical natural theology, and he theologises his own work without any speculative metaphysics (Heron 1980: 33; Weber 1981: 149). Ritschl is closely connected with 'his distinctive emphases on historical revelation and on the ethical rather than mystical nature of religion' (Heron

⁹⁷ According to Collins (2001: 42) the concept of self-revelation which is to be found in the writing of Hegel is probably the source of the modern understanding and use of this term. Hegel's usage of self-revelation, and its correlation with the dialectic and threefold repetition of Geist, corresponds to a strong parallel with Barth's conceptualisation of the three categories of event, revelation, and Trinity, and of the way in which they correlate with one another; R. D. Williams (1979:152) agrees that Barth's understanding of the doctrine of the revelation stems from the 'Hegelian notion of history as in itself revelation.' According to Him, 'And when Barth says so gnomically that Revelation is not a predicate of history, but history is a predicate of revelation, he is affirming that "revelation" is not one of the categories under which history can be spoken of (if it is, we simply have some kind of Hegelian notion of history as in itself revelation).



1980: 33), since he approaches ‘the task of talking about God very much from *our* side, the side of the believer’ (Heron 1980: 33).

Ritschl named faith in God as the presupposition and condition of morality, as the faith in God in the form of a positive religion, because the natural religion, according to Ritschl, is a simple ‘phantom’. Christ as the ‘*Offenbarer*’ of God enters into the history (*Geschichte*), into the binding of the ethical orientation of theology generally and its historical foundation as well (Pannenberg 1997: 133-134).

This understanding is closely connected with that of Barth. As Meijering (1993: 50) points out that the typical thesis of Ritschlian theology, that the New Testament does not require any metaphysical doctrine of God, but testifies about the works of God in Christ and the historical fact that the Son mediates the trinitarian contribution was considered systematic theology. This plays an important role in the representation of the doctrine of the Trinity in the Barth’s theology, since as Otto Weber (1981: 150) points out, ‘they (Barth and Bultmann) cannot be understood without Herrmann and thus without Ritschl’.

8.1.2.3 *Herrmann’s contribution*

For Barth, the doctrine of the Trinity is closely connected with the correct understanding of revelation. This understanding originates from Herrmann (Willis 1987:38-39). In fact, Willis is of opinion that Barth is influenced by Herrmann. Willis states

Thus, Herrmann wants to develop a dynamic conception of revelation based on “God is free action upon us”, which also guards theology from abstract thinking. According to his position, theology would have a concrete basis from which to speak - God’s action on the human self. But it becomes clear that in God’s self-revelation Herrmann is mainly concerned with the human self, which is the locus of revelation. The way in which this theology becomes anthropology and moves directly into Feuerbach’s critique is not



difficult to see. Herrmann has fulfilled Feuerbach's epistemological call for a sensuous basis to thinking; but the human self is that basis (Willis 1987:39).

He adds that for Herrmann, 'the subjectivity of God is dissolved into human subjective experience and theology becomes anthropology' (Willis 1987:39). And Willis (1987:39) concludes that 'his doctrine of revelation must lead to the doctrine of the Trinity, although it does not arise from religious experience'. Herrmann's idea stems from Feuerbach's critique. Herrmann has fulfilled Feuerbach's epistemological call for a sensuous basis to thinking; but the human self is that basis (Willis 1987:39).

However, Barth reverses the interpretation of Herrmann's notion of the self-revelation of God (Willis 1987:40; Moltmann 1973: 44), while for Herrmann, the subjectivity of God is dissolved into human subjective experience and theology becomes anthropology. There is little denial that Herrmann's '*Selbst*' becomes Barth's theological way (Moltmann 1973: 47)

8.1.2.4 Feuerbach

According to Feuerbach (1989: 206), 'revelation is simply the self-determination of man, only that between himself the determined, and himself the determining, he interposes an object- God, a distinct being'. For Feuerbach (1989: 206), God plays a role as medium by which human being causes the reconciliation of himself with his own nature.

Feuerbach (1989: 206) calls 'God as superhuman being since God is known by himself only.' Therefore, it is impossible for a human being to understand God beyond what he reveals to us (Feuerbach 1989: 206). However, Feuerbach (1989: 206) indicates that human beings know God through himself in terms of revelation which implies the word of God, that is, God declaring himself. Therefore he adds

Hence, in the belief in revelation man makes himself a negation, he goes



out of an above himself; he places revelation in opposition to human knowledge, the fullness of all supersensuous mysteries; here reason must hold its peace. But nevertheless the divine revelation is determined by the human nature. God speaks not to brutes or angels, but to men; hence he uses human speech and human conceptions. Man is an object to God, before God perceptibly imparts himself to man; he thinks of man; he determines his action in accordance with the nature of man and his needs (Feuerbach 1989: 206- 207)

According to Feuerbach (1989: 207), ‘God must have reference not to himself, but to man’s power of comprehension’. Admittedly, for him, ‘the distinction between divine revelation and the so-called human reason or nature would be useless, that is an illusory distinction’ (Feuerbach 1989: 207). Therefore he concludes

The contents of the divine revelation are of human origin, for they have proceeded not from God as God, but from God as determined by human reason, human wants, that is, directly from human reason and human wants. And so in revelation man goes out of himself, in order, by a circuitous path, to return to himself! Here we have a striking confirmation of the position that the secret of theology is nothing else than anthropology- the knowledge of God nothing else than knowledge of man! (Feuerbach 1989: 207).

Here, the similarity and diversity between Barth and Feuerbach occur. For both, revelation implies the word of God, or God declaring himself. However, for Feuerbach, the human being plays an important role in the understanding of the revelation of God, since the divine revelation is determined by the human nature. The reason is ‘because God speaks not to brutes or angels, but to men. Therefore God uses human speech and human conceptions’ (Feuerbach 1989: 206- 207).

In this connection, Willis sees Barth’s connection with Feuerbach. According to Willis (1987:27), ‘Barth’s development of a Trinitarian conception of God may be understood as an incorporation of, and response to, Feuerbach’s critique’. However this reaction of



Barth demonstrates two sides. 1) It includes a “yes” to Feuerbach, since he points out that God of traditional theism is a product of the human project⁹⁸ (Willis 1987:27), 2) the doctrine of the Trinity also includes a “no” to Feuerbach, since Feuerbach’s critique is still connected with traditional theism (Willis 1987:27). Trevor Hart says

As a mature teacher of theology Barth adopted the habit of having his students begin by reading Feuerbach; for, in Feuerbach’s accusation that talk about God is in the end only talk about humanity, Barth identified the most complete and telling judgment on the nineteenth-century theological project. For all the varied emphasis which may be identified the chief characteristic of that project was in one way or another to seek to found religion, and the theological reflection which attaches to it, on some aspect of human nature and experience which belongs to history and may be understood within its terms (Hart 2000: 40-41)

However, Barth’s rejection of natural theology stems from Feuerbach’s⁹⁹ understanding of theology based on the anthropological presupposition (Pannenberg 1988: 117-119). This implies that for Barth, the rejection of natural theology takes an important position in his theology, since natural theology causes the shift from theology to anthropology (Shults 1997: 306)¹⁰⁰. As Sonderegger (1992: 70) points out, ‘the

⁹⁸ It calls theologians to take Feuerbach’s critique seriously, to realize that he makes a positive theological contribution, to recognize that the God of traditional theism is a product of human projection.

⁹⁹ Feuerbach revealed the ‘open secret’ of all this ‘natural theology’: theology has become anthropology. Only one road leads back from this precipice. Human hearts must turn from this mad pursuit of self to the God who loves in freedom. God must act; God alone must judge. The ‘royal road’ from human subjectivity to God must be abandoned; the ‘Royal Man’ is the one, true human Word. The stuff of human existence-history, culture, natural wonders, and order, can be used by god for revelation or control of it. The religion of human control must be recognized as idolatry and, in its place, an attentive obedience must be directed to that ‘one Word of God in life and death (Rehman: 1998: 70).

¹⁰⁰ Barth’s methodological shift and his consequent emphasis on the doctrine of the Trinity do not constitute a retreat or a refusal to confront Feuerbach’s arguments, on the contrary, they constitute the basis of Barth’s response to Feuerbach. Allowing the doctrine of the Trinity to govern theology shows

argument rehearsed here, Barth's polemic against "natural theology", is assumed to be the centrepiece of Barth's work, and the centre of Barth's commitments as a theologian'. It is true that his program of the rejection of natural theology takes the centre of his theology. However, both (Barth and Feuerbach) differ from the mainstream of Christianity. According to Berkhof,

One of the most recent names applied to the theology of Barth is "Theology of the Word of God." Barth denies general revelation, is violently opposed to the subjectivism of modern theology, and stresses the necessity of special revelation for the knowledge of (concerning) God. It would be a mistake, however, to infer from this that he agrees with the Protestantism of the Reformation in its conception of the Bible as the source of theology. In the first place the Bible should not be identified with the special revelation of God, but can only be regarded as a witness to that revelation. And in the second place special revelation is always simply God speaking (Berkhof 1988[1932]: 61).

Sebastian Rehnman (1998: 288) explains how the doctrine of revelation is meaningful.

1) Revelation is of the order of *Geschichte*, i.e., a definitive, incomparable, and unrepeatable event with no human court of reference. Thus, Barth cannot even make an objective appeal to his doctrine of the fundamental reliability of Scripture since the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus is *Geschichte* not *Historie*. Despite his intentions, Barth did not leave Ritschlianism, but retained it in content, though not in form, as did Herrmann. Here we see the Kantian connection in actual practice. For Kant denied the possibility of theoretical knowledge of things that transcend the phenomenal world; 2) the universal church amply testifies against the

that Barth's Church Dogmatics, from the beginning, includes a response to Feuerbach. For his Trinitarian based theology attempts to demonstrate why theology cannot be anthropology or physiology (Willis 1987:55).



notion of limiting divine revelation to Jesus Christ and her competent exegeses have- in opposition to gross allegorism- denied that Scripture is only about Jesus.

8.2 The Root of Barth's Doctrine of the Trinity

The phrase '*Gott offenbart sich als der Herr*' indicates the root of the doctrine of the Trinity (*Wurzel der Trinitätslehre*) (Barth 1940: 324). According to Barth (1940: 323), without revelation man is unaware that there is a Lord, that man has a Lord and that God is this Lord. This implies that for Barth, the way to know God as Lord does not depend on human ability or side or situation, but only on Himself who reveals his own being to human beings.

8.2.1 The root of his doctrine of the Trinity

For Barth (1940: 325), the statements about God's Trinity cannot demand to be identified with the statement about revelation, or with revelation itself. The doctrine of the Trinity is an analysis of those statements, that is, of what it marks (Barth 1940: 325). And, for him, 'the doctrine of the Trinity is a work of the Church and a document of its understanding of statements (statement of the doctrine of the Trinity)' (Leslie 1989: 57). This implies that the revelation as statements about it or interpretation is identified not with the doctrine of the Trinity, but with the root of the doctrine of the Trinity (Jüngel 2001[1986]: 27). On the other side, positively, by marking revelation as the root of the doctrine of the Trinity, the statement about the Triune God is identified with the statement about revelation not directly, but indirectly (Barth 1940: 326).

For Barth (1940: 328-329), the doctrine of the Trinity implies the interpretation of revelation. It does not mean the interpretation of God who revealed him in revelation. This would be senseless, since revelation is the self-interpretation of this God. Barth (1940: 329) states that it does not mean that revelation is the ground of the Trinity, as if God is Triune in his revelation and for the sake of his revelation, but rather revelation is



the ground of the doctrine of the Trinity in the way, in which the doctrine of the Trinity has no other ground than this. He emphasises that it is impossible to approach the doctrine of the Trinity in only other way than analysis of the concept of revelation (Barth 1940: 329). Revelation must be interpreted as the ground of the doctrine of the Trinity (Barth 1940: 329). Meijering (1993: 50) notes that for Barth, revelation is indeed not the ground of the Triune God (as if God were the triune God in his revelation), but the ground of the doctrine of the Trinity. He adds that Barth's expressed thesis that it is impossible to distinguish between immanent Trinity and economic Trinity is the basis of his theology (Meijering 1993: 50).

Barth(1940: 329) says that '*Wir sagen also damit, daß wir die Trinitätslehre als die Interpretation der Offenbarung oder die Offenbarung als den Grund der Trinitätslehre bezeichnen*'. Torrance (2000:79) interprets it that 'the root of the trinitarian theology would not be defined through the possibility of theological discourse, since this would be inappropriately anthropocentric. The root of the doctrine of the Trinity takes its possibility in terms of the Lordship of God.' And according to Torrance (1990: 151), for Barth, 'God makes himself the object of our knowledge. And the root of the doctrine of the Trinity is constituted in the God's revelation of himself.' He adds

Karl Barth approached the doctrine of the Holy Trinity entirely on the ground of God's self-revelation and self-giving in Christ and in the Spirit interpreted through the Homoousion, but since the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is rooted in God's revelation of himself in such a way that there is an identity between God and his revelation, it could not but be given primary place in the Church's doctrine of God and a normative role in the whole structure of its dogmatic theology (Torrance 1990: 193-194).

According to Isidro (1983: 416), it is possible to understand the doctrine of the Trinity only by analysis of the concept of revelation, since the doctrine of the Trinity is the interpretation of revelation, the root of the concept of revelation, and the basis of the doctrine of the Trinity



8.2.2 Vestigia Trinitatis

Barth (1940: 353) rejects the anthropological possibility of the knowledge of God by rejecting the *vestigia trinitatis* of Augustine. For Barth (1940: 353), the concept ‘*vestigia trinitatis*’ implies on a analogue of the Trinity which is wholly apart from God’s revelation, which manifests itself in a creaturelike structure with a certain similarity to the structure of the trinitarian concept of God, and which is seen as a copy of the trinitarian God himself.

The term ‘*vestigia trinitatis*’ is based on the term ‘*analogia entis*’ which is regarded as the second root of the doctrine of the Trinity (Barth 1940: 354). In fact, this problem plays an important role in Barth's whole theology (Isidro 1983: 397)¹⁰¹. For Barth, according to Isidro (1983: 398), the *analogia entis* and the *analogia fidei* are two distinct ‘*Phänomene*.’ The first is a metaphysical principle which determines the whole catholic theology. Although Barth (1940: 364) admits that the inventor of the ‘*vestigia trinitatis*’ did not want to provide a second root for the doctrine of the Trinity¹⁰², Barth’s critique is that the term ‘*vestigia trinitatis*’ is not based on ‘interpretation’ but on ‘illustration’. Barth sees a distinction between interpretation and illustration. According to Cunningham (1998: 103), for Barth, ‘interpretation means saying *the same thing in*

¹⁰¹ As Isidro (1983: 397) says, the discontinuation between the Word of God and the word of human beings remains also untouched, when Barth poses the problem of analogy against the human theologians, who see Barth’s approach to Catholic theology concerning the analogy.

¹⁰² According to Isidro (1983: 514), Barth bekennt, daß es in der Geschichte der Theologie immer Theologie gegeben hat, die „*Vestigia trinitatis*“ in der Natur (Anselm v. Canterbury), in der Kultur (Luther), in der Geschichte (Joachim v. Fiore, Möller van den Bruck), in der Religion (G. Woberminn, J. Gehard) und der menschlichen Seel (Augustin, Anselm v. Canterbury, Petrus Lombardus, Thomas v. Aquin, Bonaventura, Melanchthon, B. Keckermann, G.E. Lessing, A. Schlatter, Schelling und Hegel) gefunden haben; According to Barth (1940: 364), the inventor of the doctrine of the *vestigia trinitatis* did not want to pose another second root of the doctrine of the Trinity alongside the revelation. Barth states: Die Erfinder der *vestigia trinitatis* wollten keine zweite andere Wurzel der Trinitätslehre neben der Offenbarung angeben, geschweige denn, daß sie diese andere als die eine und wahre angeben und die Offenbarung des trinitarischen Gottes leugnen wollten. Ihr Tun steht aber stark im Schatten der Frage, ob sie gerade dies nicht dennoch getan haben.



other words, and illustration means saying the same thing *in other words*. They differ in the place of the emphasis, and emphasis is not the property of words.’

For Barth (1940: 364), the word ‘interpretation’ implies ‘in anderen Worten *dasselbe* sagen’, the word ‘illustration’ implies ‘*dasselbe* in *anderen* Worten sagen’. According to Jüngel (1967: 25), it is clearly connected with the problem of the identity of revelation. However, Anderson (1981: 88) points out that ‘it is also difficult, even though Barth lays different emphases in definition, to see a real qualitative difference between interpretation and illustration. In this regard there is a particularly valid objection.’

Barth (1940: 360) confirms that ‘*vestigium trinitatis*’ implies ‘*das natürliche Vermögen der theologischen Sprache*’. Barth (1940: 360) denies the natural possibility of language as theological language of God’s revelation. Although the problem of *vestigia* is nothing less than the central question of language about God, it is natural that Barth’s rejection of *vestigia* stems from the dangerous tendency toward anthropocentrism, because, for Barth, God has revealed himself in his Word (O’Donnell 1988: 113). Jüngel (1967:23) points out that the contrast between *analogia entis* and *analogia fidei* is determined as follows: *analogia entis* leads to a loss of revelation; *analogia fidei* leads to getting language, to the possibility of theological speech of God.

Barth (1940: 366) argues that the doctrine of the *vestigia trinitatis* changes interpretation into illustration of revelation.¹⁰³ This is the reason why he denies the doctrine of the *vestigia trinitatis*. For Barth (1940: 365), there is no other root for the doctrine of the Trinity than revelation. This is ‘because he cannot accept any understanding of God which is independent of the revelation (d.h *der einzigen und wirklichen Offenbarung Gottes*)’ (Meijering 1993: 48). Heron (1983: 163) points out that for Barth, ‘no other “root” can be sought for, and especially not in any *vestigium*

¹⁰³ Jüngel (1967:25) indicates that Die Lehre von den *vestigia trinitatis* vollzieht für Barth den Übergang von der Interpretation zur Illustration der Offenbarung, einen Übergang, der “ In der theologischen Sprache offenbar nicht stattfinden” soll. Deshalb lehnt er „ die Lehre von den *vestigia* ab“

trinitatis in the created order, nor can Christian theology be properly directed to its concrete subject unless it is clear from the start that it is of this triune God that it has to speak'. It is clear that 'human language has no capacity to talk about God' (O'Donnell 1988: 113).

Shults (1997: 306) says that Barth denies vigorously any speculative anthropology, which follows from his general methodological grounding of dogmatic statements in the revelation of the Word of God. He adds

In some ways, anthropology served as a lightning rod (especially in his debates with Brunner) for all of Barth's polemic against the *analogia entis* which he viewed as trying to provide true theological knowledge apart from, and without relying upon revelation. Barth's use of the concept *analogia fidei* provides the background for understanding the mutual shaping of his methodology and his anthropology as illustrated in the *imago Dei*. "when and where the Word of God is really known by men the manner of thinking of man in the event of real faith has, so to speak, opened up from above. From above, not from below"(I/1 242). This applies to theological knowledge of true humanity as well, which is known only by revelation in the Word of God (Shults 1997: 306).

Barth (1940: 367) says that the phrase '*vestigium trinitatis in creatura als Illustration der Offenbarung*' is illegitimate; however, this *vestigium* can be used in the phrase '*vestigium creaturae in trinitate*' which does not mean a second root of the doctrine of the Trinity besides the first root¹⁰⁴. According to Cunningham (1998:100), in opposition to Augustine, Barth has rejected the term *Vestigia Trinitatis*. 'Barth believes that only "the biblical witness" allows us to move from recognition of the threefold nature of

¹⁰⁴ According to Rosato (1981: 55), 'Barth rejects the *vestigia trinitatis in creatura*, and chooses instead to invent the phrase *vestigia creaturae in trinitatis* since the latter seems more indicative of the real meaning of *vestigia* and thus more pertinent to the relation of the Trinity to human experience. For, "trace of the creature in the Trinity" leaves no doubt that things themselves are not capable of having the Trinity immanent in them or of being reflections of the Trinity.



revelation to the doctrine of the Trinity itself. Therefore, Barth refuses to consider the tradition of the *vestigia trinitatis*. For Barth, the very idea of a *vestigium trinitatis* raises the specter of the reduction of theology to mere anthropology. And Barth draws a sharp distinction between revelation itself and the human responses to revelation, namely proclamation and dogmatics' (Cunnigham 1998:100).

According to Thompson (1991:13), the central theme of Barth's theology is regarded as the relationship between God and us. This is manifested in Jesus Christ who is the Word of God and the true meaning of revelation. This is the positive point of view on Karl Barth. The negative point is his rejection of all natural theology. Thompson adds that

For Barth believes that humanity as finite is incapable of the infinite: and, more seriously, that sinful human nature is incapable of perceiving, receiving and conceiving the nature of the true God. What humanity does, as Calvin also said, is to project to infinity it's own conceptions of God, false conceptions at that; it creates a god or gods in its own image. In other words it fashions idols. Now this strong opposition of Barth's to all natural theology is simply because the true knowledge of God given in revelation makes it not only superfluous but impossible (Thompson 1991: 13-14).

Barth's rejection of natural theology is closely connected with his Christo-centrism¹⁰⁵ or Christo-monism¹⁰⁶, since for Barth, there is no other root of the doctrine of the Trinity than the revelation in which Jesus Christ is the Word of God and the true meaning of revelation.

¹⁰⁵ The structure of Barth's theology is thoroughly Christ centric (Grenz&Olson 1992: 72; Shults 1997 308; Mostert 2000: 84- There can be no doubt about the christological concentration of Barth's doctrine of revelation; Morrison 2001: 61: Barth is consciously Christocentric and Trinitarian from first to last)

¹⁰⁶ Jenson 1989: 41- It is sometimes supposed that the Church Dogmatics' christocentrism may be characterized as 'christomonism', and should be countered by a more 'trinitarian' theology; Robert 1991: 90.



Barth's view differs from traditional thought, on 'general revelation'. Meijering argues that Karl Barth denies the distinction between natural theology and general revelation, and this rejection leads to the difference between Barth and protestant Orthodoxy. For Orthodoxy, this knowledge demonstrates that all human beings as sinners need the knowledge of God in spite of their fallen situation; however, Barth denies the possibility of the independent knowledge of the revelation of God¹⁰⁷ (Meijering 1993: 48).

8.2.3 Christological anthropology's response to atheism

Barth does not follow the method of traditional theism, by which 'one arrives at the concept of God by abstracting attributes from the world *via negativa*' (Willis 1987: 70). For Barth, this methodological shift differs from the God of theism which robs humanity from building up the divine glory (Willis 1987:70). However, conversely, the doctrine of Trinity 'has not robbed humanity of his own glory. He has not constituted his being in infinity while leaving finitude for humanity' (Willis 1987:72). For Barth,

¹⁰⁷ John Calvin (*ICR*: I, i, 1) says that these two kinds of knowledge (that of human beings and that of God) are so closely connected to each other that it is not easy to discern one from the other. But the most important thing is that 'nobody can understand himself except by converting his own mind to God'. For Calvin, 'it is certain that man never achieves a clear knowledge of himself unless he has first looked upon God's face' (*ICR* I, I, 2). He goes on to explain about the knowledge of God: 'God himself has implanted in all men a certain understanding of his divine majesty' (*ICR*, I, iii, 1). What Calvin implies here does not mean so-called 'natural theology' in the modern sense. However, it is important to know that the Christian doctrine does not reject the possibility of knowing God in the human mind. Calvin uses the term '*religionis semen*', which implies the seed of religion (*quoddam tamen perpetuo religionis semen retinent*) (*ICR*, I, iii, 1). As far as the knowability of God is concerned, it is possible to interpret the term '*semen religionis*' as the meaning of the concept '*imago Dei*'. Although human beings were spoiled because of original sin (it is called 'total depravity'), the trace of the '*imago Dei*' remains still in the heart of the human being. However, this does not mean either '*analogia entis*', or 'natural theology', but natural revelation or natural grace on the basis of the Bible, since the purpose of Calvin's Institutes was to study the Bible (The purpose of Calvin's Institutes occurs in the part 'Ioannes Calvinus Lectori' in his Institutes. He mentions that 'moreover, it has been my purpose in this labor to prepare and instruct candidates in sacred theology for the reading of the divine word, in order that they may be able both to have easy access to it and to advance in it without stumbling.)

‘Trinitarian theology is not only distinct from traditional theism, but also responds to “protest atheism”’ (Willis 1987:71).

Pannenberg (1975[1968]: 33-37) criticizes Barth’s theological methodology in the light of his Christology ‘from above’. Pannenberg states

The Christological procedure “from above to below” is followed in modern Protestant dogmatics especially by Karl Barth. He speaks about a “history” of the incarnation: the Son of God goes into what is foreign, into humiliation, by becoming a man, uniting himself with the man Jesus (CD, IV/1, §59). This connection means at the same time an inexpressible exaltation for the man Jesus to whose lot it fell (CD, IV/2 § 64: “The exaltation of the Son of man”). Here Barth has combined two doctrines which were distinguished in the orthodox Protestant dogmatics of the seventeenth century: on the one hand, the doctrine of Jesus as man and God, the so-called doctrine of the two natures, and on the other, the doctrine of the humiliation and exaltation of the incarnate Son of God as two consecutive stages along Jesus’ path. By combining these two themes, Barth comes closer to the basic outline of the Gnostic redeemer myth than is necessarily characteristic of an incarnational Christology that is constructed “from above to below”: the descent of the redeemer from heaven and his return there. This is also the basic concept of Barth’s Christology (Pannenberg 1975 [1968]: 33-34).

According to Olson (1990:186), ‘Barth would especially object to Pannenberg’s criticisms and argue that his own christocentric method of theology grounds all of the doctrine of God on the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.’ He adds that ‘he would no doubt point to the later volumes of his Church Dogmatics such as IV/I, 50 to prove his case’ (Olson 1990: 186). Thompson says, Barth ‘shows that there is no God whom we know except the one true God seen in the humanity of Jesus. There is no nonhuman God.’ He adds that ‘incarnation and atonement are based on God’s purpose of election and show that, while as triune he is perfect in himself, at the same time, he chooses to



be God with us and for us – *Logos Ensarkos* and not *Logos Asarkos*’ (Thompson 1994:134).

Andrews points out that ‘for traditional theologians, the approach to the two natures of Christ was to apply a priori concepts of divinity and humanity to the divine and human natures. The problem has been trying to marry disparate anthropological or existential concepts of man with concepts of divinity that have derived from philosophy.’ He confirms that ‘Barth refuses to adopt this approach’ (Andrews 1996: 163). According to Suh (1982: 72-73), Barth (IV) actually did not connect Jesus Christ with the ‘*Logos asarkos*’, or to the second Person of the Trinity, ‘since the second Person of the Godhead is not God the reconciler as such, and “*Logos asarkos*” implies the “*Deus absconditus*”’. He adds that ‘Such a “*Logos asarkos*” or “*Deus absconditus*” means honoring one’s self-made image of god, “*Selbst gemachten Götterbild*”’ (Suh 1982: 73). It shows that Barth’s understanding is based on the economic Trinity. Andrews points out that ‘Barth focuses on the history of Jesus Christ, which he describes as His “birth and life and death” which is “revealed in His resurrection” and which “takes place in every age”. He remains open to the excess of non-meaning of this act of God.’ He adds that ‘this is evident in his refusal to entertain the possibility of a concept of humanity in relation to the human nature of Christ which we find in his rejection of the idea of a *logos asarkos*’ (Andrews 1996: 163-164). Grenz (2004: 47) points out that ‘Barth follows a particular theological method, which proceeds from revelation to the eternal God, that is, from what has come to be termed the economic Trinity to the immanent Trinity.’ This demonstrates the identity between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity¹⁰⁸. Meijering (1993: 50) points out that Barth’s expressed thesis that it is impossible to distinguish between immanent Trinity and economic Trinity is the foundation of his theology.

¹⁰⁸ Johnson (1997:46) states, following Jüngel, ‘there is a “correspondence” between the economic and immanent trinity, a correspondence, that is to say, between the way God is in self-being (in se) and the way God is for us (pro nobis).



Barth' doctrine of the Trinity 'displays agreement with Feuerbach as far as the rejection of traditional theism is concerned' (Willis 1987:69), since 'Feuerbach's atheism is always a protest against God on behalf of humanity' (Willis 1987:68). The doctrine of the Trinity can rightly understand God as being in act. This implies that 'God's being is not a static substance, but rather a dynamic event of self-giving to the world' (Willis 1987:71-72). The doctrine of the Trinity speaks of 'the God who is finite as well as infinite, since Jesus Christ who is God's revelation has two natures, that is, a divine nature and a human nature' (Willis 1987:72). 'The infinity of the triune God does not contradict the finite' (Willis 1987:72). This is closely connected with Feuerbach's understanding of the Trinity. According to Willis (1987:68) 'the intention of Feuerbach's atheism is to heal the human pathology of alienation by restoring to humanity what rightfully belongs to it. To accomplish this, God must be negated by criticizing the wedge that theism and its abstract thinking have driven between God and humanity.'

Jüngel (1971: 381) says that for Barth theism and atheism have a parallel function. The doctrine of the Trinity, which formulates the mystery of the identification of God with Jesus is already mentioned in the Prolegomena of *Church Dogmatics* as the expression of the historicity of God. It proves that every wider statement about God is already as a statement about mankind (Jüngel 1971:382).

8.3 The Doctrine of the Trinity

In this part, attention is paid to Barths treatment of 'the oneness in threeness' and 'threeness in unity', his concept of the divine Person, the terms 'perichoresis' and 'appropriation', and the doctrine of 'Holy Spirit' in connection with his view of the *filioque*.

8.3.1 Unity and threeness



In the section on ‘*Gottes Dreieinigkeit*’, Barth (1940: 367) emphasizes the ‘unity (*Einheit*)’ in the threeness (*Dreiheit*).

Der Gott, der sich nach der Schrift offenbart, ist Einer in drei eigentümlichen, in ihren Beziehungen untereinander bestehenden Seinsweisen: Vater, Sohn und Heiliger Geist. So ist er der Herr, d.h. das Du, das dem menschlichen Ich entgegentritt und sich verbindet als das unauflösliche Subjekt und das ihm eben so und darin als sein Gott offenbar wird (Barth 1940: 367).

According to Barth (1940: 369), the threeness (*Die Dreiheit*) does not imply ‘the threeness of the essence’. Triunity of God is not a threefold deity, that is, neither in the meaning of a plurality of deity, nor in the meaning of existing as a plurality of individuals or of parts within the one deity.

The name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit presents God in the threefold repetition of one God (Barth 1940: 369). Barth explains the doctrine of the Trinity in terms of the metaphor of repetition (*Wiederholung*) (Torrance 2000:80). Barth makes the use of term ‘threefold repetition’ which implies the exposition of the Trinitarian being of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit for which Barth provides the term ‘three modes’ or ‘ways of being’ (Roberts 1980:84). Aboagye-mensah (1984: 149) says that for Barth, ‘what the Trinity implies is that the distinctive name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is the One Lord in threefold repetition, with no alteration, addition or adulteration, such repetition is grounded in the single Godhead, and God is only God in this threefold repetition.’ However, the repetition does not imply the alteration of His deity, in which He is God in this repetition (Torrance 2000: 81). And this repetition also does not mean three divine ‘I’s, but three times mentioning of the divine ‘I’ (Meijering 1993: 53). However, it implies that ‘God does God three times, each time in a special way’ (Jenson 1969:111). He adds that ‘He does it three times and in these three ways, to be the particular God he is and not some other. Each “hypostasis” is a repetition in a particular way of the act of being God- an act which is itself accomplished only as this precise repetition’.



In his critique on the antitrinitarians, Barth focuses on the monotheism of Arianism and of Sabellianism. According to Meijering (1993: 53), Barth's criticism differs from the traditional critique. He denounces Schleiermacher's '*Erscheinungsformen*.' '*Mit seiner Kritik will er offenbar nicht den historischen Sabellianismus, sondern Schleiermacher treffen*', says Meijering.

For Barth (1940: 373), the unity of God established in the doctrine of the Trinity is not to be confused with singularity or isolation. The terms 'singularity' and 'isolation' are the limitations (*Einschränkungen*) associated with the concept of numerical unity in general. But the numerical unity of the revealed God does not have these '*Einschränkungen*'.

For Barth, God is one. In itself His unity is not a singularity and isolation.

Der Begriff der offenbarten Einheit des offenbarten Gottes schließt also nicht aus sondern ein eine Unterscheidung (distinctio oder discretio) eine Ordnung im Wesen Gottes. Diese Unterscheidung oder Ordnung ist die Unterscheidung oder Ordnung der drei „Personen“- wir sagen lieber: der drei „Seinsweisen“ in Gott (Barth 1940: 374).

This understanding is closely connected with the concept 'being-in-act' which implies a dynamic concept of divine nature (Collins 2001: 26). The concept of revelation as act, event, and encounter implies this 'being-in-act', since revelation is identified with the 'act (event) of Jesus Christ' that implies Creation, Kenosis, Incarnation and Resurrection (Körtner 1989: 22). Barth's understanding of the concept of unity (*Einigkeit*) corresponds to the relation between God and humans or the world. However, this concept stems from the rejection of the traditional concept of God (essence or substance) as 'absolute' or 'static' or 'isolation' and 'singularity' (Willis 1987:71-72; Aboagye-mensah 1984: 178; Torrance 1990: 172). According to Collins (2001: 26), 'the traditional language of essence or substance did not entirely exclude the concept of motion or movement (*Kenosis*).' However, he adds that 'Barth's understanding of movement in relation to the Godhead is problematic, in that it is expressed in terms of

the God who is one self-moved Person, or in terms of one Person who reiterates himself' (Collins 2001: 26-27).

8.3.2 The concept of the 'divine Person'

Referring to the matter of 'the unity in the threeness (*Die Einheit in der Dreiheit*)' and 'the threeness in the unity (*Die Dreiheit in der Einheit*)', Barth redefines the term 'person' for his hermeneutical problem. For Barth (1940: 379), the really valuable determinations of the principle of God's the threeness in the unity (*Dreiheit in der Einheit*) derived neither by Augustine nor by Thomas nor by our protestant Fathers from the analysis of the concept of Person, but, under the urge of their usually over-laborious analyses of the concept of Person acquired from quite a different source. Barth (1940: 379) prefers not to use the term 'person', but rather 'mode of being'. With the term 'mode of being (*Seinsweise*)' Barth intends to express the same thing as expressed by the term 'person' not absolutely but relatively better, more simply and more clearly¹⁰⁹.

For Barth (1940: 379), this term '*Seinsweise*' does not introduce a new concept, but a bringing to the centre a subsidiary concept used in the analysis of the concept of 'person' from time immemorial and with the greatest effect. For Barth, the middle ages concept 'person' was constituted by Boethius' definition: *persona est naturae rationalis individua substantia*.¹¹⁰ The concept of 'three persons', for Barth, implies three individuals, that is, tri-theism (Thompson 1991: 21). Leslie (1989: 100) says that the term 'person' is objectionable in this context for Barth on two general grounds: '(1) the

¹⁰⁹ According to Aboagye-mensah (1984: 178), 'What Barth is saying is that "persona" must not be defined in terms of isolated individuals without regard to their relation to others. Rather it is to be defined as a being-in-loving-relation with others. In the context of our discussion it means that the Holy Spirit is no other than one of the three modes of God's existence in relation with the other modes remembering that there is a distinction in function. In other words, in this interpenetrating relationship of being "the Father is above all things, the Son pervades all things and the Holy Spirit is active in all things", to use T.F Torrance's expression'; According to William Stacy Johnson (1997:44), in contrast to these classical abstractions, Barth reconceived God as dynamic and relational in character.

¹¹⁰ See Muller 1993: 224; McGrath 1994: 209.



general lack of clarity as to its precise meaning in the early phases of the development of the Church doctrine, and (2) an exacerbation of the confusion with the introduction of the modern notion of personality as self-consciousness, a concept relatively foreign to 'persona'. Barth (1940: 379) uses the term 'Seinsweise'¹¹¹ which is the literal translation of *tro,poj u`pa,rxewj* in use in the early church, since the term 'Seinsweise' solves some problems of the concept 'person'¹¹². The term 'Seinsweise' for the emphasis of the unity stems from the critique of the western tradition, and the theology of the 19th century, criticized strongly by Barth (Oberdorfer 2002: 360). The mention of 'the act of God' implies the concept 'person', and through this statement of the act of God with its implication of the concept 'person', Barth is opposed to the ontological concept of 'God', the Aristotelian God, as the unmoved mover (*unbewegten Bewegers*)(Körtner 1989: 24).

Collins (2001: 27) says that 'the division of being and act is overcome by abolishing the Aristotelian distinction between *energeia* and *dynamis* as the foundation for the concept of God's being'. He adds 'unfortunately, the effect of the coalescing of *energeia* and *dynamis* only serves to reinforce the emphasis which we have discerned already, of the Godhead as apparently one self-moved person. Yet the tradition of the relationship between *energeia* and *dynamis* holds within it a variety of notions, some of which diverge from the Aristotelian view'. 'In the understanding of Maximus the confessor we find a conception of the relationship between being and act which does not necessitate the coalescence of *energeia* and *dynamis* which we find in Barth's view, and which also avoids the Aristotelian polarity.' (Collins 2001: 27). Collins says

¹¹¹ This is a literal translation of *tropos hyparxeos*, a term appearing as early as Basil of Caesarea as a synonym for hypostasis (*de spiritu Sancto*, 43f) (Leslie 1989: 101)

¹¹² As Leslie (1989: 100-101) points out, it runs the ironically dual danger of leading either in the direction of tritheism (suggesting three separated substances or centers of consciousness) or toward sabellianism (for which "person" designated God acting in the economy of salvation with no application to his divine being); See Mueller (1972: 67), since the traditional term "person" describing the different ways God has revealed himself is often misconstrued in a tritheistic sense-contrary to its original meaning- Barth prefers to speak of the three "modes" of God's being in order to say the same thing more clearly



The understanding of the nature of God as being- in –act (Gottes Sein in der Tat) rests upon the claim that there is no antecedent essence behind the act which God is, whereas the claim that God’s being is in becoming tends towards the concept of an antecedent essence, which is in the process of becoming something different. Herein lies one of the fundamental problems of the language of becoming and of reiteration. Neither Barth nor his commentators are immune from the charge of dualism or dipolarity. For, if the being of God is a repetition or a becoming, it appears that God was once one thing, and has become (or is becoming) another (Collins 2001:29).

This is in line with Feuerbach. According to Feuerbach (1989: 234), ‘the three Persons of the Christian Godhead are only imaginary, pretended Persons, assuredly different from real Persons, just because they are only phantasms, shadows of personalities’. He goes on to state that ‘the three Persons are thus only phantoms in the eyes of reason, for the conditions or modes under which alone their personality could be realised, are done away with by the command of monotheism’ (Feuerbach 1989: 234). Because the unity gives the lie to the personality, the self-subsistence of the Persons is annihilated in the self-subsistence of the unity. Therefore, for Feuerbach (1989: 234), Persons are mere relations. The son is not without the Father, the Father not without the Son. For him, the idea of the Person is here only a relational idea (Feuerbach 1989: 235). To Feuerbach (1989: 232), ‘the Trinity is therefore originally the sum of essential fundamental distinctions which man perceives in the human nature’, since theology becomes anthropology. This naturally has consequences for the understanding of the term ‘person’. For Feuerbach (1989: 233), ‘independent existence, existence apart from others, is the essential characteristic of a Person, of a substance’. This is essential for God. Therefore three Persons imply three Gods or gods. Actually, Barth accepts Feuerbach’s critique of the concept ‘Person’. Therefore, Barth uses the term ‘*Seinsweise*’ instead of the term ‘Person’ (Collins 2001: 148). However, this understanding of the concept as independently existent, or existence apart from others, does not express the traditional Christian understanding of the concept ‘person’ (Collins 2001:149).



There are contrasting views of Barth's term '*Seinsweise*' instead of the concept 'person'. Jowers (2003) advocates Barth's understanding of '*Seinsweise*'. He says that Barth's understanding of the concept '*Seinsweise*' does not imply modalism. Jowers indicates five points of Karl Barth's rejection of modalism.

- 1) He maintains that modalism undermines, not merely contain data implied by revelation, but the very idea of revelation itself (Jowers 2003: 238).
- 2) Barth claims that modalists posit a quaternity instead of a trinity in God in so far as they direct men to a 'hidden fourth' behind and above the triune God of the Bible (Jowers 2003: 239).
- 3) Barth implicitly indicts the modalists of associating modalism with patripassianism, which he declares is 'absolute forbidden' (Jowers, 2003: 239).
- 4) Barth opposes modalism by construing the image of God in man as the male – female relationship (Jowers 2003: 239).
- 5) Barth combats modalism (Jowers 2003: 240).

Jowers points out that two factors in particular exculpate Barth from the charge of introducing modalism via the term 'mode of being': 1) Barth intends the term as a literal equivalent of the patristic *tro,poj u`pa,rxewj*. (It implicates Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa equally) (Jowers 2003: 244). 2) Barth explicitly identifies the intended meaning of the term '*Seinsweise*' with 'subsistent relations' (CD I/1 364) objectively identical with the divine essence, that is, with the customary meaning of 'Person' (Jowers, 2003: 244).

Torrance (1988:219) in *Trinitarian Faith* argues that Barth's concept '*Seinsweise*' is closely connected to the Cappadocian tradition and is identified with it. However Collins (2001: 149) points out that 'Torrance fails to note the shift in the usage and understanding of the term when Barth employs it in the *Church Dogmatics*.' According to Prestige (1981[1936]: 245) 'originally it has contained a covert reference not merely to their existence but to the derivation of their existence from the paternal arche'.

Jonker (1981:112) points out that it is no wonder that Barth is often accused to be a modalist in his idea of the three-in-oneness, since the motif behind the accusation is the



conviction (belief) that Barth does not clearly enough put forward the independence (autonomy, individuality) of the divine Persons. He explains that they (the critics) are of the opinion that Barth, unlike Karl Rahner, is too concerned with the oneness of God and then tries to bring the oneness in harmony with the threeness of God's revelation. It is a typical prejudice of western theology set by Augustine. For fear of tri-theism it moved too close to modalism (Jonker 1981:112). Barth is not a modalist in the sense of Schleiermacher's concept that from his experience with God the human being projects the thought of a three-oneness in God (Jonker 1981:113). Louis Berkhof (1996[1938]: 83) agrees that Barth's term 'Seinsweise' is not a kind of Sabellianism.

Isidro (1983: 600) says that Barth's use of the ambiguous word 'Ich' can lead to the misunderstanding that exists behind his three-Seinsweise and one 'subject' or one Person (in the traditional sense). Isidro (1983: 600) argues that in spite of this ambiguous word, Barth is not a modalist as witnessed by his rejection of modalism. Isidro (1983: 600-601) points out that, with the 'unreconcilability of the being of the subject', Barth indicates the uniqueness of the nature, of the understanding and of the self-consciousness of God in his '*drei Seinsweisen*'. So, Barth rejects the tri-theism (Isidro 1983: 601).

Hill takes a middle position between critique and support for Barth's term '*Seinsweise*'. According to Hill (1982: 117), the term '*Seinsweise*' is not only 'a literal translation of *tro,poj u`pa,rxewj*, which was already used in the early church', but also provides a meaning for *u`po,stasij* in the sense which is limited in the mode of existence'. Hill (1982: 117) mentions that 'this doctrine of Barth is surely not "modalism" in its traditional sense but it does qualify for what might be called "modal trinitarianism"'. He adds

Barth's doctrine of the Trinity is free of any overt modalism, and it is also beyond the danger of subordinationism, i.e., in no way open to conceiving the Father as already the fullness of the one Godhead who subsequently (in a logic, not temporal sense) generates a Son and spirates a Spirit, with the implication that the latter are thus lesser divinities. But some compromise

has to be allowed in denying to the Three in God the full prerogatives of Personhood (Hill 1982: 117).

Torrance (1996: 103) evaluates Hill's understanding of Barth's concept 'Seinsweise' as trinitarian modalist: 'whether it is possible to be a "trinitarian modalist" in this way is open to doubt. However, Hill's comment does direct us to some consideration of the divine singularity which underlies Barth's exposition'.

Pannenberg¹¹³ and Moltmann¹¹⁴ criticize Barth's understanding of the concept of Person. Pannenberg shows that Barth depends on I.A. Dorner¹¹⁵. According to Pannenberg (1988:330-331, ET 303-304), Barth 'believed that he had found a way out of the problems by deriving the trinity of Father, Son and Spirit from the concept of revelation, or, more precisely, from the statement that "God reveals Himself as the Lord," which, when grammatically analyzed into its three components- subject, object, and predicate- leads us to the three modes of being of the self-revealing God. This is not the same, however, as basing the doctrine of the Trinity on the revelation of God as it materially attested in the biblical writing.' He adds that Barth 'did not develop the trinitarian statements out of the contents of the revelation to which scripture bears witness but out of the formal concept' (Pannenberg 1988: 331, ET 304). According to Powell (2001: 233), for Pannenberg, 'Barth "deduced the Trinity out of God's being subject," a deduction grounded strictly in the logical structure of selfhood.'

¹¹³ Pannenberg (1977: 25-40). See Pannenberg (1997: 248-260).

¹¹⁴ Moltmann (1994: 154- 161).

¹¹⁵ According to Bradshaw (1987:157), 'Pannenberg has recently sought to establish a connection between Barth and Dorner'. According to Pannenberg 'von der Durchführung der angedeuteten Konzeption bei Dorner selbst ist besonders hervorzuheben, daß er the Einheit Gottes als „absolute Persönlichkeit“ dachte und deshalb die drei trinitarischen „Personen“ nicht als personal im gleichen Sinn wie den einen Gott gelten lassen wollte. So sprach er lieber von „drei Seinsweisen Gottes“, die „in ihrem Producte, der göttlichen Persönlichkeit, nicht verlöschen, sondern ewig fort dauern“... Barth bejahte- allerdings ohne Dorner zu zitieren- die These, daß Gott nur eine einzige Persönlichkeit ist, und zwar sei es „als eine Folgerung aus der Trinitätslehre“ zu denken, daß der eine Gott als der Herr, „also Person zu verstehen ist, d.h. aber als in und für sich seinendes Ich mit einem ihm eigenen Denken und Wollen“ (Pannenberg 1997: 250).



For Pannenberg, as Isidro (1983: 599) points out, Dorner blamed a different, indeed a negative position of Schleiermacher to the doctrine of the Trinity, and expressed the Sovereignty of God which occurred through the '*immanente Trinitätslehre*', as the guarantee (*Garantie*) for the doctrine of the Justification. Dorner regards the unity of God as absolute personality (*absolute Persönlichkeit*), and the three trinitarian '*Persons*' is not regarded as persons in the same sense (Isidro 1983: 599). However, according to Collins (2001: 150), 'it is less clear whether Barth is influenced by Dorner in his choice and usage of *Seinsweise*.'¹¹⁶

Moltmann criticizes Barth as being a Modalist. According to Moltmann (1994:156-157), Barth's doctrine of triunity is the '*Behauptung und Unterstreichung des Gedenkens der strikten und absoluten Einheit Gottes*', that Barth equates the Lordship of God with the concept of the essence of God and this with the concept of the deity of God. What is today called the personification of God belongs to this equation. All these concepts of the sovereign Subject are employed to the divine Lordship and his revelation. Therefore there can not be referred to three Persons to which subjectivity and an 'I' must be attributed. There can only be referred to the 'three modes of being in God' (Moltmann 1994: 157-158). The one personality of God must either be attributed to the Father with Athanasius, or with Sabellius to the subject representing all three trinitarian Persons as '*Seinsweisen*' (Moltmann 1994: 160). Moltmann sees the reason for the difficulties, which Barth brings with his idealistic reflection on the divine Subject, lies in the Lordship of God prior to the Trinity, and its application in the doctrine of the Trinity to safeguard the interpretation of the divine subjectivity by his Lordship (Moltmann 1994: 160). Barth, according to Moltmann (1994:160-161), uses a non-trinitarian concept of the unity of God, namely the concept of the identical subject.

¹¹⁶ According to Leslie (1989:108), 'Pannenberg makes the reasonable suggestion of a line of influence from Dorner to Barth even though Barth nowhere cites Dorner in reference to the thesis of the singular personality of God.' Leslie (1989: 108) goes on to demonstrate that 'Pannenberg notes the striking similarities between the trinitarian doctrines of Barth and Dorner. Dorner wants to interpret the Unity of God in terms of "absolute personality" which meant consequently that the three trinitarian Persons could not be thought of as Persons in the same sense.' See Isidro 1983, 599-600. He criticizes Pannenberg's associating of Barth with Dorner by following the critique of Lonergan.



Moltmann says that Barth was influenced by Idealism¹¹⁷. Heron (1983:167) notes that ‘as Barth is among those whom he here criticises, this can lead us onto the question of Barth’s apparent modalism’. Torrance interprets Heron’s comment as follows:

Despite all this, there are modalist tinges in certain features of his discussion. Posing the question as to whether Barth does incline toward a modalist interpretation of the Trinity, Alasdair Heron comments “In line with the general Augustinian trend in the West, which Barth emphasises both the unity and the threefoldness within God, he tends to give effective priority to the former”. Heron then goes on to make a profoundly important observation which points to what is, in our opinion, the essential weakness in Barth, one which haunts the *Church Dogmatics* throughout- namely that “God’s triple *reiteration of himself* is much more prominent than his *relation to himself*; the notes of “otherness” is more muted than that of “self-expression”; tritheism is sensed to be a greater threat than Sabellianism’ (Torrance 1996: 103)

In the study of Barth’s concept of person as mode of being (*Seinsweise*), O’Collins (1999: 175-176) asks, ‘how could one adore and glorify Rahner’s “three distinct manners of subsisting” or Barth’s “the Revealer, the Revelation, and the Revealedness”(i.e., three modes of being)? The somewhat modalistic language of Rahner and Barth is not well adapted for private prayer and public worship’. According to Robert (1991: 86) ‘this potentially reductive criticism of Barth must be borne in mind as the explicit logic of the Trinity is unfolded, for it is possible that here is encountered a source not only of Barth’s “Christo-monist” tendency but also of the heavy emphasis he places upon the unity of God’s “ways of being” in the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.’

Although it is difficult to distinguish this subtle meaning of *Seinsweise* in Karl Barth from the traditional meaning of ‘tro,poj u`pa,rxewj’. Heppe explains it as follows:

¹¹⁷ See Moltmann 1994: 158; Leslie 1999: 107.



The Persons then differ not *ouvsi,a|* but *tro,pw| u`pa,rxewj*- “Distinction of Persons is that by which one Person is distinguished from the other Persons by a fixed notion (*certa notione*).” This distinction depends upon the relation in which the three Persons stand to each other. “The relation of the divine Persons is the *tro,poj u`pa,rxewj*, the mode of existence, proper to each Person and incommunicable, which does not compose the Person, but composition apart constitutes it and distinguishes it from other Persons(Heppe 1950:114-115).

While Barth identifies the term ‘*Seinsweise*’ in a sense with the term ‘Person’¹¹⁸, the relation between the divine Persons is *tro,poj u`pa,rxewj*. This mode of being, however, does not imply the Person itself, but the distinction of one Person from other Persons. According to Prestige (1981[1936]: 245), the term ‘mode of *hyparxis*’ is applied to the second or third Person, since ‘it may originally have contained a covert reference not merely to their existence, but to the derivation of their existence from the paternal arche’.

St. Basil mentions this term in his book: *De Spiritu Sancto*. St. Basil (*DSS* 46) states that ‘*kai. to. Pneu/ma ouvsi,a zw/sa(a`giasmou/ kuri,a| th/j me.n oivkeio,thtoj dhloume,nhj evnteu/qen(tou/ de. tro,pou th/j u`pa,rxewj avrrh,tou fulassome,nou.*’ According to Prestige’s translation (1981[1936]: 246), this implies that ‘the Spirit is a living *ousia*, lord of sanctification, whose relationship to God is disclosed by His procession, but the mode of whose *hyparxis* is preserved ineffable.’ According to Sieben (1993: 212), the procession of the Holy Spirit is a mystery; Basil represents the

¹¹⁸ According to Jüngel (1967: 37), Barth uses the term *Seinsweise* (the early church’s term *tro,poj u`pa,rxewj*) to replace the misunderstanding of concept of person: Mit dem Begriff der *Seinsweise* nimmt Barth den altkirchlichen terminus *tro,poj u`pa,rxewj* auf, um durch ihn den mißverständlichen Person-Begriff zu ersetzen. Das einheitliche Sein Gottes ist darin differenziert, daß es sich in drei verschiedene *Seinsweisen* unterscheidet. Die unterschiedenheit dieser drei *Seinsweisen* ist von den zwischen ihnen waltenden Beziehungen her zu verstehen. Diejenigen Eigentümlichkeiten der *Seinsweisen* Gottes, die durch das Verhältnis der *Seinsweisen* zueinander gegeben sind, machen die *Seinsweisen* gottes „zu *Seinsweisen*“



(eastern) tradition from Athanasius to John of Damascus. The reason for Basil's use of this term stems from his friend, Amphilochius of Iconium. Amphilochius regards the names of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as not representing the *ousia* as such, but as 'a mode of *hyparxis* or relation' (Prestige1981 [1936]: 245). Since the end of the fourth century, the term 'mode of hyparxis' is identical to the particularities of the divine Persons, since this term explains the concept that 'in those Persons or hypostaseis one and the same divine being is presented in distinct objective and permanent expressions, though with no variation in divine content' (Prestige1981 [1936]: 248-249).

According to Isidro (1983:588)¹¹⁹, for Barth, the rejection of the concept 'Person' in the doctrine of the Trinity is connected with the rejection of the *analogia entis*. This illustrates that Barth's rejection of the concept 'person' is closely connected with the modern understanding of God in the light of the myth¹²⁰, in which liberal theologians find their hermeneutical equipment (McGrath 1994: 57). The rejection of natural theology or *analogia entis* pervades Barth's whole theology. Jüngel (1967:33) says that Barth's doctrine of the Trinity is another '*Entmythologisierung*'¹²¹, like Bultmann's hermeneutical methodology. According to Heron (1980:212), Barth's disagreement with Bultmann does not stem from 'the principles of historical-critical exegesis', nor 'even primarily from Bultmann's programme of demythologisation', but Bultmann's reduction of theology to anthropology.

¹¹⁹ Bei Barth ist die Ablehnung des Personbegriffs innerhalb der Trinität im engen Zusammenhang mit der Ablehnung der *analogia entis*. Aufgrund der Ablehnung der *analogia entis* konnte Barth Gott den Personbegriff nicht zuschreiben: die göttliche Person wäre in Bezug auf die menschliche Person „die ganz Andere“. In diesem Sinne wäre nach Barth der Personbegriff für Gott nicht geeignet. (Isidro 1983:588)

¹²⁰ See McGrath 1994: 329-330.

¹²¹ According to Rosato (1981: 57), Barth's trinitarian teaching thus serves a hermeneutical function: it offers a human interpretation of God which corresponds to God's own self-interpretation in the Scriptures. In addition to correcting Schleiermacher, Barth is also attempting to lend his own understanding of the Trinity the same function which Bultmann later was to give to the process of demythologization, namely, that of comprehending God as "You."



Barth's '*Seinsweise*' differs from the traditional usage with his endeavour to reject the possibility of human talking of God. Although it is not certain that the term '*Seinsweise*' leans towards modalism or Sabellianism¹²², it is clear that Barth's term '*Seinsweise*' would be misused and misunderstood.

In connection with '*Seinsweise*', Barth makes use of the two terms '*perichoresis*' and '*appropriation*'. Both are necessary for Barth, since the concept '*appropriation*' is grounded in the concept '*perichoresis*' (Isidro 1983 597; Williams 1979: 166). While the doctrine of perichoresis demonstrates the unity of God, the doctrine of appropriation implies that God reveals himself as ultimately and unmistakably three (Jowers 2003: 237).

For Barth (1940: 395)¹²³, it is only by appropriation that now this act, now this attribute of the Father or the Son or the Holy Spirit, or that mode of existence must be brought to the forefront, to designate it as such at all, but never forgetting nor denying the presence of God in all his modes of existence, in his complete being and action even over against us. According to McGrath,

It is appropriate to think of creation as the work of the Father. Despite the fact that all three Persons of the Trinity are implicated in creation, it is properly seen as the distinctive action of the Father. Similarly, the entire Trinity is involved in the work of redemption (although a number of

¹²² Berkhof (1996[1938]: 83) denies that Barth's term *Seinsweise* follows the way of Sabellianism or Modalism. However, Meijering (1993:57; 244) regards Barth's *Seinsweise* as leaning toward Sabellianism. See Thompson's footnote, no 28 (1996: 221); 251. Roberts (1980: 88) says that the danger of Karl Barth's method of grounding and deriving the concept 'three modes of being' from the 'single act' of the divine being, has become manifest.

¹²³ *Per appropriationem* muß je diese Tat und jene Eigenschaft im Blick auf diese und diese *Seinsweise* Gottes in den Vordergrund gerückt werden, damit diese überhaupt als solche bezeichnet werden kann. Aber nur *per appropriationem* darf dies geschehen, also in keinem Fall unter Vergessen oder Leugnung der Gegenwart Gottes in allen seinen *Seinsweisen*, in seinem ganzen Sein und Tun auch uns gegenüber (Barth 1940:395).



theories of salvation, or soteriologies, ignore this Trinitarian dimension of the cross, and are impoverished as a result). It is, however, appropriate to speak of redemption as being the distinctive work of the Son (McGrath 1994:254).

The concepts ‘perichoresis’ and ‘appropriation’ are closely connected with each other. For Barth, both terms play an important role in the doctrine of the Trinity.

Meijering (1993: 60-61) compares Barth’s term ‘appropriation’ with the view of Athanasius, for whom the harmony of the world reveals the Son, and the creature reveals the Father, because the Father creates it through the Son on the basis of a quantitative difference. It is impossible to understand creation without the perception of God as the Father of the Son since the Father created the world in the Son. For Athanasius, the perception of ‘the Father of the Son’ includes the perception of the creator while Barth sees the Father as the ‘the Father of the Son’ before creation (Meijering 1993: 60).

8.3.3 The filioque

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Karl Barth’s theology is closely connected with several concepts, that of the immanent and economic Trinity, of the term ‘*Seinsweise*’ for ‘person’, and of *perichoresis*. These concepts play an important role in Barth’s Pneumatology as well.

For Barth (1940: 482), the Holy Spirit, according to the witness of the Scripture, is God himself. However, according to Collins (2001: 206), ‘what emerges from Barth’s understanding of the Western tradition is effectively a reinforcement of his commitment to the modern understanding of Person’. In fact, for Barth (1940: 493), the Holy Spirit cannot be understood as in the sense of Person (in modern sense of Person), but He is ‘*in besonders deutlicher Weise, was auch Vater und Sohn sind.*’ This implies that the Holy Spirit is not a third Subject, a third ‘I’ (*Ich*), and a third Lord ‘*Herr*’, but a third



mode of being (*Seinsweise*) of the divine subject or Lord. The Holy Spirit is ‘the act of the communityness (*Gemeinsamseins*) of the Father and the Son (*des Vaters und des Sohnes*)’ (Barth 1940: 493).

Grenz (2004:47) points out that Barth advocates the doctrine of the filioque on the ground of the relation between the immanent and economic Trinity. His immanent Trinity is identified with his economic Trinity¹²⁴ (Freyer 1982: 302-303). For Barth, this identification between the two is through the unity of the works and Being of God (Freyer 1982:303). Reid (1997: 31) says that for Barth, the economy of revelation corresponds to the inner-trinitarian ‘economy’ or order. The two basic economic acts of God in self-revelation correspond to the inner-Trinitarian activity in the two distinct processions. According to Coffey (1999:19), for Barth, ‘the immanent Trinity stands revealed in the Mystery of Christ; this is an acquisition of the reflection of the patristic Church on the New Testament, rather than of the New Testament alone’

Thomson (1991: 29) points out that ‘the basis for Barth’s acceptance of the filioque and rejection of the Eastern Orthodox position is the correspondence between God’s economic and immanent being and activity.’ For Barth, the Western understanding of the doctrine of the filioque is based on the correspondence between the immanent and economic Trinity, and the decision of unity in the threeness (Oberdorfer 2002:368). In this sense, Barth advocates the doctrine of the filioque¹²⁵ (Heron 1981: 111).

¹²⁴ In the modern era, as Molnar (1989: 367) points out, ‘many modern theologians, including Jürgen Moltmann, Wolfhart Pannenberg and Eberhard Jüngel have been influenced by Karl Barth; they also accept Karl Rahner’s axiom that the immanent and economic trinity is identical.’ However Molnar denies that Barth is in line with Rahner’s axiom.

¹²⁵ The doctrine of the filioque caused the division between the Eastern and Western church. In the Eastern (Byzantine - according to Fahey (1979: 16), the controversy is not between East and West. Rather than grouping several distinctive Church traditions under the rubric ‘Eastern’, it is proper to be more restrictive and speak of ‘Byzantine’ theologies connected with the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Other eastern traditions such as the Syrian, Egyptian and Armenian, were not directly involved in the filioque question.) Church, the doctrine of filioque is illegitimate, since it implies the two *aitia* (sources or origin),



in which the Son becomes the second *aitia* of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Byzantine theology strongly rejects this doctrine. In the Western theology, the doctrine of the filioque does not see the second *aitia*, since the *aitia* is one also, that is, God Himself. But the cause of the division was political.

By A.D. 318, the Nicene-Constantinople Council (*Symbolum Constantinopolitanum*) did not provide any insight into the doctrine of the filioque. However it included the clause: the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. The Nicene-Constantinople Council extended the article of the Holy Spirit in which the Nicene Creed included the clause ‘*kai. eivj to. a[giou pneu/ma*(Denzinger 1973: 52)(*et in Spiritum Sanctum*)’ by A.D. 325. However, the Latin Church added the filioque to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed in 581 at the third Toletanum. After the third Toletanum, this filioque was confirmed in the western creeds in other Toletanums (See Denzinger (1973; 168.Toletanum IV-AD 638; 175; Toletanum VI-AD 675; 192.; XVI- AD 693) They sustain the filioque.). Before being confirmed in the Toletanums, the doctrine of the filioque was already widespread in Spain as the doxology in the Mass.

These struggles originated from adding the term ‘filioque’ to the ‘*Symbolum Constantinopolitanum*.’ In 808, Leo III wrote to Charlemagne that he does not want to insert ‘filioque’, nevertheless in 810 he had declared that the term ‘filioque’ was orthodox, but he still did not want to include it in the Creed.

The filioque doctrine encountered an official Crisis in 867. Photius, who was a very noble man, pronounced Nicholas anathema and excommunicated him together with the filioque. This followed Photius’s excommunication in 863 by Nicholas. According to Walker, the story was as follows: Photius became the new Patriarch instead of Ignatius who had lost his position. Ignatius, however, refused to retire and raised the question concerning the legitimacy of his deposition. The emperor and Photius invited Nicholas to dispatch legates to a synod that was to deal with certain questions about icono-clasm and with the problem of the patriarchate. The Pope’s primary concern was to use this occasion to negotiate with the eastern authorities regarding the restoration of papal ecclesiastical jurisdiction in southern Italy and in the Balkans. In these regions he was in correspondence with the Bulgarian tsar Boris over the possibility of dispatching Roman missionaries to Christianize Boris’s people. His legates, however, were outmanoeuvred on this issue and contrary to the pope’s desires, participated in a synod which registered papal approval of Ignatius’s deposition without gaining concessions from Constantinople (Walker 1985: 250-251). So Nicholas I hesitated to register approval of Photius. In 863, Nicholas I declared that Ignatius was still the patriarch, and he excommunicated Photius. This became a very delicate political problem.

Through the history of the controversy surrounding the doctrine of the filioque, there have been several attempts to bring about unity, such as at Lyon in 1274 and at Florence in 1438. At Lyon the Latin churches forced it’s Byzantine counterpart to accept the filioque, but this failed to unite both churches. At Florence, after long and intensive discussion, the doctrine of the filioque was approved as ‘*per Filium*.’



According to Barth (1940: 496), the Holy Spirit is not a creature, but He proceeds from God. For Barth (1940: 504), the term ‘filioque’ implies ‘*Der Ausdruck der Erkenntnis der Gemeinschaft zwischen Vater und Sohn*’. According to John Thompson (1991: 27), ‘this communion between God and humanity demonstrates both the reality of our participation in revelation and is indicative of the place of the Spirit in the divine life’, since the Holy spirit fulfils the role of participation between God and man, and between the Father and the Son. For Karl Barth, as Heron (1981:112) interprets him, ‘the filioque appears not only defensible but actually required in order fully to articulate the bond between the Son and the Holy Spirit, and through it, the integrity of the Trinity.’ This implies, as Rosato (1981:62) says, that ‘to deny that the Holy Spirit proceeds both from the Father and from the Son from eternity would in effect mean that the Spirit is not the divine ground of the temporal communion between the Trinity and mankind which takes place in faith, but is only a divine gift which originates totally from the Father’.

However, the pneumatology of Barth, which includes the doctrine of the filioque, is closely connected with a clear answer to the ambiguities of either an overly-philosophical, overly-institutional or overly-personal understanding of the Holy Spirit (Rosato 1981: 62). It has something to do with his hermeneutic program, that is, his rejection of the *analogia entis* (natural theology and vestigia trinitatis). Rosato (1981:63) says that ‘in order to avoid such confusion, Barth underscores again and again that it is not an *analogia entis* but an *analogia fidei* in the form of a trinitarian analogy which stands at the nucleus of his pneumatology’. For Barth, the doctrine of the filioque plays an important role in his rejection of the *analogia entis*.



9 MOLTMANN'S DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

In recent times, after Karl Barth, the most significant trinitarian theologian is Jürgen Moltmann. His main idea is closely connected with the cross of Jesus Christ. His theology of the cross is closely connected with his concept of 'hope'¹²⁶ and the Christian hope is resurrection hope (Moltmann 1973 [1964]: 11). The resurrection and the cross of Jesus play an important role in Moltmann's dialectic theology. Both concepts are significant for Moltmann's Christology as part of his doctrine of the Trinity. For him, the doctrine of the Trinity is nothing else than a short version of the history of the passion of Christ in its significance for the eschatological freedom of faith and of the life of the distressed nature (Moltmann 2002[1972]: 232). In fact, for Moltmann (2002[1972]: 232), the content of the doctrine of the Trinity is the crucifixion of Christ itself. And the form of the crucified one is the Trinity (Moltmann 2002[1972]: 232-233).

¹²⁶ The problem with Moltmann's concept of hope is 'Universalism'. Williams (2003: 102) criticizes Moltmann's understanding as universalism. He makes two comments. 'First is that he never defends universalism in this sense ... The second, for Moltmann, universal salvation is the basis for missionary activity. Because God calls and includes all to and in his kingdom, we are motivated without reserve in infecting all with hope, suffering in solidarity with all, reaching out to all' (Williams 2002:102-103). If Moltmann sustains 'that we must hope for all, in the sense compatible with nondogmatism on the question of universalism, he is not using 'hope' in the biblical sense or in its biblically based sense in the tradition which sees it as one of the three "theological virtues"'. 'The problem is that when he speaks of hope for all it is usually of the kind of hope that does not disappoint- it is of eschatological hope. The vocabulary of hope seems therefore to be confused unless Moltmann is a dogmatic universalist' (Williams 2003: 104). 'One major consequence of denying universalism' is closely connected with Moltmann's proposal that 'relates the church to the world' (Williams 2003: 106). And Church and world in Moltmann's theology 'are set on the same course toward eschatological salvation' (Williams 2003: 106). 'His discussion ignores the types of connection often drawn in the New Testament between the eschatology, the church and salvation, for example, in Ephesians and Colossians. It might be denied that the visible church is the 'ark of salvation', it might be admitted that there may be salvation outside the visible church, but even if such were the case, Moltmann's analysis of church and world could be found unsatisfactory' (Williams 2003: 107).



Moltmann (1999 266-270) proposes three ways to understand the doctrine of the Trinity 1) as political theology 2) as theology of the cross 3) as theological concepts to understand orthodoxy.

9.1 Political theology

According to Moltmann (1999: 267; English Translation: ET 303), political theology follows the thesis of Erik Peterson, ‘for Christian there can be political action only if the premise is belief in the triune God’. Like Peterson, Moltmann believes that the political problem of monotheism would be settled by the development of the doctrine of the Trinity. A special kind monotheism caused serious problems like that of Hitler who ‘with the help of a posse of historical instances, every religious legitimation of a universal monarchy was derived home on Christian grounds: the worship of the one God in heaven- a mode of argument that had been normal practice from time immemorial, from China by way of Persia as far as Rome: “One God- one emperor-one empire.”’ (1999: 267; ET 303). Moltmann (1999: 267) criticizes this monotheistic concept of God explicitly, while in the Christian tradition, the concept of God followed a monotheistic understanding. This section will consider the questioning of monotheism in Moltmann’s theology with his social doctrine of God or the Trinity and the term ‘perichoresis’.

9.1.1 The questioning of monotheism in Moltmann’s theology

Ackva (1994: 213) says that Moltmann refers to Peterson’s monotheistic ideology of unity’ as ‘*Erleidungsthese*’. For Peterson, the development of a trinitarian Dogma implies the end of an affirmative political theology which serves as justification of a political situation (Ackva 1994:213).

Moltmann (1973 [1964]: 126) argues that philosophical theism causes problems. Especially, in Christology, the early Church regarded the mystery of Jesus as the incarnation of one, eternal, original, true, and unchangeable divine being. But from it



flowed a kind of Christology, in which the Father of Jesus Christ was identified with the one God of Greek metaphysics. However, Christian theology as theology of the cross is ‘*die Kritik und Befreiung vom philosophischen und politischen Monotheismus*’ (Moltmann 2002[1972]: 201).

Moltmann criticises and rejects philosophical and political monotheism by the theology of the cross, that is, ‘the death of Christ.’ Niewiadomski(1982:63) points out that this rejection has its source ‘*in der diametralen Entgegensetzung der “metaphysischen Welt” und des Ereignisses des Todes Jesu am Kreuz*’. This extreme opposition of ‘metaphysical world’ and ‘the event of death of Jesus on the cross’ leads Moltmann’s thought into the doctrine of the Trinity, since the metaphysical understanding would be a concept of God which is not properly trinitarian (Williams 2003:96). For Moltmann

The “inward” or “theological history” of Jesus is the history of the Son with the Father. It is not the history of a person with a god. In relation to God Jesus understood himself as “the Son”. The “Abba” revelation of God’s nature dominated his own relation to God as well as his proclamation of God to men and women. His preaching of the kingdom and the effect he had were founded on his relationship to his Father. Consequently, they cannot be interpreted monotheistically; they have to be understood in a trinitarian sense: Jesus reveals God as the Father of the Son and himself as this same Son of the Father (1994[1980]: 90; ET 74).

Moltmann (1994[1980]: 84; ET 68) says that ‘the mutual knowing of the Father and the Son is a mutual love. The mutual love of the Father and the Son is a love of like for like’. “Like is known by like’ applies to the exclusive relationship of the Father and the Son. “Those who are unlike know one another” is true of the revelation to men and women through the Son’. This axiom only permits a trinitarian interpretation, not a monotheistic one (Moltmann 1994[1980]: 85). Moltmann (1994[1980]: 86; ET 70) says that ‘Jesus did not proclaim the kingdom of God as the Lord (*Herr*), but kingdom of God his Father. The *Basileia* only exists in the context of God’s fatherhood. In this kingdom, God is not the Lord (*Herr*), but he is the merciful Father’. He adds that ‘for



the kingdom which Jesus proclaims is the kingdom which the Father has made over to the Son. Its structure is not monotheistic as the word “rule” or “kingdom” suggests; it is trinitarian as the relationship of Jesus the Son to his Father proves’ (Moltmann 1994[1980]: 87; ET 71). Jansen says

Moltmann wishes to distinguish freedom as community, from freedom as lordship. The concept of freedom as lordship is closely connected to the concept of power that Moltmann finds operative in the theist concept of God, and like it is to be traced back to nominalism and Roman politics. Freedom as lordship views the freedom to the other as a limitation on one’s own freedom. In contrast to this, Moltmann holds that in understanding freedom as community, however, one finds one’s freedom in the other and thus the other is no longer a limitation of one’s own freedom but an expansion of it (Jansen 1995:124).

For Moltmann (1994[1980]: 33), this monotheism is closely connected with the concept ‘person’. Since Hegel, the Christian Trinity was represented as an ‘absolute subject’, that is, one subject – three modes of being. A Christian doctrine of the Trinity, which is to be represented in the medium of the modern concept of God as ‘absolute subject’, must renounce the trinitarian concept of person, because the concept of person also contains the concept of the ‘subject’ of acts and relationship. Moltmann (1994[1980]: 34; ET 18) says that ‘the later notion of “absolute personality” takes us a step further. The human personality is the result of a historical maturing process of the person.’ ‘The absolute personality of God must be seen as the result of his eternal life process eternally present in himself (*in Gott ewig vorhandenes Resultat seines ewigen Lebensprozesses*)’. He adds that ‘the absolute personality of God fulfils its eternal being in three different modes of being (*Daseinsweise*)’ (Moltmann 1994[1980]: 34; ET 18). Moltmann says

The problems of the doctrine of the Trinity resemble those we discovered in the earlier Trinity of substance (*Substanztrinität*): the unity of absolute subject is stressed to such a degree that the trinitarian Persons disintegrate



into mere aspects of the one subject. But the special Christian tradition and proclamation cannot be conceived of which within the concept of the absolute subject. To represent the trinitarian Persons in the one, identical divine subject leads unintentionally but inescapably to the reduction (*Reduktion*) of doctrine of the Trinity to monotheism (*Monotheismus*) (Moltmann 1994[1980]: 34; ET 18).

According to Powell (2001:226-227), 'Moltmann charges traditional trinitarian thought with giving primacy to an abstract monotheism. His judgment rests on the observation that in traditional systems of theology God is commonly regarded as a substance; in these systems the unity of the divine substance is established before the Trinity.' Hence, for Moltmann, 'the Trinity is not a hierarchical entity but rather a fellowship of Persons' (Kärkkäinen 2004:159).

Moltmann (1994[1980]: 80; ET 64) argues that 'Christian monotheism has to reduce the interpretation of Christ's history in a monotheistic sense to the one divine subject. But this does not do justice to the history of Christ'. According to O'Donnell (1983:110), Moltmann is convinced that monotheism is correlated with monarchy, in which the being of the one God is regarded as the absolute sovereignty of his rule. Moltmann (1994[1980]: 145; ET 130) says that 'the One God has always been appealed to and comprehended in the context of the unity of the world'. Moltmann (1994[1980]: 145; ET 130) argues that 'the expression "*monarchia*" is a curious hellenistic word-formation, deriving from *mo,naj* and *mi.a avrch.*'

Moltmann criticizes Arius, Sabellius, Tertullian, Karl Barth, Karl Rahner¹²⁷. According to Larson (1995:139), Moltmann 'believes that Karl Barth and Karl Rahner fall prey to

¹²⁷ According to William (2003:96), the term 'monarchianism' is regarded as the thought of a group of heresies in the early church. There are two kinds of *monarchianism* in the early Church history, the first is a dynamic *monarchianism* called *adoptionism*, the second is *modalism*, which tends to dim the distinctions between Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Kelly 1975[1958]: 115). According to Kelly (1975[1958]: 115), 'the clarification of both as forms of *monarchianism* stems from the assumption that,



philosophical monotheism because they both begin with the image of God as the absolute subject'. Moltmann (1994[1980]: 160; ET 144) says that Barth presents the 'doctrine of the Trinity' as Christian monotheism and argues polemically against a 'tritheism which has never existed'. Therefore, for Moltmann (1994[1980]: 161; ET 144), Barth uses a non-trinitarian concept of the 'unity of one God', that is to say, 'the concept of the identical subject'¹²⁸. Moltmann (1994[1980]: 160) argues that although Barth uses the term 'Trinity', Barth's doctrine of the Trinity would be *modalism* in terms of '*Seinsweise*'. Both Barth's *Selbstoffenbarung* and Rahner's *Selbstmitteilungsmodell* would be the paradigm of monotheistic subjectivity (Oberdorfer 2002:390).

Although Moltmann (1994[1980]: 111; ET 95) rejects this monarchianism and monotheism, he accepts the concept 'unity' which cannot be a monadic unity, but the unity of divine triunity (*Dreieinigkeit*)¹²⁹ lies in the union of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, not in their numerical unity (Moltmann 1994[1980]: 111). Therefore, for Moltmann (1994[1980]: 168; ET150), the concept of God's unity 'cannot in the trinitarian sense be fitted into the homogeneity (*Homogenität*) of one divine substance, or into the identity of the absolute subject either; and least of all into one of the three Persons of the Trinity'. He adds that 'if the unity of God is not perceived in the at-oneness of the triune God (*der dreieiniger Gott*), and therefore as a *perichoretic* unity, then Arianism and Sabellianism remain inescapable threats to Christian theology'.

His questioning of monotheism is closely connected with the social doctrine of the Trinity and the term '*perichoresis*'.

despite different starting-points and motives, they were united by a concern for the divine unity, or *monarchia*.' However, Moltmann often uses *monarchianism* in much the same sense as 'monotheism' (William 2003:96).

¹²⁸ Barth, as Larson (1995:139) points out, proposed the formula for the Trinity as one subject in three modes of being.

¹²⁹ Die Einheit der göttlichen Dreieinigkeit liegt in der Einigkeit des Vaters, des Sohnes und des Geistes, nicht in ihrer numerischen Einheit.



9.1.2 Social understanding of the concept 'Person'

In connection with the questioning of monotheism, Moltmann develops his trinitarian view by regarding the concepts 'relationship' and 'social doctrine'. His social understanding of God is closely connected to his term '*perichoresis*'. Moltmann's term 'social' implies the personal society of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Meessen 1989:346; Shults 2005:147).

According to Moltmann (1994[1980]: 174; ET 157), 'if, on the basis of salvation history and the experience of salvation, we have to recognize the unity of the triune God in the perichoretic at-oneness of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, then this does not correspond to the solitary human subject in his relationship to himself; nor does it correspond, either, to a human subject in his claim to lordship over the world. It only corresponds to a human fellowship of people without privileges and without subordinances'. 'The perichoretic at-oneness of triune God corresponds to the experience of the community of Christ, the community which the Holy Spirit unites through respect, affection, and love' (Moltmann 1994[1980]: 174; ET 157-158).

According to Jansen (1995:109), 'the notion that God is Trinity follows from the fact that he is love, if this is eternally true of God. Love requires an object, but if God is love and does not just love, then for Moltmann this implies that he is triune, a community of persons.' 'This Love, according to Moltmann, is the mystery of the Trinity and constitutes their unity which is not to be conceived in terms of a substance or subject but in terms of a "communicable unity and as an open, inviting unity, capable of integration"' (Jansen 1995:109). The most important part of Moltmann's trinitarian view is directly connected with the Hegelian understanding of the concept 'Person',¹³⁰ (Jansen 1994:299). According to Powell (2001:230) the relationality that is essential to God as this perfect mutual love, is closely connected with not only the Trinitarian

¹³⁰ According to Moltmann, Diesen Gedanken hat dann Hegel aufgenommen und vertieft: Es ist das Wesen der Person, sich selbst ganz an ein Gegenüber hinzugeben und sich gerade in dem anderen zu gewinnen. Erst durch Äußerung und Entäußerung an andere kommt die Person zu sich selbst (Moltmann 1994[1980]: 190).



Persons but also to God's relation to the world. In fact, as Powell (2001:231) points out, the doctrine of the Trinity that is related with the concept 'divine love' is a social and pluralistic one. According to Hegel

In der Liebe, in der Freundschaft ist es die Person, die sich erhält und durch ihre Liebe ihre Subjektivität hat, die ihre Persönlichkeit ist. Wenn man hier in der Religion die Persönlichkeit abstrakt festhält, so hat man drei Götter, und da ist die unendliche Form, die absolute Negativität vergessen; oder wenn die Persönlichkeit als unaufgelöst ist, so hat man das Böse, denn die Persönlichkeit, die sich nicht in der göttlichen Idee aufgibt, ist das Böse. In der göttlichen Einheit ist die Persönlichkeit als aufgelöst gesetzt; nur in der Erscheinung ist die Negativität der Persönlichkeit unterschieden von dem, wodurch sie aufgehoben wird (Hegel 1986[1969]:233-234).

He adds

Die Dreieinigkeit ist in das Verhältnis vom Vater, Sohn und Geist gebraucht worden; es ist dies ein kindliches Verhältnis, eine kindliche, natürliche Form. Der Verstand hat kein solche Kategorie, kein solches Verhältnis, das hiermit in Rücksicht auf das Passende zu vergleichen wäre. Es muß aber dabei gewußt wesen, daß es nur bildlich ist; der Geist tritt nicht deutlich in dies Verhältnis ein, Liebe wäre noch passender, der Geist ist aber das Wahrfhafte (Hegel 1986[1969]: 234).

This understanding of the concept 'person' in Hegel stems from Richard of St. Victor. 'According to Richard of St. Victor, being a person (*Personsein*) does not merely mean subsisting (*Subsistieren*); nor does it mean subsisting-in-relation (*In-Relationen-Subsistieren*). It means existing (*Existieren*)' (Moltmann 1994[1980]: 190; ET 173). This implies, according to Moltmann (1994[1980]: 190; ET 173), that 'then existence means a deepening of the concept of relation: every divine Person exists in the light of the other and in the other. By virtue of the love they have for one another, they ex-ist



(*ek-sistieren*) totally in the other: the Father ex-ist(*ek-sistiert*) by virtue of his love, as himself entirely in the Son; the Son, by virtue of his self-surrender, ex-ists as himself totally in the Father; and so on’.

For Moltmann, the fundamental unity of God is therefore, related to Hegelian terms, a unity –in –difference (Jansen 1995:110). Jansen adds that ‘Moltmann’s conception of God as community not only includes the notion of reciprocal relations in which Persons are necessarily involved by virtue of their being Persons, but also a second qualification- that of dialectic’ (Jansen 1995:133). In this regard, ‘Moltmann argues that God is changeable’ (Jansen 1995:119). For Moltmann, ‘this permanent divine identity is rooted in the divine intratrinitarian relations’ (Jansen 1995:119). For Moltmann, the term ‘Person’ would not be determined by the individual, but by social understanding (Powell 2001:231). Therefore, Moltmann uses the concept relationship (*perichoresis*) ‘in order to argue along Hegelian lines that the Persons are not subsistent entities in themselves, but thoroughly relational- they are what they are only in their relations with the others’ (Powell 2001:231-232).

Moltmann (1994[1980]: 187-191; ET 171-3) says, the concept ‘person’ functions in both the western church and Eastern Church. Western Latin theology, according to Moltmann (1994[1980]: 187), historically, uses the concept of person of sabellian-modalism, that is, one God in three masks. The Eastern Church’s Greek theologians use the concept ‘*hypostasis*’ in the doctrine of the Trinity, parallel to the term ‘person’ (1994[1980]: 187; ET 171).

In Moltmann’s criticism of Latin theology, Boethius’ axiom¹³¹ ‘*Persona est rationalis naturae individua substantia*’ plays a negative role. According to Moltmann

¹³¹ In fact, according to Henry Jansen (1995: 68), Moltmann’s concept ‘person’ stems from a rejection of Boethius’s substantial definition of a person, since for Moltmann, ‘the Trinity is characterized by a dialectical, reciprocal process of giving and receiving and the Persons of the Trinity are defined by their relationship to one another.’ He adds “This social view of humanity or even of the world denies the notions that there can ever be a solitary life. People develop only interpersonally and never in solitude.



(1994[1980]: 188; ET 171), for Boethius, ‘nature consisted of substance and accident. Consequently a person cannot be constituted of accidents, but only out of substance. As individual substance the person is characterized by substantiality, intellectuality, and incommunicability’. He adds that according to Boethius’ definition of the concept ‘person’, ‘the trinitarian Persons are not modes of being (*Seinsweisen*); they are individual, unique, non-interchangeable subjects of the one, common divine substance, with consciousness and will. Each of the Persons possesses the divine nature in a non-interchangeable way; each presents it in his own way’ (1994[1980]: 188; ET 171). Moltmann criticizes the Boethian concept ‘person’ as an ‘individual’ (Jansen 1995: 63).

According to Moltmann (1994[1980]: 189), there is a difference between the Orthodox and the Western doctrine of the Trinity that became clear in the council of Florence. Moltmann (1994[1980]: 189) says that ‘certainly Fatherhood is a relation, a mode of being (*Seinsweise*). But the fact that God *is* the Father says more than merely that: it adds to the mode of being, being itself. Person and relation therefore have to be understood in reciprocal relationship’ (1994[1980]: 189; ET 172). ‘Here there are no persons without relations; but there are no relations without persons’¹³²(Moltmann 1994[1980]: 189¹³³; ET 172). As Larson (1995:134) points out, ‘Moltmann is clear that “Father” denotes only the relationship of that divine Person to the Son, and that humankind may refer to God as “Father” only in so far as we understand that our alignment with Jesus within the Trinity permits and asks for such address.’

For Moltmann this means a rejection of Boethius’s substantial definition of a person as an “individual substance of a rational nature,” in which relations are accidental” (Jansen 1995: 63)

¹³² According to Volf (1998:205), Moltmann’s concept of person is ‘relation’: [h]ere there are no persons without relations; but there are no relations without person either. Person and relation are complementary’. This means social Trinity.

¹³³ Es gibt hier keine Personen ohne Relationen, aber auch keine Relationen ohne Personen. Person und Relation verhalten sich komplementär zueinander. Die Person stellt sich relational dar, und die relation stellt sich personal dar. Die Reduktion des Personbegriffs auf den Relationsbegriff ist im Grunde modalisch, weil sie die weitere Reduktion des Relationsbegriffs auf ein Selbstverhältnis gottes nahelegt(Moltmann 1994[1980]: 189).

In this aspect, Moltmann (1994[1980]: 189; ET 173) criticises the western concept ‘person’ as basically modalistic. ‘The reduction of the concept ‘Person’ to the concept ‘relation’ is basically modalistic, because it suggests the further reduction of the concept of ‘relation’ to self-relation (*Selbstverhältnis*) on God’s part’ (Moltmann 1994[1980]: 189; ET 172). According to Grenz (2004:80), ‘Moltmann contends that trinitarian theology must begin with the fellowship of a plurality of Persons, understood as three centers of conscious activity’. This implies, as Letham (2004:305) points out, that the three divine Persons are three subjects in relationship to one another. In eastern orthodoxy, Moltmann says

But on the Orthodox side it is no less one-sided to say: the relations only manifest the persons’. For that presupposes the constitution of the persons simply in themselves and without their relations. Then the relations would only express the difference in kind of the Persons, but not their association, their fellowship (Moltmann 1994[1980]: 189; ET 173).

For Moltmann (1994[1980]:189), personality and relationship are genetically connected. They arise simultaneously and together.

Moltmann’s criticism of the concept ‘Person’ as individual stems from the rejection of monotheism (Letham 2004: 305). Moltmann’s starting point of the social Trinity depends on the opposition to the predominant ‘Christian monotheism’ in the mono-subjective conception of the Trinity, which advanced unity-ideology in the Church and society as a political and cleric monotheism (Ackva 1994:199). This implies that for Moltmann, the traditional understanding of the concept ‘Person’ is too closely connected with the traditional metaphysical conception of God (Powell 2001: 226).

Moltmann developed a ‘social doctrine of the Trinity’ (Courth 1996:163). Moltmann’s understanding of the concept ‘person’ as relationship or society causes problems. According to Powell (2001:232), for Moltmann, although the unity is constituted not by solitariness but by social plurality, in spite of this striving for balance (his trial to avoid the perils of *subordinationism*, *tri-theism* and *modalism*), Moltmann’s emphasis lies on



the plurality of the trinitarian Persons. He adds that ‘each Person would be a subject of activity, not a mode of being of the one divine subject. Each possesses will and understanding’ (Powell 2001:232).

9.1.3 The term ‘Perichoresis’

The term ‘Person’ as relation in Moltmann’s thought is closely connected with both his rejection of ‘monotheism’ and ‘his social doctrine of God.’ For Moltmann,

The concept of person must in itself contain the concept of the unitedness or at-oneness, just as, conversely, the concept of God’s at-oneness must in itself contain the concept of the three Persons. This means that the concept of God’s unity cannot in the trinitarian sense be fitted into the homogeneity of the one divine substance, or into the identity of the absolute subject either, and least of all into one of the three Persons of Trinity. It must be perceived in the term ‘*perichoresis*’ of the divine Persons. If the unity of God is not perceived in the at-oneness of the triune God, and therefore as a *perichoretic* unity, then Arianism and Sabellianism remain inescapable threats to Christian theology (Moltmann 1994[1980]: 167; ET 150).

Moltmann adds

The doctrine of the *perichoresis* links together in a brilliant way the threeness and the unity, without reducing the threeness to the unity, or dissolving the unity in the threeness. The unity of triunity lies in the eternal *perichoresis* of the trinitarian persons (Moltmann 1994[1980]: 191; ET 175).

With regard to this understanding of ‘*perichoresis*,’ ‘the unity of the trinitarian Persons lies in the circulation of the divine life which they fulfil in their relations to one another’ (Moltmann 1994[1980]: 191; ET 175). For Moltmann (1994[1980]: 192; ET 175),



‘through the concept of the term *perichoresis*’ all the subordinationism, in the doctrine of the Trinity is avoided’. The Trinity is constituted with the Father as ‘the origin of the Godhead’. But this ‘monarchy of the Father’ only applies the constitution of the Trinity, not in the perichoretic unity of the Trinity (Moltmann 1994[1980]: 192; ET 176). ‘In the respect of the constitution of the Trinity, the Father is the “origin-without-origin” of the Godhead’ (*ursprunglose Ursprung*) (Moltmann 1994[1980]: 194; ET 177).

Moltmann says that ‘the idea of mutual indwelling, *perichoresis*, goes back to the theology of the Greek Fathers’ (1999: 277; ET 316). Gregory of Nazianzus was the first man to use this word in the form of a verb (Otto 2001: 368). John of Damascus made it the key concept for his Christology (Lawler 1995: 50). While ‘in Christology, the term *perichoresis* describes the mutual interpenetration of two different natures, the divine and the human, in Christ the God-human being’ (Moltmann 1999: 277; ET 316), in the Latin translation of the term (*circumincessio*, later also *circuminsessio*), ‘the first word describes a dynamic interpenetration (*incedere*), the second an enduring, resting indwelling (*insedere*) staying and responding indwell’ (Moltmann 1999: 278; ET 317).

Moltmann (1994[1980]: 194; ET177) says that ‘in respect of the Trinity’s inner life, the three Persons themselves form their unity by virtue of their relation to one another and in the eternal *perichoresis* of their love’. He indicates that ‘if it is the *perichoresis* which forms the trinitarian unity; then it is that which also leads to the *trinitarian differentiation* between the divine Persons’ (Moltmann 1999: 280; ET 319). Grenz (2004:84) points out that ‘in Moltmann’s estimation, the concept of the perichoresis of the three trinitarian Persons, which produces a doctrine of God that is characterized by mutuality rather than lordship provides the foundation for such a vision of the kingdom of glory, because it opens the way for a “cosmic perichoresis,” for “a mutual indwelling of the world in God and God in the world”’ (Grenz 2004:84).

Because of his understanding of the social concept of the Trinity, Moltmann is regarded as an advocate of tri-theism. As O’Donnell (1988:108) points out, ‘many theologians, even his colleagues, feel uneasy about his social doctrine of God seeing in it a subtle form of tri-theism.’ So Larson (1995:137) estimates that ‘Moltmann will not construct a



doctrine of the Trinity on the preposition of the unity of the godhead.’ However, ironically, Moltmann attempts to escape this tri-theism in two ways. As O’Donnell states

His response is twofold. First, he argues that tri-theism could only arise if one brings an individualistic understanding of ‘Person’ to theology. It is precisely such an interpretation which Moltmann finds in modalistically-inclined theologians such as Rahner. This is the concept of persona as a ‘self-possessing, self-disposing centre of action which sets itself apart from other Persons.... Secondly, he brings in the traditional idea of the perichoresis to bolster his social understanding of the Persons of the Trinity (O’Donnell 1983: 151).

Although Moltmann uses *perichoresis* to escape the danger of being accused of Tri-theism, he is still in danger of it. Peters (1993: 184) points out that the ‘social doctrine of the Trinity, though increasingly popular, is wrongheaded. What attracts social Trinitarians is the category of community rather than personality for understanding God.’

Otto believes that Moltmann’s *perichoresis* is without the necessary Christological basis. According to Otto,

While Moltmann’s use of the term as a model for social relations has proven helpful as an analogy of the community of generic nature that humanity is and should recognize itself to be, his use of perichoresis is based on an ‘*analogia relationis*’ devoid of the requisite ‘*analogia entis*’. Moltmann uses perichoresis in a sociological, phenomenological, and existential fashion, virtually equivalent to the Hegelian *aufgehoben*, to sublimate all things into the hoped-for-communal God said to be coming, though requiring eschatological ontological verification. Perichoresis is here emasculated of its essential basis and is wrongly employed (Otto 2001: 384).



Originally, this Perichoresis was applied for Christological usage (Otto 2001: 370). But Moltmann decreases this Christological and ontological application. But the Greek Fathers used *perichoresis* in two meanings. The first meaning is the communion of two natures in the one Person of Jesus; the second meaning is the three Persons in one God (Lawler 1995: 49). Not only in the Christological, but also in the trinitarian usage this term '*perichoresis*' plays a role as 'two natures in one Person' and 'one deity', not two Persons or three deities. Moltmann's usage of the term '*perichoresis*' differs from that of tradition. Otto (2001: 348) says, '*perichoresis* is here emasculated of its essential basis and is wrongly employed.'

9.2 The theology of the cross

For Moltmann, his doctrine of the Trinity is defined by the theology of the cross. The dialectic of cross and resurrection gives Moltmann's theology a strongly Christological centre in the particular history of Jesus and at the same time a universal direction (Bauckham 1989:296). The cross, as Müller-Fahrenholz (2000:63) points out, 'is the point at which and in which everything stands and falls'. For Moltmann (2002[1972]: 28), Christian theology finds its identity as Christian theology in the cross of Christ. However, Schweitzer (1995: 100) says that 'Moltmann does not give up the eschatological orientation of Hope'. He adds that Moltmann puts 'the cross at the centre of a dynamic process with God leading to the coming of the future promised in the resurrection'.

For Moltmann (2002[1972]: 117), faith in God is faith in the resurrection. The resurrected Jesus does not differ from the crucified Jesus; the resurrected Christ is the historical and crucified Jesus and *vice versa* (Moltmann 2002[1972]: 147). The confession of the crucified Jesus as *Kyrios* is based on the faith in God who resurrected him. On the other hand is this faith in God completely faith in the resurrection of the person of the crucified one (Moltmann 2002[1972]: 148). Müller-Fahrenholz (2000:47) points out that 'there is this sameness in the cross and resurrection, although there is the

greatest conceivable difference between the two, which makes up the qualitative peculiarity of the Christian understanding of revelation’.

Jesus’ resurrection stands in the frame of a universal hope of the eschatological faith, which is kindled by him (Moltmann 2002[1972]: 149). The first title ‘Christ’, which was formulated under the impression of the appearances of the crucified Jesus in the light of the coming glory of God is the title of the promise of hope (Moltmann 2002[1972]: 149-150). His historical crucifixion is understood as the eschatological event of judgement and his resurrection is understood as the hidden anticipation of the eschatological kingdom of glory, in which the dead are resurrected. The ‘future’, of which one sees the first real preview in Christ’s resurrection, should not be understood as future history and thus subjected to transitoriness, but eschatologically as the future of history and as an advance of the new creation (Moltmann 2002[1972]: 150). The resurrection of the dead qualifies the person of the crucified one and also the salvation-significance (*Heilsbedeutung*) of his death on the cross for us, ‘the dead’ (Moltmann 2002[1972]: 170). Therefore the salvation-significance (*Heilsbedeutung*) of his cross reveals his resurrection (Moltmann 2002[1972]: 170). In the historical sense, Jesus died and was then resurrected. But, in the eschatological sense, the last comes the first: As the resurrected did he die and as the coming one he became flesh (a human being). In historical sense, Christ can be called the anticipation of the coming God on the basis of his resurrection from the dead. But in eschatological sense, he must be called the incarnation of the coming God in our flesh (body) and in the death on the cross (Moltmann 2002[1972]: 171). According to Kärkkäinen (2003:151) ‘the importance of the resurrection for Moltmann arises out of his focus on the cross and it does not negate the cross.’ He adds, ‘for him, the theology of the cross is nothing other than the reverse side of the Christian theology of hope, if this theology has its point of departure in the resurrection of the one who was crucified. The most controlling idea here is a dialectical interpretation of the cross and resurrection’.

Through his suffering and death, the resurrected Christ brings righteousness and life to the unrighteous and the dying. In this way, the cross of Christ modifies the resurrection of Christ under the conditions of a history of the world’s suffering from a pure future-



orientated history to a history of the liberating love (Moltmann 2002[1972]: 172). His death on the cross is the meaning of his resurrection ‘for us.’ On the contrary, every explanation of his death without the presupposition of his resurrection from the dead becomes a hopeless thing, since it can not impart any new kind of life or salvation, which appeared with his resurrection. Christ did not only die as sin-offering, in which the law was restored or the original creation is rebuilt from the fall of the human beings. He died ‘for us’ in order to let us who are dead participate in his new life of resurrection and in his future of eternal life (Moltmann 2002[1972]: 173). His resurrection is the content of the meaning of his death on the cross for us, since the resurrected one is himself the crucified one. In his death ‘for many’ his resurrection from the dead is to be realized (Moltmann 2002[1972]: 173-174).

The traditional answer to this question ‘For whom did Christ die?’ would be that Christ died for sinners. Moltmann adds that

In *The Crucified God* I expanded the question of salvation from the traditional concern with sin to encompass also the contemporary concern with innocent and meaningless suffering. Those with whom Christ is identified in his abandonment and death are the godless on the one hand, and the godforsaken on the other, or, more concretely, the evildoers and their victims. The traditional doctrine of justification is sin-oriented; modern liberation theology is victim-oriented. Both sides belong together in a world of sin and suffering, violence and victims (Moltmann 2003:75).

As Feske (2000:91) points out, ‘central to Moltmann’s use of the cross, then, is his claims that the death of Jesus was neither an accident, nor a mistake, but a political execution provoked by his disruption of the sacrificial social order.’

Moltmann (2002[1972]: 179) says that in the passion of the Son, the Father suffers the anguish of forsakenness. In the death of the Son the death comes to God himself, and the Father suffers the death of his Son in his love for the forsaken people. The event on the cross must be understood as an event between God and the Son of God. Letham



(2004:299) points out that the cross demonstrates the event of divine love. For Moltmann, as Kärkkäinen (2003:153) points out, ‘God-forsakenness stands at the centre of theology. Every Christian theology and every Christian existence fundamentally responds to the quest that is addressed by the dying Jesus to his God: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’

From 2 Cor 5: 19, Moltmann (2002[1972]: 179) deduces that God (himself) suffered in Jesus; God himself died in Jesus for us. God is in the cross of Jesus ‘for us’. God died, therefore, we live. God became the crucified God, whereby we became free children of God. Therefore, on the cross the Father and the Son become so united (Radlbeck 1989: 32).

The trinitarian interpretation depicts the ground of the strong reality of the cross in the relationship of the trinitarian Persons to each other (Meessen 1989:340). Therefore, the Son suffers deeply, in his relationship to the Father, that is, in his Sonship of God (Meessen 1989:340). Moltmann (2002[1972]: 230) says that in the forsakenness of the Son the Father forsakes himself. In the abandonment of the Son the Father abandons himself, but not in the same way. For Jesus suffers the dying in forsakenness, but not death itself. For man cannot merely suffer the death, since life presupposes the suffering. As Willis (1987:95) points out, ‘in Jesus’ abandonment on the cross, God was not absent but working and not simply allowing it to happen, but actively involved himself’.

Moltmann (2002[1972]: 201) says that as the theology of the cross, Christian theology is the critique and liberation from philosophical and political monotheism. According to theism, God cannot suffer; God cannot die to protect the suffering, mortal being. Instead, the Christian faith says that God suffered in Jesus’ suffering, God died on the cross of Christ, so that we may live and be resurrected in his future. Therefore, for Moltmann ¹³⁴(2002[1972]: 204), Christian theology is not the ‘end of metaphysics’. For

¹³⁴ Christliche Theologie ist nicht das „Ende der Metaphysik“. Denn die „Geschichte Gottes“, deren Kernstück das Kreuzesgeschehen ist, kann nicht als geschichte in der Welt gedacht werden, sondern



the history of God (*Geschichte Gottes*), which the event of the cross is the core, cannot be regarded as the history of in the world (*Geschichte in der Welt*), but conversely requires the world to be understood in this history.

Moltmann's special target is the doctrine that God does not and cannot suffer, that is, the doctrine of impassibility (Williams 2003:85). Williams (2003: 88) says that 'what the cross distinctively reveals and achieves is the way the Trinity opens itself out in time to embrace the extremities of God-forsakenness'. Moltmann joins his theology of the cross with theology of the Trinity (Müller-Fahrenholz 2000:79). As Bauckham (1995: 5) points out, 'Moltmann's theology became strongly trinitarian, because he interpreted the cross as a trinitarian event between the Father and the Son.'

According to Moltmann (2002[1972]: 227), the doctrine of the Trinity is not located in the mind of the thinker (*Denken des Denkens*), but in the cross of Jesus. Here Moltmann(2002[1972]: 227; Moltmann 1973: 360) follows Kant's criticism : '*Begriffe ohne Anschauung sind leer. Anschauungen ohne Begriffe sind blind*'. The perception of trinitarian concept of God is the cross of Jesus. The theological concept for the percept of the crucified one is the doctrine of the Trinity (Moltmann 2002[1972]: 227). The material principle of the doctrine of the Trinity is the cross of the Christ. The exterior principle of the contemplation of the cross is the doctrine of the Trinity (Moltmann 2002[1972]: 228; Meessen 1989:341). For Moltmann,

[T]he trinitarian event of God on the cross becomes for the eschatological faith the history of God, which is open to the future and which opens up the future, the presence of which means reconciliation with the anguish of love and the end of which means the fulfilment of all mortal flesh with Spirit and all dead with this love, and therewith the transformation unto the completion of living (Moltmann 2002[1972]: 241).

nötigt dazu, umgekehrt die welt in dieser Geschichte zu begreifen.



The abandonment on the cross is the centre of this history in God, but not its conclusion. Only with the subjection of the lordship to the Father is the obedience of the Son fulfilled and therewith his Sonship (Moltmann 2002[1972]: 253).

9.2.1 The rejection of the traditional understanding of the doctrine of ‘two-natures’

Bauckham (1995:47) points out that Moltmann criticizes the traditional understanding of the doctrine of ‘two natures’ which ‘distinguished the impassible divine nature from the passible human nature and attributed the suffering of Jesus only to the latter’. The doctrine of ‘two natures’ presents God in Christ for human beings, while the doctrine of the Trinity demonstrates human being in Christ for God (Moltmann 1973: 353). However, Moltmann (2002[1972]: 215) argues that this doctrine of ‘two natures’ stems from the platonic axiom of the essential apathy of God.

Moltmann (2002[1972]: 218) says that the divine nature is originally identical with the Person of Christ in as much as the Person of Christ is the second Person of the Trinity, that is, the eternal Son of God. The divine nature is active in Christ not as nature, but as Person. On the other hand, the human nature of Christ is not likewise originally identical with the Person of Christ, but is assumed by the divine Person of the Son of God through his incarnation, and became in the Person of Christ the concrete existence of Jesus Christ. Kärkkäinen (2003:152) points out that ‘Moltmann is critical of the traditional understanding of the two natures of Christ, which distinguished the impassible divine nature from the passible human nature and attributed the suffering of Jesus only to the latter, excluding passion from the deity. This could lead only to paradoxical talk about the suffering of Christ, the God-man’.

Niewiadomski (1982: 146) says that not only the rejection of the doctrine of the ‘two natures’ in Christology, but also the deliberate polarization of two traditional ways of thought about God, that is, the immanent trinity and the economic trinity excludes the doctrine of salvation. Moltmann regards the relation of both traditions to each other as



an opposition (Niewiadomski 1982:146). Niewiadomski (1982: 146) concludes that such an alternation (*'konstruierte'* and *'unlogische'* alternation) forces Moltmann to accept the suffering of God (Niewiadomski 1982:146).

Moltmann misunderstands the 'doctrine of the two natures'. This doctrine of the 'two natures' is a negative way to formulate the confession, since this formulation 'simply seeks to guard the truth against various heretic views' (Berkhof 1996[1938] 321). The doctrine of the 'two natures'¹³⁵ as being unmixed *in duabus naturis inconfuse, immutabiliter, indivise, inseparabiliter* is regarded as the role of the Mediator with God in reconciliation, and of unity of man with God (Heppe 1950:413). Berkhof (1991[1937]: 107-108) presents four important implications of this statement:

- 1) The properties of both natures belong to the one Person,
- 2) The suffering of the God-man can be regarded as truly and really infinite, while yet the divine nature is impassible
- 3) It is the divinity and not the humanity that constitutes the root and basis of the personality of Christ
- 4) The Logos did not unite with a distinct human individual, but with a human nature. There was not first an individual man, with whom the Second Person in the Godhead associated Himself. The union was effected with the substance of humanity in the womb of the virgin.

¹³⁵ This doctrine was set up in the Council of the Chalcedon. According to the Chalcedonic definition, ... e[na kai. to.n auvto.n Cristo,n(ui`o,n(ku,rion(monogenh/(evk du,o fu,sewn [evn du,o fu,sesin](avsugcu,twj(avtre,ptwj(avdiakre,twj(avcwri,stwj gnwrizo,menon\ ouvdamou/ th/j tw/n fu,sewn diafora/j avnh\rhme,nhj dia. th.n e[nwsin(swzome,nhj de. ma/llon th/j ivdio,tthoj e`kate,raj fu,sewj kai. eivj e[n pro,swpon kai. mi,an u`po.stasin suntrecou,shj(ouvka eivj du,o pro,swpa merizo,menon h; diairou,menon(avll v e[na kai. to.n auvto.n ui`o.n kai. monogenh/(qeo.n lo,gon(ku,rion vIhsou/n)))

... unum eundemque christum Filium Dominum unigenitum, in duabus naturis inconfuse, immutabiliter, indivise, inseparabiliter agnoscendum, nusquam sublata differentia naturarum propter unionem magisque salva proprietate utriusque naturae, et in unam personam atque subsistentiam concurrente, non in duas personas partitum sive divisum, sed unum et eundem Filium unigenitum Deum Verbum Dominum Iesum Christum....(Denzinger 1973: 108).

This understanding of the doctrine of ‘two natures in one Person’ plays an important role in Christology. It does not stem from a philosophical understanding to explain the divine nature, but explains the biblical message of the ‘mystery of Christ’s incarnation’. Lohse (1978[1974]: 81) points to the Christ hymn in Phil 2:5-11, which depicts the mystery of Christ’s incarnation. The mystery of Christ’s incarnation gave rise to all the controversies surrounding the doctrine of the Trinity and of Christology¹³⁶.

9.2.2 Apathy

Moltmann’s critique (2002[1972]: 199) is that death, suffering, and mortality had to be excluded from the divine being according to the traditional theism. In addition, Moltmann (2002[1972]: 201) argues that according to traditional theism God cannot suffer, and God cannot die in order to be able to protect the suffering, dying existence. The Christian faith confesses that God suffered in the suffering of Jesus¹³⁷, God died on the cross of Christ, so that we may live and arise in Jesus’ future. For Moltmann (2002[1972]: 256; 1975: 220¹³⁸), the axiom ‘apathy’ is closely connected with Platonic

¹³⁶ Berkouwer says of the doctrine of the ‘two natures’: ‘If one in fact takes seriously the confession of the church – the *vere Deus*, and *vere homo*, that is – then he can speak about this union only, both as far as the Godhead and as far as the humanity is concerned, in the light of Revelation. The limits of dogmatic reflection on Christology lie, not in a given historical decision of the church, but in exegesis or rather in Scripture itself. In this activity the church and theology with it, warned by many deviations and speculations, must certainly be on its guard. But it may try to maintain in human formulations, amid all Christological heresy, that the core of this mystery is not a paradox, capable of being seen only in an irrational intuition of faith, but an act of God, of him who is and remains truly God, in this assumption of human nature also’ (Berkouwer 1977[1954]: 96).

¹³⁷ For Moltmann (1990: 180 –181), ‘the sufferings of Christ’ are God’s suffering because through them God shows his solidarity with human beings and his whole creation everywhere: God is with us. ‘The suffering of Christ’ are God’s sufferings because through them God intervenes vicariously on our behalf, saving us at the point where we are unable to stand but are forced to sink into nothingness: God is for us. ‘The sufferings of Christ’ are God’s sufferings, finally, because out of them the new creation of all things is born: we come from God.

¹³⁸ According to Moltmann(1975: 220), ‘In diesem Zusammenhang muß man die alten philosophischen Axiom für die Natur Gottes fallen lassen. Gott ist nicht in dem Sinne unveränderlich, das er sich nicht in



and Aristotelian philosophy regarding immortal, unchangeability and impassibility. For Moltmann,

[I]n the physical sense apathy indicates unchangeability, in psychical sense insensitiveness and in ethical sense freedom. In contrast to it, pathos indicates neediness, compulsion, impulse, dependence, low passions, and unwilled suffering. Since Plato and Aristotle, the metaphysical and ethical perfection of God is described with apathy. According to Plato, God is good and can therefore not be the cause of something evil, of punishment and suffering (Moltmann 2002[1972]: 256).

Moltmann says

Is God capable of suffering? If we follow the fashion of Greek philosophy and ask what attributes are “appropriate” to God, differentiation, diversity, movement, and suffering all have to be excluded from the divine nature. The divine nature is incapable of suffering; otherwise it would not be divine. The absolute subject of modern metaphysics is also incapable of suffering; otherwise it would not be absolute. Impassible, immovable, uncompounded, and self-sufficing, deity stands over against a moved, divided, suffering, and never self-sufficient world. The divine substance is the founder and sustainer of this world of transitory phenomena. It abides eternally, and so it cannot be subjected to this world’s destiny. This called the metaphysical apathy axiom. We find it in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, book 12 (Moltmann 2003:73).

der Freiheit seiner Liebe für die veränderliche Geschichte mit Mensch und Schöpfung öffnen könnte. Gott ist nicht in dem Sinne leidensunfähig, daß er sich nicht in der Freiheit seiner Liebe für das Leiden am Widerspruch der Menschen und an der Selbsterstörung seiner Schöpfung öffnen könnte. Gott ist nicht in dem Sinne vollkommen, daß er nicht in der Freiheit seiner Liebe ohne die von ihm geliebte Menschheit und Schöpfung unvollkommen sein will. Gott ist nicht in dem Sinne unverwundbar, daß er sich nicht für die Erfahrung des Kreuzes öffnen könnte.’



With the rejection of the traditional understanding of the doctrine of the ‘two natures’, Moltmann (2002[1972]: 214) criticizes that the traditional Christology came near to Docetism, since it emphasized that only the human side can suffer and not the divine side of Christ. According to Docetism, in the understanding of Moltmann, Jesus suffered only apparently, not really and died just seemingly, not really forsaken by God. The spiritual barrier against it stems from a philosophical concept of God. According to it God’s being is ‘imperishable, unchangeable, indivisible, impassible, and immortal: on the other hand, human nature is perishable, changeable, divisible, passible, and mortal. The influence of such a Docetism on Christian thinking is rejected by Moltmann (Moltmann 2002[1972]: 214) ¹³⁹.

Moltmann’s critique is that this understanding of Christology in traditional theism causes the axiom of apathy on the basis of Greek philosophy. Moltmann (1994[1980]: 38; ET 23) questions ‘why did the theology of the patristic period cling to the axiom of apathy?’ There are two grounds¹⁴⁰ for this:

- 1) God’s essential impassibility distinguishes the Deity from human beings, who are subject to suffering, transience, and death.
- 2) Salvation is the

¹³⁹ However, while traditional Docetism puts the emphasis on the rejection of the real humanity of the Son, the traditional mainstream of Christology never denied the real humanity of the Son. According to Kelly (1975[1958]: 141), actually men like Ignatius and Polycarp in the early Christian church anathematized those who refused to ‘confess that Jesus Christ came in the flesh’. From the beginning of the Christendom, even St. Paul and John, opposed Gnosticism and Docetism. Irenaeus, one of church fathers, ‘teaches that the bread and wine are really the Lords’ body and blood. His witness is indeed all the more impressive because he produces it quite incidentally while refuting the Gnostic and docetic rejection of the Lord’s real humanity’ (Kelly 1975[1958]: 198). However, Moltmann focuses only on the aspect of the philosophical understanding of traditional Christology (passibility or not). The aim of the Christology of mainstream Christianity differs from Moltmann’s purpose.

¹⁴⁰ 1) Durch seine wesentliche Leidensunfähigkeit unterscheidet sich Gott vom Menschen und allen nichtgöttlichen Dingen, die dem Leiden ebenso unterworfen sind wie der Vergänglichkeit und dem Tod. 2) Gibt Gott den Menschen das Heil dadurch, daß er ihnen Anteil an seinem ewigen Leben gibt, dann bringt dieses Heil Menschen in die Unterblichkeit, in die Unvergänglichkeit und darum auch in die Leidensunfähigkeit (1994[1980]: 38).



deification of human beings by giving them a share in eternal life. If we become immortal, we shall also become impassible: Apathy is divine nature and the fulfillment of human salvation (Moltmann 2003:74).

According to Moltmann (2002[1972]: 208), the God of Aristotle cannot love; he can only let himself be loved by all non-divine things in terms of his perfection and beauty and attract them to himself in this way. But a human can suffer, because he can love (Conyers 2000:33). ‘The theology of the divine passion is founded on the biblical tenet: “God is love”’ (Moltmann 1994[1980]: 72; ET 57). For Moltmann, as Lucien Richard (1992: 44) points out, apathy is regarded as the spiritual disease of modern society.

For Moltmann, it is true that ‘God who cannot suffer is poorer than any human being’ (Kärkkäinen 2003:152). This implies that the God who cannot love is a dead God (Letham 2004:303). For Moltmann,

The Son suffers death in this forsakenness. The Father suffers the death of the Son. So the pain of the Father corresponds to the death of the Son. And when in this descent into hell the Son loses the Father, then in this judgment the Father also loses the Son. Here the innermost life of the Trinity is at stake. Here the communicating love of the Father turns into infinite pain over the sacrifice of the Son. Here the responding love of the Son becomes infinite suffering over his repulsion and rejection by the Father (1994[1980]: 97; ET 81).

This love leads us into a dynamical statement of the relationship of the Trinity ‘ad intra as implied from ad extra’ (Larson 1995:132).

For Moltmann, the love of God is necessarily identified with the suffering of God (Bauckham 1995: 49). Without passion (suffering), there is no love in God (Letham 2004:303). Weinandy (2000: 36) hopes to ‘clarify the mystery of God’s impassibility in relationship to the passible lives of human beings within the ever-changing world of history’. He emphasizes that ‘only an impassible God, and not a passible God, is truly



and fully personal, absolutely and utterly loving, and thoroughly capable of interacting with human Persons in time and history’ (Weinandy 2000: 37-38).

According to Weinandy (2000: 84), although the Church Fathers did not concentrate on God’s impassibility, their accounts for the impassibility of God ‘were more influenced by and more faithful to biblical revelation than those contemporary theologians who champion God’s passibility.’ The Church Father’s borrowing the philosophical notion of God is on the base of the Bible itself.

Contrary to modern critique that the Patristic writers were better accustomed to Greek philosophy than to the Bible, Weinandy (2000:108) states, ‘while they evidently did use words and concepts taken from philosophy, they did so primarily either to show that biblical revelation was compatible with some of what philosophy taught, or to defend Christianity against philosophical attacks, or to demonstrate that Christianity actually provided better philosophical answers to the questions at hand.’ ‘Whatever they said that was new was not due to their faithfulness to some philosophy, but to their fidelity to the Scriptures. They were not philosophical innovators. They were theological innovators and their innovation was founded upon the Bible’ (Weinandy 2002: 108). Therefore, the contemporary accusation against the Patristic understanding of the impassibility of God is on the basis of ‘the false premise that to be impassible is to be devoid of passion. This, again the Fathers never argued for nor even countenanced’ (Weinandy 2000: 111). He goes on to state that the reason that the Persons of God are impassible is not their lack of passion (Weinandy 2002: 120), but their loving communion (Weinandy 2002: 161). For Weinandy,

They are immutable and impassible in their love for one another, not because their love is static or inert, but because it is utterly dynamic and totally passionate in its self-giving. It is impossible for the Trinity to do more loving for the persons of the Trinity possess no self-actualizing potential to become more loving. This is not only in keeping with the biblical proclamation that “God is love”, but it actually gives to it befitting, exact, and even literal philosophical and theological depth. God “is” love



because God's love, as reciprocally expressed within the Trinity, is fully in act (Weinandy 2002: 161).

Letham summarizes Weinandy's idea of the impassibility of God instead of a passible God as follows:

Only a God who cannot suffer can help us. For it is through the Incarnation, in which the Son lives as man, that he experiences human suffering as man and deals with the root cause-sin-by his death and resurrection. It would be of no help to us if God suffered divinely as God. On the one hand, he would be unable to help us, for he would be at the mercy of hostile forces in his creation. On the other hand, he would have no capacity to understand or deal with human suffering. Precisely because he does not and cannot suffer as God, he is able (through the Incarnation) to suffer in a human way and, having made atonement for sin (the cause of human suffering), to bring about its ultimate removal. To turn Bonhoeffer¹⁴¹ on his head, only the God who as God cannot suffer, can help and so put love into action (Letham 2004:303-304).

However, his fear for Docetism led Moltmann to a position on the passibility of God, to the identification of the immanent Trinity and economic Trinity, and to panentheism which differs from the traditional understanding of it.

9.2.3 The problem of Patripassianism or Patricompassianism

The rejection of apathy leads Moltmann's theology to the problem of Patripassianism that was seen as a heretic thought in the early church. So, as Surin (1986:126) mentions 'Moltmann is careful to secure himself against the heresies of patripassianism and theopaschitism'¹⁴². In fact, Moltmann (2002[1972]: 192) strongly denies that his

¹⁴¹ Boenhoeffer's memorable phrase is that only a suffering God can help (Letham 2005:33)

¹⁴² According to McGrath, 'Patripassianism: arose during the third century, and was associated with



understanding is identified with the concept '*Patripassianismus*', since the death of Jesus cannot be understood as 'the death of God', but only as death in God. He indicated that the death of God cannot be described as the source of Christian theology, even though this slogan points to something right, but only the death of the cross in God and God in this death of Jesus (2002[1972]: 192). According to Moltmann (2002[1972]: 230), the Father, who forsook and abandoned him, suffered the death of the Son in the endless grief of love. However, Moltmann (2002[1972]: 230) argues that one can here also not partripassionistically say that the Father also suffered and died. The suffering and death of the Son in the forsakenness by the Father differs from the suffering of the Father through the death of the Son. The death of Jesus therefore is not simply theopaschitically to be understood as the 'death of God' (2002[1972]: 230; Moltmann 1973: 359). Moltmann explains in detail as follows:

The suffering of the Father is different from the suffering of the Son. The Son experienced dying in forsakenness, while the Father experienced the death of the Son. We can illustrate this with our own experiences. At my end I shall experience dying, but not my own death, while in those I love, I experience death when they die because I have to survive their death. The death of Christ reaches deep into the nature of God, and, above all other meanings, is an event that takes place in the innermost nature of God, the Trinity (Moltmann 2003:77-78).

writers such as Noetus, Praxeas, and Sabellius. It centered on the belief that the Father suffered as the Son. In other words, the suffering of Christ on the cross is to be regarded as the suffering of the Father. According to these writers, the only distinction within the Godhead was a succession of modes or operations. In other words, Father, Son and Spirit were just different modes of being, or expressions, of the same basic divine entity' (McGrath 1994:219).

Theopaschitism: arose during the sixth century, and was linked with writers such as John Maxentius. The basic slogan associated with the movement was "one of the Trinity was crucified." The formula can be interpreted in a perfectly orthodox sense (it reappears as Martin Luther's celebrated formula "the crucified God"), and was defended as such by Leontius of Byzantium. However, it was regarded as potentially misleading and confusing by more cautious writers, including Pope Hormisdas(died 523), and the formula gradually fell into disuse.(McGrath 1994:219)



In fact, for Moltmann, the suffering of the Father of the beloved Son on the cross and the suffering of the death by the Son in God-forsakenness are not identical (Meessen 1989:340). According to McGrath (1994:219), this does not imply the ‘patripassian position’. Moltmann argues that this understanding of the suffering of God does not imply the term ‘*Patripassianismus*’ which implies an ancient heretic idea, but ‘*Patricompassianismus*’ which implies ‘co-suffering’ or ‘compassion’ (Durand 1976: 96¹⁴³ Moltmann 1973: 358¹⁴⁴). As Meessen (1989:353) points out, although Moltmann does not simply identify the Father’s suffering with the Son’s suffering on the cross, (Moltmann mentions ‘*Patricompassianismus*’ in terms of that) in order to escape the problem of ‘*Patripassianismus*’, there is also an opposite evaluation. For the Bible (Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 27)¹⁴⁵ does not support the suffering of the Father (Meessen 1989: 353).

¹⁴³ In Moltmann se kruisteologie sentreer die Godsvraag rondom die probleem van die lyding. Jesus ly en ervaar die verlatenheid terwyl die Vader ly aan die dood van die Seun in die smart van sy liefde. Hier is dus sprake van ’n “patricompassianisme” in onderskeiding van die ou patripassianisme. So neem God, in die wisselwerkende betrekking van Vader en Seun, die afgrond van die lyding, die dood en die Godverlatenheid op in sy eie geskiedenis. Langs hierdie weg oorwin God Homself om so as die humane, gekruisigde God vir die mense daar te wees.(Durand 1976:96)

¹⁴⁴ Moltmann mentions that „ Weil das Leiden des Sohnes ein anderes ist als das Leiden des Vaters, kann man nicht *theopaschitisch* vom [Tod Gottes] sprechen, wie in der Gott- ist –tot- Theologie. Wohl aber kann man trinitarisch von einem *Patricompassianismus* reden. Handelt der Vater an seinem eigenen Sohn durch hingebendes Verlassen, leidet der Sohn das verlassende Hingeben von dem Vater, dann steht der Kreuzestod zwischen Gott und Gott“.

¹⁴⁵ The darkness (Mt 27:45) does not imply the expression of Father’s compassion, but the symbol of judgment of God (Hare 1993: 323). In commentary of St. Mark, Craig A. Evans (2001: 507) says that ‘that Jesus cries out the way he does suggests that divine judgment has in part fallen on him’. Actually, Jesus’ crying out does not imply Father’s suffering with his Son. Hare (1993:323; Morris 1967: 48-49) indicates that ‘Matthew regards Jesus as sinless (see Mt 3:13-15); if Jesus is abandoned by God, it can only be because he is giving his life as a ransom for sinners (Mt 20:28). Separation from God is the price of sin. Jesus is paying that price on behalf of others.’ Calvins(1949: 318-319) says that ‘though the perception of the flesh would led him to dread destruction, still in his heart faith remained firm, by which he be held the presence of God, of whose absence he complains. We have explained elsewhere how the



However, according to Moltmann (2002[1972]: 230), God can suffer contrary to the traditional understanding. In Jesus Christ, not only the deity of Christ but also humanity in Christ suffers on the cross. He denies that the Son's suffering is identical with Father's suffering. If the Son's suffering is identical with Father's suffering, this would be the heretical position of *'patripassianismus'*. However, if the suffering of God (divinity) is not identical with the suffering of the Father, there are two more Gods, since in the Trinity there must be one God (in Christianity nobody believes in two or three Gods). The tri-theistic danger in this scheme is seen in Moltmann's reference to Father, Son and Spirit as three subjects who work together in history. In Moltmann's case, many theologians feel uneasy about his social doctrine of God, seeing in it a subtle form of tritheism (O'Donnell 1983: 108). Classical trinitarian theology vigorously maintained that in God there is only one centre of consciousness and will (O'Donnell 1983: 149). 'The ontological unity of one substance or subject seems to be replaced by a volitional unity of three subjects. Such fears of tritheism cannot help but be aroused when Moltmann speaks in the following way' (O'Donnell 1983:150):

- a) He argues that tri-theism could only arise if one brings an individualistic understanding of 'person' to theology; b) he brings in the traditional idea of the perichoresis to bolster his social understanding of the person of the trinity (O'Donnell 1983:151).

9.2.4 Response to Atheism

Divine nature gave way to the weakness of the flesh, so far as was necessary for our salvation, that Christ might accomplish all that was required of the Redeemer'. 'The perception of God's estrangement from him, which Christ had, as suggested by natural feeling, did not hinder him from continuing to be assured by faith that God was reconciled to him.' He concludes that 'no one who considers that Christ undertook the office of Mediator on the condition of suffering our condemnation, both in his body and in his soul, will think it strange that he maintained a struggle with the sorrows of death, as if an offended God had him into a whirlpool of afflictions.'

In spite of the danger attached to the term ‘the suffering of God’, Moltmann builds his theology of the cross on it as a rescue from the experience of the holocausts of ‘Auschwitz and ‘Hiroshima’. Moltmann says

In July 1943 at the age of seventeen, I lay watching bombs rain down all around me in my hometown of Hamburg. Forty thousand people, including women and children, were killed as a result of that bombing or burned in the firestorm that followed. Miraculously I survived. To this day I do not know why I am not dead like my comrades. My question in that inferno was not, “Why is God letting this happen?” but rather, “Where is God?” Is God far away from us, absent, in his heaven? Or is God among us, suffering with us? Does God share in our suffering? Two questions occur to me at this point. One is the theoretical question about accusing God in the face of the pain of the victims- that is the so-called theodicy question. The other is the existential question about community with God in suffering. The first question presupposes an apathetic, untouchable God in heaven, while the second question is searching for a compassionate God, “the fellow-sufferer who understands us”(Alfred North Whitehead)(Moltmann 2003:69-70).

He adds

The Crucified God is in essence a book about believing in God after the cross of Christ. What we can say about God “after Auschwitz” depends on what we can say about God after the crucifixion of Christ, hearing the dying Jesus’ cry of abandonment: “My God, Why have you forsaken me?” The whole book can be understood as a theological interpretation of these words from the Gospels of Mark and Matthew (Moltmann 2003:71). My book The Crucified God was said to be a Christian theology “after Auschwitz.” This is true. It was for me an attempt to speak to God, to trust in God and speak about God in the shadows of Auschwitz and in view of the victims of my people. The God-question has been identical with the cry of the victims for justice and the hunger of the perpetrator for a way back from the path of

death (Moltmann 2003:71).

His theological starting point would be the suffering of victims. For Moltmann traditional concepts: impassibility, immutability, monotheism, cannot give answer to the victims of this holocaust (O'Donnell 1983:111). Moltmann rejects these concepts vigorously in response to atheism (Willis 1987:96; Shults 2005:147). Willis summarizes Moltmann's logical consequences as follows

The consequences of Moltmann's theology that are important for our discussion are numerous. 1) Moltmann's analysis, like Barth's theology, gives theology a concrete epistemology 2) The crucifixion is identified as an event "which takes place within God himself and in which God acts on behalf of human suffering by suffering himself 3) This means the God defined by the cross is not the impassible, immutable God of traditional theism, which is presupposed by atheism. On the basis of God's identification with and self-definition in the cross, it follows that this God can and does suffer and change. Like Barth, Moltmann indicates the true element in the traditional doctrine of God's immutability and impassibility (Willis 1987: 96).

Willis (1987: 96) adds that 'at this point a partial response based on the doctrine of the Trinity can be given to atheism grounded on the problem of suffering.' For Moltmann, God who acts for human suffering by suffering himself is the triune God, not the God of traditional theism (Willis 1987: 97). Because Jesus Christ who was crucified on the cross is one Person of the three Persons in the Trinity, God suffers with human beings (Willis 1987: 98). This God responds not only to human beings but also to atheism that criticizes the abstract God in traditional theism¹⁴⁶. For Moltmann, atheism is correct in

¹⁴⁶ Willis displays the apologetic function of the doctrine of the Trinity: '1) The doctrine of the Trinity, as it clarifies the Christian concept of God for dogmatics, contains a polemic against the theology of theism.... The suffering, loving, dynamically changing triune God of the Christian faith who actively involves himself in human suffering and defines himself in his giving of himself to humankind- in



its attack on the God of traditional theism who is isolated in apathetic impassibility and omnipotence (Willis 1987:105).

In fact, Moltmann (2002[1972]: 206) is convinced that the history of western atheism is very similar to the history of nihilism. Stoker (1996:98) argues that the ‘death of God’ produces a crisis in meaning in Nietzsche’s nihilism. However, according to Stoker

becoming human-cannot be identified with the impassible, immutable God of traditional theism who remains isolated in himself in heaven and who defines himself in opposition to everything human. Trinitarian theology, here, agrees with atheism. The theistic God must be negated, for he is a misidentification of the Christian God and can give only a useless answer to the problem of suffering. This God does not act on behalf of human suffering, because this theistic God cannot suffer himself’ (Willis 1987:101), 2) ‘However, protest atheism never gets beyond the theistic conception in its thinking and negation of God’ (Willis 1987:101). 3) ‘The triune God is not an impassible God who does nothing in view of the terrors of human life. Rather, this God acts. The doctrine of the Trinity comprehends the God who in his inner being is an event, an event that acts concretely in suffering love for suffering humanity. God, here, in his very nature reaches out and identifies with human suffering...’(102) ‘That is, the triune God in opening himself for suffering at the cross answers one of the protests of atheism in that he atones for human suffering. He suffers for humanity in that he suffers with humanity. Therefore, in suffering God is “at one” with humanity. Nothing at all can separate God from humanity’ (Willis 1987:102). 4) But so far this constitutes only a partial response to protest atheism... But, in the identification of the cross of Jesus as a God event, in the identification of Jesus as the second person of the Trinity- the Son who suffers dying and forsakenness by being delivered up by the Father who suffers the death and loss of the Son, both acting in the unity of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of suffering love- the doctrine of the Trinity claims that God has taken human pain, suffering and death into the very center of his being and life and has made them his own’(Willis 1987:102). 5) ‘Moltmann parallels Barth in describing the life of the triune God as the “history of God”(102).... Unlike the theistic God presupposed by protest atheism, the triune God does not fail to act. He does not remain aloof from and unresponsive to humanity and its suffering’ (Willis 1987:102-103). 6) ‘The apologetic function of the doctrine of the Trinity, however, is not complete with the demonstration of the inclusion of suffering in God’s being. It must also clarify how this inclusion is soteriological, how it is the basis for the hope of justice and the overcoming of suffering (103).... And we know that at the cross the triune God has taken all suffering into his own being and that the Holy Spirit continues the process of integrating human history and suffering into the life of God (104).... Hope is seen in that the God comprehended in the doctrine of the Trinity is so passible that he has risked his own being out of love for you’ (Willis 1987:103-104). 7) Finally, ‘this leads us to a response to the understanding of God’s omnipotence raised by protest atheism’ (Willis 1987:104f)

(1996: 140), for Nietzsche, ‘the “death of God” implies a rejection of God that goes beyond the world of becoming. This implies that ‘with the rejection of the Christian and metaphysical God it is only the moral God who is vanquished. Therefore, for Nietzsche the traditional Christian or metaphysical God is impossible, but other concepts of God are possible (Stoker 1996:140). For Nietzsche, ‘new gods are possible after the death of the moral God. Stoker adds

Thus Nietzsche sees the affirmation of reality as an eternal recurrence, the affirmation of creation and destruction as a religious experience. It is a reality of a self-contradictory plurality. For this reason Dionysus cannot be a monotheistic God, but a designation for a sophisticated form of polytheism (Stoker 1996: 141).

Therefore Nietzsche does not deny god itself but the traditional Christian God. In this aspect, Nietzsche overcomes nihilism and atheism. Likewise, the rejection of traditional theism as a metaphysical God responds to atheism and the victims of the holocausts. According to Williams (2003:85), for Moltmann Protest atheism points out rightly that the true humanity of man, who was burdened by his suffering, cannot agree with a God who is incapable of suffering. For atheists, the holocaust and Hiroshima proved that the traditional theism is wrong, since ‘the God of traditional Christianity excluded human freedom and the sense of responsibility for this world’ (Grenz & Olson 1992:170). Therefore, Moltmann can say that *Nur ein Christ kann ein guter Atheist sein*“, *habe ich einmal zu Bloch gesagt und seinen Satz: „ Nur ein Atheist kann ein guter Christ sein“ umgekehrt*(2002[1972]: 182). *Der Atheismus erweist sich hier als der Bruder des Theismus* (2002[1972]: 207). However, this differs from the reformed theology. Atheism denies the existence of God. The atheist argument is really against theism (Hodge 1982: 444).

9.3 Moltmann’s understanding of ‘the immanent and economic Trinity’ and the doctrine of the filioque



Moltmann also criticizes the doctrine of the filioque, following the Orthodox theologian, Dumitru Staniloae. Moltmann (1991: 320-321) regards the doctrine of the filioque as superfluous (*überflüssig*) (GL: 320; SL 306)¹⁴⁷, and wrong in itself (*sachlich falsch*) (GL: 321) in *Der Geist des Lebens* (Oberdorfer 2002: 399). The doctrine of the filioque follows from the understanding of the economic and the immanent Trinity.

9.3.1 Economic and Immanent Trinity

Moltmann (1994[1980]: 176-177; O'Donnell 1983:125; Willis 1987:98¹⁴⁸; Williams 2003:98) affirmed and took up Rahner's axiom '*Die ökonomische Trinität ist die immanente Trinität und umgekehrt*'. Moltmann says,

According to this monarchical pattern for the Trinity, the 'economic Trinity (as is always stressed) is bound to correspond to the 'immanent Trinity'- indeed must be identical with it; for if God is truth, then God corresponds to himself in his revelation, thereby making his revelation dependable.... It follows from this that the 'trinitarian deduction' from the revelation which is experienced and believed finds just that in God which revelation presupposes. God is 'beforehand in himself' (Barth's phrase) what he is afterwards in his revelation. But what precedes revelation as its foundation is not 'the immanent Trinity'. If the doctrine of the Trinity describes only 'the transcendent primordial ground of salvation history', then it must infer the transcendent 'primordial ground' from the historical operations, and can naturally find nothing in the 'primordial ground' that fails to correspond to salvation history. This, however, means that 'the immanent Trinity' is related to 'the economic Trinity', and identified with it (Moltmann 1992: 291).

¹⁴⁷ In the English translation, for Moltmann (1992: 306), the filioque, the Holy Spirit from the Father and from the Son (the addition to the Nicene Creed) is superfluous.

¹⁴⁸ But he maintains a strict identity between the immanent and economic Trinity, by following Barth's Method of speaking of the immanent Trinity only can the basis of the economic Trinity.

Moltmann does no longer want to use the terms ‘immanent’ and ‘economy’ (Ackva 1994:211). Instead, he works with the terms of the ‘monarchical Trinity,’ the ‘historical Trinity,’ the ‘eucharistic Trinity,’ and the ‘doxological Trinity’ (Moltmann 1992: 290).

Admittedly, Moltmann, as Oberdorfer (2002:392; Baukham 1995: 156) points out, radicalises the modern western claim of correspondence between the economic and immanent Trinity. Moltmann (1994[1980]: 175) said the patristic tradition liked to distinguish and relate the Trinity’s immanence and its economy as the Platonists distinguished and related the idea and its appearance. The distinction of this kind between God and the world is generally a metaphysical one.

However, Moltmann (1994[1980]: 177; ET 160-161) argues that ‘the relationship of the triune God to himself and the relationship of the triune God to his world is not to be understood as a one-way relationship - the relation of image of reflection, idea to appearance, essence to manifestation - but as a mutual’. In the concept ‘reciprocal relation’ the economic Trinity reveals the immanent Trinity and reacts to the immanent Trinity (Radlbeck 1989:46; 1994[1980]: 177; ET 160), even though the divine relationship to the world is primarily determined by that inner relationship¹⁴⁹. Therefore, for Moltmann (1994[1980]: 177; ET 160), ‘the Augustinian distinction between the phrase “*opera trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*” and the phrase “*opera trinitatis ad intra sunt divisa*” is insufficient’.

Moltmann tried to understand the doctrine of the Trinity in the light of the theology of the cross (Courth 1996:162). As Grenz & Olson (1992:179) point out ‘for him the key to understanding God’s identity as historical - and thus immanent - is the doctrine of the Trinity as understood from the event of the cross of Jesus Christ’. Moltmann (2002[1972]: 232) indicates that the interpretation of the death of Jesus is regarded not

¹⁴⁹ Das Verhältnis des dreieinigen Gottes zu sich selbst und das Verhältnis des dreieinigen Gottes zu seiner Welt ist nicht einlinig als Urbild- Abbild, Idee- Erscheinung, Wesen- Offenbarung zu verstehen, sondern als ein Wechselverhältnis. Mit dem Begriff „Wechselverhältnis“ wird das Weltverhältnis Gottes seinem Selbstverhältnis nicht gleichgestellt, sondern gesagt, daß es auf dieses zurückwirkt, obgleich es primär von diesem bestimmt wird.



as a god-human event (*ein gottmenschliches Geschehen*) but as a trinitarian appearance between the Son and the Father. As Conyers (1988:9) points out ‘God’s works are the works of love because He himself is love. The immanent Trinity (God in himself) is not distinguished from the economic Trinity (God’s salvific self-disclosure), because ‘God is faithful.’ For Moltmann, the immanent Trinity appears to collapse into the economic Trinity, out of which it arises (Grenz 2004:86)

Moltmann’s understanding of the term ‘panentheism’ is closely connected with his rejection of the traditional distinction between the immanent and the economic Trinity (Letham 2004:304). Here, the term ‘panentheism’ is often confused with the term ‘pantheism.’ However, both terms differ from each other. According to Charles Hartshorne (1987:165), the term pantheism, on the one hand, implies that *all is God*. On the other hand, the term ‘panentheism’ means that *all is in God*. This implies, as Larson (1995:142) points out, that the term ‘panentheism’ indicates that ‘God’s being includes the created order but is not exhausted by it.’

For Moltmann, as Williams (2003: 91) points out, God is neither distance from the world, nor identical with the world. This viewpoint distinguishes Moltmann’s theology from pantheism. Moltmann confirms that ‘the classical theism cannot express God’s relationship to the world’ (Grenz & Olson 1992: 181). Moltmann (1994[1980]: 120; ET 106) says, ‘Christian panentheism started from the divine essence: creation is a fruit of God’s longing for his Other (*seinen Anderen*) and that Other’s free response to the divine love (*dessen freier Erwidern der göttlichen Liebe*)’. Here, Moltmann holds that the world was created by God’s free will, unlike Barth (Kärkkäinen 2004: 157). Kärkkäinen (2004:157) adds that for Moltmann ‘creation is from the love of God’. ‘God’s freedom is the freedom of love; love and freedom are synonymous’. For Moltmann (1994[1980]: 121; ET 108), ‘the idea of the world is already inherent in the Father’s love for the son’.

Grenz & Olson (1992:182) points out that ‘Moltmann developed his trinitarian panentheism farther and attempted to redress the pantheistic implications of *The Crucified God in the Trinity and the Kingdom*’. They add that ‘Moltmann sets forth a



social doctrine of the Trinity, in order to overcome the “disintegration of the doctrine of the Trinity in abstract monotheism” and to link God intimately with the world and its history while preserving and deepening the divine transcendence (Grenz & Olson 1992: 182). This is closely connected with Hartshorne’s understanding that ‘panentheism avoids both extreme monism and extreme pluralism, and it does this, it claims, without obvious paradox’ (Hartshorne 1987: 166), since Moltmann struggles strongly with the ‘traditional understanding of the monarchy of God’¹⁵⁰.

The term ‘panentheism’ is also closely connected to the concept of the ‘passibility’ of God. According to Brierley (2004:11), ‘because these arguments for passibility stem from panentheistic principles, panentheism entails passibility.’ He adds ‘there are other grounds for holding that God is passible, so panentheism does not lie behind every instance of passibility; but because of the connections between the two, passibility, in the course of its twentieth-century rise, has often led to panentheism’ (Brierley 2004: 11).

In regard of panentheism, Monlar (1989:385) criticizes it as ‘worse than pantheism’ following Barth. And by quoting from Baukham, Letham (2004:305) says that ‘Moltmann makes the same mistake as Hegel- that of making world history the process by which God realizes himself.’

9.3.2 The doctrine of the *filioque*

The doctrine of the Trinity is the theological interpretation of the history of Jesus and the Spirit (Bauckham 1995:157). According to Moltmann,

In all eternity the Holy Spirit allows the Son to shine in the Father and transfigures the Father in the Son. He is the eternal light, in which the Father knows the Son and the Son the Father. In the Holy Spirit the eternal divine life arrives at consciousness of itself, therein reflecting its perfect

¹⁵⁰ In previous chapters, this notion occurs strongly and clearly.



form. In the Holy Spirit the divine life becomes conscious of its eternal beauty. Through the Holy Spirit the eternal divine life becomes the sacred feast of the Trinity (1994[1980]: 192-193; ET 176)¹⁵¹.

According to Moltmann (1994[1980]:185; ET 169), ‘the Spirit is “breathed out” (spiratio) not begotten (generatio). So the Spirit cannot be a second Son of the Father. He proceeds from the Father. He does not equally proceed from the Son. If this were so, the Son would be the second Father and there would be two different “origins” for the divine Spirit’. Therefore, according to Moltmann (1994[1980]: 186; ET 169), ‘we can only say about the origin of the Spirit, that 1) He is not without origin like the Father, 2) He is not generated like the Son 3) His procession from the Father (*evkpo, reusij*) is a relationship peculiar to himself, the factor determining him alone.’

Moltmann seems to parallel Augustine’s conception of the Holy Spirit as the “bond of Love”, by cementing the union of the Father and the Son (Willis 1987:99-100). According to Moltmann

Western theology even since Augustine, has suggested with a certain reserve that the Holy Spirit issues from the mutual love of the Father and the Son and that the Spirit is the ‘*vinculum amoris*’ the bond of love, which brings the Father and the Son to the truth in one another and with one another; that is to say, that the Holy Spirit is the trinitarian Person who both truly distinguishes and truly unifies the Father and the Son in their relation to one another. If the Spirit together with the eternal word proceeds from the Father as ‘origin of the Godhead’, then we must also say that the Spirit is not created, but that he issues out of the necessity of the Father’s being

¹⁵¹ Der Heilige Geist bringt in Ewigkeit den Sohn im Vater *zum Leuchten* und verklärt den Vater in dem Sohn. Er ist das ewige Licht, in dem der Vater den Sohn und der Sohn den Vater erkennt. Im Heiligen Geist kommt das ewige göttliche Leben zum Bewußtsein seiner selbst und spiegelt darin seine vollkommene Gestalt. Im Heiligen Geist wird sich das göttliche Leben(192) seiner ewigen Schönheit bewußt. Durch den Heiligen Geist wird das ewige göttliche Leben zum Heiligen Fest der Trinität(1994[1980]: 193).



and is of the same essence or substance as the Father and the Son. In experiencing the Holy Spirit we experience God himself: we experience the Spirit of the Father, who unites us with the Son; the Spirit of the Son, whom the Father gives; and the Spirit who glorifies us through the Son and the Father (1994[1980]: 186; ET 169).

Moltmann (1994[1980]: 197; ET 181) tries to reconcile both the Western and Orthodox churches. 'By withdrawing the filioque a schism in the church can be ended'. 'The creed tells us that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father' (Moltmann 1994[1980]: 200; ET 183), Moltmann says, referring to Boris Bolotov (Boff 1986:205). For Moltmann (1994[1980]: 197; ET 181), the aim of the western church with the filioque was to interpret and define the trinitarian statement of the creed, while the eastern church interpreted it analogously through the interpretative phrase *evk mo,nou tou/patro,j* (only from the Father).

Moltmann (1994[1980]: 196-197; ET 180) says that 'Boris Bolotov adheres to the procession of the Holy Spirit, "from the Father alone". But he sees the Son in such proximity to the Father that the Son becomes the logical "presupposition" and the factual "condition" for the procession of the Spirit from the Father and to some extent involved in it'. Moltmann (1994[1980]: 197; ET 180) finds 'in Bolotov a theological approximation to the truth which the West tried to express through the filioque'. According to Oberdorfer (2002: 397), Moltmann does not deny the filioque for ecumenical peace only. But he refers, not explicitly and directly, to the variety and differences of the economic relation between the Son and the Spirit, which is reflected clearly in the trinitarian principle of uniqueness, and which constitutes the theological main argument against the *filioque*. The Son, in another categorical way than the Father, should participate in the procession of the Spirit (Oberdorfer 2002: 397). However, Oberdorfer (2002: 397) adds that in the name of this categorical difference, Moltmann agrees to the greek term *evk mo,nou tou/patro,j* and explicitly says: The Holy Spirit does not come from the Son. As La Due (2003:143) points out, Moltmann confirms that the Spirit proceeds from the Father only and does not proceed from the Son. Actually, Moltmann (1981: 166) declares that 'the interpretation is correct which states that the



Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father “alone”, by pointing to ‘the procession of the Spirit (divine existence),’ but ‘not to his inner-trinitarian personal form in his relations to the Father and to the Son’ (Moltmann 1981: 167).

Moltmann (1994[1980]: 199; ET 182) sees that although ‘the uniqueness of the procession of the Spirit from the Father has never been disputed by the theologians of the western church’, the rejection of the doctrine of the *filioque* is closely connected to the ‘monarchy’ of the Father. For Moltmann (1994[1980]: 198-199; ET 182), ‘they have never seen the Son as ‘competing’ with the Father as regards the issuing of the Holy Spirit; there has never been any question of two sources for the Godhead. Consequently, the *filioque* could also be interpreted as ‘per Filium.’ He adds that ‘the *filioque* was never directed against the ‘monarchy’ of the Father, even though this formula was supposed to ward off tendencies towards a subordinationism in the trinitarian doctrine, as well as trends towards a subordinationist dissolution of the Trinity in its own economy of salvation’ (1994[1980]: 199; ET 182). Moltmann says

The creed tells us that the Holy Spirit “proceedeth from the Father”. The first Person of the Trinity is the Father, but only in respect of the Son- that is to say, in the eternal generation of the Son’. God the Father is always the Father of the Son. He is not to be called Father because he is the Sole Cause, and because all things are dependent on Him. God shows himself as the Father solely and exclusively in the eternal generation of the eternal Son. In salvation history he is exclusively ‘the Father of Jesus Christ’, and it is through Christ the Son and in the fellowship of this ‘firstborn’ among many brothers and sisters, that he is our Father too (Moltmann 1994[1980]: 200¹⁵²; Moltmann 1981: 167).

¹⁵² Der Heilige Geist „geht vom Vater aus“, sagt das Bekenntnis. Die erste Person der Trinität ist der Vater, aber immer nur im Blick auf den Sohn, nämlich in der ewigen Zeugung des Sohnes. Gott der Vater ist immer der Vater des Sohnes

Nicht wegen seiner Alleinursächlichkeit und der Abhängigkeit aller Dinge von ihm ist er „Vater“ zu



As Boff (1986:205) points out, ‘Moltmann starts with the Father, who is always Father of the Son.’ Moltmann (1981: 167; 1994[1980]: 200) says that ‘the Father is eternally only the Father of the Son. He is not the Father of the Spirit. The procession of the Spirit from the Father presupposes the eternal generation of the Son through the Father’. Moltmann (1994[1980]: 200; ET 184) argues with a working group of Faith and Order of the WCC that ‘the Spirit is the third hypostasis of the holy Trinity. His being presupposes the existence (*Dasein*) of the Father and the existence (*Dasein*) of the Son, because the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, and because the Father is the Father of the Son alone. Consequently, as soon as God *proboleus tou pneumatos* is called Father, he is thought of as having a Son’. Moltmann (1994[1980]: 200; ET 184) says that ‘if God as Father breathes the Holy Spirit, then the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father of the Son’. The Holy Spirit experiences his hypostatic divinity from the Father as the origin of divinity, and his innertrinitarian form from the Son, the Father and their reciprocal relation (Moltmann 1981: 168; Oberdorfer 2002: 399).

According to Moltmann, ‘monotheism’ caused the doctrine of the *filioque* (Oberdorfer 2002: 402; Heron 1983: 170¹⁵³). According to Moltmann

It was therefore quite logical that the *monarchical concept of the Trinity* should lead to the introduction of the *filioque* into the Nicene Creed. The Holy Spirit proceeds ‘from the Father and the Son’ because in salvation history he is sent by the Father and the Son, and is experienced in this way by human beings; and his eternal processio in the ‘immanent’ Trinity as transcendent primordial ground must correspond to his missio in the

nennen. Einzig und exklusiv in der ewigen Zeugung des ewigen Sohnes erweist sich Gott als „der Vater“. Er ist heilsgeschichtlich exklusiv der „Vater Jesu Christi“, und erst durch Christus den Sohn und in der Gemeinschaft dieses „Erstgeborenen“ unter vielen Brüdern und Schwestern ist er auch „unser Vater“. Um diese in jeder Hinsicht wichtige Unterscheidung festzuhalten, schlagen wir vor, mit Bedacht von dem „Vater des Sohnes“ zu sprechen (1994[1980]: 200).

¹⁵³ It is no accident that Moltmann is particularly concerned to achieve reconciliation between East and West on the matter of the *filioque*. His distancing of himself from the modalising tendencies of ancient and modern Western trinitarianism is certainly one of the prerequisites for any such rapprochement



economic Trinity as this is experienced” (Moltmann 1992: 292-293).

However, as Oberdorfer (2002:402) points out, indeed Christian theology toiled with the critique of an abstract concept of one God in the development and intellectual completion of the doctrine of the Trinity. However, particularly for the continuity with Judaism, Christian theology holds strongly to the unity and the uniqueness of God. He adds that Moltmann’s oneness (*Einigkeit*) is unity (*Einheit*), and it is a touchstone for the efficiency of his conception, whether it can actually indicate it (Oberdorfer 2002: 402).

That Moltmann’s reluctance to renounce ‘relations of origin (*Ursprungsbeziehungen*)’ for *perichoresis*, is not due to his mere regard for Orthodox traditionalism, but to the inherent problem: the lack of clarity in the ‘*Verhältnisbestimmung von Ursprung und Perichorese*’ is an indicator that Moltmann does not provide the problem with a real solution (Oberdorfer 2002:403). Oberdorfer says that Moltmann regards the filioque-discussion as important, because he showed a possible solution by criticizing the doctrine of the *filioque* as expressed in the modern western theology without dismissing the active of truth in the *filioque*. But Moltmann’s realization of possibility is not free from gaps, aporia, and opaqueness. However it may be difficult to challenge this possibility by itself (Oberdorfer 2002:403). Moltmann’s rejection of the doctrine of the *filioque* by giving up the western idea is unjustified, since the western and eastern understanding is the same thing of different angles.



10 EBERHARD JÜNGEL'S DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

In accordance with Moltmann, Jüngel rejects the metaphysical understanding of God according to Courth (1993:276). This implies that, as McGrath (2005[1994]: 219) points out, for Jüngel, 'the slogan "the death of God" must be understood to mean "the death of the metaphysical God", which is discredited both by the critiques of atheism and by a Trinitarian conception of God,' since Jüngel regards atheism as antitheism (Webster 1986: 82). Jüngel (2001[1977]: 57) says that the fruit of the labour of the meaning the talk of the death of God is the substansive center of theology (*Die Erarbeitung des Sinnes der Rede vom Tode Gottes führt in das sachliche Zentrum der Theologie*). According to DeHart (1999:164), 'the collapse of metaphysic was intimately tied up with the "death" of the metaphysics' God, a conceptual construction upon which Christian theology had become dangerously dependent.' It is thus highly significant that Jüngel combines Barth's Christocentric understanding of theology with the New Hermeneutics' aim to clarify the ontological implications of the Christian faith for human existence- an aim the so-called Barthians often looked at with distrust (Spjuth 1998:508).

10.1 The Doctrine of God

In the theology of Eberhard Jüngel, the doctrine of the Trinity is based on his understanding of the doctrine of God, especially on the meaning of the 'death of God'. This concept the 'death of God' is regarded as the answer against the problem of the metaphysical understanding of God. According to McGrath (2005[1994]: 211), 'Jüngel's theological programme relates fundamentally to the question of how it is possible to speak of God in a responsible manner in a world in which people live, by using Dietrich Bonhoeffer's phrase, *etsi Deus non daretur* (as though God were not given).'

According to Wethmar (1977:160), Ebeling makes use of the same phrase '*etsi Deus non daretur*'. For Ebeling, this implies that God's existence is derived from humans



(Wethmar 1977:160)¹⁵⁴. God's close connection with the world is experienced through human beings in God's nature as 'absence'. Admittedly, in the experience of the absence of God, God expresses himself (Wethmar 1977: 161). For Ebeling, according to Wethmar (1977:161), this absent presence of God in the world results from the radical 'freedom,' with which the life of man is characterized: a 'freedom' that is demonstrable in the human phenomenon of finiteness and passivity. The linguistic nature of human knowledge regarding God is not exclusively based on the linguisticity of human existence but in the first instance on the original linguisticity of God's revelation (Wethmar 1977:161). As DeHart (1999:154) points out, Jüngel develops his understanding of 'God's absence from the world in linguistic terms' in a manner informed by Fuchs and Ebeling.

10.1.1 The problem of the doctrine of God in modern understanding

In the traditional metaphysics, the distinction between the essence (*Wesen*) and the existence (*Existenz*) of God is important to understanding God. Jüngel says,

Nevertheless, human thought had to distinguish linguistically between essence and God's existence, when, for example, it wanted to prove that God exists. This distinction becomes all the more when, for example, Thomas Aquinas sought to demonstrate the existence of God but at same time had to say with regard to the *essence* of God: We can only know that of God which he is not. The human reason had to *distinguish* something which it wanted to assert to be *identical* (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 139-140; [ET] 106).

¹⁵⁴ Wethmar quotes Ebeling's sentence here, 'Daß theologisch von Gott nicht die Rede sein kann, ohne daß damit die Welt als Geschehen zu Sprache kommt, und von der Welt theologisch nicht die Rede sein kann, ohne daß damit ebenfalls Gott als Geschehen zur Sprache kommt'.



The serious assumption that there could be any real distinction between the essence and the existence of God (*Wesen und Existenz Gottes*) would have robbed the word ‘God’ of any meaning (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 140; ET 106). However, for Jüngel (2001[1977]: 140; ET 107) human thinking could not avoid the distinction between the essence and the existence of God which is the necessary differentiation as a methodical distinction to be able to initiate responsible talk about God within the dimension of thought.

According to Klimek (1986:58), the problem of this relation between the essence and the existence of God is influenced by Descartes’ self-sureness. Actually, Jüngel (2001[1977]: 144; ET 109) mentions that ‘the possibility of a crisis of the idea of God as a thinking event, a possibility already anticipated in the metaphysical tradition of the concept of God, became an acute problem at the point when thinking began to ground itself in the event of the human “I think”. This happened in the philosophy of Rene Descartes who became the decisive figure for modern thought.’

With Descartes, doubt functions in any hermeneutical principle (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 148). According to Webster (1986: 53), Jüngel ‘identifies three elements in the structure of the Cartesian “undermining of certainty of God”’. He adds

1) Descartes’ thought represents a decision in favor of the doubting ego as the indubitable foundational truth. For Jüngel, this decision transposes the question of knowledge of God into a radically subjective mode... 2) The structural element concerns Descartes’ concept of God, which Jüngel feels to be shaped by the initial decision in favor of the ‘subjectum... as hypokeimenon [that which is fundamental]’. God becomes the guarantor of the continuity of the successive moments of certainty which are afforded in the ego’s self-reflection. Descartes’ account of God functions as this principle of coherence. The consequence of this is that ‘God is a methodological necessity for the *res cogitans* which seeks to secure the continuity of its existence.’ 3) The very weakness of the *dubito* in its need for a divine guarantor is paradoxically a powerful agent in the overthrow of the thinkability of God (*Denkbarkeit Gottes*) (Webster 1986:53-54).



According to Klimek (1986:65), for Jüngel, this critique of the traditional metaphysical presentation or introduction of God is a central issue. And for Jüngel, ‘this critique of traditional metaphysics comes from Heidegger, who considered metaphysics to be ultimately useless’ (Zimany 1994: 10). Jüngel regards this critique ‘as a lever against the “theistic tradition”’ (Webster 1986:68; Shults 2005: 154). Webster (1986:82) points out that for Jüngel ‘atheism becomes synonymous with the rejection of one particular tradition of theistic metaphysical doctrine.’ Jüngel, indeed, claims that ‘his construction corrects the classical doctrine of God and at the same time does away with three of its traditional axioms, those, namely, of the absoluteness, the apathy, and the immutability of God’ (Coffey, 1999: 132).

For Jüngel (2001[1977]: 144-145), the crisis of the modern ‘thought about God’ is closely connected with the three modern philosophers Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Ludwig Feuerbach and Friedrich Nietzsche, on the basis of the critique of the Cartesian thought in its sentence ‘I think (Ich denke)’. They demonstrated that the metaphysical thought about God had to become the presupposition of the modern challenge to be possible to think about God.

First of all, Jüngel (2001[1977]: 170-187) treats Fichte’s demand ‘God must ... not be thought at all’ (*Gott soll... überhaupt gar nicht zu denken*). According to Jüngel (2001[1977]: 170), Fichte’s claim ‘not to think about God at all’ (*Gott überhaupt gar nicht zu denken*) is supported rather concisely with the statement ‘because it is impossible’. For Fichte, the impossibility of the idea of God was based on the certainty of a metaphysically conceived God (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 171). According to DeHart (1999:59), ‘Fichte had asserted the impossibility both of conceiving God as a substance possessing “being”, and of conceiving of God as “outside” the world.’ Fichte’s understanding, that God is not thinkable, is not a statement ‘against’ but ‘for’ God (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 185). Fichte shares in the metaphysical concept of God with the entire western tradition (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 186; DeHart 1999:57). Fichte ‘shares his understanding of thought with Descartes and Kant’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 186; ET 140). ‘In the atheism controversy Fichte remains faithful to the metaphysical understanding of God’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 187; ET 140-141). Fichte’s argument ‘is convincing only if



two presuppositions are accepted. On the one hand thought must be defined as always having been and always being defined by the human ego as a mortal subject. On the other hand, God within the basic structure of the metaphysical understanding of God, is asserted to be the perfect and infinite being' (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 186; ET 140).

Jüngel (2001[1977]: 188-195) refers to Feuerbach's assertion 'only when you think about God you are thinking rigorously spoken' (*Nur wo du Gott denkst, denkst du, rigoros gesprochen*). Jüngel (2001[1977]: 188; ET 141) says, 'whereas Fichte declared that his demand "*Gott überhaupt gar nicht zu denken*" was an answer given in passing to a question raised in passing, Feuerbach understands his argument as 'rigorously spoken' (*rigoros gesprochen*), Feuerbach's rigorous statement is only one example of a language understood throughout as basically rigorous, but which cannot be called strict'. He adds 'the rigorousness of this language is to be found neither in the strictness of its formulations nor in the strictness of the thought expressed through it, but exclusively in the rigorousness of the intention which is expressed in it' (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 188; ET 141).

Jüngel (2001[1977]: 189; ET 142) thinks that, following Feuerbach's explanation, 'it would be possible to delineate the divinity of human understanding, the divinity of human will, and the divinity of human love, and then to assert the type of essence (*Gattungswesen-genus man*) constituted by the unity of this *Trias* ('reason- will-heart') was a divine being'. Jüngel says

In spite of his assertion that each of these three human capacities exists for itself and is thus divine, Feuerbach points out expressly through the connection of the chapters at the beginning of the first part of his book that the God who is interpreted only as the essence of understanding is precisely not seen as the God who is in truth human, hence human understanding too cannot actually be presented as divine (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 189, ET 142).

'At the level of thought, God is thought as a God who remains abstractly opposite to Man "... as a being not human"' (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 189; ET 142). Feuerbach's



saying ‘the intellect knows nothing of the sufferings of the heart’ (*Der Verstand weiß nichts von den Leiden des Herzens*) ‘is the anthropological reason for it’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 189-190; ET 142-143). Jüngel (2001[1977]: 190; ET 143) says that ‘in order for the abstract perfection of divine rational essence to become the concrete perfection of the human essence, the abstract oppositeness of God and man, established by God as a rational essence, must be shown to be a painful lack in man, a self-alienation of the human essence’.

He adds that ‘this happens in that the perfection, in which God is God, is expressed as man’s own possibility of being perfect, through the demand for human perfection’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 190; ET 143). Thus, Feuerbach claims that ‘the chapter on God as the essence of understanding is followed by a chapter about God as Law.’ It is only within the dimension of the law that movement in the oppositeness of God and man is introduced. For in order to fulfill the law, love is required. In love, however, the antithesis of God and man is abrogated.

Jüngel (2001[1977]: 191; ET 144) says that ‘the general reason for Feuerbach’s thesis “... that the true sense of theology is anthropology, that there is no distinction between the predicates of the divine and human nature, and, consequently, no distinction between the divine and human subject,”¹⁵⁵ is logically inadequately established.’ Jüngel adds that ‘Feuerbach’s critique of religion sustains itself as a critique *de facto* on the material statements of the Christian faith and its theology, which certainly does not always answer as well as it should to this faith. This can now be seen in his remarks about “God as Being of Understanding”’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 192; ET 144). Jüngel says

It connects up with Anselm’s famous description of God as ‘*id quo maius cogitari nequit*’. Together with traditional dogmatics, Feuerbach assumes that God is thinkable in his essence, his deity, with initially no reference to

¹⁵⁵ daß der wahre Sinn der Theologie die Anthropologie ist, daß zwischen den Prädikaten des göttlichen und menschlichen Wesens, folglich... auch zwischen dem göttlichen und menschlichen Subjekt oder Wesen kein Unterschied ist“



the identity of this essence with the concrete trinitarian subsistence and certainly by ignoring the identity of God with the concrete existence of the man Jesus of Nazareth (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 192; ET 144-145)¹⁵⁶.

This connection with Anselm's definition, as DeHart (1999:62) points out, is the 'instrument in the transformation of theology into anthropology.' Jüngel (2001[1977]: 193; ET 145) says, 'Feuerbach sets up God's deity as an only apparent counter concept to that of the human essence. God is rather thought of "as the antithesis [Extrem] of man, as a being not human, i.e., not personally human"'. Jüngel says that 'for to the extent that God is thought "as a purely thinkable being, an object of the intellect," he "is thus nothing else than the reason become objective to itself." The presupposition here is that reason itself must become objective'. Feuerbach regards God as the boundary (*Grenzwert*) and 'as the boundary concept (*Grenzbegriff*) God is a thought. And as a thought, God is one, or better, the most authentic accomplishment of thought' (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 194; ET 146).

Jüngel explains Nietzsche's question: Can you think about a God? (*Könntet ihre einen Gott denken?*). According to Jüngel (2001[1977]: 195; ET 147), for Nietzsche, and 'for the tradition against which he is contending, God is the conjecture of finiteness (*Endlichkeit*)'. Jüngel adds

Tradition made an identification between the infinity surrounding finite man and God. By making such an identification, infinity became a firm antithesis to finitude, particularly when the incarnation of the infinite God was disregarded in this context, which is what usually happened. An infinity not identified with God, on the other hand could be looked on as the open aspect of finitude, its horizon, and it then would be the essence of man to go toward that horizon and to prohibit the emergence of any opposition

¹⁵⁶ ...daß Gott in seinem Wesen, in seiner Gottheit, zunächst unter Nichtberücksichtigung der Identität dieses Wesens mit der konkrete trinitarischen Subsistenz und erst recht unter Ignorierung der Identität Gottes mit der konkreten Existenz des Menschen Jesus von Nazareth, denkbar ist.



between the finite and infinity. In that sense, Nietzsche, overcoming both metaphysics and Christianity, speaks of the death of God as that great event which finally opens up the horizon again (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 195-196; ET 147).

According to Jüngel (2001[1977]: 197; ET 148), Nietzsche's antipathy applies to the definition of God, and the word 'antipathy' (*Wider-Wille*) is the opposition to 'the anselmian axiom which implies the definition of God as 'that which nothing great can be conceived (*id quo maius cogitari nequit*)', the ontological argument of Anselm, as well as against the Cartesian approach of a metaphysics which makes being dependent on the "thinking thing" (*res cogitans*)'. Nietzsche 'is linking himself to the aporia which Hegel had already formulated when he drew his conclusion from the philosophy of subjectivity' (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 198; ET 149). According to Geyer (1970:255), the sentence 'God is dead' implies the end of metaphysics, in which, for Nietzsche, the western philosophy is regarded as Platonism. Stoker explains this understanding of the 'death of God' in Nietzsche as the new proposal for meaning in Nihilism. He mentions that 'for him [Nietzsche], the 'death of God' means giving up a way of thinking about God that goes beyond the world of becoming. But with the rejection of the Christian and metaphysical God, only the moral God is vanquished'. 'Other concepts of God are possible after the death of the moral God' (Stoker 1996:140). And 'after the "death of God" the moral period is disappearing' (Stoker 1996: 142).

10.1.2 The meaning of the talk about the death of God

The significance of the talk about the death of God leads to 'the substantive centre of theology' (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 57; ET 44). Although, to Jüngel (2001[1977]: 59; ET 45), 'the proposition that God is dead is a dark statement. And it will remain dark as long as it is not understood in terms of its origin.' According to Jüngel,

The origin of this dark statement is at least twofold. 'In both Hegel and Nietzsche, although in varying ways, it becomes clear that the thought



which is expressed in this statement has both a metaphysical and genuinely Christian origin. Both origins must be differentiated methodically, although in their consequences they permeate each other. It also becomes clear that the metaphysical and the Christian origin of this thought have been passed on in Christian theology itself. That is why it is not surprising that either in connection with the apparently anti-metaphysical concept of the death of God it is also asserted that “the belief in the Christian God has become unworthy of belief,” or in connection with the theological justification of talk about the death of God such talk is won back for metaphysics and thus the metaphysical idea of God is elevated, for which Ludwig Feuerbach thought he had to level accusation at Hegel (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 59; ET 47).

For Jüngel(2001[1977]: 62; ET 48), ‘the decision about the relationship of Christianity and metaphysics, the decision about the possibility of the free usage of the metaphysical tradition by Christian theology, and the decision about the freedom of Theology is made in the response to the question: where is God?’

The question of God ‘is changing into a specifically modern theodicy question’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 69; ET 53). However, according to Jüngel (2001[1977]: 69; ET 53), Vis-à-vis nothingness, one does not ask who or what God is, but rather where God is. As the most indefinite way of asking about God, ‘the question “where is God?” belongs to the end of the traditional metaphysics, which answers the question with the dark statement about the death of God’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 69; ET 54). He adds that ‘as the most concrete way to ask about God, the question “Where is God?” is the basic question of Christian faith, which may perhaps illuminate the dark statement of the death of God’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 70; ET 54).

Jüngel (2001[1977]: 71; ET 54) says that ‘as long as the question about the Where of God can be answered with the alternative reference either to his presence (*Anwesendsein*) or his absence (*Abwesendsein*), then God’s being has not been put into question radically’. Jüngel adds,



If then, with the metaphysical tradition, God's being has been thought of as pure reality which excludes every possibility from its self and conditions all other reality, in other words, if God has been asserted to be the 'absolute necessity (*absolute Notwendigkeit*)', then the negation of his presence (*Anwesenheit*) is much more than just the affirmation of his absence (*Abwesenheit*). Here, God himself is negated along with his absence and the distinction between presence (*Anwesenheit*) and absence (*Abwesenheit*) becomes senseless with reference to God' (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 71; ET 54-55).

To Jüngel, the talk about 'the death of God' is not strange to Christian theology (DeHart 1999:9).

According to Jüngel (2001[1977]: 72; ET 55), 'the fathers of the ancient church could talk about it, and Martin Luther virtually demanded that it was necessary to speak of the death of God using, of course, very precise presuppositions.' According to Meessen (1989:305), for Jüngel, this understanding is not regarded as new land, but as the 'return' (*Heimkehr*) of this theological theme in theology. Jüngel (2001[1977]: 72; ET 55) says that 'the statement "God has died" was not originally the province of philosophy but of theology. Then it became alien to theology.' As McGrath (2005[1994]: 218) says, 'Jüngel argues for the need for Christian theology to reclaim the idea of the "death of God", and to insist that it be interpreted in a responsible and Christian manner.'

For Jüngel (2001[1977]: 72; ET 55), 'the history of the alienation between theology and talk about the death of God began primarily with the intellectual accomplishments of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.' He adds that

Hegel was seeking to take up the atheistic tendencies of the age in which he lived and to work through them positively, and this is what gives his dealing with the idea of the death of God its special significance. That Hegel's massive accomplishment was almost immediately misunderstood is



no excuse for the scandalous fact that there are contemporary thinkers who would have us believe that they could appeal to Hegel for their theologically senseless use of the idea of the death of God. For that reason alone it would be useful to sketch briefly Hegel's discourse on the death of God (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 72; ET 56)

Jüngel (2001[1977]: 74) calls Bonhoeffer's understanding as 'contraction to the return of the speaking of the death of God (*Beitrag zu Heimkehr der Rede von Tode Gottes*)' in theology. This is caused from his facing the problem of contemporary theism (Livingston 1971:483). Livingston (1971:479) says that 'the only conception of God appropriate to a religionless Christian faith is that of God in his powerlessness and suffering for other viz, the Crucified.' For Jüngel,

Hegel, at the beginning of the last century, tried with his talk about the death of God to assert a theological proposition as the "world spirit's" truth consciousness. Conversely, the attempt has been made in our century, by use of the fragmentary thought of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, to draw the "truth-consciousness" of the "world spirit" into theology, so that religionlessness might be exposed as an element of theological truth (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 73; ET 56).

Jüngel (2001[1977]: 134) says that the meaning of the death of God implies the question of God's being with the existence of God which leads to the question 'where is God', which must be answered 'Nowhere', and thus 'God is nowhere, therefore he is not (*Gott ist nirgends, also ist er nicht*)'. He adds that 'the assertion that God is nowhere and thus is not, is the practical consequence of an aporia in the concept of the divine essence. The statement of the death of God reveals that there is an aporia in the "natural" concept of God which makes the essence of God problematical, and it does so not only in its christological usage but also in its nontheological usage, and it does so not only in its christological usage but also in its non theological expressly atheistic usage' (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 134-135; ET 102). Jüngel sees the meaning of the death of God in terms of the 'problem of traditional theism, in which God would be transcendent



over the human being' (McGrath 2005[1994]: 219). Lønning (1986:187) explains Jüngel's position that in modern talk of the death of God Jüngel sees a doublet(*Doppeltes*), namely on the one hand, the last, logical, and inevitable sign (*Zeichen*) of self-solution of the metaphysical absolute-idea (and in this the traditional 'natural' theology in its complete development), on the other hand, the announced return(*Heimkehr*) of an original and true-christian motive, which was expelled from theology too long and too emphatically.

Actually, the critique of the traditional metaphysical concept of God takes a central position in Jüngel's idea of God (Klimek 1986:76). As Wigley (1993:91) points out, 'the notion of the "death of God" should not be seen so much as a result of atheism but rather as a proper reflection upon the word of God spoken in the "crucified one"; only it should be reflected upon by theologians in a more profound way than it has been hitherto.' According to Jüngel (2001[1977]: 275; ET 203), 'based on the premises of modern metaphysics, talk about the death of God makes pointedly clear that the concept of God which modern metaphysics took over from the older metaphysics cannot tolerate the finitude to express the absurdity of the concept of God'. Jüngel adds

That weakness is not understood as a contradiction of God's power. There is, however, only one phenomenon in which power and weakness do not contradict each other, in which rather power can perfect itself as weakness. This phenomenon is the event of love. Love does not see power and weakness as alternatives. It is the unity of power and weakness, and such is certainly the most radical opposite of the will to power which cannot affirm weakness (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 280; ET 206).

Therefore, for Jüngel (2001[1977]: 297; ET 218) 'talk about the death of God implies then, in its true theological meaning that God is the one who involves himself in nothingness. This is not contradicted by belief in the resurrection from the death'. He adds

The talk of the death of God means in its interpretation through the



proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus: (a) that God has involved himself with nothingness; (b) that God has involved himself with nothingness in the form of a struggle; (c) that God gives nothingness a place within being by taking it on himself. In that God identified himself with the dead Jesus, he located nothingness within the divine life. But by making for nothingness a place within the divine being, God took away from it the chaotic effect of its phantom like attraction' (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 297; ET 219).

However, it is true, as Pannenberg (1988: 341; ET 314) criticises, that it is not right at all to talk about the 'death of God on the cross' as it has occurred since the time of Hegel. We can say only of the Son of God that he was 'crucified, dead, and buried.' He adds that 'even to speak directly of the death of God in the Son' is a reverse 'monophysitism'. Macquarrie says about Jüngel's understanding of the doctrine of God.

Furthermore, throughout his theological career Jüngel has had to contend with a strong tendency toward atheism which has appeared even in Christian theology in the assertion by some theologians of the 'death of God'. Jüngel believes that if the church truly based its understanding of God on the crucified Jesus, then such atheistic developments would not have taken place (Macquarrie 2001[1963]: 399).

Macquarrie (2001[1963]: 400) says that 'the word "theism" is not a bad word'. As Davidson (1997:178) points out, Jüngel's attack on metaphysical theism is obscure. Davidson (1997:179) argues that Jüngel's error is serious, although he points out the danger of the over-simplification of his critique. Davidson adds that

The condemnation of Descartes which is central to his understanding of the proper basis for the *Denkbarkeit Gottes*, over against theism and atheism, is seriously weakened by a confusion of epistemology and ontology: It is one thing to say that knowledge of God is dependent on the self-knowledge of God the doubting ego, but obviously quite another to say that God's being is contingent upon humanity. Such confusion almost implies a basic failure



to appreciate what apologetical theology is all about (Davidson 1997: 179)

10.1.3 The problem of the speakability of God

According to Jüngel (2001[1977]: 309; ET 227) ‘in general, God can be thought as the one who he is only on the basis of revelation which has taken place. The possibility of the thought of God which thinks God as God is conditioned by the fact that God has revealed himself.’ He adds that ‘Faith is the anthropological realization of the fact that God has revealed himself’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 309; ET 228).

10.1.3.1 The deity is unspeakable and incomprehensible

To Jüngel (2001[1977]: 312), ‘the discussion about ‘whether’ and ‘how’ God is speakable must take place with regard to very specific speech events which claim that God has spoken.’ He adds that ‘for Christian theology, those are the particular speech events which make Christian faith possible. With reference to them, the problem of the speakability of God must be discussed in as principled and general a fashion as possible, and work on the thought of God must be governed by an interest in a concept of God which is generally binding.’ For Jüngel

The principal and general problem which is raised for Christian theology in the context of the speakability of God has to do with the relationship of God to human language, or better, the relationship of human language to a God who can be thought only as one who speaks out of himself. We had to understand the word in which God is supposed to have expressed himself, as that word which belongs to God’s own being. But as such, it does not necessarily belong to human language. As God’s word, it is not necessarily also human language (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 312-313; ET 230).

This is in line with Ebeling. For Ebeling, according to Wethmar (1977:164), the essence of language is given in the word as event. He starts from the phenomenon of language.

The first step upon his theological way of thought (by which he answers the speech about God in our time) is therefore his analysis of the phenomenon of word and language (Wethmar 1977:164).

Actually for Jüngel (2001[1977]: 322), theology is certainly talk about God. However, traditionally the talk of God is incomprehensible and unspeakable. Jüngel criticizes the phrase of John of Damascus ‘the divine is unspeakable and incomprehensible (*Unsagbar ist das Göttliche und unbegreiflich*),’ which is based on Jn 1:18 and Mt 11: 27, because it is the spirit of Plato which ‘is expressed in this fundamental statement’. Jüngel (2001[1977]: 318; ET 233) states that mediated by Neo-Platonism, the basic platonic decision about the ‘the divine is unspeakable and incomprehensible (*Unsagbar ist das Göttliche und unbegreiflich*)’ made its way into Christian theology.

To Jüngel (2001[1977]: 315; ET 231), ‘the problem of the speakability of God is ultimately seen to be the problem of the possibility of analogous talk about God.’ Jüngel (2001[1977]: 315) refers to Thomas Aquinas who developed the classical thesis of the speakability about God (*Sagbarkeit Gottes*). According to Jüngel (2001[1977]: 322; ET 236), Aquinas ‘worked through this tradition and its problems and in the process, the axiom of the ineffability of God is restated in the narrower proposition, “*Quod de Deo non possumus scire quid est*”(we cannot know in what the essence of God consists)’. To Aquinas, ‘God is not called the perfect one because there are perfections within creaturely being, which is incontestable. Rather because God is absolutely perfect, he gives to his creatures creaturely perfections. In that sense he is to be called “the Good”’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 332; ET 244). Therefore, ‘Thomas has subjected the names of God which speak of him absolutely and affirmatively to his hermeneutic of the greater dissimilarity between God and the world which speaks of him.’ Jüngel adds that ‘even the name which expresses the perfection of God only imperfectly name God’s perfection and imply that God is always the more perfect: *Deus semper maior* (God is always greater)’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 333; ET 244).

The hermeneutical difference between God and the word which ‘speaks about him is based by Thomas Aquinas in this instance in a differentiation in the language process



itself' (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 333; ET 245). For Jüngel (2001[1977]: 334; ET 245), 'the hermeneutic of the unspeakability of God appears to preserve the essence of God as a mystery (*das Wesen Gottes als Geheimnis*)'. Jüngel (2001[1977]: 334; ET 246) says that 'faith knows God as the ultimate and authentic mystery of the world. Yet at the same time, faith understands God as that which is most self-evident. Whoever has ears to hear and eyes to see would have to understand God'. Zimany (1994:114) says that 'the Being of God is a complete mystery and is not a mystery simply because of the limits of human knowledge'.

God is the mystery of the world because God empowered Jesus to be who he was, and Jesus was in the world. Because Jesus belonged to God and to the world, Jüngel concludes that the world belongs to God (because it belonged to the Being of Jesus) and therefore does not possess itself... It is the mystery of the world because God is love. This assertion is significant because it means that God is in relationship with us, enabling us to see the world and its internal relationships as being ultimately in relationship with more-than-itself (God) (Zimany 1994:114-115).

10.1.3.2 *The doctrine of analogy*

According to Jüngel (2001[1977]: 356), the understanding of 'mystery' is closely connected to the doctrine of analogy. Jüngel (2001[1977]: 356) looks for a doctrine of analogy which explains the Gospel as the human word which corresponds to the divine mystery. On the basis of the New Testament's positive understanding of mystery, this new view on analogy will be presented against the traditional usage of analogy.

10.1.3.2.1 The problem of analogy

The doctrine of analogy, which is of special interest within the context of the problem of appropriateness (*Angemessenheit*) or inappropriateness (*Unangemessenheit*) of human talk about God, which it would appear is always humanizing talk about God, is known under the title *analogia nominum* (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 357; ET 261-262) which



implies ‘an analogy of being’ known under the title *analogia entis*. Here, Jüngel (2001[1977]: 358; ET 262) is concerned with ‘only partial aspects of the many-leveled classical doctrine of analogy’. He treats Kant’s statements in the light of its ‘Aristotelian origin’ and Thomas Aquinas’ ‘theological elaboration.’

Immanuel Kant ‘sought to answer the theological and philosophical question about how to speak appropriately of God by appealing expressly to the logical figure of analogy’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 358; ET 263). Jüngel adds that ‘in that, Kant’s appeal to analogy has special meaning because here that particular philosopher who thought it to be necessary to abrogate metaphysical knowledge believed that he could give a positive answer to the question whether God can be expressed in language in a rationally responsible way’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 358-359). This positive answer ‘follows the rule of knowledge “by means of this analogy (*die Regel des Erkennens nach der Analogie*)”’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 360; ET 264). Jüngel (2001[1977]: 360; ET 264) says, ‘Kant asserts that in such an approach we would avoid “dogmatic anthropomorphism (*dogmatische Anthropomorphismus*)”, but would permit ourselves a legitimate “symbolical anthropomorphism (*symbolischen Anthropomorphismus*)”, which is legitimate because it “in fact concerns language only and not the object itself”. Kant ‘ascribes to language a hermeneutically decisive function for the definition of the relation of God and the world, and thus for the problem of the thinkability of God’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 360; ET 264).

Jüngel (2001[1977]: 362; ET 265) says that ‘according to Kant, analogy “does not signify (as is commonly understood) an imperfect similarity of two things, but a perfect similarity of relations between two quite dissimilar things.”’ He adds

The mere similarity of two relations between very different things is thus always presented as the similarity of a dependent relationship, so that in the analogy of relationship a certain relative order is also at work. The concept of relationship which is presupposed in this analogy is expressly called “the concept of cause” by Kant. In his Critique of Judgement, Kant then defines analogy (“in a qualitative sense”) as “the identity of the relation subsisting

between grounds and consequences- causes and effects- so far as such identity subsists despite the specific difference of the things, or of those properties, considered in themselves (i.e. apart from this relation), which are the source of similar consequences.” Two different kinds of analogy thus are intermixed in Kant, which the tradition was more or less accustomed to distinguish from each other (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 363; ET 266).

For Jüngel (2001[1977]: 377), this understanding of the traditional doctrine of analogy is connected to the struggle about God as mystery (*Gott als Geheimnis*). Kant ‘maintains that we express the unknowness of God only when we use the analogy of relation. What is made known in such language really applies only to language and not to the “object”’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 379; ET 278). The term ‘symbolic anthropomorphism (*symbolische Anthropomorphismus*)’, in which Kant presents his analogical talk about God, has the function to keep God out of the world with help of language (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 380).

10.1.3.2.2 The analogia entis

Jüngel (2001[1977]: 385) criticizes traditional metaphysics which is based on the ‘*analogia entis*’, that is, on natural theology. Jüngel’s criticism against ‘*analogia entis*’ stems from Karl Barth (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 385). As Spjuth (1998:511) points out, ‘Jüngel has continued Barth’s criticism of natural theology.’ Jüngel (1967:23) affirms that to Barth, the contrast between *analogia entis* and *analogia fidei* is determined by the following: *analogia entis* leads to a loss of revelation; *analogia fidei* leads to acquiring language, to the possibility of theological speech about God. Barth’s rejection of the term ‘*analogia entis*’ stems from ‘his study of Anselm’.

Barth’s study of Anselm’s *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* remains one of the most sensitive attempts to view the argument of the *Proslogion* from the inside (Clayton 1995: 129). Actually it is true that this leads Barth to the concept of *analogia fidei*,



deciding for his theological doctrine of perception in opposition to *analogia entis* (Kreck 1977: 231).

However, this understanding is closely connected to Barth's change 'from Dialectics to Analogy' (Von Balthasar 1992[1952]: 86). If one is to accept Von Balthasar's phrase 'Dialectics to Analogy'¹⁵⁷, his book play a very important role in the study of Barth. As Torrance (1962:182) points out, this book presents a 'decisive turning point' in Barth's thought, for it demonstrates the final point in his advance from dialectical thinking to Church Dogmatics. He goes on to declare that this book made 'Barth turn to write his Church Dogmatics' (Torrance 1962:193, Jüngel 1982:137). Heron (1985: 85) says, Barth's Anselm study (*Fides Quaerens Intellectum*) 'carried Barth decisively away from Dialectical theology, and especially from Bultmann'. According to Jüngel (1982: 140), Barth differs from others on the term 'dialectics' 1) as they discussed it not from God, but from human beings 2) he tried to give a foundation (*Begründung*) to faith through a historical approach and through the reconstruction of an historical (geschichtlicher) past. Barth's rejection of the term 'existence dialectic (*Existenzdialektik*)', according to Jüngel (1982:173), implies Barth's break with the dialectic theology (*dessen Existenzdialektik denjenigen Punkt markiert, an dem es sachlich zum Bruch Barths mit der dialektischen Theologie kommen mußte*).

¹⁵⁷ In the opposition to Von Balthasar's phrase 'Dialectics to Analogy', Jenson (1969: 202) affirms that Von Balthasar is 'directly and obviously mistaken'. And another opponent of Von Balthasar is Bruce McCormack. McCormack argues that although it is a commonplace in the literature on Barth's development that through his study of Anselm, Barth was led to a new starting point in thought (McCormack 1995: 421), it is quite wrong. As Beintker (1987:185) argues, Barth's love of Anselm already bore fruit in the *Christliche Dogmatik*. It is impossible to see Barth's thought as representing an 'unexpected change'. Beintker adds that the theme of Barth's change from *Dialektik* to Analogy so loses not only its sharpness with regard to Barth's *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, where a certain co-existence of logic and 'Dialectic and Analogy' is indicated, but also the sharpness in view of Barth's dialectical phase, in which the consciousness of the problem of Analogy is still recognisable (Beintker 1987:280). Quadt (1976:175) calls what Barth learned from Anselm '*die Spezielle Dialektik*'. This may imply that Barth's Analogy can be understood as one of Dialectics in the light of the term 'special Dialectics'. And this implies that for Barth, his Analogy is regarded as Dialectic in the sense that this analogy is a kind of special Dialectics.



[B]art looked for another school than that of Kierkegaard, as he changed to “*Kirchlichen Dogmatik*”. Barth respected the voice of the Apostolic and Nicene confessions in his ears. Through Anselm’s proof of the existence of God, in his book *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*, Barth had a very sure key to understanding in his “*Denkbewegung*” which arose in the “*Kirchlichen Dogmatik*” as a very suitable theology alone (1982:174-175).

Jüngel (1982:175) illustrates that this key to understanding the dominant ‘*Denkbewegung*’ in the *Kirchliche Dogmatik* explains Barth’s disagreement with the Kierkegaardian ‘*Denkbewegung*’ of ‘*Existenzdialektik*’ and its ‘*Rezeption*’ in dialectical theology. However, Jüngel (1982:178) confirms that Barth’s break from ‘dialectical theology’ is ultimately a reply to the problems which arose from the Kierkegaardian interpretation. Stephen Wigley explains the influence of Anselm’s ‘theological Scheme’. Wigley (1993: 90) says that ‘for Jüngel, God’s essence and existence should not be separated. It also applies to Karl Barth that this unity is of crucial importance to Barth’s doctrine of the Trinity in relation to his doctrine of revelation. For Jüngel, this is connected to the Christian doctrine of God which is overwhelmed by false metaphysics.’

According to Jüngel (2001[1977]: 192), Feuerbach states that God is thinkable, in line with Anselm’s famous sentence ‘*id quo maius cogitari nequit*’. This connection with Anselm’s definition, as DeHart (1999:62) points out, is the ‘instrument in the transformation of theology into anthropology.’ Wigley (1993: 90) demonstrates that ‘the significance, for Jüngel, of Anselm in all this is that it is Anselm’s argument in the *Proslogion* which plays a critical role in the development of just such a false metaphysic.’ However, Wigley (1993: 91) argues that for Jüngel, Anselm’s understanding is ‘to be standing within that tradition of classical theism which atheists rightly reject’. For Jüngel, ‘metaphysical (philosophical description) assumptions embody Anselm’s two books “*Monologion*” and “*Proslogion*”’ (Wigley 1993: 91).

Thus we find ourselves in something of a paradox, when Jüngel writes that “God is more than necessary”, on his own understanding he is rejecting the



philosophical method of classical theism in which he believes Anselm stands. Yet whilst he examines in great detail and appears conclusively to reject the role of “necessity” in coming to speak of God, at the same time he is adopting just what Barth understands to be the Anselmian use of *necessitas*. That is to say, he is describing the possibility of the knowledge of God only in terms of its reality, in this case the Word of God spoken in the crucified one (Wigley 1993: 91-92).

Jüngel does not follow Anselm’s understanding of God. Jüngel rejects the God of traditional metaphysics and returns to the true God who has revealed himself in Jesus Christ, with the epistemology which was derived from Karl Barth (Wigley 1993: 92; Zimany 1994: 83).

In connection with the doctrine of analogy, ‘if human talk about God is supposed to correspond to him, then it must be analogous to him’. For Jüngel, therefore, ‘theology must devote concentrated attention to analogy’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 383; ET 281). There are ‘different models in the doctrine of the analogy’, but to Jüngel (2001[1977]: 384; ET 281) ‘what must be decided now is what makes analogy the analogy of faith (*Zur Entscheidung steht nun, was die Analogie zur Analogie des Glaubens [analogia fidei] macht*). Jüngel (2001[1977]: 389) uses the term ‘analogy of advent (*Analogie des Advent*)’ which points to the arrival of God as human being as a definitive event. This ‘analogy of advent (*Analogie des Advent*)’ implies an analogy of relation (*analogia relationis*) (Webster 1986:48). According to Zimany (1994:62), this implies that this ‘analogy of advent (*Analogie des Advent*)’ does not mean comparing thing with thing, but rather ‘relations with relations,’ that is, ‘providing for the possibility of God “coming” to the relationship.’ Webster (1986:48) is of opinion that ‘the analogy of advent is the linguistic equivalent of the proper relation of God and the world.’

Jüngel (2001[1977]: 390) regards the Gospel as the event which corresponds to the term ‘analogy of advent’¹⁵⁸. This ‘gospel as correspondence’ (*Evangelium als Entsprechung*)

¹⁵⁸ According to Shults (2005: 121), Jüngel suggests that the analogy of “advent” can help us speak of all



implies ‘first of all to ask about the event which is the subject of the gospel’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 391; ET 287). The result of the event is that God becomes linguistically accessible as God, by that which the Bible names revelation (*Offenbarung*). It makes it possible to think about God as the speaking God and to speak about God as speaking God (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 393). In this event or as event, the ‘analogy of faith (*Analogie des Glaubens*)’ takes place in the sense which ‘God as the Word comes close to man in human words’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 393; ET 288).

However, the doctrine of analogy poses the problem of the struggle between *analogia entis* and *analogia fidei*. The struggle started with Karl Barth who rejected the *analogia entis* against the liberal theologians. According to Jüngel (2001[1977]: 385), Barth’s rejection of the *analogia entis* is limited to his period of dialectical presuppositions, that is, to the dialectic Barth (*dialektischen Barth*). But the later Barth still holds the distinction between God and man since the later Barth fears that the so-called ‘*analogia entis*’ misses the difference between God and man (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 283).

Although Jüngel admits a new capacity of nature including the ‘possibility of human language speaking about God (*Analogie des Advent*)’, his main idea (such as his concept of the ‘cross’) is governed by the earlier Barth’s rejection of natural theology (Davidson 1997: 177). While Jüngel rejects natural theology as the ground for Christian theology by accepting Barth’s understanding of God’s Self-revelation, he ‘is careful to maintain a distinction between God and the world. He holds that God ‘is involved with the world’ (Zimany 1994: 8). Zimany adds ‘while Jüngel shares Barth’s opposition to an understanding of the *analogia entis* (analogy of Being) that isolates God’s Being from God’s actions and that presumes to produce knowledge of God apart from God’s actions and that presumes to produce knowledge of God apart from revelation’, ‘he claims, nevertheless, that Barth misunderstands the *analogia entis*’ as ‘dealing with a static residue of a God-similarity remaining in a fallen creation’ (Zimany 1994: 60).

of God’s attributes as shared (or communicable). Because speaking of God is made possible by God’s arrival in the event of the justifying address of the divine promise, the ascription of attributes to God has no other function than giving expression as exactly as possible to the God who is love.



10.1.3.2.3 The term 'metaphor'

For Jüngel (2001[1977]: 394), the event of the Incarnation of the Word of God in Jesus Christ is 'the unique, unsurpassable instance of a still greater similarity between God and man taking place within a great dissimilarity' (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 394; Wigley 1993:94).

Through this christological event of identification, a nearness between God and man is expressed which from the outset surpasses anything like the 'result' of an identity of God and man which sets aside every difference. Identity in the sense of the removal of every difference knows nothing of nearness. It would be, obviously, the end of the original distance between two entities which had become identical. But it would be the end of the distance without the entrance of nearness. Identity as the ending of distance without nearness is the establishment of absolute distance (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 394; ET 288)

Jüngel adds

By contrast, the mystery of the God which identifies with the man Jesus is the increase of similarity and nearness between God and man which is more than mere identity and which reveals the concrete difference between God and man in its surpassing mere identical being. It is only in this sense that the Easter confession may be risked, that confession that Jesus Christ is true God and true man. And in the sense of the still greater similarity between God and man in the midst of such great dissimilarity, one can and must say that the man Jesus is the parable (Gleichnis) of God, understanding the being of the man Jesus on the basis of the Easter Kerygma. This christological statement is to be regarded as the fundamental proposition of a hermeneutic of the speakability of God. As such, it is the approach to a doctrine of analogy which expresses the gospel as correspondence (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 394; ET 288- 289).

As Webster (1986:46) points out, ‘what Jüngel rejects in the correspondence theory of truth is not its realism but rather its literalism- its orientation towards actuality and so towards literal speech.’

The meaning of ‘parable (*Gleichnis*)’ is regarded as ‘an extended metaphor’, or the metaphor can be named ‘an abbreviated parable’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 396). According to Jüngel (2001[1977]: 396; ET 289; DeHart 1999:133¹⁵⁹), ‘the difference consists of the fact that a parable narrates while a metaphor coalesces the narrative in a single word’.

The narrative structure is also immanent in the metaphor, at least of the metaphor understood as the “*epiphora kata to analogon*”. But whereas metaphor implies narrative in the form of naming and thus is directed toward a certain word, the parable always presupposes language’s process of naming and is rather directed to portraying a process, an event through the movement of language (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 396; ET 290).

To Jüngel (2001[1977]: 397), the term ‘analogy’ is eminently a social-structure-phenomenon, a process of the language. This sociality has a certain special and playful character. Jüngel says that ‘the sociality of metaphor and parable distinguishes itself from other kinds of addressing speech, such as the command, in that the discovering language of metaphor and parable is, in a very special way, really not necessary, but is forceful in its nonnecessity’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 398; ET 291).

For Jüngel (2001[1977]: 399), these terms ‘metaphor’ and ‘parable’ imply a linguistic event of creative freedom.

¹⁵⁹ According to DeHart (1999:133), ‘metaphorical speech is always implicitly narrative because it expresses the constant movement of language. It represents the possibilities of a new word-and concept-formation through its linking of present actuality to future possibility. It is in narrative that the temporal structure of language is most clearly reflected, and as the quotation above indicates it is narrative which ties together metaphor and parable.’



In a parable, language is so focused that the subject of the discourse becomes concrete in language itself and thus defines anew the people addressed in their own existence. Something happens in the parable, and it happens in such a way that then something also happens through the parable. The metaphor already has a tendency toward event, because the metaphor surpasses the directness of indicative speech with its greater concreteness (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 400; ET 292-293).

The Christian faith sees God and transience together, in that it lets God speak as a human (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 407). According to Jüngel (1989: 19), the language of faith presupposes revelation, and the language of faith is characterized by *metaphoria* (Jüngel 1989: 24), since the revelation of God takes place in the limited medium of human language for the purpose of man's understanding of God. For metaphor is authentically human language, drawn from the speech of actuality of 'bringing God to speech' (Webster 1986:46). 'Metaphor' is built 'both upon the identification and the strangeness between the different things described and in so doing serve to create and to draw attention to a new dimension of meaning' (Wigley 1993:95). It is true, as McGrath (1994:138) points out, that 'metaphor implies both similarity and dissimilarity between the two things being compared'. Thus, for Jüngel, metaphorical language is appropriate to Christian language about God, for 'the language of faith sharpens our sense of reality by addressing us with more than is actual' (Wigley 1993:95).

In this regard, the event of Jesus functions as the 'ground and limit of the choice of metaphors' (DeHart 1999:143). Jüngel says

If it is true of the parables of Jesus that God comes closer to their human hearers in them than they are to themselves, then it is true of Jesus as the parable of God that God has come closer in him to humanity than humanity is able to come close to itself. Through that process he brings humanity into a new relationship to itself whose form is the ecumenical community of Jesus Christ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 407; ET 298)



Therefore, to Jüngel, 'language about God must be metaphorical' (Dehart 1999:142).

10.2 The doctrine of the Trinity

Webster (1986:72) says that 'the doctrine of the Trinity in Jüngel's theology is that of formulating the identity of God's being-for-himself and his being-for-us in the Person of Jesus Christ.' He adds that 'in particular, trinitarian formulae demonstrate how Jesus' history can be the actuality of God in the world when that history ends in the negativity of death' (Webster 1986:72). Therefore 'the trinity is a formulation of God's being such that the historical event of God is not in conflict with nor divorced from the eternal freedom of God's being' (DeHart 1999: 169). And 'the task of the doctrine of the trinity is thus to read the pattern of Jesus' history as the pattern of God's free being (DeHart 1999:169).

In this regard, the question '*Wo ist Gott?*' is important in Jüngel's theology. This question is connected to the atheistic phrase 'the dark word of the death of God (*das dunkle Wort vom Tode Gottes*)'. To Jüngel (2001[1977]: 409), this Christological usage of 'the dark word of the death of God' implies that the unity of God with the finite human is the identification of the living God with the crucified Jesus of Nazareth and the event of this identification as the revelation of the life of the crucified God.

The original and indispensable meaning of talk about the death of God is not the identification of man with God, which necessarily must lead to the replacement of God with man (understood generically), but the identification of God with the one man Jesus for the sake of all men. Its original sense, now to be regained, is not to express man's striving for divinity, but rather the humanity of God (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 409; ET 299).

The 'appropriate talk of God comes, only where God is having an impact on humanity' (Zimany 1994:88). The essence and the eternal being of God is opened from the event of identification with the crucified, not *vice versa* (Löser 1984:34).



To Jüngel, according to Webster (1997: 59¹⁶⁰) ‘this trinitarian background of the notion of the identification would be crucial’, since it is connected to his programme of the rejection of traditional metaphysics such as the distinction of the essence and existence following Descartes (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 410-411; Löser 1984:33 Courth 1993:276). To regard God’s being as love demonstrates both God’s ‘thinkability (*Denkbarkeit*)’ on the basis of his ‘speakability (*Sagbarkeit*)’ and his speakability on the basis of the correspondence (*Entsprechung*) between God and humans which comes from God himself (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 411). ‘The analogy of faith brings God into speech in such a way that he comes nearer to humanity and thus nearer to the individual person than they and he are capable of coming near to themselves’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 411; ET 300). The doctrine of the Trinity testifies to the unity of the near and distant God in the word ‘coming (*Kommen*)’ (Klimek 1986:79). The foundation for ‘the thinkability and speakability of God as love’ is the death of Jesus on the cross (Löser 1984:33).

To Jüngel (2001[1977]: 409), God himself is regarded as the unity of death and life for life. However, the phrase ‘the unity of death and life for life’ is the definition of the essence of love, and God as love is regarded as the ‘humanity of God (*Menschlichkeit Gottes*)’ understood christologically (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 409). The sentence ‘God is love’ formulates the truth (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 430). This understanding of ‘God as love’ is the task of theology (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 430). To Jüngel (2001[1977]: 433), following Prenter, the love of God can be expressed in the conceptuality of the doctrine of the Trinity. He adds that ‘the full understanding of the statement “God is love” becomes understandable only on the basis of the history of the being of God, in which and as which he realizes his being as subject in a trinitarian way. But even the understanding of the trinitarian history as the history of love presupposes a pre-understanding of love (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 433; ET 316). Jüngel illuminates ‘the

¹⁶⁰ The trinitarian background of the notion of identification is crucial. It is this which drives the critical history of theism in *God as the Mystery of the World*, and the various attempts to bring together the doctrine of the Trinity, the notion of God as love, and the death of God. Furthermore, it is this that blocks any idea that Jesus is accidental to the being of God, for God’s self-relation occurs as his relation to the man Jesus (Webster, 1997:59)



relation between love and the Trinity in the course of his analysis of human love' (Zimany 1982:220).

10.2.1 The meaning of Love

Love, to Jüngel (2001[1977]: 438; ET 320), 'implies or presupposes affection (*Zuneigung*-'inclination'). Disaffection contradicts love. In affection an intention of the I is carried out with reference to another, an intention from the I to the Thou.' Love itself promises the new Being, which relates the 'I' (*Ich*) with the 'You' (*Du*) and the 'You' (*Du*) with the 'I' (*Ich*) from this (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 440). DeHart (1999:102) interprets this in the meaning that 'love means not wishing to be oneself without another; in love, one's path to oneself flows through another person, so that one must in effect receive one's self from that other'. Zimany (1982:221; 1994:106) points out, that 'Love is reciprocal giving or surrender.' He adds that 'since love requires at least two for reciprocity, God shows that God is love itself by sending "His Son," thereby defining God as at least two persons. Differentiation within God is also shown when the [living] God identifies with the dead Jesus by empowering his resurrection' (Zimany 1994:106). Therefore, for Jüngel,

The lover does not exist on the basis of what he has been until now or has made of himself. Instead, in receiving himself from another, the lover exists. Thus he exists only because of the existence which is given to him, and apart from that he is nothing. The loving and beloved I is then totally related to the beloved Thou, and thus to his own nonbeing: without Thee I am nothing (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 442; ET 323).

An important concept in Jüngel's understanding of love is the dimension of death (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 442). The dimension of death in love is indicated by selective love (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 443). Klimek (1986:33) says that the dimension of death in love marks the full figure of the lover as in love. 'The selective character of love implies only negatively to what extent death is present in the event of happy love. The event of



happy love goes beyond mutual selection and is to be evaluated as a phenomenon *sui generis*' (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 443; ET 324).

Jüngel (2001[1977]: 444; ET 324) says that 'the strength of love is limited to the event of love. If love ceases to happen, it ceases to be'. He says

Insight into the strength of love implies at the same time the knowledge of weakness which inheres in love over against everything which is not love. With this knowledge of the weakness of love, derived from insight into the strength of love as an I-Thou relationship, the understanding of the phenomenon love leads beyond the I-Thou relationship, although of course not in the sense that this relationship may be left behind as though it had received enough consideration (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 445; ET 325).

As Klimek (1986:33) points out, the loving 'I' is also strong, since love participates in the weakness. Therefore, the one who does not take part in the weakness of love is not able to love others (Meessen 1989:307).

Jüngel (2001[1977]: 446) says that 'our consideration of the essence of love brings us back to our insight that God is love. On the basis of this consideration, we have gained a pre-understanding of the identification of God and love just as in our discussion of the thinkability and speakability of God we were constrained by the content itself to anticipate the statement "God is love"' (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 446; ET 326). By regarding the identification of God and love as a human task, subject and predication interprets each other in the sentence 'God is love' which is regarded as the explanation of God's self-identification with the crucified man Jesus (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 447; Klimek 1986:28). For Jüngel (2001[1977]: 448; ET 327), 'even in the oppositeness of loving Father and beloved Son, God is still not love itself. The identifying statement "God is love" can be made only on the basis of the fact that God as the loving one sends his beloved Son into the world, which means to a certain death' According to Webster (1986:72), 'the conviction that God's self-differentiated nature is revealed in the event

of his self-identification with the crucified' is centered in his theology. This understanding is connected to the doctrine of the Trinity (Webster 1986:72).

For Jüngel (2001[1977]: 449), God is the one and living God through giving up his beloved Son as the loving Father. Jüngel (2001[1977]: 450; ET 329) says that 'the identification of God with the crucified Jesus requires the differentiation of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Only in this threefold differentiation of the being of God does the statement that God is love become understandable'. As Zimany (1994:107) points out, 'the third Person of the Trinity is the event of love. As event, the Spirit is the Being of love, because that Being consists in the relation of lover and beloved, and the Holy Spirit is that relation. The relation is one of total harmony, the "differentiation between God and God" within God "can never be understood as a contradiction in God"'. Zimany (1994:105) says that to Jüngel, a phenomenological analysis of human love explains the Being of God in the Trinity, since love applies to both God and man. He adds that 'this understanding of love has clear implications for comprehending both the relation in the Trinity and God's love of people. God's reality as concrete love is affirmed, for example, by understanding God's triune Being as both self-related and selfless' (Zimany 1994:106).

On the relationship between God and love, Jüngel (2001[1977]: 458) follows Feuerbach's understanding that 'God must be sacrificed to love', in which faith and love differ, while for Jüngel (2001[1977]: 467; Klimek 1986:27), in contrast to Feuerbach, God would not be the 'highest of what a human is able (*Höchste des dem Menschen Möglichen*)'. Although He is superior to man he is, at the same time, more 'interior intimo meo'. As Zimany (1994:105) points out, 'there is no ontological difference between God and love'. Lønning (1986:190) says that the grammatical-logical possibilities of an identification of God and love are a very important theme. He says the fact that the Love is God does not imply that humans may see themselves as deified by the development of their love, or that love is possible earthly way of self-redemption (Lønning 1986:190).



‘Faith alone which engenders activity by doing nothing at the right time is then the anthropological expression of the fact that God and love are identical’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 468; ET 342). He adds

Faith in the humanity of God is the evidence of the identity of God and love. It expounds this evidence in that, in the power of God the Holy Spirit, it knows that it is related to God the loving and almighty Father through the death and resurrection of the true man and true Son of God, Jesus Christ, and thus knows that the believer is concretely distinct from the triune God. Faith in the humanity of God expounds the evidence of the identity of God and love in that it believes: in God the Father who gave up his beloved Son for man’s sake, and thus is truly the Father who loves this his Son (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 470; ET 343)

Therefore, as Klimek (1986:65) points out, Jüngel’s understanding not only in the parallel between the ‘structure of God’ and the ‘structure of love’ but also in the meaning of the death of Jesus comes from its similarity to that of Hegel.

As regards love, Pannenberg (1988: 324) criticizes Jüngel’s understanding of the relation between love and the doctrine of the Trinity. Pannenberg (1988: 324) says, although Jüngel emphasizes that the being of the Triune God is not deduced from the logic of the essence of love, his understanding simply follows that of Reichard of St. Victor. Pannenberg (1988: 325) says that any derivation of the plurality of the trinitarian Persons from a concept of the essence of one God leads to the problem of ‘modalism’ and ‘sabellianism’

10.2.2 The Identity of the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity

Jüngel (2001[1977]: 510) is of the opinion that the traditional distinction of ‘economic’ and ‘immanent’ Trinity originates from the metaphysical understanding of God. With



Moltmann (Courth 1993:278; McGrath 2005[1994]: 214; Webster 1986:67-68), he rejects the concepts which come from traditional metaphysics, that is, the ‘absoluteness axiom (*Absolutheitsaxiom*)’ ‘apathy axiom (*Apathieaxiom*)’, and ‘the immutability axiom (*Unveränderlichkeitsaxiom*)’. According to Jüngel (2001[1977]: 511), the ‘absoluteness axiom (*Absolutheitsaxiom*)’ ‘apathy axiom (*Apathieaxiom*)’, and ‘the immutability axiom (*Unveränderlichkeitsaxiom*)’ are unsuitable axioms for the Christian concept of God that distinguishes between God and God, which is based on the cross of Jesus Christ.

To Jüngel (2001[1977]: 472), the themes of metaphysical concepts come from the traditional understanding of the relationship between the ‘*deus revelatus*’ and the ‘*deus absconditus*’ which comes from the Lutheran understanding. The distinction between the terms ‘*deus revelatus*’ and ‘*deus absconditus*’ led to the distinction between the ‘immanent’ and the ‘economic’ Trinity (2001[1977]: 472). To Jüngel (2001[1977]: 474), the distinction between ‘*deus absconditus*’ and ‘*deus revelatus*’ would be a necessary difference which is holding the coming of God moving between ‘whence (*Woher*)’ and ‘whereto (*Wohin*)’.

Jüngel (1972: 218) says that although Luther insists on the distinction between ‘*absconditus deus*’ and ‘*revelatus deus*’, his purpose is not to reject the trinitarian view of God, but to understand the revelation of God as of the highest importance. This distinction between ‘*deus absconditus*’ and ‘*deus revelatus*’ is combined with the relationship of the tripersonal God and the revealing God, so that the ‘*deus absconditus*’ can be conceived as the authority behind the revelation of God (Jüngel 1972: 217-218). This distinction originally comes from his opposition to Erasmus, who used the scripture wrongly. Jüngel (1972: 220) says that Luther’s insistence on the distinction between ‘*absconditus deus*’ and ‘*revelatus deus*’ did not bring the concealment of God and the revelation of God into dialectical balance.

According to Jüngel (2001[1977]: 474; Klimek 1986:88), the traditional doctrine of the Trinity has its weakness. The ‘dialectics (*Dialektik*)’ in the distinction between ‘*absconditus deus*’ and the ‘*revelatus deus*’ in the doctrine of the Trinity remains



remarkably irrelevant. The danger is derived through the traditional distinction between immanent and economic Trinity (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 474; ET 346). Molnar (1989:396¹⁶¹) says that for Jüngel ‘the only permissible distinction occurs between the immanent and economic Trinity’.

The immanent trinitarian doctrine understands God himself with no regard for his relationship to man; the economic trinitarian doctrine, by contrast, understands God’s being in its relationship to man and his world. This distinction within the doctrine of the Trinity corresponds then to the old distinction between “theology” and “economy”. But it is legitimate only when the economic doctrine of the Trinity deals with God’s history with man, and the immanent doctrine of the Trinity is its summarizing concept. Here careful corrections of the traditional form of trinitarian doctrine are absolutely called for. These corrections must do justice to the dialectic of law and gospel with regard to “God himself” (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 474; ET 346),

In Rahner’s principle of the unity of the economic and the immanent Trinity Jüngel recognizes an incentive for the forgotten outdated new grounding of the doctrine of the Trinity in the context of the evangelical dogmatics (Löser 1984:31). Jüngel (2001[1977]: 507; ET 370) confirms that Karl Rahner’s axiom (Die ökonomische Trinität ist die immanente Trinität und umgekehrt) is correct, since ‘God himself takes place in Jesus’ God-forsakenness and death (Mark 15: 34-37). What the passion story narrates is the actual conceptualization of the doctrine of the Trinity.’ Indeed, as Thompson (1994:30) points out ‘Jüngel takes up Rahner’s axiom and agrees with it but interprets it in the context of his own theology.’ According to DeHart (1999:171) ‘he interprets it in terms of Barth’s language of “relapse”; the immanent trinity is formulated by “stepping back” from the economic trinity and conceptualizing the

¹⁶¹ But as long as this is the case the immanent trinity cannot possibly be the indispensable premise of the economic Trinity (Barth’s view) in an irreversible sequence that invariably dictates a certain form of knowledge.



Christ-event precisely as an event of the eternally free God.’ This implies that Jüngel gets his ‘doctrine of the cross (*Staurologie*)’ from Rahner’s axiom (Meessen 1989:321). God not only experienced death through his identification with the crucified Jesus, but also confirmed his eternal being (Meessen 1989:321). In Jüngel’s understanding, the fundamental event is the identification of God with the Person of the Son as the crucified one (Löser 1984:33).

Jüngel’s proposal of a new plan for the doctrine of the Trinity, which will apply Rahner’s leading axiom of the unity of the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity, finds a close but precise summary in the sentence ‘God’s being is in coming’ (Löser 1984:34). In concentrating on the identification of God with the death of Jesus on the cross, an accent shift is to be noticed in favour of the economic perspective (Wiltshier 1987: 29).

The theology of the Crucified One is speaking, then, of a heightening, an expansion, even an overflowing of the divine being, when it considers God as the total surrender of himself for all men in the death of Jesus. In that God is that total self-surrender, that is, not only the one who surrenders or what is surrendered, but the event of self-surrender itself, the New Testament statement is true: God is love (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 505; ET 368-369).

Jüngel adds

The self-relatedness of the deity of God takes place in an unsurpassable way in the very selflessness of the incarnation of God. That is the meaning of the talk about the humanity of God. It is not a second thing next to the eternal God but rather the event of the deity of God. For that reason, the “economic” Trinity is the “immanent” Trinity, and vice versa. And thus the crucified One belongs to the concept of God. For the giving up of the eternal Son of God takes place in the temporal existence of one, that is, of this crucified man Jesus. In him, the love of God has appeared (1 John 4:9),



because that love has happened in him. The crucified Jesus belongs to the Christian concept of God in that he makes it necessary that a distinction between God and God be made. Therefore, the incarnation of God is to be taken seriously to the very depths of the harshness of God's abandonment of the Son who was made sin and the curse for us (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 510; ET 372).

To Jüngel (2001[1977]: 475; Zimmny 1994:111), the economic Trinity speaks of the history of God's history with man. God's history is his coming to humans. The historicity of God is God's being in coming (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 475). In this regard, the immanent Trinity, which has to be considered the historicity of God, demonstrates that God is our God (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 475). The doctrine of the Trinity testifies to the unity of the near (*nahen*) and the far (*fernen*) God in coming (Klimek 1986:79). The connection of both manners of speech prevents an abstraction through the false distinction between the immanent and economic Trinity (Klimek 1986:79), since in this context the event implies not a punctual event, but something like a continuously eternal new event. Because of this, the being of God keeps coming, and keeps on coming, since the Holy Spirit is not only 'the bond of love (*vinculum caritatis*)', but at the same time also God's gift (Klimek 1986:87). So for Jüngel, the essence of God is identical with the existence of God, since he is love (Klimek 1986:87).

Jüngel's understanding is based on the concept 'from below'. Zimany (1994:111) says that 'in contrast to the Eastern Orthodox and other traditional approaches, his doctrine of the Trinity is a doctrine "from below,"' since the Eastern Orthodox and traditional understanding presupposes a 'theology' over the 'economy'. According to Thompson (1994:31-32), 'Löser is critical of both Rahner and Jüngel in that Rahner reaches back too much to classical metaphysics, where he accepts being as spirit and identity, where as Jüngel rejects this and also natural theology and theism in line with Karl Barth. Löser pleads for a middle way, an alternative metaphysic of love based on book 3 of Richard of St. Victor's *De Trinitate*'



10.2.3 *The Crucified Jesus Christ as vestigium trinitatis*

The Christian doctrine of the triune God 'is the epitome of the story of Jesus Christ, because the reality of God's history with man comes to its truth in the differentiation of the one God into the three Persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit' (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 472; ET 344). This is, for Jüngel, connected to the economic trinity, in which 'the history of God's dealing with humanity' is included (Zimany 1994:111). This is regarded as the reason for the identity of the economic and the immanent Trinity, as Zimany (1994:110) explains, since 'God's internal dynamics becomes nothing without God's coming to humanity.'

Jüngel's doctrine of the Trinity implies the right understanding of the concept of the word of God (*recht verstandenen Begriff des Wortes Gottes*) (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 472). For Jüngel, the doctrine of the Trinity is an interpretation of the revelation (DeHart 1999:169). This, as Peters (1993:91) points out, implies that what is axiomatic to Jüngel's argument is the priority of special revelation. Jüngel says

In reformation and early Protestant theology, the doctrine of the Trinity was understood as a product of the church's doctrinal development solely with regard to its form. Its content was felt to be grounded in Scripture, and over the years increasing attention was given to providing a scriptural foundation for the trinitarian doctrine. Related to that is the fact that in the early stages of the development (for example, in Melanchthon) the so-called 'vestiges of the Trinity' (*vestigia trinitatis*) were referred to as significant for the foundation of the doctrine of the Trinity- that is, those structures of creation which are allegedly trinitarian in their order and thus refer to the divine Trinity (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 476 ET 348).

Jüngel (2001[1977]: 477) criticizes the doctrine of the '*vestigia trinitatis*'. According to Klimek (1986: 80) the old *vestigia trinitatis*, which were taken from the range of our human experience, is not adequate for Jüngel and Protestant theology. Jüngel



(2001[1977]: 477) admits that there is truth in the doctrine of the '*vestigium trinitatis*'. But according to Jüngel (2001[1977]: 479-478), there is no Christian faith, which corresponds anthropologically to the event of the revelation, except for the one human, Jesus and his history. He is the '*vestigium trinitatis*' the footprint of the Trinity (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 478).

The man Jesus and his death on the cross would basically not affect faith in God if God himself had not come to the world in this human life and death. Conversely, if there were no man Jesus and his history, there would be no Christian faith at all. Christian faith stands and falls, both historically and systematically, with the fact that it sees God coming to the world in the life and death of this man. For that reason, it is virtually an axiom of the Christian faith that God has come to the world in the being of the man Jesus (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 479; ET 349).

Faith recognizes the traces of the coming of God in the man Jesus. Jüngel regards the man Jesus as the *vestigium trinitatis*. The man Jesus Christ can exclusively and alone be asserted as the *vestigium trinitatis* (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 479)¹⁶². For Jüngel, as Davidson says

It is here, in the identification of God with the God-forsakenness of Jesus, that we are forced to reconsider the doctrine of the divine omnipresence: God removes himself, yet is present to faith, revealed as the one who is in heaven in such a way that he can come to the world in identification with the dead man Jesus; this demands self-differentiation within God (Davidson 1997: 168)

Jüngel (2001[1977]: 479-480; ET 350) says that 'the New Testament *Kerygma* which proclaims and tells the identity of the ascended Christ with the earthly Jesus calls for the

¹⁶² For Jüngel, apart from the humanness of this man, apart from his life- history and his suffering, talk about the triune God would be a '*mysterium logicum*', a pointless and groundless speculation.



concept of the triune God, if it is to be protected beyond its historical origin from being confused with the mythological god stories. It is theological meaningful to question the life history and passion of the earthly Jesus only on the basis of the proclamation of the resurrected and crucified Christ as the Lord of the world, and in a similar way the man Jesus must be seen as a “vestige of the Trinity” if biblical talk about God the Father, about the son of God, and about the Holy Spirit is not to appear arbitrary, and further, if the doctrine of the justification which is necessarily implied by such talk is not to appear totally unfounded¹⁶³. It implies that faith makes possible true understanding of the triune God (DeHart 1999:129). McGrath (2005[1994]: 219) points out that ‘the cross is allowed to act as both the foundation and criterion of faith, subjecting existing notions of divinity to criticism in the light of the God who makes himself known through the cross.’

To Jüngel (2001[1977]: 479), the man Jesus Christ who died on the cross is understood as the ‘*vertigium trinitatis*’. It indicates that the history and humanity of Jesus is the footprint of the triune God (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 481). This implies that ‘the cross is the key to the trinitarian nature of God’ (Thompson 1994:58). The way which leads into the triune God is identical with the phrase ‘God’s relationship to Jesus (*Beziehung Gottes auf Jesus*)’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 482). This relationship on the basis of the faith in the identity of God with Jesus is connected to the relationship of God to Jesus (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 482; Webster 2001: 170). In this regard, as with Moltmann, for Jüngel, the crucified Jesus Christ is the *vestigium trinitatis* (Courth 1993:276; McGrath 2005[1994]: 213; Wiltschier 1987: 28). The significance of the man Jesus as the ‘*vestigium trinitatis*’ in Jüngel’s theology demonstrates that in the cross, God identifies

¹⁶³ Jüngel’s Christology has evoked very little exposition or critical discussion. He stands at the intersection of the two major strands of German Protestant theology of this century, namely Bultmann and Barth, who are, as he once remarked, ‘like two souls in me’ (Webster 1997:45; 2001: 155). Webster adds that ‘Jüngel is clearly much influenced by second-generation Protestant existentialist Christology (not only Fuchs but Käsemann and Ebeling also), which sought to move beyond Bultmann’s restriction of the historical component of Christology to a mere reference to the “that” of Jesus as the simple occasion of God’s eschatological intrusion’ (Webster 1997:52; 2001: 164)



himself with the dead Jesus, with which his being as the Son is revealed; such identification presupposes a ‘differentiated- unity’ (Wiltschier 1987: 31).

According to Jüngel (2001[1977]: 498[ET 363]; Davidson 1997: 189: Case 2004:9), this Self-identification ‘belongs to human existence’, ‘and thus is not self-destruction although it can turn into that’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 498; ET 363). ‘Self-differentiation as the implication of identification with another is the expression of the fact that that other profoundly defines my own being from outside of myself’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 498; ET 363). Like this, it must be said that God’s identification with the dead Jesus implies the self-distinction ‘between God and God’ (Case 2004:9). The phrase ‘the being of this death (*Das Sein dieses Toten*)’ defines God’s own being (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 498). Case (2004:9) interprets it in the sense that ‘we must say that God defines himself in this act of identification.’ ‘The event of identification applies an explanatory key to the being of Jesus’ (Webster 1986:36).

Thus, for Jüngel, ‘God’s identification with the dead Jesus implies a self-differentiation on God’s part. The being of this dead man defines God’s own being in such a way that one must speak of differentiation between God and God.’ He adds that ‘it must immediately be added that it is an act of God himself who effects his identity with the dead Jesus and as its precondition the differentiation of God and God’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 498; ET 363). The resurrection affirms the unity of the Father and the Son, of God and Jesus (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 498). As Webster (1997:58-59) points out, ‘this identification is manifest at the resurrection, so that Jüngel can speak of the “identity of God with the crucified, dead and buried Jesus which is revealed in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.”’ This identification leads to the doctrine of the Trinity (McGrath 2005[1994]: 214).

The problem of the *apatheia*, and *theopaschitism* of the so-called ‘traditional theism’ arises in the theology of Jüngel. Moltmann (see the chapter on Moltmann) denies that his theology follows ‘*Patripassianismus*’, which implies ‘co-suffering’ or ‘compassion’ (Durand 1976:96; Moltmann 1973: 358). Jüngel, as Davidson (1997: 186) points out, is



‘bolder than Moltmann in his *theopaschitism*, asserting that the living God is able to suffer death in such a way that it can be a mode of his life rather than its termination.’ Webster (2001: 172) says ‘Jüngel pointed out tirelessly that the death of Jesus is to be regarded as the definitive divine action which constitutes the ground of a richly theopaschite trinitarianism’. However, according to Davidson (1997: 187), ‘he does not begin from the background of a theodicy and the challenge of protest-atheism in the way that many of these writers do.’

According to Jüngel (1976:100), for Barth it is possible to understand that God can suffer and die as a human being. However, this (of this inner trinitarian capacity) is not regarded as the transcendental condition for the possibility of the passion of God in Jesus Christ, but the capacity of God that indicates God is Lord. For Barth, the obedience in humiliation plays an important role in the connection with the term the ‘death of God’. Jüngel (1976: 101) adds that in this obedience God suffers as a human in Jesus Christ. And in this obedience, God exposes himself to death. Passion and death are not a metaphysical misfortune which happens to the Son of God who becomes man. This implies that God identifies himself with the crucified Jesus (Jüngel 1976: 101). Therefore it is impossible to exclude the Father from suffering, He who gives up his Son to such a ‘death of suffering’ (Jüngel 1976: 101).

To Jüngel (2001[1977]: 479), the opposite to death is the resurrection of Jesus. The reason that the resurrection is important in the theology of Jüngel, is, as McGrath (2005[1994]: 213) points out, that ‘God identifies himself with the crucified Christ, so that faith recognizes the crucified human being Jesus of Nazareth as identical to God.’ The present work of the resurrected Jesus Christ is based on the identity of God with the crucified, the dead, and the buried Man Jesus. This identity becomes obvious through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (Jüngel 1978: 510). In this aspect, for Jüngel (2001[1977]: 497), the proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus is the opposite to what occurs in his death. Therefore, by Jesus Christ resurrection from the dead God identifies himself with this dead man (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 497). God also identifies himself with the Godforsakenness (*Gottverlassenheit*) of Jesus (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 497; Case 2004: 9). Webster (1986:33; Jüngel 1978: 511) points out that ‘the resurrection discloses



‘God’s relation to the death of Jesus of Nazareth’, a relation for whose description the language of identification is appropriate’. He adds ‘the resurrection reveals, that is, discloses the enhypostatic grounds of Jesus’ anhypostatic existence. The concept of ‘*enhypostasia*’ formulates how Jesus’ existence is ‘ontologically grounded in the fact that his humanity is enhypostatic in the mode of being of the Logos’ (Webster 1986:35).

To Jüngel (2001[1977]: 498), therefore, the proclamation of the resurrection proclaims the crucified one on the cross as the self-definition of God, because, as Kelsey (1997:360) explains, ‘the response to God’s nearness in Jesus’ crucifixion brings with it the hope of resurrection’ which implies ‘the trust that the life that has been lived is so loved and affirmed by God that it will never be forgotten’. To Jüngel, the meaning of the resurrection, as DeHart (1999:27) points out, ‘is the open announcement to faith that this human history and death are God’s history and death.’ Therefore it is possible for Jüngel (2001[1977]: 504) to know the identification of divine life with the dead Jesus as an event of divine love. This returns to the trinitarian meaning of the sentence ‘God is love’.

Jüngel’s understanding of identification cannot avoid the criticism that he follows Hegel’s understanding. As Davidson (1997: 168) points out, ‘at the same time, by insisting that, via the resurrection, the cross is disclosure not determination of God, he seeks not to submerge the cross within a hegelian general principle of immanence, in which the being of God is too closely tied to human history’. The similarity between Jüngel and Hegel does not only lie in the parallel structure of God and the structure of love, there are also parallels in the explanation of the death of Jesus (Klimek 1986: 72). Webster (1997:59) points out that ‘the force of the idea is to ensure that identification is distinguished clearly from immanence.’ He adds that ‘this is the burden of his critique of Hegel in *God the Mystery of the World*- a critique all the more forceful when set against the backdrop of Jüngel’s very great respect for Hegel as the thinker who retained the awareness of the evangelical insight into the death of God long after its disappearance from Protestant dogmatics. Identification as event, in other words,



provides a means of drawing attention to the specificity and uniqueness of God's action in Jesus' (Webster, 1997:59).

To Hegel, according to Jamros (1995:285), 'divine nature is the same thing as human nature, and this unity is what is viewed in the incarnation of God.' According to Hegel (1969[1986]: 289), the miracles in the history of Jesus is comprehended in the Spirit, and through the miracles the death of Christ is understood. God and the unity of divine and human nature are revealed in the death of Jesus Christ, which is regarded as its touchstone (Hegel 1969[1986]: 289). To him, Christ's death has two aspects, the first would be that Christ becomes 'God-man' and the second implies that Jesus is at the same time God with the human nature up to death (Hegel 1969[1986]: 289). It indicates that this death would be the end of human finiteness (*Endlichkeit*) and of absolute finiteness (Hegel 1969[1986]: 289). Resurrection belongs especially to faith. The proclamation of Christ succeeds his resurrection (Hegel 1969[1986]: 291). The death of Christ is the death of death itself, that is, the negation of negation (Hegel 1969[1986]: 292). In it the structure of the Trinity as the structure of God and love becomes clear (Klimek 1986:72). To Hegel (1969[1986]: 292; Klimek 1986:72), God conquers the distance, death, and sin in the death of Jesus. It explains the meaning of the death of Christ (Hegel 1969[1986]: 292). To Hegel (1969[1986]: 293), this death is the death of God. And this death is regarded as love itself as an element of God. This death is reconciliation, and it is seen as absolute love. It is also the identity of divinity and humanity. In it God is in the finite, and the finite in this death is the self-definition of God. God reconciled the world through the death and eternally reconciles it with himself (Hegel 1969[1986]: 295).

In summary, as O'Collins (1999:158) criticizes, 'Jüngel has developed his theology of the Trinity and theology of the cross in strict relationship to one another. The idealist legacy is clear, and so too is the risk of lapsing into hegelian speculations about the inner history of God that have no firm roots either in the witness of the Bible and the great tradition or in the experience of the Christian at worship.'



10.2.4 The Trinitarian God as the mystery of the World

To Jüngel (2001[1977]: 515), the sense, in which God is invisible, does not imply that it is impossible to know Him, but this statement demonstrates the characteristic of the confession under the condition of the world. In this regard, it is necessary to relate to the concrete role of this revelation (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 515). Therefore, the phrase ‘that nobody has ever seen God (*Dass Gott niemand je gesehen hat*)’ is the negative expression of the positive truth, in which the term ‘mystery’ is properly applied (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 515). Jüngel’s study stems from his understanding of the invisibility of God (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 515).

Jüngel (2001[1977]: 516; ET 376) says that ‘such an understanding of the invisibility of God cannot interpret this invisibility as God’s unknownness in principle. It is not even possible to explain it as God’s knownness among Christians over against his unknownness among non-Christians’ He adds that ‘the negative experience of God’s invisibility is thus to be understood as increasing the positive experience of God’s self-communication. That certainly does not exclude the fact that this negative experience can *de facto* take place, as well, as a problematizing of this positive experience’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 517; ET 377). God’s invisibility is the negative side of the positive content when people call God the mystery of the world (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 518).

Thus with regard to the world, it is not a deficiency when it cannot have or possess itself *because* God is the one who is coming to the world in his humanity. We should speak here not of a deficiency but of a distinction of the world and its people, if God comes to the world and is thus its mystery. In that God comes to the world, it is as little encroached on in its abilities and possibilities as would God become necessary because the world does not have itself. In both directions the basic insight stands that God is more than necessary (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 518; ET 378)

He adds



We are, then, to understand as the actual point of all talk about the invisibility of God the fact that the world is not at its end, but rather that God claims it as his creation anew and rights it. That point is the invisibility of the God who comes to the world, whereby we should take the expression “comes to the world” precisely in its normal and common sense: God came to the world as man. As that man, he was visible. As that man he belonged to the world, which for that reason belonged to him. Jesus Christ is that reason, which distinguishes the world, for the fact that it does not possess itself and that we do not have ourselves. To be without having oneself, without possessing oneself, and yet not to not be but rather to be there- that is the material content of the mystery of creaturely existence. In his identity with Jesus Christ, God is the actual mystery of the world (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 519; ET 379)

God’s identification with the crucified one implies the self-distinction of the trinitarian God. Therefore, the identification of God with the crucified one (man) is the condition of the doctrine of the Trinity (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 520; McGrath 2005[1994]: 214). Jüngel says

The identification of God with the Crucified One implied the trinitarian self-differentiation of God, so that the doctrine of the unity of God with the crucified man Jesus revealed itself to be the grounding of the doctrine of the Trinity. The Trinity of God implies, within the horizons of the world, the self-differentiation of the invisible Father in heaven from the Son on earth, visible as man, and from the Spirit who reigns as the bond of unity and love between the invisible Father in heaven and the visible Son on earth and who produces in an invisible way visible results in us (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 520; ET 379).

The Holy Spirit of God is not only the relationship between the Father and the Son which constitutes the life of God, but also their powerful turning to man, who in this way is drawn into the relationship of the Son with the Father. As the Holy Spirit, God is



the mystery of the world (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 520). As Peters (1993: 93) points out, ‘Jüngel’s thesis depends upon the credibility of the concept of correspondence. Evidently, according to Jüngel, if God were not self-related, God could not be world-related.’

The insight, in which the statement ‘God came to the world’ and ‘is as such the one who is coming’ implies ‘a fundamental distinction between God and the world’, and is ‘understood as an insight based on God himself only when we understand God as being intrinsically the one who is coming, and not only because of the existence of the world’ (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 521; ET 380).

The statement God’s being is in coming implies first of all that God’s being is the event of his coming to himself. This event, this coming of God’s being to itself, is what the tradition has meant when it spoke of eternity. But eternity is not something distinct from God. God himself is eternity. God is eternally coming to himself (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 521; ET 380).

Jüngel adds

That statement is more than a tautology when it expresses that God comes out of himself when he comes to himself. God always derives or comes from God. He is his own absolute origin. But, coming from himself, God really does come to himself. God comes to God. He is his own goal. But he does not strive to reach himself as goal in order to move away from his origin. God does not leave himself as origin behind. He always comes as God from God to God. God is his own mediation. We have said this on the basis of the trace of the coming of God which is revealed in the humanity of Jesus (Jüngel 2001[1977]: 521; ET 380).

According to Davidson (1997: 181), ‘the *vestigium Trinitatis* that is revealed in the history of Jesus Christ, and specifically in the climax of the cross, shows that God comes from God (Father), to God (Son), as God (Spirit)’



However, as Bray (1993:58) points out, although he ‘does not follow process theology in linking this idea to the creation’, ‘he does not regard it as fundamental to our understanding of God as he is in himself- an understanding which, by implication, goes against the main tenets of classical theism’ (Bray 1993:58). Meessen (1989: 321) criticizes that Jüngel interprets the doctrine of the Trinity process-theologically following J. A. Bracken. In this way the economy of salvation changes not only the relationship between God and man but also the relation of the trinitarian Persons among each other.



11 PANNENBERG'S DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

Pannenberg presents his doctrine of the Trinity as 'a new approach for the solution of some crucial problems of the traditional conception of the doctrine of God (Schwöbel 1989:275), since his doctrine of the Trinity is based on his Christology, which can solve the problem of the question of God in the modern era by taking into account the 'atheistic critique of theism' (Schwöbel 1989:268) like Feuerbach, Nietzsche, and Marx. In order to understand Pannenberg's doctrine of the Trinity, some concepts must be studied beforehand, like his concepts of 'history', and of 'revelation'.

11.1 History and Revelation

In the theology of Pannenberg, as Bradshaw (2003:133) points out, 'revelation and history are two sides of the one coin'. In other words, 'his doctrine of revelation is in effect a view of history pregnant with meaning, a move away from a Cartesian or Kantian kind of subjectivist base, towards a more objective historicist position' (Bradshaw 2003:131), while history is identical with 'a hermeneutical process' and 'human interpretation of its events conceptualises its current significance by means of rational reflection on the data' (Bradshaw 2003:131). Therefore, as Schwöbel (1989: 265; Jansen 1995: 184) points out 'the first issue that is constitutive for Pannenberg's whole theological program is his concept of a universal history and its implication for the overall project of Christian theology.' Therefore, for Pannenberg, history is the most widespread perspective of Christian theology (Schwöbel 1989: 265).

Admittedly, according to Pannenberg (1988: 207; ET 189), 'the knowledge of God is possible only by revelation.' This implies that 'God can be known only if he gives himself to be known' (Pannenberg 1988: 207; ET 189). Such a definition of revelation is the central issue of the theological theme in Pannenberg's understanding.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ With Barth, Pannenberg asserts that revelation occurs only as God gives Himself to be known. But he



Pannenberg (1988: 216-217; ET 198) argues that ‘the historical survey of the concept of revelation must finally be followed by a systematic discussion of two alternative concepts in the understanding of revelation that seem to exclude one another.’ As Bradshaw (2003: 128; Dulles 1988:170) points out, Pannenberg ‘accepts from Barth¹⁶⁵ that revelation must mean divine self discourse, flowing from divine initiative to us’, although he developed it differently from Barth¹⁶⁶. Although Pannenberg’s doctrine of the Trinity is explained and built rigorously on the basis of revelation, like Moltmann he has reacted against the theology of the Word (Powell 2001: 202).

argues that the focal point of this revelation is the historical process. (Grenz 1991: 79).

¹⁶⁵ For Pannenberg (1975[1968]: 130), the demonstration of the connection of Jesus’ divinity with the concept of revelation constitutes one of Barth’s greatest theological contributions. According to Ringleben (1989: 459), ‘wie Pannenberg im Gefolge Hegels und Barths annimmt.’ Galloway (1973:37) says that before Pannenberg, there were two important moves which were made in the nineteenth century, ‘On the one hand Schleiermacher identified revelation with the self-disclosure of God in religious experience. But this tended- and still tends – to evaporate into various forms of subjectivism. On the other hand Hegel conceived of revelation as the self-disclosure of the Absolute. In a very different form- but with affinities to Hegel which Pannenberg stresses more than most interpreters - Karl Barth has taken up this notion of revelation as the self-disclosure of God.

¹⁶⁶ Dennoch wirkte das Buch im Lager der dialektischen Theologie, also nicht nur im Barthianismus, sondern auch in der Schule Rudolf Bultmanns, als Herausforderung, weil es die fundamentale Funktion des Wortes Gottes für die Theologie in Frage zu stellen schein, mithin die gemeinsame Basis der dialektischen Theologie in allen ihren Richtungen. Die von vielen Seiten heftig geäußerte Kritik kreiste daher um die vermeintliche Alternative: Wort Gottes oder Geschichte(1988: 249-250);According to Galloway(1973: 37), ‘He(Barth) retains a profound respect for Schleiermacher but he rejects his subjective interpretation of revelation. He rejects it on the ground that faith cannot be generated out of itself. It must be occasioned by an external event. This is also his reason for rejecting R. Bultmann’s existentialist interpretation of the revealing and saving events of the New Testament. He regards Bultmann as in the direct line of succession to Schleiermacher’s subjectivism’; According to Pannenberg (1975[1968]:130), ‘Barth quite rightly has built the doctrine of Jesus’ divinity and the doctrine of the Trinity on the concept of God’s revelation in Jesus. To be sure, that has not affected the methodology of his Christology; According to Peter McEnhill & George Newlands (2005[2004]: 208), ‘the accent on the universal historical scope of revelation is a break from Barth and Bultmann.



Pannenberg, as Dulles (1988:170) says, ‘insists that God cannot be known at all, except through revelation, that revelation must be historical, and that the sole historical revelation is that given in Jesus Christ.’ This origin of revelation is not only special for the revealedness (Offenbarsein) of God in the world, but also eminently for the being of the revealer himself to a certain extent (Nnamdi 1993:323). History would be lost without the ongoing orientation of its unity on the future of its salvation-historical identity (Nnamdi 1993:323). Pannenberg’s ‘orientation toward history, rather than the narrow concept of the word of God as providing the basis for his trinitarian theological proposal, is closely connected to his understanding of the task of theology’ (Grenz 2004: 88).

Pannenberg (1965:91-114) proposes seven dogmatic theses¹⁶⁷ for the doctrine of revelation.

- 1) These: Die Selbstoffenbarung Gottes hat sich nach den biblischen Zeugnissen nicht direkt, etwa in der Weise einer Theophanie, sondern indirekt, durch Gottes Geschichtstaten, vollzogen (91-95).
- 2) These: Die Offenbarung findet nicht am Anfang, sondern am Ende der offenbarenden Geschichte statt (95-98).
- 3) These: Im Unterschied zu besonderen Erscheinungen der Gottheit ist die Geschichtsoffenbarung jedem, der Augen hat zu sehen, offen. Sie hat universalen Charakter (98-102).
- 4) These:

¹⁶⁷ Braaten (1992[1965]: 641-642) states this in the English version 1) The Self-revelation of God, according to the biblical witnesses, did not take place directly, after the fashion of a theophany, but indirectly through God’s historical acts. 2) Revelation happens at the end of the revelatory history, not at the beginning. 3) In contrast to special manifestations of the deity, the historical revelation is open to anyone who has eyes to see. It has universal character. 4) The universal revelation of the deity of God is not yet realized in Israel’s history, but was first realized in the destiny of Jesus of Nazareth, insofar as the end of all events took place beforehand in what happened to him. 5) The deity of Israel’s God is revealed by the Christ-event, not as an isolated occurrence, but only insofar as it is an integral part of God’s history with Israel. 6) The universality of the eschatological self-demonstration of God in the destiny of Jesus comes to expression in the development of non- Jewish concepts of revelation in the Gentile Christian churches. 7) The Word is related to the revelation as prediction, instruction, and report.



Die universale Offenbarung der Gottheit Gottes ist noch nicht in der Geschichte Israels, sondern erst in der Geschichte Jesu von Nazareth verwirklicht, insofern darin das Ende aller Geschehens vorweg ereignet ist (103-106). 5) These: Das Christusgeschehen offenbart nicht als isolierte Ereignis die Gottheit des Gottes Israels, sondern nur, sofern es Glied der Geschichte Gottes mit Israel ist (107-109). 6) These: In der Ausbildung außerjüdischer Offenbarungsvorstellungen in den heidenchristlichen Kirchen kommt die Universalität des eschatologischen Selbsterweises Gottes in der Geschichte Jesus zum Ausdruck (109-111). 7) These: Das Wort bezieht sich auf Offenbarung als Vorhersage, als Weisung und als Bericht(112-114).

Pannenberg distinguishes between direct and indirect revelation. According to Dulles (1988: 171), for Pannenberg, direct revelation implies ‘that in which the content is the revealer himself’, while ‘indirect revelation occurs when a word or action having a content that is other than God also expresses something about God as its originator. Pannenberg regards revelation in the Bible as indirect revelation, although ‘all revelation is self-revelation’ (Dulles 1988: 171).

Pannenberg (1988: 266; ET 243) points out that a revitalization of the theology of the Word of God must struggle with the fact that ‘the various biblical ideas of the Word of God do not directly treat God himself as the content of the Word,’ and ‘that they share the indirectness of the relation of their content to God with other ideas of revelation that we find in the biblical writings’. He adds that ‘we are given cause to think in terms of an indirectness of God’s self-revelation by the finding that in the biblical texts themselves the direct content of the reception of revelation is not God himself but ourselves and our world’ (1988: 267; ET 244)¹⁶⁸. This implies that the different events of revelation, of

¹⁶⁸ Pannenberg(1967:154) points out that „Jahwe gibt sich als er selbst zu erkennen durch sein Tun. Ich habe diese Weise der Offenbarung als indirekt charakterisiert gegenüber der unmittelbaren Anschaulichkeit der Theophanie. He adds „Der Gedanke der Selbstoffenbarung Gottes, wie er vom Alten Testament her als indirekte Offenbarung Gottes durch das von ihm gewirkte Geschehen zu verstehen ist,



which the biblical scripture speaks, do not have God himself directly (Vechtel 2001:86). From this ground, the biblical event of revelation cannot be interpreted as the direct ‘self-revelation (*Selbstoffenbarung*) of God’ (Vechtel 2001:86). For example, the prophetic word of God relates with God himself indirectly, in that God is the originator of the contemplated contents (*Urheber des geschauten Inhalts*) (Vechtel 2001:86). This indirectness of revelation is opposite to the theology of God’s word (*Wort-Gottes-Theologie*). Pannenberg does not maintain the idea of a self-revelation of God (*Selbstoffenbarung Gottes*) through the word (Vechtel 2001:87). According to Vechtel (2001:87), for Pannenberg, the plurality of the biblical ideas of the word of God stands in contrast to the thought of the self-revelation (*Selbstoffenbarung*) of God through his word.

Bradshaw (2003:128-129¹⁶⁹) says that, for Pannenberg, in contrast to Barth and Bultmann, ‘indirect self revelation’ is the most accurate definition of revelation, in which ‘the content of divine revelation is regarded as in the totality of history, and so finally known at its end paragraph’ (Bradshaw 2003: 129). The indirectness of revelation stems from the idea that the meaning of events has to be considered in order

entspricht nun in bemerkenswerter Weise der Art, wie sich uns die durch Jesus erschlossenen Gotteserkenntnis darstellte (1967: 153)... Sein Geschick hat eschatologischen Charakter, weil die Botschaft Jesu trotz des Ausbleibens der allgemeinen Endkatastrophe durch seine eigene Auferweckung von den Toten, mit der das allgemeine Endgeschehen an ihm selbst stattfand, von Gott her bestätigt worden ist. Im Auftreten und Geschick Jesu, also in seiner Person, ist die endgültige Offenbarung der Gottheit Gottes am Ende aller Zeiten schon im voraus Ereignis, sofern die Geschichte Jesu den Charakter des Endgültigen mitten in unserer vergehenden Zeit hat. Dabei hat die Offenbarung Gottes in Jesus denselben indirekten Charakter wie in Alten testament: Entscheidend ist nicht das isolierte Faktum, daß Jesus die Nähe der Herrschaft Gottes ankündigte, sondern daß über dieser Verkündigung und im Geschick Jesu bis hin zu seiner Auferweckung die Herrschaft Gottes gegenwärtig wurde.(1967: 153-154)

¹⁶⁹ According to Bradshaw (2003:128-129), ‘The biblical narrative, however, speaks of many acts of God and words about God, given in many and various ways. The history of Israel mediates revelation about God, but there is a distinction between the mediating events themselves and God. Bultmann’s theology of revelation collapses this range of historical meaning in the experience of faith here and now. Barth unites the medium and the message in the incarnation: God reveals himself fully in the person of Jesus Christ, God and man, accessible only to obedient faith.



to understand them, in the sense which the meaning of a book or play must be considered (Bradshaw 2003:129).

Dulles (1988:172) states that for Pannenberg ‘the entire burden of revelation’ rests on events. ‘God proves himself not by what he says but by what he does. For Pannenberg, what God does appear in history, for reality as a whole is historical’ (Dulles 1988:172). On the basis of this understanding, Pannenberg (1988: 217; ET 198) mentions that ‘if we let ourselves be guided by modern discussions of the concept of revelation, it might seem that the term denotes the event, or type of events, in which people achieve primary knowledge of God.’ Schwöbel (1989: 266) says that ‘the theological perspective of universal history has a number of implications for the relationship of theology to historical investigation and to hermeneutic’. He adds that ‘Pannenberg attempts to demonstrate that only on the presupposition of the anthropocentric conception of history, the principles of historical understanding have to be interpreted as implying the uniformity of all events and their interrelatedness in a closed immanent causal nexus which precludes a theological interpretation of history’ (Schwöbel 1989: 266).

For Pannenberg, the context of the deed and fate of Jesus is based on ‘one of apocalyptic expectation’ (Galloway 1973: 60). Jesus of Nazareth is the final revelation of God in his eschatological message as well as through his resurrection from death¹⁷⁰,

¹⁷⁰ According Pannenberg (JGM: 129), ‘the path should now be indicated in three steps that lead materially from the concept of revelation to the knowledge of Jesus’ divinity. 1. The Christ event is God’s revelation- the appearance of the glory of God in the face of Jesus (II Cor. 4:6)- only to the extent that it brings the beginning of the end of all things. Therefore, Jesus’ resurrection from the dead, in which the end that stands before all men has happened before its time, is the actual event of revelation. Only because of Jesus’ resurrection, namely, because this event is the beginning of the end facing all men, can one speak of God’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ. Without the event of Jesus’ resurrection the ground would be pulled out from under theological statements about God’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ. 2. The concept of self-revelation includes the fact that there can be only a single revelation. God cannot disclose himself in two or more different ways as the one who is the same from eternity to eternity..... 3. The third factor is closely related to the essential uniqueness of God’s self-revelation: the concept of God’s self-revelation contains the idea that the Revealer and what is revealed are identical. God is as much the



as far as the end of history occurs in him (Pannenberg 1967: 160). However, for Pannenberg, according to Galloway (1973: 63), the concept ‘apocalyptic’ is closely connected, not only with ‘a Christian window’, but also with ‘Greek philosophy and German Idealism.’¹⁷¹ He concludes that ‘he is correct in interpreting the cosmic scope of apocalyptic imagery as representing the unity of universal history under God. These are post Hegelian concepts. But they arise directly from the out- working of the apocalyptic context of the life and action of Jesus- even though it may be seriously doubted whether they were the first thoughts in the mind of a first-century Jew in that connection’ (Galloway 1973: 64).

According to Pannenberg (1971:9), the proclamation of the coming kingdom of God is the centre of the message of Jesus. Trying to explain the relevance of Eschatology for the thinking about God, the eschatological thinking about the kingdom of God as the work of God himself constitutes the starting point (Pannenberg 1971: 11). In the light of the future of God’s coming kingdom it is possible to focus on man and the problem of his event (Pannenberg 1971: 11). Pannenberg (1971:11) dislikes Bultmann and Dodd who disregard the concrete future of the kingdom of God with Jesus as the ‘remnant’ (*Restbestand*) of the Jewish hope. He maintains the value of the concrete future of the kingdom of God with Jesus. For Pannenberg (1971:19), the difficulty of the future is closely connected with the concept of time. He is opposed to the Greek concept of ‘eternity’ as the orientation of the present, as with Parmenides and Plato, in which they regard the concept ‘eternity’ as ‘timelessness’ (*Zeitlosigkeit*)(Pannenberg 1971:20). Pannenberg (1971:20) ascribes time to God as the divine actuality in process like the American philosopher Whitehead and his student Hartshorne. For Pannenberg

subject, the author of his self-revelation, as he is its content. Thus to speak of a self-revelation of God in the Christ event means that the Christ event, that Jesus, belongs to the essence of God himself...

¹⁷¹ Galloway (1973: 63) says that ‘Pannenberg is prepared to look at apocalyptic not in a merely antiquarian way but from his own perspective as a man who knows what it became, through the action and fate of Jesus, in the hands of the Greek Fathers, of Augustine, of Joachim of Floris, of the Reformers, of Hegel, Marx and nineteenth-century historiographers. This, in his view, is what a historical understanding of a phenomenon really involves’.



(1971:20; Freyer 1993: 299), however, the futurity of God as the power of the future does not imply development in God. In his *Systematische Theologie*, Pannenberg says

Similar to these preliminary disclosures of end-time events is Jesus' anticipatory proclamation of the imminence of the kingdom of God. Yet in the coming and work of Jesus we do not merely have a preliminary disclosure of the future. The central factor in Jewish expectation, the coming of God's kingdom, is already here a power that shapes the future. Precise elucidation of this point is a task for Christology. But we may say this much at this point: The future of God is not merely disclosed in advance with the coming of Jesus; it is already an event, although without ceasing to be future. The future of God has already dawned. In its own way the Christian Easter message corresponds to this structure of the proclamation of Jesus, for it declares that the saving future of the resurrection life of Jesus has come already, and that in him it has broken in for us (Pannenberg 1988: 270; ET 247).

In this special meaning, 'we can speak of an anticipatory revelation, in Christ's person and work, of the deity of God that in the future of his kingdom will be manifest to every eye (Pannenberg 1988: 270; ET 247). He adds that 'the realism of eschatological expectation of the future is the basis of the primitive Christian (*urchristlichen*) understanding of revelation as it was also the presupposition of Jesus' proclamation of the coming of God's kingdom and the frame of reference for the apostolic message about Christ' (Pannenberg 1988: 271; ET 247-248).

Pannenberg (1965: 103- These 4) says that the universal revelation of the divinity of God is actualised not in the history of Israel, but primarily in the history of Jesus of Nazareth. In the destiny of Jesus, the God of Israel is revealed not only as the hidden God but also as the triune God (*der dreieiniger Gott*) (Pannenberg 1965:105). Pannenberg (1965:105; Vechtel 2001:93) agrees with Barth and Hegel that the foundation of the doctrine of the Trinity stems from revelation, since the doctrine of the Trinity formulates the thinking about God of the revelation which happened as history.



The event of revelation can be called the word of God. So, Jesus Christ is the ‘Word of God’ as ‘the quintessence of the divine plan for creation and history and of its end-time but already proleptic revelation (*antizipatorischen Offenbarung*)’ (Pannenberg 1988: 281; ET 257). He adds

We may thus speak of the self-revelation of God by this Word of his and its revelation so long as the Word is the same as the deity of God. This implication of the self-revelation of God by his Word is explicated by the doctrine of the Trinity. Yet not the doctrine of the Trinity alone, but all parts of Christian teaching are to be seen and developed as an explication of the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ, just as the thought of revelation becomes a comprehensive one for God’s action and thus takes the place that myth has in other religions (Pannenberg 1988: 281; ET 257).

This understanding elicited the critique that Pannenberg looked for revelation in the non-biblical religions, although Dulles (1988:173) clarifies that for Pannenberg, the emphasis lies on the uniqueness of the biblical religion. But there is a subtle difference with orthodox Christian understandings of ‘Scripture.’ According to Jansen (1995: 191-192)¹⁷², following Vroom’s statement, Pannenberg’s view of Scripture certainly does not treat it as the Word of God.

11.2 The doctrine of the Trinity

¹⁷² For Pannenberg, the revelation of God occurs in history, and the Bible itself contains a multiplicity of ideas of revelation. He criticised the principle of *sola Scriptura* already early in his career, arguing that not only has the Protestant theological world gained an awareness of the role of tradition in interpretation, but the hermeneutical problem has presented itself in connection with modern historico-critical exegesis. In Pannenberg’s view, the biblical writings themselves exhibit tendencies which are in contradiction with one another. The truth of talk about God, for Pannenberg, has shifted over to dogmatics. Theology, for Pannenberg, cannot be a science of Scripture as was the measure of truth in the Christian theology of dogmatic statements, but as having acquired “a dimension of depth in the historical process of the transmission of tradition”. (Jansen 1995: 191-192)



Pannenberg's proposal of the doctrine of the Trinity implies 'the divine self-disclosure in Jesus Christ' (Grenz 2004: 95). Therefore, for Pannenberg, faith in Jesus implies the conviction of the presence of God in him (Greiner 1988:39). As McGrath (2005[1994]: 195) points out, his Christology 'from below' constitutes 'new possibilities to Christian apologetics'. This Christology 'from below' implies says that the doctrine of the Trinity must be based on 'revelation', which implies the 'economy of salvation' (Grenz 2005[1990]: 63). This presents Pannenberg's intention to resolve 'some of the traditional difficulties of Western theism' and emphasizes 'the necessity of retaining the monotheistic emphasis of Western tradition' (Schwöbel 1989:283).

Pannenberg is concerned with 'the theological and philosophical inadequacy of classical theism in view of contemporary thought' (Jansen 1995: 66). For Pannenberg's purpose the doctrine of the Trinity lies in the development of an ontology which includes both the infinite and the finite, the eternal and the temporal, God and the world (Fulljames 1993: 276).

Pannenberg rejects the traditional starting point of the understanding of God which is based on the unity of God. For Pannenberg (1988: 325; ET 298), 'any derivation of a plurality of trinitarian persons from the essence of the one God, whether it be viewed as spirit or love, leads into the problems of either "modalism" on the one hand or "subordinationism" on the other hand.' So Pannenberg criticises Barth in the sense in which he (Barth) develops his doctrine of the Trinity as the expression of the subjectivity of God (*Subjektivität Gottes*) which constitutes the root (*Wurzel*) of the Trinity, not as their result (Pannenberg 1977:29). And Pannenberg accepts the identity of the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity of Rahner's axiom. For Pannenberg, as Miller & Grenz (1988:133) point out, 'whatever can be said about the immanent Trinity must flow out of our understanding of the economic Trinity, that is, out of the activity of the triune God in the divine economy.'

11.2.1 Christology



The doctrine of the Trinity in the theology of Pannenberg is closely connected with Christology, especially with the human Jesus, since self-revelation in Jesus Christ implies God's self-openness through and in Jesus (Meessen 1989: 264). For Pannenberg (1972: 53), the appeal to Jesus of Nazareth constitutes the Christian faith, and indeed for the Christian faith in God (*Die Berufung auf Jesus von Nazareth ist für den christlichen Glauben konstitutiv, und zwar gerade für den christlichen Glauben an Gott*). Pannenberg's proposal of the doctrine of the Trinity implies 'the divine self-disclosure in Jesus Christ' (Grenz 2004: 95). This implies 'the framework of the history which God has with humanity, and through humanity with his whole creation-the history revealed in Jesus Christ'¹⁷³ (Grenz 2004: 89). According to Ringleben (1989: 467), this Christology treats the theology of the divine self-revelation which is unique, and for this, the unity of 'revealer' and 'revealed' is characteristic, that God is subject and content of himself becomes conceivable. He adds that because of the identity of God with his appearance revealing himself, Jesus belongs to the essence of God himself. God defines himself in the event of Christ.

For Pannenberg (1975[1968]: 22), the starting point of the Christological question is closely connected with the question: Must Christology begin with Jesus himself or with the *kerygma* of his community? Pannenberg (1975[1968]: 39) argues that 'the task of Christology is to establish the true understanding of Jesus' significance from his history, which can be described comprehensively by saying that in this man God is revealed.' Therefore, for Pannenberg, Christology is regarded as 'the interpretation of an historical event' (Galloway 1973: 60).

11.2.1.1 From 'above' or from 'below'

According to Pannenberg (1975[1968]: 33), there are two methodologies for Christology: 'from below' and 'from above'. Pannenberg (1975[1968]: 33) indicates that the Christology 'from above' begins from the 'divinity of Jesus, the concept of

¹⁷³ According to Nnamdi(1993:323), This origin of revelation is not only special for God's being revealed (Offenbarsein) in the world, but also in an eminent way for the being of the revealer himself.



incarnation stands in the center'. Admittedly, Christology 'from above' stems from the ancient church fathers: Ignatius of Antioch and the second-century Apologists, the Alexandrian Christology of Athanasius, and from Cyril (Pannenberg 1975[1968]: 33). 'A Christology "from below", rising from the historical man Jesus to the recognition of his divinity, focuses on Jesus' message and fate and arrives only at the end at the concept of the incarnation'(Pannenberg 1975[1968]: 33; McEnhill & Newlands 2005[2004]: 209). Pannenberg starts from a Christology from "below." (Thompson 1994: 34; Galloway 1973: 60),

According to Freyer (1993: 301), the decision of Pannenberg for a 'Christology from below' stems first of all from the perspective of scientific theory and the epistemological option to judge. The result is that Pannenberg's view of the term 'Christology from below' in its basic element is not at all so far from the traditional meaning of the term 'Christology from above.' But his Christology 'from below' differs from the classical Christology 'from above' only in its way of thinking '*noetische Verfahren*' (Freyer 1993:301). Pannenberg portrays the characteristics of a Christology of 'from above' as follows:

1. A Christology from above presupposes the divinity of Jesus...
2. A Christology that takes the divinity of the Logos as its point of departure and finds its problem only in the union of God and man in Jesus recognizes only with difficulty the determinative significance inherent in the distinctive features of the real, historical man, Jesus of Nazareth.
3. There remains one final reason why the method of a Christology 'from above' is closed to us: one would have to stand in the position of God himself in order to follow the way of God's Son into the world. As a matter of fact, however, we always think from the context of a historically determined human situation. We can never leap over this limitation. (Pannenberg 1975[1968]: 34-35)¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ Pannenberg's objections against a Christology 'from above' are therefore only limited strongly in the three points. The first objection against a 'Christology from above' would be in the sense which already



However, Hendrickson (1998: 53) says that for Pannenberg ‘a Christology “from below” cannot say any more than that Jesus lived and died unless presuppositions are made’. Hendrickson (1998: 53) confirms that ‘the conclusion is that “from above” and “from below” cannot stand as one without the other. There is a “reciprocal conditioning” going on between the two’. Hendrickson (1998: 53) points out that ‘for Pannenberg, therefore, “above” and “below” are useful only to a point. As terms reflecting historical trends in Christological studies they are helpful. As terms to identify current systems of thought they are also helpful’ (Hendrickson 1998: 53). Pannenberg (1975[1968]: 33) says that ‘the Christological procedure “from above to below” is followed in modern Protestant dogmatics by Karl Barth¹⁷⁵ especially.’ However, Pannenberg criticizes Barth’s method ‘from above’. As Shults (1997: 308) points out, ‘in his earlier years, Pannenberg’s “from below” approach stood in strong contrast to Barth¹⁷⁶. However, Shults (1997: 306-307) explains that ‘in IV/4, 23, Barth warns against both a “subjectivism from below” (anthropomonism) and a “subjectivism from above” (Christomonism). So it appears that his real focus is on avoiding subjectivism in his method.’ Shults regards Pannenberg as a post-foundationalist. He explains his understanding of Pannenberg under the concept of a mutual relationship.

According to Bradshaw (2003: 149), ‘it is more historicist and provisional, hence the term “post-foundational” coined by F. LeRon Shults, not unhelpfully.’ Shults (1997:

presupposes the divinity of Jesus (Freyer 1993: 301). The second objection stems from the meaning in which this would neglect the characteristics of the human Jesus of Nazareth (Freyer 1993: 302). Finally, Pannenberg's third point of criticism against a Christology "from above" is connected with the point that would take the line of God, and ignore the historical-broken perspective of human- knowledge as well as an ‘indirect’ character of the divine self-revealing (Freyer 1993: 303)

¹⁷⁵ The difference in Barth, as in all of the church’s Christology, is that the redeemer redeems not himself but man as a being essentially different from God. Further, Barth adds the feature that the humiliation of God is at the same time the exaltation of the man who is thereby united to him and conversely (Pannenberg 1975[1968]: 34).

¹⁷⁶ Olson (1990: 186) demonstrates that ‘Barth would especially object to Pannenberg’s criticisms and argue that his own Christocentric method of theology grounds all of the doctrine of God on the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. He would no doubt point to the later volumes of his Church Dogmatics such as IV/I, 50 to prove his case.’



307) states that ‘it is important to distinguish between the roles of the divine and the human subject 1) in revelation, and 2) in understanding and explaining revelation.’ He adds that ‘Barth and Pannenberg agree that revelation is “from above”. The question is whether our explanatory task begins “from below” or “from above”. Barth argues for the latter through his use of the term *analogia fidei*, insisting that knowledge of the Word of God corresponds to itself in the event of faith’ (Shults 1997: 307). Shults (1999: 165) argues that, for Pannenberg, ‘he views the “from below” and “from above” movements as complementary, not as conflicting or mutually exclusive.’ He goes on to state that ‘Pannenberg describes this as a “relation of real mutual conditioning between an idea of God and a human self-understanding” and refers to “the actual reciprocal relation of theology and anthropology that characterizes human self-understanding”’ (Shults 1999:167). He concludes that ‘in “Christologie und Theologie”, he explicitly calls for the overcoming of the alternative between “from above” and “from below”. This will require a “deepening and widening of the place from which concentrated theological reflection on the man Jesus of Nazareth begins”’ (Shults 1999: 169).

Although Pannenberg (1975[1968]: 35) rejects the understanding ‘from above’, he admits ‘the relative justification for such a way of approaching the question, especially as it is to be seen in earlier periods of the church and of the history of theology’, since ‘one cannot claim that the incarnational Christology which has ruled the history of the development of the Christological doctrine was simply a mistake’. He adds that ‘nevertheless, the historical reality of Jesus, which has often been extremely restricted in this way, must be made fruitful today in its fullness’ (Pannenberg 1975[1968]: 37). However, for Pannenberg (1975[1968]: 37) this implies that ‘in the context of such a Christology ‘from below’, it is clear that the confession of the divinity of the man Jesus requires substantiation, that it is not self-explanatory.’

Schwöbel (1989: 261) says that the concept of ‘from below’ does not imply that ‘Pannenberg’s Christology remains below.’ He adds that ‘in the framework of the revelational unity of God and Jesus, the divinity of Jesus has to be understood as the unity of the Son with the Father which leads directly to the Christian understanding of God as Trinity (Schwöbel 1989: 261)’



However, for Pannenberg (1975[1968]:48), the Christological method must be ‘from below’ since ‘Soteriology must follow from Christology, not vice versa’. Pannenberg (1975[1968]: 48) confirms that ‘Christology must start from Jesus of Nazareth, not from his significance for us as, for instance, the proclamation directly offers it. The significance of Jesus must be developed from what Jesus actually was then. This intention has been, by and large, at the basis of the Christological tradition’. He adds that ‘thus, a presentation of Christology beginning with the past reality of Jesus does not necessarily need to break with the Christological tradition at every point. It must, however, examine the Soteriological approach of the traditional Christologies in the light of the historical reality of Jesus’ (Pannenberg 1975[1968]: 49).

11.2.1.2 Resurrection

Thompson (1994: 34) says that for Pannenberg ‘the resurrection works retroactively and shows that, whether Jesus claimed and knew it or not, he was the Son of God and so one with the Father.’ He adds that ‘the resurrection is central for another reason: it gives access to a proper understanding of the role of the Spirit. The Spirit comes from the risen Christ, is given to believers, and is seen as drawn into the fellowship with the Father. Second, the resurrection of Jesus is the prolepsis of the final manifestation of God as he will be and so is’ (Thompson 1994: 35). Pannenberg (1975[1968]: 60-61) states that ‘Jesus’ claim to authority through its proleptic structure corresponds to the apocalyptic vision’s relation to history, which in turn goes back to the relation of the prophetic word of God to the future.’ Pannenberg (1975[1968]: 61) argues that ‘the apocalyptic view of history, which also grasped future events before they occurred, required confirmation by the actual course of the events themselves’. Pannenberg adds

When we speak today of God’s revelation in Jesus and of his exaltation accomplished in the resurrection from the dead, our statements always contain a proleptic element. The fulfillment, which had begun for the disciples, which was almost in their grasp, in the appearances of the resurrected Lord, has become promise once again for us. ...To that extent the eschatological future was nearer then, than at any time since. All



subsequent church history lives from that, even though the truth of seeing the resurrection and the end together has become more problematic again in the meantime than it was for the first community, and will be completely confirmed only in the future for the first community, and will be completely confirmed only in the future (Pannenberg 1975[1968]: 108).¹⁷⁷

In this connection, 'Jesus' relation to God implied in the Easter event must first be developed more precisely' (Pannenberg 1975[1968]: 115)¹⁷⁸. Schwöbel (1989: 261) says that 'the resurrection is not only the crucial point for the validation of the claims of Jesus' divinity; it is also the foundation for understanding the true humanity of Jesus as the fulfillment of human destiny.' He adds that 'from this anthropological perspective Pannenberg explores the soteriological content traditionally presented as the work of Christ, before turning to the relationship of humanity and divinity in Christ.'

11.2.1.3 Pre-existence and the two natures of Christ

Pannenberg (1975[1968]: 150) confirms that 'Jesus' unity with God, insofar as it belongs to God's eternal essence, precedes the time of Jesus' earthly life.' He adds that 'from the idea of revelation we attain access to the understanding of the old concept of Jesus' preexistence' (Pannenberg 1975[1968]: 150). According to Pannenberg (1991: 30), 'the idea of the preexistence of the Son of the eternal Father is crucial in the process of the explication of the meaning inherent in Jesus' historical teaching and activity.' He adds that 'without the preexistent Son who became incarnate in Jesus there would be no trinitarian concept of God. Therefore the idea of preexistence is the connecting link in the process of explication from the historical Jesus to the doctrine of the Trinity' (Pannenberg 1991: 30). However, for Pannenberg (1975[1968]: 152), 'the concept

¹⁷⁷ The Christian perception of what happened in Jesus will always retain an openness to the future. The ultimate divine confirmation of Jesus will take place only in the occurrence of his return. Only then will the revelation of God in Jesus become manifest in its ultimate, irresistible glory.

¹⁷⁸ That involves showing the extent to which the Christological tradition becomes understandable from the perspective of Jesus' resurrection as an explication of the historical Jesus, insofar as the Easter event reveals Jesus' activity and fate as a unified complex of meaning(1975[1968]: 115).



“preexistence” is used after Jesus’ resurrection for the one who was to come again in Messianic Lordship’. This understanding of resurrection implies that ‘God was always one with Jesus, even before his earthly birth. Jesus is from all eternity the representative of God in creation’ (Pannenberg 1975[1968]: 153).

For Pannenberg (1988: 289), the idea of the pre-existence of Jesus opens the Sonship of Jesus Christ eschatologically or opens in the event accomplishing the resurrection of Jesus eschatologically. Pannenberg (1975[1968]: 159) argues that ‘the relation of Jesus as the Son to the Father may be summarized with primitive Christianity as “obedience”. It is therefore a relation proper to the essence of God himself’. He adds that ‘God is not only “Father”, but as the God who is revealed through Jesus’ resurrection, he is in his eternal essence also “Son.” Thereby the expressions “Father” and “Son” are to be strictly applied to the relation to God of the historical man Jesus of Nazareth’ (Pannenberg 1975[1968]: 159). On the one hand, here, ‘the word “Father” means the God of Jesus, who was the God of the Old Testament, to whom Jesus directed his prayers and from whose hand he accepted his fate’. The word ‘Son’, on the other hand, here, ‘does not designate, as it does in other places in the New Testament, Jesus’ place of honor in contrast to humanity and the cosmos, but primarily his relation to the Father, a relation of obedience and “mission”, but also of trust’ (Pannenberg 1975[1968]: 159). Pannenberg says that ‘in the light of his pre-existence the earthly life and work of Jesus could easily be presented as a sending of the Son into the world, and the thought of pre-existence is already presupposed in Paul in this connection (Gal 4:4; Rom 8:3)’ (1988: 289; ET 265).

Contrary to the traditional understanding, Pannenberg (1991: 31) argues that ‘the idea of preexistence does not entail the full divinity of the preexistent entity.’ But, the title ‘*Kyrios*’ indicates the full divinity of the Son (Pannenberg 1988: 290). Therefore, Pannenberg says

In contrast to the thinking of classical teaching about the Trinity, then, the thought of generation brings us less close to the relationship of the Son to the eternal God than does the idea of preexistence which the sending



statements imply. But the latter have to be shown to involve this relation to the Father before they can have any relevance as a basis for the doctrine of the Trinity. For the idea of preexistence which underlies them does not in any sense carry with it a belief in the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father (Pannenberg 1988: 334; ET 307).

As his section on 'The impasse of the doctrine of the two natures' indicates, Pannenberg (1975[1968]: 283) shows that the doctrine of the two natures causes problems: Jesus' unity with God is not to be conceived as a unification of two substances, but as the sentence 'this man Jesus is God'. Pannenberg, like Moltmann, questions the traditional doctrine of the two natures.

For Pannenberg (1975[1968]: 291), 'the dilemma¹⁷⁹ of these two-christological solutions (Alexandrian theology and Antiochian theology) is insoluble so long as Christology is developed from the concept of the incarnation, instead of culminating in the assertion of the incarnation as its concluding statement'. He adds that 'this false point of departure is common to both the Antiochian conception that the Logos assumed the whole man at the incarnation, and the Alexandrian conception that the Logos only assumed human nature' (Pannenberg 1975[1968]: 291). Pannenberg argues

Therefore, neither of the two conceptions was simply right in contrast to the other. Each represented an important element of truth: in the Antioch position, the idea of the real, individual human being of Jesus; in the Alexandrian, the unlimited unity of Jesus with God. But a solution of the Christological problem would have been possible only if one would have overcome the approach that lies at the basis of both theses, namely, the question of the process of the incarnation, of the coming to be of the unity of God and man in Jesus (Pannenberg 1975[1968]: 291-292).

¹⁷⁹ See Pannenberg's chapter 'The Impasse of the doctrine of the two natures' (Jesus' unity with God is not to be conceived as a unification of two substances, but as this man Jesus is God.): Alexandrian theology and Antiochian theology.



Therefore, Pannenberg (1975[1968]:283) confirms that ‘the unity of God and man in Jesus Christ is the concluding and crowning theme of Christology.’ There are two considerations involved. On the one hand, it is the consideration ‘from Jesus’ resurrection to the confession of Jesus’ divinity.’ On the other hand, it is consideration of ‘the activity and fate of Jesus in his humanity’ (Pannenberg 1975[1968]: 283). However, for Pannenberg (1975[1968]: 285), ‘the notion asserted by the two-natures formula of two substances coming together to emerge as one individual is problematic.’ He adds that ‘on this point the Chalcedonian decision merely shared the general problem of its contemporary theological situation. Chalcedon probably did not intend to go beyond the formula of Irenaeus that it wanted to interpret.’

According to Schwöbel (1989:261), Pannenberg inquires into ‘the possibility of asserting that the identity of Jesus with the Son of God is established indirectly through his relationship of absolute obedience to God the Father’, although ‘he is deeply sceptical about the adequacy of the traditional two-natures doctrine, conceived in terms of the metaphysics of substance.’ He adds that ‘in this sense, Jesus’ eternal Sonship is interpreted as dialectically identical with his humanity, in so far as the relationship of Jesus to God the Father, in the historical aspect of his existence, mediate the relationship of the eternal Son to the Father’ (Schwöbel 1989:261-2). For Pannenberg, McEnhill & Newlands say

We cannot use the Logos Christology, of which preexistence was an important component, any more. We must work from below, moving back from the resurrection to the man Jesus. Although he knew himself to be one with God, yet his self-consciousness, like all human self-consciousness, was centered on the future. This status was confirmed by the resurrection. Through his personal communion, Jesus received from his father his self-consciousness, which was the personality of the Son (McEnhill & Newlands 2005[2004]: 212)

However, as with Moltmann, Pannenberg diverts from the traditional understanding on the basis of a Christology ‘from below’ and the identification of



the immanent and economic Trinity.

11.2.1.4 Christological anthropology

For Pannenberg, Christology follows on ‘the doctrine of God and anthropology’ on the basis of ‘the development of Christological assertions in a twofold context’ (Grenz 2005[1990]: 150-151). The first context is based on ‘the doctrine of humanity’ in which he ‘follows the traditional sequence of topics as grounded in the salvation-historical schema of theology present even in Barth’s Church Dogmatics, in which anthropology precedes Christology’ (Grenz 2005[1990]: 151). The second context is based on the doctrine of God itself (Grenz 2005[1990]: 151). Grenz (2005[1990]: 152) argues that ‘the approach from an anthropology determined through the doctrine of God suggests to Pannenberg a first fruitful standpoint for the Christological task, namely, the attempt to understand the appearance of Jesus as the revelation and fulfillment of human destiny.’ Schwöbel (1989: 262) confirms that ‘at a number of crucial points the validity of this Christological conception rests on the justifiability of its anthropological presuppositions.’ He adds ‘the appeal to the resurrection as the foundation for the Christological statement about the unity of Jesus with God, and about the fulfillment of human destiny in him, presupposes that the apocalyptic expectation of the end of history as the disclosure of the totality of meaning can be justified on general anthropological grounds.’ (Schwöbel 1989: 262)

Modern atheism, for Pannenberg (1973: 105), focuses its debate upon anthropology, ‘at least since Feuerbach, as can clearly be seen in Marx, Nietzsche, Freud and Sartre.’ He adds ‘here, the arguments of atheism run parallel to the concentration upon anthropological theology, and in particular on the proof of God’ (Pannenberg 1973: 105). Atheists, Feuerbach and his successors down to Sartre, opposed to the idea of God as ‘a hindrance to human freedom’ (Pannenberg 1973: 106). Pannenberg (1973:106) confirms that ‘the first and fundamental choice between theology and atheism in fact lies in the understanding of man, in anthropology.’ However, for Pannenberg (1973: 107), ‘the atheist assertion that the idea of God is the expression of a self-alienation of



man, and is a threat to human freedom and therefore to humanity itself, cannot be taken lightly.’

Pannenberg does not simply criticize the atheistic position and anthropology, but ‘subjectivism’¹⁸⁰ in anthropology (or being interpreted anthropologically) in line with both Barth and Feuerbach. For Pannenberg, it is premature just to regard modern atheism as ‘hatred God’. Modern atheism cannot be escaped by retreating into ‘a supernaturalistic wildlife sanctuary, as Barthian theology does with its divorce between faith and reason.’ Therefore Pannenberg regards Barth’s theological subjectivism as a ‘surrender to the nihilism of Nietzsche’ (Wood 1991: 49). Wood adds

Modern atheism must be understood as the outcome of the rise of human subjectivity as the criterion of truth, as developed in the philosophy of Descartes. Finally, the atheistic outcome is due to the idea of the supernaturalistic Absolute Subject (Person) who coexists “above” us. The atheistic critique of Fichte, Feuerbach and Nietzsche is based on this concept of a supermundane Person. Secularistic naturalism refuted the idea of this supernaturalistic Subject (a divine Person) and replaced it with the autonomous subject (a human being). Not God but humans choose what is the truth! This atheistic self-affirmation is the inevitable consequence of a metaphysic of the will which Barth’s subjectivism presupposes’ (Wood 1991: 49).

For Pannenberg, as Wood (1991:50) points out, ‘the only way to overcome modern atheism is by means of a more radical inquiry into being. For theology, this means that its concept of God must be thought out in connection with the philosophical question about being if it is to be a match for the atheism of Nietzsche.’

¹⁸⁰ See Pannenberg (1988: 104)- For Pannenberg, this anthropological interpretation of the proof of God and the thought of God can be the basis of the atheistical argument, since for atheism, the thought of God is regarded only as an expression of the subjective need and as the production of the projection of the human-earthly idea of the Infinite on the basis of Fichte’s book on the struggle of atheism, that is, in the attempt to prove that the idea of God as Substance and as a Person is contradictory.



Actually, the atheistic critique against theism that ‘turns any attempt to deal with the question of God dogmatically into an exercise in religious subjectivism’ (Schwöbel 1989: 268) plays an important role. This atheistic critique is the motive for his attention to the question of God. ‘The crucial point of the atheistic critique is the assertion that the concept of God is not necessary for a complete and meaningful understanding of human existence’ (Schwöbel 1989: 268). It is opposed to anthropological reflection as the background to God. Today anthropology is the field of argument between theology and atheism (Greiner 1988: 45). Pannenberg, according to Grenz (1991: 78-79), argues that ‘theology cannot merely launch into the doctrine of God, but it must be its starting point. To accomplish this, he builds on an anthropological observation.’

Although Pannenberg’s idea is ‘God-centred’ and concentrates on explaining ‘the ability of the Christian belief in God’ to indicate ‘human experience of the world’, his theology is steadfastly built upon on ‘anthropology, the doctrine of humanity’ (Kärkkäinen 2003: 157). As Livingston (2006: 347) points out, ‘Pannenberg develops his anthropology with a specific historical orientation in that he connects the openness of human nature with the incompleteness of history’. He adds that ‘in his anthropology, Pannenberg seeks to develop Herder’s insight in the formation of the subject in history, his notion of anticipation, and God’s spirit’ (Livingston 2006: 347). According to Hendrickson (1998: 68)

Herder understood the image of God as a directive force, an understanding that lends itself to Pannenberg’s own understanding of humanity moving towards its destiny. For Herder, the image of God is, first of all, the guide for human beings (as instinct is the guide for animals). Secondly, this guiding image of God serves for the achieving of an end... Thirdly, human beings cannot become human by themselves, but, finally, the guiding image of God uses tradition and learning, reason and experience and divine providence to achieve the destiny toward which it guides humanity. The image of God is an already present guide in humanity, but it is a teleologically oriented, already-present guide, being revealed fully only upon achieving the destiny of humanity (Hendrickson 1998: 68).

For Pannenberg, ‘theology and anthropology are not two separate operations that one must work to bring together. Rather, they are mutually conditioning, each unthinkable without the other’ (Shults 2001: 814). Although both anthropology and theology permeates ‘both sides of the relation’, two tasks may be distinguished. One is closely connected with ‘the anthropological data (with theological concerns as the background)’, while the other indicates ‘the explanatory power of theological statements in relation to our lived human experience’.

Bradshaw (2003:144) states that ‘as interpreted anthropologically by Kant and Hegel, the proofs of God usefully bear witness to the need of humanity and human reason to rise above the mundane finitude of human existence to the thought of the infinite. The cosmological arguments are important because they refer all reality to one origin.’ According to Gutenson (2005: 36), ‘the important point is that the arguments have shifted over time from a cosmological basis to a more anthropological basis.’ This implies that ‘the arguments were grounded in the analysis of certain concrete aspects of the human encounter with the cosmos’ (Gutenson 2005: 36).

11.2.2 The Doctrine of the Trinity

Pannenberg, as Grenz (2004: 95) points out ‘develops the doctrine of the Trinity on the basis of the way that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit come into appearance and relate to one another in the event of revelation as presented in the life and message of Jesus, as well as in his death and resurrection.’ According to Pannenberg (1977a: 86), the doctrine of the Trinity is not only the formulation of the peculiarity (characteristic) of the special historical event revealing God’ (*Formulierung der Eigenart des in einem besonderen geschichtlichen Ereignis offenbaren Gottes*). But Pannenberg’s proposal of the doctrine of the Trinity implies ‘the divine self-disclosure in Jesus Christ’ (Grenz 2004: 95). This understanding stems from the identity between Immanent and Economic Trinity. Olson (1990: 178) points out that modern theologians see Rahner’s Rule as ‘providing a significant turning point in modern Christian thinking about God, while each developed this thesis in his own way. From this, Grenz (2005[1990]: 63)



regards Pannenberg's doctrine of the Trinity as 'the interpretation of the relationship of Jesus to the Father and to the Spirit.' Therefore Pannenberg begins his doctrine of the Trinity with the concept 'Person' which includes the possibility to say something *via analogiae* about God (Nnamdi 1992: 336).

11.2.2.1 *Person and relation*

For Pannenberg, the modern concept 'person' is regarded as an individual and subject (Gutenson 2005: 137) flowing through the whole traditional western and eastern understanding. Bradshaw (2003: 168) states that while 'Pannenberg radically destroys Kantian subjective idealism', 'he is with Hegel¹⁸¹ in seeking to leap over human subjectivity, and his thought is far more Hegelian than Kantian in cast' (Bradshaw 2003: 169).

11.2.2.1.1 The three Persons is not deduced from the unity of the deity

For Pannenberg (1991: 31), the doctrine of the Trinity 'cannot be deduced from a general concept of God as spirit or love'. The derivation of the divine threeness from the concept 'Spirit' in the western theology goes back to Augustine (Pannenberg 1977: 30). Augustine 'took over the relational definition of the trinitarian distinctions which the Cappadocians, following Athanasius, had developed' (Pannenberg 1988: 309; ET 284).

¹⁸¹ According to Pannenberg (1975[1968]: 181-182), 'his[God's] personality, God's being as subject over against the world, displays in Hegel the same structure as the personality of the Trinitarian Persons. And indeed for the perception of the Trinity from God's revelation both are associated in the closest way. The God who reveals himself is essentially Person. He shows himself to be such in his revelation as Father in relation to the Son, who as the Son of the Father belongs indissolubly to the divinity of God. Thus the personality of the divine essence is also the presupposition for the differentiation of Persons within the divinity.' He adds that 'Hegel understood the unity in the Trinity as the unity of reciprocal self-dedication, thus as a unity that only comes into existence through the process of reciprocal dedication. Thereby he conceived God's unity in an intensity and vitality never before achieved, not by striking off the threeness of Persons, but precisely by means of the sharpest accentuation of the concept of the personality of Father, Son and Spirit' (1975[1968]: 182).

However, according to Pannenberg (1988: 309; ET 284), Augustine 'did not try to derive the trinitarian distinctions from the divine unity.' He adds,

The psychological analogies that he suggested and developed in his work on the Trinity were simply meant to offer a very general way of linking the unity and trinity and thus creating some plausibility for trinitarian statement. The analogies do not depend on the common outward operations of God because the picture of God in the human soul reflects the three persons not alone but in concert. The copy, of course, falls far short of the original. Hence Augustine could not develop a psychological doctrine of the Trinity in the sense of a derivation of the three divine persons from the unity of the divine Spirit (Pannenberg 1988: 209- 210; ET 284-285).

On the contrary, Augustine emphasises on 'the inadequacy of all psychological analysis' (Pannenberg 1988: 310; ET 285).

The derivation of the trinitarian threeness from the divine unity, which is inspired by Neo-Platonism, occurs in Anselm's Monologion (Pannenberg 1988: 310-311). Anselm was much nearer to Augustine. 'Whereas Augustine regards the spirit that knows and loves itself as only a remote copy of the Trinity, Anselm takes the Trinity directly from the concept of *summa natura* as *Spiritus*' (Pannenberg 1988: 311; ET 268).

Pannenberg (1988: 318) refers to Hegel's understanding of the doctrine of God in connection with the derivation of the Trinity from the Spirit. Hegel developed the trinitarian structure of divine life from the concept of God as Spirit and as Subject (Pannenberg 1977: 30; Pannenberg 1988: 322). For Pannenberg

The plurality of the persons is not primarily derived, but original, and only in them the unity of God is real. Furthermore, Subjectivity at least accrues comes to the Trinitarian persons, not the unity of love, which unites them by dedication to one another. It is nevertheless not about a tri-theism or bi-theism, because the persons are only of the Father and the Son who are



surrendering their independence to one another, and therefore only have their existence (Dasein) in a third, the Spirit, who unites them, and is therein again nothing for himself, but only the Spirit of fellowship of the Father and the Son. Only from such a reciprocal devotion the Trinitarian Persons have their specific personality (Pannenberg 1977: 37).

Pannenberg (1988: 322; ET 296) criticises Barth that ‘the *Church Dogmatics* does not develop the doctrine of the trinitarian God from the data of the historical revelation of God as Father, Son, and Spirit, but from the formal concept of revelation as self-revelation, which, as Barth sees it, entails a subject of revelation, an object, and revelation itself, all of which are one and the same’. Pannenberg (1988: 322; ET 296) argues that ‘there is no room for a plurality of Persons in the one God but only for different modes of being in the one divine subjectivity’ in Barth’s doctrine of the Trinity. Pannenberg (1977: 30) indicates that Barth develops his doctrine of the Trinity not primarily from the exegetical results, that is, something from the historical relation of Jesus to the Father, but from the inner Logic of the concept of revelation. According to Powell (2001: 235), in the history of theology Pannenberg distinguishes two main approaches to understand ‘the relation between the unity and Trinity’: ‘the way of Anselm and Barth, which derives the Trinity from the unity’, and ‘the way of Richard of St. Victor, who derives the Trinity from the idea of God’s self-love’. Pannenberg choose the latter because it implies ‘a plurality of persons and the personal encounter that he believes lies at the essence of personhood’, in line with Hegel. Pannenberg says

Any derivation of the plurality of trinitarian persons from the essence of the one God, whether it be viewed as spirit or love, leads into the problems of either modalism on the one hand or subordinationism on the other. Neither, then, can be true to the intentions of the trinitarian dogma. The derivation from love is closer to the Christian concept of God and the doctrine of the Trinity than is derivation from the idea of a divine self-consciousness, since it leaves more room for a plurality of persons in the unity of the divine life. Yet this plurality cannot be deduced from an idea of divine love without relapse into pretrinitarian monotheism, that of the subjectivity of the one



God as the one who generates the other Persons. In the concept of divine love it can find only their comprehensive unity (Pannenberg 1988: 325; ET 298).

11.2.2.1.2 Critique of the concept ‘the Father as the source of divinity’

According to Pannenberg (2003: 239), in the classical role of the trinitarian theology, the Person of the Son and the Spirit are constituted through their origin from the Father, the source (*Quelle*) of divinity, the bearing of the Son, and the breathing or procession of Spirit from the source (*Quelle*). As Olson (1990: 180) points out, ‘Pannenberg’s thesis is that from the early history of the church, both east and west, theologians have tended to understand the deity of the Son and the Spirit from the deity of the Father either by regarding the Father as the source or “font” of deity or by seeing the Son and Spirit as expressions of the Father’s self-consciousness. Both approaches, he believes, are highly speculative and have always tended toward subordinationism or Sabellianism.’ For Pannenberg (1988: 350), ‘Athanasius ventured to take so literally the saying of Christ in Jn 14:6: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life,” that for him the Son was the truth and life of the Father, too.’ And ‘the saying thus became an argument against the Arians’ (Pannenberg 1988: 350; ET 322). He adds

The Son is for Athanasius the power and wisdom of the Father (C.A 1.11). The deity of the Father is thus seen in the Son (3.5). As the Father is not the Father without the Son (3.6; cf. 1.29,34), he does not have his Godhead without him...The common view of the deity of the Father radically questions these daring thoughts of Athanasius. It accepts the deity of the Father unconditionally and ascribes deity to the Son and Spirit only derivatively. In fact, however, the Son is a condition of the deity of the Father. It is the Son who teaches us to know the Father as the only true God (3,9; cf. 7). Athanasius, too, could call the Father the “fount” of wisdom, and therefore of the Son(1.19), but only in the sense that one cannot call the Father the “fount” without the Son who issues forth from it(Pannenberg 1988: 350; ET 322)



The Cappadocians also followed Athanasius. Pannenberg says that ‘the Cappadocians, with their thesis that the Father is the source¹⁸² (*Quelle*) of deity, sometimes come close to a view which threatens the equal deity, because they do not expressly add that the Father is the principle of deity only from the perspective of the Son.’ He adds that ‘without the addition of this qualification the Son and Spirit are ontologically inferior to the Father- something which the Cappadocians no less than Athanasius strove to avoid’ (Pannenberg 1988: 350; ET 322-323). Olson says (1990: 180), ‘Pannenberg believes the Cappadocian Fathers are largely responsible for the subordinationist tendency in Christian thinking about the Trinity’.

But Jansen (1995: 178) criticizes Pannenberg’s rejection of the concept ‘Father as Source of other Persons’ following O’Donnell’s critique. According to Jansen, O’Donnell indicates that ‘although there is reciprocity among the Persons of the trinity, there is also a sense, in which some relationships are unilateral’ (Jansen 1995: 178). He concludes, ‘the Son receives his hypostasis from the Father and not vice versa. Neither the scriptures nor the tradition warrant an unrestricted mutuality of relationships in the Trinity’ (Jansen 1995: 178)¹⁸³. Jansen (1995: 179) comments that ‘the individual members are merely “forms” or “manifestations” of the Godhead, which is described in terms of field. The price Pannenberg has to pay for a successful evasion of subordinationism is an endorsement of a new form of monism and modalism.’

11.2.2.1.3 The concept ‘Person’ is a mutual relation.

According to Gutenson (2005: 137), the concept of Personhood in modern times, ‘came to be understood primarily in terms of autonomy and individuality’ following Boethius who ‘understood “self-consciousness” as the constitutive element of Personhood’ (Gutenson 2005: 137). Like Moltmann, Pannenberg rejects the traditional understanding of concept ‘person’ as ‘subjectivity’.

¹⁸² The translator of Pannenberg’s *Systematic Theology* uses the term ‘fount’ for the German word ‘Quelle’. However, the German word ‘Quelle’ can better be rendered by the English word ‘source’.

¹⁸³ See Jansen’s footnote (1995: 178)



Pannenberg rejects the traditional starting point of the understanding of God which is based on the unity of God. For Pannenberg (1988: 325; 330; ET 298), ‘any derivation of the plurality of the trinitarian persons from the essence of the one God, whether it be viewed as spirit or love, leads into the problems of either modalism on the one hand or subordinationism on the other.’ The concepts ‘modalism’ and ‘subordinationism’ stem from the traditional understanding of a person (Pannenberg 1988: 325). For Pannenberg (1975[1968]: 181), since Augustine, the structure of the Father, and Son and Spirit as Person ‘has been contested repeatedly because it appeared to express too great an individual independence of the three’. For him, this concept ‘individual independence of three’, following the western tendency, ‘reaches its climax in Karl Barth, namely, in his suggestion that one should speak of three “modes of being” instead of “Persons”’ (1975[1968]: 181). Both Moltmann (1994[1980]: 160) and Pannenberg criticizes Barth’s concept of ‘three Persons’ as modes of existence (*Seinsweisen*)¹⁸⁴ which stems from Dorner. For Pannenberg, the three Persons are three ‘separated centres of action and not just modes of being of one divine subject’ (Min 2004: 253; La Due 2003: 134). According to Powell (2001 233), ‘Pannenberg charges Barth with devising a doctrine of the Trinity that is based on something other than the relation of Jesus to the Father.’ Actually, for Pannenberg

[B]arth’s basic thought is problematic to develop the doctrine of the trinity as the expression of the subjectivity of God in his revelation (*Subjektivität Gottes in seiner Offenbarung*) so that the subjectivity of God is the root (*Wurzel*) of the Trinity, not primarily its result. Barth’s construction of the doctrine of the Trinity on the idea of God as subject shows that he is nearer to Dorner and Hegel, whose idea led to the speculative doctrine about God.

¹⁸⁴ According to Pannenberg (1988: 330), Barth’s understanding of the concept of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit originates from the concept of revelation, that is, from the sentence ‘*Gott offenbart sich als der Herr*’. Thereby he explains the three modes of existence in which God revealed himself with a grammatical analysis of the sentence elements as subject, object and proclamation (1988: 330). Barth develops the trinitarian statement not from the contents of the revelation as witnessed in Scripture (*Inhalten der durch die Schrift bezeugten Offenbarung*), but from from its formal presentation (*formalen Vorstellung*) expressed in any sentence about God revealing himself (1988: 331).



The idea of the new theology that man can only think of God as a subject and as self-consciousness (*Selbstbewußtsein*), while thinking of God in trinitarian terms, goes back to Lessing (Pannenberg 1977: 29¹⁸⁵).

For Pannenberg (1988: 331; ET 304), ‘to base the doctrine of the Trinity on the content of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ we must begin with the relation of Jesus to the Father as it came to expression in his message of the divine rule’. He adds that ‘The NT statements about the deity of Jesus all presuppose his divine Sonship and are ultimately grounded in his relation to the Father’ (Pannenberg 1988: 331; ET 304). This stems from Athanasius’ statement that the Father cannot be thought of as Father without the Son’ (*Der Vater ohne Sohn nicht als Vater gedacht werden kann*) (Pannenberg 1988: 303-304). Pannenberg says,

Contrary to Arius, the churches at Nicea and Constantinople affirmed that the Son and the Spirit are of the same nature (*homoousios*) as the Father is. But as long as Son and Spirit were conceived primarily in causal terms as being brought forth by the Father, the tendency towards ontological subordinations continued, because, according to the then prevailing metaphysical conception of cause and effect, the cause is always of superior ontological dignity than the effect. The remedy is provided by Athanasius’ thesis that the Father was never without the Son, because “Father” is a relational term that makes no sense except in relation to the Person whose father He is. Thus, in some way the identity of being Father depends on the Son, and vice versa (Pannenberg 1991: 32).

¹⁸⁵ Pannenberg (1977: 25-40); He says ‘Dann aber wird die Grundgedanke Barths problematisch, die Trinitätslehre als Ausdruck der Subjektivität Gottes in seiner Offenbarung zu entwickeln und zwar so, daß die Subjektivität Gottes schon die „Wurzel“ der Trinität bildet und nicht erst ihre Resultat ist. Barth stand mit der Verhaftung seiner Trinitätslehre an den Gedanken Gottes als Subjekt noch näher Dörner selber bei Hegel und der in dessen Denken kulminierenden spekulativen Gotteslehre. Der Gedanke, daß man Gott als Subjekt, als Selbstbewußtsein, nur denken könne, indem man ihn trinitarisch denkt, geht in der neueren Theologie auf Lessing zurück (Pannenberg 1977: 29).



Pannenberg says that ‘the relation of his message and work to the Father forms the foundation of the confession of the divine Sonship of Jesus by the Christian community in the light of the divine confirmation of his fullness of power of the Easter event’ (Pannenberg 1988: 331; ET 304). He adds that ‘if, however, the doctrine of the Trinity is an exposition of the relation of Jesus to the Father and the Spirit, this has some incisive implications for the terminology which the classical presentation of the doctrine worked out to describe the relations among Father, Son, and Spirit’ (Pannenberg 1988: 332, ET 305). As Schwöbel (1989: 275) says, ‘this approach from Jesus’ relationship to the Father and the Spirit has a number of important consequences for the conceptuality of the doctrine of the Trinity.’

The personal relationship of Jesus to the Father and the Spirit can prove, not only historically and salvation-historically, but at the same time the eternal essence of God by characterizing the relation. This does not reduce it into the traditional concepts production (*Hervorbringung*), Begetting (*Zeugung*), and Spiration (*Hauchung*) (Pannenberg 1988: 334). For these words do not mark the eternal relation between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but the event of the appearance of the revelation itself (Pannenberg 2003: 236).

The concept ‘relation’ in Moltmann’s view of the ‘social Trinity’ causes a problem with the plurality in God. Actually, as Powell (2001: 237) points out, Pannenberg and Moltmann ‘begin with the plurality of Persons.’ However, he clarifies Pannenberg’s understanding of relation which does not ‘intend to suggest any sort of tri-theism’ (Powell 2001: 237), although for Pannenberg, ‘this distinction and plurality are the conditions of the Trinitarian relations’, meaning ‘the life of the Trinity consists in mutual relations. Pannenberg’s concept ‘relation’ does not mean tri-theism since the concept ‘Person’ is not ‘the subsistent entity that first exists and then enters into relation’ (Powell 2001: 237).

However, according to Olson (1990: 192), Falk Wagner ‘compares Pannenberg’s formulation with the “social analogy” and concludes that ‘the unity built on the relationships of the trinitarian Persons falls into an infinite regress, by which the



original threeness of the relations is continuously reinforced.’ But Pannenberg does not see ‘their personalities only as a result of mutual submission to one another’ (Olson 1990: 192). Olson (1990: 203; Letham 2004: 316¹⁸⁶) comments that ‘Pannenberg’s formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity will unquestionably be charged with Tritheism’.

11.2.2.1.4 The reciprocal self-distinction as the concrete figure of the trinitarian relation.

Grenz (2004: 96) says that ‘central to Pannenberg’s development of the doctrine of the Trinity is the concept of self-differentiation.’ Pannenberg (2003: 244) argues that the reciprocity in the personal relation therefore marks both the personal particularity and the fellowship between the Persons. In personal particularities, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit relate actively to each other. He adds that this is an activity marked by a self-differentiation (*Selbstunterscheidung*) which is both constitutive for personal particularities and for the fellowship of Persons with each other (Pannenberg 2003:244). While Pannenberg restores ‘Hegel’s triune self-differentiating, self-integrating deity’, he opposes Hegel for ‘failing to overcome the subjectivism of the modern idea of “person”’ (Bradshaw 2003: 165; Grenz 2004: 96).

La Due (2001: 37) says that ‘the eternal Son’s self-distinction from the Father is expressed fully in the context of the creaturely existence of Jesus. And this subordination of the Son repairs the damage done by the arrogance of Adam, reconciling the world to God’. Pannenberg describes the mutual self-distinction of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as ‘the concrete stature (Gestalt) of the Trinitarian relations’, beginning with ‘God’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ’ (Schwöbel 1996: 505). The relation of Jesus to the Father is essentially spoken, through his self-distinction from the Father (Vechtel 2001: 110). The self-distinction of Jesus from the Father

¹⁸⁶ According to Letham (2004: 316), As with Moltmann, Pannenberg’s idea of mutual reciprocity between the persons drives him in the direction of tritheism, as all social doctrines of the Trinity in some way must.

constitutes the inner ground for his divine Sonship and for his unity with the eternal essence of God (Vechtel 2001: 110). For Pannenberg

Thus, the trinitarian relations must not be reduced to relations of origin, but include the concrete mutuality of an interpersonal relationship. It is precisely in terms of this concrete mutuality that the identity of the trinitarian Persons is constituted by their relations to each other. These relations are eternal because the Father, in His eternal identity, is no other than He is revealed to be in His relationship with Jesus Christ by the glorifying work of the Spirit (Pannenberg 1991: 33).

Pannenberg (1988: 340; ET 312-313) says that ‘the handing over of the power and rule of the Father to the Son is then to be seen also as a defining of the intratrinitarian relations between the two, as is also their handing back by the Son to the Father’. He adds that ‘the handing over and the handing back seem at first to be separate acts, the former related to the sending of the Son, the latter to the eschatological consummation. Yet they are not mutually exclusive. They interpenetrate one another. The lordship of the Son is simply to proclaim the lordship of the Father, to glorify him, to subject all things to him. Hence the kingdom of the Son does not end when he hands back lordship to the Father’ (Pannenberg 1988: 340; ET 313).

This activity of the Father and the Son is understood as the reciprocity of the relationship between the Father and the Son. In this sense, Jesus is not an isolated revealer (isolierter Offenbarer), but He is the ‘Revealer’ in fellowship with the Father and the Holy Spirit (Nnamdi 1992:323). Pannenberg says

By handing over lordship to the Son the Father makes his kingship dependent on whether the Son glorifies him and fulfils his lordship by fulfilling his mission. The Self-distinction of the Father from the Son is not just that he begets the Son but that he hands over all things to him, so that his kingdom and his own deity are now dependent upon the Son. The rule or kingdom of the Father is not so external to his deity that he might be God



without his kingdom. The world as the object of his lordship might not be necessary to his deity, since its existence owes its origin to his creative freedom, but the existence of a world is not compatible with his deity apart from his lordship over it. Hence lordship goes hand in hand with the deity of God. It has its place already in the intratrinitarian life of God, in the reciprocity of the relation between the Son, who freely subjects himself to the lordship of the Father, and the Father, who hands over his lordship to the Son (Pannenberg 1988: 340; ET 313).

According to Oberdorfer (2002: 406), for Pannenberg, the Son is not the Son, and the Father is not Father without distinguishing the Son from Him, to give Him honour, to submit himself, and to glorify Him as the Father. Pannenberg says that ‘only on this basis one can speak of the trinitarian relevance of the cross of Jesus’ (Pannenberg 1988: 341; ET 313-314). It implies that ‘the best example of the mutual dependency of the trinitarian Persons is demonstrated in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus’ (Gutenson 2005:149-150). For Pannenberg, the mutuality of the relationship of the Father and the Son is ‘the key for the correct interpretation of the cross of Christ’ (Schwöbel 1989: 276). According to Pannenberg

The Passion of Jesus Christ is not an event which concerned only the human nature that the divine Logos assumed, as though it did not affect in any way the eternal placidity of the trinitarian life of God. In the death of Jesus the deity of his God and Father was at issue. It is incorrect, of course, to speak point-blank of the death of God on the cross, as has been done since the time of Hegel. We can only say of the Son of God that he was “Crucified, dead, and buried.” To be dogmatically correct, indeed, we have to say that the Son of God, though he suffered and died himself, did so according to his human nature. Even to speak directly of the death of God in the Son is a reverse monophysitism’ (Pannenberg 1988: 341; ET 314).

Pannenberg (1988: 342; ET 314) says that ‘the event of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ does not merely bring the deity of the Father as well as the Son into question. It refers



both to the work of the Spirit, who as the Creator of all life raises Jesus from the dead'. He adds 'the resurrection of Jesus may also be seen as an act of the Son of God himself, but again by the power of the Spirit. All three Persons of the Trinity are at work in this event. Decisive significance attaches, however, to the work of the Spirit as the creative origin of all life' (Pannenberg 1988: 342; ET 315). In Pannenberg's theology, the resurrection is the key to a sufficient understanding of the third Person, because it portrays 'the dependence of the Father and the Son on the Spirit as the medium of their community' (Schwöbel 1989: 276).

Pannenberg (1988: 343; ET 215-216) says that 'Augustine described the Spirit as the eternal communion of the Father and the Son, as the love (*caritas*) that unites them.' He adds that 'the criticism is correct, for there is no place for the self-distinction of the Spirit from the Father and the Son whom he glorifies if he is viewed merely as the "we" of their communion. The Spirit, too, does not glorify himself but the Son in his relation to the Father and hence also the Father in the work of the Son' (Pannenberg 1988: 343; ET 315). But 'there is a deeper truth in Augustine's view of the Spirit as the love that unites the Father and the Son. The Gospels trace back the relation of Jesus to the Father to his being filled by the Spirit. The accounts of the baptism of Jesus depict him as the recipient of the Spirit' (Pannenberg 1988: 343; ET 316). According to Pannenberg (1988: 345; ET 318), that the Holy Spirit is imparted through the risen Lord and originates and proceeds from the Father 'has played too fateful a role in the rift between Eastern and Western Christianity'. He adds

[The] theology of the christian West has good cause not merely to regret the one-sided addition of the *filioque* clause to the third article of the Creed of AD 381, and to withdraw it as uncanonical, but also to recognize that the Augustinian doctrine of the procession of the Spirit from both Father and Son is an inappropriate formulation of the fellowship of both Father and Son with the Spirit that Augustine rightly underscores¹⁸⁷ (Pannenberg

¹⁸⁷ ... sondern auch die augustinische Lehre vom Ausgang des Geistes von Vater und Sohn als eine theologisch unangemessene Formulierung der von Augustin mit Recht betonten Gemeinschaft von Vater



1988: 345-346; ET 318-319).

On the basis of the reciprocal relationship or self-distinction, Pannenberg criticizes the concept '*filioque*' (Vechtel 2001: 134). Pannenberg (1988: 346; ET 318-319) says that 'it [the filioque clause] is inappropriate because it describes the fellowship in the vocabulary of a relation of origin'. For Pannenberg (1988: 347) the problem of the doctrine of the filioque stems from the mis-interpretation of Augustine. This implies that the relations among the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are regarded exclusively as 'relations of origin' (Pannenberg 1988: 347). Letham (2004: 316; Grenz 2005[1990]: 66) says that 'due to his stress on the mutuality of relations, Pannenberg dismisses the filioque.' With his mutual relationship the relations of origin, that is, the subordination type of it is excluded (Grenz 2005[1999]: 66).

11.2.2.2 *Three Persons but one God*

Pannenberg (1988: 348; ET 320; 1991:33) says that 'the relations among the three Persons that are defined as mutual self-distinction cannot be reduced to relations of origin in the traditional sense.' Pannenberg's deduction of the doctrine of the Trinity from the reciprocal relations of the trinitarian Persons conceives of the traditional doctrine of Persons as a relation, and on the other hand, criticizes the traditional doctrine of its relations as relations of origin (Vechtel 2001:125). Pannenberg states that

[T]he biblical witness instructs us on the reciprocity of these personal relations, and as reciprocity is indispensable to all true personal fellowship, so the triune fellowship of the Father, the Son and the Spirit is understood as the eternal source and model of all true personal fellowship marked as reciprocity. The emphasis on the elements of reciprocity in the relations between the trinitarian Persons does not support the classical formulation by the church of the doctrine of the Trinity as a relation of origins (*Ursprungsbeziehung*) (Pannenberg 2003: 244-245).

und Sohn durch den Geist zu erkennen.



According to Pannenberg (1988: 348; ET 320), this relation implies that ‘the Father does not merely beget the Son. He hands over his kingdom to him and receives it back from him. The Son is not merely begotten of the Father. He is also obedient to him and he thereby glorifies him as the one God. The Spirit is not just breathed. He also fills the Son and glorifies him in his obedience to the Father, thereby glorifying the Father himself.’ For Pannenberg (2003: 241), in the relation of the Father to the Son, there is a moment (*Moment*) of self-distinction, namely in the transfer of rulership to the Son, who returns to the Father and submits himself to the Father. Therefore, their self-distinction is the condition for their unity (Pannenberg 2003: 242).

11.2.2.2.1 The love of God

Pannenberg (1988: 460; ET 426; Nnamdi 1992: 354) says, ‘the mutual love of the trinitarian love does not simply denote activities of their mutual relations.’ He adds ‘love is a power which shows itself in those who love and in their turning to one another, growing through them like fire.’ ‘According to 1 Jn 4:8, 16, love as the power that manifests itself in the mutual relations of the trinitarian persons is identical with the divine essence’ (Pannenberg 1988: 461; ET 427). Pannenberg says, according to Min (2004: 258), that ‘God does not just love us but is love. Loving is not an activity among others in God but constitutes God’s essence,’ and, ‘as for Feuerbach, love is not a predicate, but the very substance of God. God does not primarily know and love himself, generating the Son and spirating the Spirit in the process as in the classical position’. This implies that the divine love constitutes the concrete unity of divine life in the distinction of their personal manifestation and relation (Nnamdi 1992: 356).

According to Powell (2001: 234), ‘in particular he [Pannenberg] favors Hegel’s depiction of the divine unity in terms of love.’ Grenz (2005[1990]: 62) says that ‘Pannenberg affirms the significance of the Hegelian renewal of an argument that he points out was characteristic of Western medieval theology as well’. However, for Pannenberg, this Hegelian understanding causes ‘a deeper problem untouched by the discussion in the nineteenth century’ (Grenz 2005[1990]: 62). This problem implies the derivation of plurality from a concept of God as one being, which for Pannenberg

implies subordination and modalism (Pannenberg 1988: 325). In spite of this danger for Pannenberg, Powell (2001: 234) says, ‘since love presupposes a plurality of subjects, this maneuver acknowledges the trinitarian Persons as original and regards selfhood as a property of the Persons individually, not of the unity. Accordingly, Pannenberg wishes to distinguish “Person” from “subjectivity”’. Pannenberg says

In the mutual relations of the trinitarian persons, however, their existence as persons or hypostases is wholly filled by these specific mutual relations, so that they are nothing apart from them. Thus their existence as persons is coincident with the divine love, which is simply the concrete life of the divine Spirit, just as conversely the one reality of God as Spirit exists only in the mutual relations of the trinitarian persons and precisely for that reason is defined as love (Pannenberg 1988: 465; ET 431).

He adds

The divine love constitutes the concrete unity of the divine life in the distinction of its personal manifestations and relations. The personal distinctions among Father, Son, and Spirit cannot be derived from an abstract concept of love. We may know them only in the historical revelation of God in Jesus Christ. But on this basis they and their unity in the divine essence make sense as the concrete reality of the divine love which pulses through all things and which consummates the monarchy of the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit (Pannenberg 1988: 466; ET 432).

11.2.2.2 Spirit

Jn 4: 24 indeed says that ‘God is Spirit (pneuma)’ (Pannenberg 1988: 402). This sentence plays an important role in the doctrine of the pneumatology in Pannenberg’s theology. Against the idea of the divine Spirit-essence as highest reason, Pannenberg emphasizes that in the biblical sense the Spirit is understood not as reason (nous), but as

creative and living dynamic of God (Vechtel 2001: 170). Pannenberg compares the Hebrew *ruah* to stoic *pneuma*,

Now the Stoic *pneuma* was in many ways similar to the meaning of the biblical word *pneuma* or, in Hebrew *ruah*. The basic intuition was in both cases that of air in movement, full of force, which, according to the stoic, is a result of the ‘tension’ the air contains. The important difference, of course, is that in Stoic philosophy the *pneuma* was a cosmic principle, pervading the cosmos and keeping all its parts together by its tension (*tenos*), while in the biblical conception the divine *pneuma* was conceived as transcending the world of creatures though working in it creatively (Pannenberg 2001:787).

For Pannenberg, the Spirit is a divine Person, who does not place his own divinity at the centre of his works, but points to the divinity of the Father and the Son and away from himself (Vechtel 2001: 132). The personality of the Holy Spirit is grounded in his self-distinction (*Selbstunderscheidung*) from the Father and the Son (Vechtel 2001: 133). Augustine regards the Holy Spirit as the eternal community, the bond between the Father and the Son (Pannenberg 1988: 343). Augustine was criticized that he sees the Holy Spirit not as an individual but as the community of the ‘we’.

For Pannenberg, as Min (2004: 258) points out, ‘the Spirit is the dynamic force field of love, “the power and fire of love growing through the divine Persons, uniting man, and radiating from them as the light of the glory of God”’. And the Spirit is the field of power of the almighty presence of God with his creature (Vechtel 2001: 170). Pannenberg explains:

My theological considerations on the divine spirit as field aim precisely at the distinction as well as interconnection between the reality of God and the world of nature concerning its constitution between the reality of God and the world of nature concerning its constitution in time and space. The space and time of the creatures are composed of parts and are divisible into parts,



which God is not, and they are objects of geometrical description and physical measurement, which God isn't either. It seems that the transition from God's immensity and eternity to the space and time of the creatures occurs when finite events and entities are granted an existence of their own within the undivided space of God's omnipresence and in the presence of his eternity. The finite existence of creatures entails relationships that are described in schemes of measurable space and time. The space-time concept of General Relativity is of philosophical significance here in expressing the dependence of the metrical structure of space and time on the presence of finite reality, of "masses" or clusters of energy (Pannenberg 2001: 791)

According to Hefner (2001: 904), 'Field is Pannenberg's way of clarifying "God's relationship to space and time.' He adds that

In field, as I understand Pannenberg, action is not described by the relationships between bodies that emerge from the coexistence that derives from their being together in a field. ... This same idea enables Pannenberg to describe the inner life of the Triune God as characterized by field (Hefner 2001: 804).

Pannenberg says

At this point, I return to the field concept and to the significance of its application to the doctrine of God as spirit. I said before that space and time, or rather space-time, are the only basic requirements of the field concept in the General Theory of Relativity. Here, the universe is described as a single field, while in principle the states of bodily matter (or particles) are considered as singularities of the cosmic field. If all geometrical descriptions of time and space, however, are dependent on the prior conception of space and time as an infinite and undivided whole, on the immensity and eternity of God, then this infinite and undivided whole may



also be described as an infinite field, the field of God's spirit that constitutes and penetrates all finite fields that are investigated and described by physicists, even the space-time of General Relativity. This relationship makes intelligible how the divine Spirit works in creation through the created reality of natural fields and forces. The interpretation of the concept of God as spirit in terms of the field concept, then, functions as a key to obtaining some understanding of God's fundamental relationship to the world of nature (Pannenberg 2001: 790).

However, according to John Polkinghorne (2001:796), Pannenberg's attempt failed and is abandoned. He adds that 'since all the physical entities of the universe are excitations in fields, it would be quixotic, to say the least, to leave the physical universe empty of matter because the metaphysicists had decreed that fields do not participate in the material' (Polkinghorne 2001: 796). He concludes

So what role is there, then, for the idea of a field in theology? It does not seem that it can function as an explanatory concept that bears any consonant relation to the scientific meaning of the term. Rather, it has been used simply as a metaphorical way of signifying the immanent presence of God and the activity of the divine energies in the space and time of creation (Polkinghorne 2001: 797).

11.2.2.2.3 Perichoresis

Pannenberg says that 'the unity of God in the Trinity of persons must also be the basis of the distinction and unity of the immanent and the economic Trinity' (Pannenberg 1988: 361; ET 334). To Pannenberg (1988: 362; ET 334), however, 'in traditional trinitarian teaching, then, the unity of the persons is not based on their *perichoresis* but on the derivation of the person from the Father as the Source of deity or on a self-development of the divine self-consciousness.' He adds that 'we can no longer adopt today these traditional ways of basing the trinity of persons on the unity of the Father or of the divine essence because they entail either subordinationism or Sabellianism'



(Pannenberg 1988: 362; ET 334). The doctrine of the *perichoresis* ‘begins with the three distinct Persons and only affirms the *de facto* unity among them; it too presupposes and “can only be manifest this unity” without providing a foundation for it’ (Min 2004: 253). Actually, for Pannenberg (1988: 362; ET 334), *perichoresis* ‘presupposes another basis of the unity of the three persons. It can only manifest this unity. On its own, its starting point is always the trinity of persons.’ According to Grenz (2004: 99), for Pannenberg ‘the unity of God in the threeness of the Persons provides the basis of the unity of the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity, and the unity of the divine life lies in the activity of the three Persons on behalf of one another rather than merely in the idea of perichoresis (contra Moltmann¹⁸⁸)’. Pannenberg says,

As regards the outward relation of the Trinity to the creaturely world, the 4th-century Cappadocians taught that the trinitarian persons work together here, and that with the perichoresis and the unity of origin from the Father, which explains genealogically the monarchy of the Father, this commonality of outward action is an expression of their unity in the divine essence (Pannenberg 1988: 416; ET 384-385).

Pannenberg (1988: 416) mentions’ however that Gregory of Nyssa had to concede to the Arian opponents that with the unity of workings the unity of substance is not fully explained¹⁸⁹. Pannenberg says:

The persons are not first constituted in their distinction, by derivation from the Father, and only then united in perichoresis and common action. As modes of being of the one divine life they are always permeated by its

¹⁸⁸ Min (2004: 253) says, ‘if we cannot derive the unity of the triune persons from the monarchy of the Father, the unity of the divine essence, or the unity of the absolute subject, nor can we derive the unity of the persons either from their joint operations in the world, as the Cappadocians, or from their eternal *perichoresis*, as does Moltmann. The joint operations of the persons in the economy only presuppose and express the unity of the divine essence; they do not provide the basis for the unity.’

¹⁸⁹ *Gregor von Nyssa mußte allerdings den arianischen Gegnern zugestehen, daß mit der Einheit des Wirkens noch nicht die Einheit der Substanz ausgesagt sei.*



dynamic through their mutual relations. In this regard we must first explain the relation between the common outward action of the divine persons and their living union in the unity of the divine essence. The commonality of action of Father, Son, and Spirit can only be a manifestation of the unity of life and essence by which they are always linked already' (Pannenberg 1988: 417; ET 385).

Pannenberg, as Schwöbel (1989: 279) says, 'insists that the three Persons of the Trinity are the primary and immediate subjects of divine activity. At the same time he rejects the view that the three Persons are first individually constituted and are only then united by perichoresis and in joint action.'

However, in the traditional understanding, the perichoresis plays an important role to explain the unity of three persons. Pannenberg's critique of the traditional understanding of the unity of the Persons based on 'the relations of origin' is unacceptable. The term *perichoresis* implies 'the relations of origin', since to the Cappadocians, relations are always 'the relations of origin'.¹⁹⁰ Pannenberg's critique of the traditional understanding of the unity of the Persons is based on the 'social understanding' and 'the identification of the immanent and economic Trinity'.

11.2.2.2.4 Monarchy

According to Pannenberg (1988: 352; ET 324), 'the mutuality and mutual dependence of the persons of the Trinity, not merely as regards their personal identity but also as

¹⁹⁰ Gregory of Nazianzus regards the unity on the basis of the relations of origin (Quasten 1975: 250). Oberdorfer (2002: 86) says that there is no modern understanding of the reciprocal relationship of persons; Gregory of Nyssa who first used the verb '*perichoreo*', did not use it in the modern reciprocal understanding of person, but for the relation between the natures of Christ (human and divine). Behr (2004: 425) says that Gregory of Nyssa never used perichoresis in the modern understanding of reciprocal relation. Ayres (2002: 446) rejects the modern interpretation of Gregory's *Ad Ablabium* as 'paradigm of Gregory's supposed commitment to "beginning with divine plurality rather than unity"', or even as 'a paradigm of his supposed commitment to "social Trinitarian analogies"'.



regards their deity, do not mean that the monarchy of the Father is destroyed.’ He adds ‘on the contrary, through the work of the Son the kingdom or monarchy of the Father is established in creation, and through the work of the Spirit, who glorifies the Son as the plenipotentiary of the Father, and in so doing glorifies the Father himself, the kingdom or monarchy of the Father in creation is consummated’ (Pannenberg 1988: 352; ET 324; La Due 2003: 135). It is true, Gutenson (2005:152) states, that ‘given developments so far, Pannenberg must reject any notion of the monarchy of the Father that results in ontological subordination of the son and/ or Spirit.’ He adds that ‘this does not mean rejection of the monarchy of the Father *per se*’ (Gutenson 2005: 152). As Schwöbel (1996:505) confirms, ‘the monarchy of the Father is understood as relationally constituted in the joint action of the Son and the Spirit with the Father.’ This implies that ‘this is true not merely of the event of revelation. On the basis of the historical relation of Jesus to the Father we may say this of the inner life of the triune God as well’ (Pannenberg 1988: 352; ET 324). He adds

Normative again in this regard is the aspect of self-distinction in the relation of the Son to the Father. The Son is not subordinate to the Father in the sense of ontological inferiority, but he subjects himself to the Father. In this regard he is himself in eternity the locus of the monarchy of the Father. Herein he is one with the Father by the Holy Spirit. The monarchy of the Father is not the presupposition but the result of the common operation of the three persons. It is thus the seal of their unity (Pannenberg 1988: 352-353; ET 324-325)

According to Min (2004: 255), ‘this also means that it is wrong to distinguish, as does Moltmann, between the “constitution” of the Trinity from the Father as the unoriginate origin of deity and the “life” of the Trinity in which personal relations are lived in perichoretic mutuality.’

Pannenberg (1988: 353: ET 325) argues that ‘only because the communion of the persons finds its content in the monarchy of the Father as the result of their common working may we say that the trinitarian God is none other than the God whom Jesus

proclaimed, the heavenly Father whose reign is near, dawning already in the work of Jesus.’ ‘An investigation of NT usage confirms it, for almost without exception the word “God” means the Father and not the triune God’ (Pannenberg 1988: 354; ET 326).

Pannenberg says

It may be seen here that the relation of the Son to the Father and his monarchy, as it is for its part mediated by the Spirit, determines not merely the historical Jesus of Nazareth but comprises in this history the whole economy of salvation... The monarchy of the Father is not established directly but through the mediation of the Son and the Spirit. Hence the unity of the divine lordship has its essence in the form of this mediation. Better, the essence of the Father’s monarchy acquires its material definition through this mediation. At any rate, the mediation of the Son and Spirit cannot be extraneous to the monarchy (Pannenberg 1988: 355; ET 327).

For Pannenberg (1991: 34), therefore, ‘on the basis of the mutuality of the personal relationship, the monarchy of the Father is conditioned by the obedience of the Son and by the glorifying work of the Spirit.’

11.2.2.3 The Identity of the economic and immanent Trinity

The concept of the Trinity, for Pannenberg, plays a very important role for the ‘correct understanding of one God and his relation to the World’ (Olson 1990: 177). Moltmann, Jüngel and Pannenberg accept Rahner’s rule in some form. Their general concern is to ‘avoid the strong sense of immutability that resulted from the adoption of Hellenistic conceptions, and that tended to separate the being of God from salvation history’ (Gutenson 2005:163)

For Pannenberg (1988: 356; ET 328), Rahner’s rule¹⁹¹ ‘means that the doctrine of the Trinity does not merely begin with the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and then work

¹⁹¹Pannenberg (1988: 356-357; ET 328- 329) says that ‘the starting point for Rahner’s thesis is the



back to a trinity in the eternal essence of God, but that it must constantly link the trinity in the eternal essence of God to his historical revelation, since revelation cannot be viewed as extraneous to his deity.’

Pannenberg (1988: 357; ET 330) indicates that ‘the most difficult problems in this thesis of the identity of the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity arise, however, only when we press it.’ following Kasper he points to the misunderstanding ‘that the equation of the two means the absorption of the immanent Trinity in the economic Trinity’ (Pannenberg 1988: 357; ET 331). Pannenberg adds that ‘this steals from the Trinity of salvation history all sense and significance. For this Trinity has sense and significance only if God is the same in salvation history as he is from eternity. Thus the immanent Trinity is to be found in the Trinity of salvation history. God is the same in his eternal essence as he reveals himself to be historically.’

assertion that Jesus Christ is in person the Son of God, so that the incarnation is not just ascribed to the Son, as distinct from the other persons of the Trinity, by eternal appropriation. The man Jesus is a real symbol of the divine Logos. His history is the existence of the Logos with us as our salvation, revealing the Logos. In the context of the work of the trinitarian God in salvation history the incarnation is a specific instance of the intervention of a divine person in worldly reality. It is true that the instance of the hypostatic union of the divine Logos with the man Jesus is unique. Nevertheless, it belongs to the context of a work of the trinitarian God in the world which embraces the whole economy of salvation. Extending the thought of Rahner, one might thus say that creation is brought into the relations of the trinitarian persons and participates in them. Nevertheless, only the persons of the Son and Spirit act directly in creation. The Father acts in the world only through the Son and the Spirit. He himself remains transcendent. This fact comes to expression in the “sending” of the Son and the Spirit into the world (*Das ist der in den Sendungen von Sohn und Geist in die Welt zum Ausdruck kommende Sachverhalt*). He adds that ‘these descriptions of the crucifixion which depict the deity of the Father as affected and questioned by the death of the Son imply that in their intratrinitarian relations the persons depend on one another in respect of their deity as well as their personal being, and that this mutual interdependence affects not only the relations of the Son and the Spirit to the Father but also those of the Father to them. The interpretation of the crucifixion of Jesus as a questioning of the deity of the Father points to this mutuality of trinitarian relations in the central events of salvation history, the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ’ (Pannenberg 1988: 357; ET 329).



However, there are two kinds of interpretation of Rahner's rule: one is in the strong sense of interpretation of Rahner's rule, the other is in its weaker sense (Olson 1990: 197). According to Olson (1990: 189), Moltmann and Jüngel follow the strong sense of identity. This implies that 'each in his own way presents the inner trinitarian life of God as a salvation-historical process (Olson 1990: 197-198). However, Kasper holds the weaker sense of the identity 'in the God of Jesus Christ' (Olson 1990: 198). Kasper interprets Rahner's rule as 'affirming that the immanent Trinity is truly present in the economic Trinity by free, gracious, kenotic choice' (Olson 1990: 198). This implies that the immanent Trinity is regarded as 'the apophatic mystery of God's real presence in the event of salvation-history' (Olson 1990: 198).

Pannenberg agrees, with Kasper's weaker interpretation of identity according to Rahner's rule, with his statement 'God's deity is his rule' (Olson 1990: 198-199). This implies that 'God's very deity' depends radically on 'the creation and its history'. Since God's deity does not separate from 'his lordship it is placed in question by the fall of the creation and by the evil which drives suffering love to a cross'. God's deity is 'at stake in the outcome of world history' (Olson 1990: 199). While Pannenberg emphasised the 'anticipatory nature of the immanent Trinity', he agrees with Moltmann, Jüngel 'in stressing the strict identity of the immanent and economic Trinity' (Olson 1990: 200). He also agrees with Kasper 'in holding to the "priority" of the immanent Trinity so that it is not reduced to a contingent historical process' (Olson 1990:200) Therefore, according to Olson (1990:201), 'the key to understanding the unity-in difference of the immanent and economic Trinity lies in the reciprocal relationship between future and presence.'¹⁹² For Pannenberg 'this concept of the reciprocal relationship between the eschatological immanent Trinity and the historical economic Trinity also reveals the unity of God with the world' (Olson 1990:201-202).

¹⁹² According to Gutenson (2005: 156) 'in summary, then, it is ultimately the ontological priority of the future that allows Pannenberg to conceive the relationship between the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity such that God's existence in the world today is debatable, while at the same time maintaining the eternal self-identity of God so that the history of the world is not finally necessary for God's becoming who he is. In the end (quite literally), God will be shown to have been God all along.'



According to Powell (2001: 208), the use of Rahner's rule implies 'an alteration in the understanding of the relation of the eternal to the economic Trinity'. 'Although the eternal Trinity remains the ontic foundation of the economic Trinity, the two are nonetheless not to be distinguished' (Powell 2001: 208).¹⁹³ Therefore it is true that 'the fact that there is a unity between the immanent and economic Trinity means that God is the true Infinite who transcends finite reality and yet includes it' (Sanders 2005: 99). As Sanders (2005: 100) points out, 'Pannenberg's doctrine of God is determined by the way in which he has interpreted the unity of the immanent and economic Trinity in terms of the logical structure of the free Infinite.'

¹⁹³ Molnar (1989:388) comments on Pannenberg's identity: thus the immanent trinity is simply a metaphor signifying the universal religious attempt to distinguish reality from myth (Pre-existence); it cannot have any real significance here.



12 EVALUATION

The doctrine of the Trinity is an important doctrine of Christianity. It is difficult to understand, but has always been confessed by orthodox Christians. The Trinity has a long history. Through history, it was understood in many different ways, and described from different angles. However, although the four leading 20th century protestant theologians revitalized the doctrine neglected by liberalism, they distorted it according to their theological program.

The Korean Church has a 100 year's history. However, the Church does not teach the doctrine of the Trinity. Although many pastors (church leaders) and church members confess it, they only regard it as a tradition. However, what is a more serious problem is that they are influenced by the modern understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity, in spite of their reformed tradition. On the basis of this modern influence (panentheism and social understanding of person and Church), the Church becomes a social group, which is spiritually powerless. The purpose of this study will help the Korean Church to be firmed in the reformed tradition by being concerned about the orthodox understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity, since the Korean church is in line with the reformed tradition of Calvin, H. Bavinck, C. Hodge, L. Berkhof, etc.

This final chapter will consist of three parts: 1) the evaluation and comparison of the four protestant theologians of 20th century (Barth, Moltmann, Jüngel and Pannenberg) 2) Reformed assessment 3) Implication of the practical church life.

12.1 Evaluation and comparison of the four leading 20th century protestant theologians (Barth, Moltmann, Jüngel, and Pannenberg).

Bruce Marshall (2000: 5) points out that the doctrine of the Trinity has an important place with the modern protestant theologians. One of the great developments of the

twentieth-century ‘is the revival and revitalization of trinitarian thought in Christian theology’ (Olson & Hall 2002: 95; Grenz 2004: 33-106). In fact, as Ford (1989: 12) says, ‘the twentieth-century theologians wrestled with the agenda set by Hegel and with his contribution to specific issues.’ Powell (2001: 259) however points out that ‘it is [too] far to claim that trinitarian thought would not have enjoyed its twentieth-century revival without Hegel’s prior setting of the stage.’ Barth, Moltmann, Jüngel, and Pannenberg are the major German protestant theologians responsible for the renaissance of trinitarian thought in the twentieth century, building on thinkers like Schleiermacher and Hegel in the nineteenth century (Grenz 2004: 33). Hegel reinterpreted the doctrine of the Trinity to provide a foundation for the ‘relation *between God and world*’ (Jansen 1995: 95).

There are two reasons for the renaissance of the doctrine of the Trinity in modern theology. One is the role the humanity of Jesus plays in understanding God in the Christian response to the criticism of atheists like Feuerbach, and Nietzsche. The other is their understanding of the social concept of the ‘divine person’.

12.1.1 The humanity of Jesus

The atheists criticized the traditional theism on the basis of their projection theory connected with anthropocentrism. According to Willis (1987: 207), Barth and Moltmann regard the doctrine of the Trinity as a two sided apologetics. ‘The doctrine of the Trinity, as developed by Barth and Moltmann, offers the basis of a cogent response to protest atheism (Willis 1987: 210): ‘the trinitarian response does not merely reject the atheists’ claim, but represents a challenge to this atheism ‘precisely by demonstrating its agreement with the traditional theism on its understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity’ (Willis 1987: 210). But Barth, Moltmann, Jüngel, and Pannenberg actually respond to atheism from a different angle (See Part II). They focus on the human Jesus as the revelation of God on the basis of the identity between the immanent and the economic Trinity.



12.1.1.1 *The response to atheism*

The doctrine of the Trinity ‘from below’, from the history of Jesus Christ, provides an answer to atheism on the basis of his humanity, since atheists like Feuerbach, Nietzsche, and Marx criticize the traditional understanding of God, and reject the traditional understanding of God. These modern protestant theologians focus on the crucified Jesus (See Part II). Jüngel and Moltmann focus on the death of God in their response to atheism.

Willis (1987: 34-38) suggests that the doctrine of the Trinity in Barth’s theology has a relationship with Feuerbach’s understanding of God. It is possible to analyse Barth’s understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity in the light of Feuerbach’s philosophy. According to Willis, Barth sees Feuerbach’s philosophy as a critique on Christian theism (Willis 1987: 27) and while the God of theism robs humanity to build up his divine glory, the doctrine of the Trinity ‘has not robbed humanity for his own glory’ (Willis 1987:70). Therefore, Barth contends that trinitarian theology not only ‘averts from traditional theism’, but also ‘responds to protest atheism’ (Willis 1987:71).

Their response to atheism’s criticism led to ‘theopaschitism’ which is closely connected with God’s suffering for human beings. Berkouwer (1956: 311-312) points out that ‘modern theopaschitism wants to open new perspectives here.’ This suggests not only a ‘Christological interpretation of the power of God, and thereby a central and radical correction of the natural power concept’, but also ‘a theodicy of the cross’ (Berkouwer 1956:312). The ‘theodicy of the cross as the deepest background of the theology of the cross concerns itself with the true God who is now no longer obscured by the tension created by the incompatibility between His power and His love’ (1956: 312). Berkouwer (1983[1952]: 232) presents the problem of theodicy. For him ‘theodicy is a justification of God’s providential rule’. And he adds that ‘this attempts to defend God against all complaints or accusations by demonstrating the meaningfulness and purposefulness of God’s activity in the world and in human life’. Berkouwer points to five kinds of theodicy: 1) dualistic theodicy (235-236) 2) harmonic theodicy (236-239) 3) teleological theodicy (239-240) 4) the theodicy of Wilfred Monod (240-241) and 5)



the Christological theodicy¹⁹⁴ (241-244). Barth's theodicy is in line with the fifth model of theodicy (Berkouwer 1983[1952]: 264-265). Berkouwer (1983[1952]: 265) indicates that Barth's theodicy is closely connected with universalism.¹⁹⁵ Berkouwer (1983[1952]: 265-266) concludes that 'Barth's attempt to do so in his theodicy, though he disclaims a theodicy, is consistent with his entire dogmatics- with his doctrine of creation, of election, of redemption, of man and.... of eschatology'. Barth is opposed to traditional theism.

In the light of Barth's view, Moltmann develops his understanding of the suffering of God and of the world. Willis (1987:92) points out that 'the question of theodicy is unavoidable for any relevant theology'. Because for Moltmann, human suffering in line with God's suffering is a key point in the existence of God and it raises the problem of the theodicy (Kärkkäinen 2004:156). According to Moltmann (1994[1980]: 55) the human grief teaches people to love God. God, who is love and loves his creature endlessly, must experience grief and loss in the death of every one of his creatures.

Larson (1995:131) says that 'Moltmann believes that this biblical understanding of God in *sympatheia* (a term taken from Abraham Heschel) with creation is the answer to the theodicy'. Moltmann (1994[1980]: 55) says, the theology of the universal grief of God presupposes the problem of the theodicy question. So, either God suffers for human beings, or God suffers for himself. The God who suffers in innocence is accused in the forum of the theodicy. God who suffers everything in everything is his own unique defence. According to Kasper,

In his [Moltmann's] view, the history of human suffering ultimately has to do with justice. In this case, Christology is discussed within the framework

¹⁹⁴ the Christological theodicy stems from Karl Barth. Although Barth expressly denies that God has willed evil possibilities, he has already committed himself, in a sense, to a theodicy.

¹⁹⁵ Berkouwer (1983[1952]: 265) says that 'with this universalism, Barth must interpret the love of God as embracing the entire world of pain and death and evil. At bottom, then, there can be no serious talk of a judgment of God in the world, because God's judgment was fulfilled as the sense of grace. Barth's Christological theodicy is thus closely related to his universalistic doctrine of election.'



of the theodicy. This historical approach... is able to cite the scriptural stress on salvation history, and that tradition in theology, which strongly emphasizes its importance. But it can and must also connect with the Hegelian philosophy of history. Consequently it has to confront the historical ideology of Marxism (Kasper 1981[197]:18).

Moltmann regards a monotheistic God as 'leading directly to the atheistic Cul-de Sac' (O'Donnell 1983:110). This monotheistic God is 'a lonely world-ruler and world-possessor' (O'Donnell 1983:110). O'Donnell adds

Moltmann argues that such a concept of God gives rise to protest atheism, 1) because if God is the absolute ruler and possessor of power, there is no room for freedom, not even the freedom of the children of God 2) such a concept of God raises the question why guiltless children suffer and die (O'Donnell 1983:111).

In line with his rejection of the monotheistic understanding of God, Moltmann (2002[1972]: 182) says that an atheist can be a good Christian. Atheism is shown as the brother of theism (2002[1972]: 207). This implies atheism as theodicy (*Atheismus als Theodizee*) (2002[1972]: 212). For Moltmann, the God who cannot suffer for human beings has nothing to do with human beings, as atheism criticises. Therefore the question of theodicy, as Pöhlmann (1980:150) points out, is silenced in the face of the crucified God.

Lucien Richard (1992:43; Moltmann 2003:70; 1994[1980]: 65) says that 'the problem of suffering, for Moltmann, is not a theoretical issue for armchair theology, but one that directly concerns Christian praxis in solidarity with those who suffer.' Therefore, the question of the theodicy is not speculative, but a critical question. It is the comprehensive eschatological question (Moltmann 1994[1980]: 65). According to Bauckham (1995:84; 1989:300), 'as a response to the problem of suffering, therefore, Moltmann is proposing an eschatological theodicy, not in the sense that suffering will prove to be justified as contributing to the final fulfillment of God's purpose, but in the



sense that God will finally overcome all suffering'. However, according to Jowers (2001: 251), there are two reasons why Moltmann's theodicy does not have the authorization of his argument of the divine passibility. Any theodicy which relies on the axiom of a divine passibility frustrates the Christian's legitimate assurance of the righteousness and promises of God (Jowers 2001: 251). Secondly, Moltmann's theodicy does not address the depth of the problem of evil (Jowers 2001: 252). Therefore Jowers (2001: 252) argues that 'Moltmann's theodicy fails to refute the key elements of the case for protest atheism by appealing to supposed divine passibility.'

As with Moltmann, Jüngel rejects every metaphysical understanding of God (Courth 1993:276). DeHart (1999:43) says, 'Jüngel understands the modern notion of the "death of God" and thus the phenomenon of modern atheism to be closely linked with the concept of God's "non-necessity" within the worldly or human horizon.' Jüngel (see ch.6) says that the Church fathers and Martin Luther supported the 'death of God'. Jüngel (see Ch.6) says, the phrase 'God has died' was previously closely connected to theology. Later it became alien to theology. According to Jüngel (2001[1977]: 73; ET 56; see Ch.6) 'Hegel tried with his talk about the death of God to assert a theological proposition as the truth consciousness of the "world spirit". In our century, the fragmentary thought of Dietrich Bonhoeffer drew the "truth-consciousness" of the "world spirit" into theology, to expose religionlessness as an element of theological truth. Actually, the critique of the traditional metaphysical concept of God takes a central position in Jüngel's idea of God (Klimek 1986:76). The slogan 'the death of God' must therefore be understood to mean 'the death of the metaphysical God', which is discredited both by the critique of atheism and by a trinitarian conception of God (McGrath 2005[1994]: 219). As Davidson (1997:178) points out, Jüngel's attack on metaphysical theism is obscure. Davidson (1997:179) argues that Jüngel's error is serious, although he points out the danger the over-simplification of his critique.

In Pannenberg's doctrine of God, the atheistic critique against theism which 'turns any attempt to deal with the question of God dogmatically into an exercise in religious subjectivism (Schwöbel 1989: 268)' plays an important role. As Schwöbel (1989:268) points out, this atheistic critique of theism is the motive of his 'reflection on the



question of God.’ ‘The crucial point of the atheistic critique is the assertion that the concept of God is not necessary for a complete and meaningful understanding of human existence.’ This is contrary to Pannenberg’s anthropological reflection on the understanding of God (Schwöbel1989: 268).

However, their apologetical function (the response to atheism) of the doctrine of the Trinity fails to build the orthodox understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity which is closely connected to God’s grace for the salvation of human beings, that is, to the soteriological function.

12.1.1.2 Identity between the immanent and economic Trinity

The doctrine of the Trinity is closely connected with Christology. As Gunton (1994:13) says ‘Christology is a key to the new protestant philosophical theology, for Hegel’s is a philosophical theology which is based on a kind of Christology.’ For understanding Hegelian Christology, it is necessary to understand the ‘difference between Lutheran and Reformed tendencies’ (Gunton 1994: 13). He adds

It is sometimes remarked that whereas Calvin’s Christology is closer to that of Antioch, Luther’s orientation is to Alexandria. That is to say, while Calvin tends to call attention to the distinction of the divine and human in the person of Christ, Luther is more interested in their union. The latter appeals in particular to a version of the Patristic teaching of the communication of attributes, according to which anything attributable to the divinity of Christ must also be attributable to his humanity, and the reverse. It is thence, of course, that he derives his famous and problematic teaching of the ubiquity of the humanity of Christ, and hence Christ’s capacity to be present in the eucharistic elements (Gunton 1994: 14)

Hegel, however, changed its meaning to ‘the divine nature is the same as the human’ (Gunton 1994: 14). This understanding becomes ‘a general principle of immanence’. Gunton says that ‘the divine involvement in Christ becomes in different ways



generalized, so that the locus of divine being as well as of action comes to be centered on forms of divine presence to and in the world.’ He adds

The influence is particularly marked in the theologies of Moltmann and Pannenberg, whose concern to identify God from his historical immanence has, in the view of some commentators, not been without problems. While Moltmann consciously uses the principle of immanence to cast doubt upon the propriety of speaking of an immanent Trinity at all, preferring to speak of ‘the trinitarian history of God’, Pannenberg appears, particularly to Anglo-Saxon readers, impatient of apparent ambiguity, to want to say both that there is a sense in which the world constitutes or shapes the being of God and that God is eternally the one on whom all things depends (Gunton 1994: 14-15)

On the basis of Hegel’s understanding, Barth, Moltmann, Jüngel and Pannenberg focus on the humanity of Jesus as the revelation of God. Their focus on the humanity of Jesus Christ also responds to atheists. These four leading 20th century protestant theologians start their apologetic response to atheism with the human Jesus. They actually respond to atheism for the same purpose from very different angles (See Part II). It also indicates why they focus on the human Jesus starting ‘from below’ on the basis of the identity between the immanent and economic Trinity.

Barth (1940: 328-329¹⁹⁶) regards the doctrine of the Trinity merely as the interpretation of God’s self-revelation. Barth (1940: 329) confirms that the doctrine of the Trinity has no other ground than this. So he focuses on the human Jesus as revelation. In this regard, Barth holds the idea of the identity between the immanent and economic Trinity.

¹⁹⁶ Wir sagen damit nicht: die Trinitätslehre ist bloß die Interpretation der Offenbarung und nicht auch eine Interpretation des in der Offenbarung sich offenbarenden Gottes. Das wäre darum sinnlos, weil ja eben die Offenbarung die Selbstinterpretation dieses Gottes ist. Haben wir es mit seiner Offenbarung zu tun, so haben wir es mit ihm selbst und nicht, wie die Modalisten aller Zeiten meinten, mit einer von ihm selbst unterschiedenen Entität zu tun.



Molnar criticizes the opinion that Barth held the identity between the immanent and economic Trinity. Although the other three, Moltmann, Jüngel, and Pannenberg accepted Rahner's axiom of the identity between the immanent and economic Trinity, Barth did not follow Rahner's rule. According to Molnar (2005: 70-71), 'Barth insisted upon a clear and sharp distinction between the immanent and economic Trinity in order to avoid ascribing to history or humanity as such what can only become real within and for history and human by the grace of God active in Christ and the Spirit.'

Molnar (2005: 71) points out that 'Barth also maintained the importance of the *logos asarkos* within the strict doctrine of the Trinity and within Christology'. He adds that Barth 'believes this abstraction was necessary because God's acting for us must be seen against the background of God in himself, who could have existed in isolation from us, but freely chose not to.' And Molnar argues that Barth 'rejected a *logos asarkos* in his doctrine of creation if it implied a 'formless Christ' or 'a Christ-principle' rather than Jesus who was with God as the Word before the world existed; he rejected it in connection with reconciliation if it meant a retreat to an idea of a God behind the God revealed in Christ; but he still insisted it had a proper role to play in the doctrine of the Trinity and in Christology, describing it as "indispensable for dogmatic enquiry and presentation"'.

Thompson (1994:134) says, Barth 'shows that there is no God whom we know except the one true God seen in the humanity of Jesus. There is no nonhuman God.' He adds that 'incarnation and atonement are based on God's purpose of election and show that, while as triune he is perfect in himself, at the same time, he chooses to be God with us and for us – *Logos Ensarkos* and not *Logos Asarkos*¹⁹⁷'. According to Bradshaw (1988: 88; 128; 134), Barth's term '*logos*' is 'always *Logos Ensarkos*'.

¹⁹⁷ Meijering (1993: 60-61) states that for Athanasius, the harmony of everything demonstrates that the son is creating, and man can know it. The term 'God' is wider than the Father who is termed *avgc, nhtoj*, since it includes the Son also. Therefore he is the Father of the Son. The term (word) *avgc, nhtoj* implies that God is the Creator, and the creation itself reveals that God is the Father of the Son. Therefore, the



Jesus as the revelation of God is the core for the four protestant theologians' thinking (See Part II). The doctrine of the Trinity plays an important role in their theological understanding since Jesus Christ who is one of the three persons in the Trinity is an answer to the atheistic critique. Their starting point is the humanity of Christ¹⁹⁸ that is closely connected to their anthropology. It is the so-called 'Elevation-line Theology'¹⁹⁹.

They focus on the identity between the economic and immanent Trinity with priority given to the economic Trinity (from below). They accept the Hegelian concept, the identity between the economic and the immanent Trinity (although they understand this from different angles), and they reinterpret the concept of the 'divine person' differently from the traditional understanding. According to Olson (1990:178), 'all (Pannenberg, Moltmann, and Jüngel) are convinced that the classical doctrine of the Trinity has failed to bridge the gap between the being of God and world of time and history, because of that separation, and because of the traditional strong distinction between the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity.' They see Rahner's Rule as 'providing a significant turning point in modern Christian thinking about God' (Olson 1990:178). According to Gutenson (2005:163), 'many of the theologians who have reemphasized the doctrine of

Son is the *logos asarkos* and not, as with Barth, the historical Jesus. In the classical view, God works ad extra both through the '*Logos asarkos*' and through the *logos ensarkos*: through the *logos asarkos* in creation and providence, through the *logos ensarkos* in the reconciliation. To Athanasius, creation reveals not only the Father but also the Son. Who calls God only the Creator and not 'the Father of the Son' does not have no knowledge of God as with Barth, but is defective, and this defect must be regarded as sin, because he rejected the revelation through creation.

¹⁹⁸ In Pannenberg's Christology, it implies the term 'from below' (McGrath 1994:195; Miller & Grenz 1998:133).

¹⁹⁹ The contemporary elevation-line theology exhibits some common characteristics: Its consistent emphasis upon the glory in the *eschaton* through the works of Jesus Christ, its stress upon the self-condescending love as the major character and quality of God, the importance of the historical Jesus, and His significance for the creation in connection with and apart from His redemptive works. Other points of agreement are: their qualification of sin as an episode, participation in the divine being or deification as the final stage of the development of the creation, the provisional and imperfect creation, a more subordinate place for the idea of the glory of God as it is at stake in the creation and sometimes a speculative element in their thinking appealing to the eternal counsel of God (Suh 1982:292).



the Trinity, including Moltmann, Jüngel and of course Pannenberg, have accepted Rahner's rule in some form'. But there are two kinds of interpretation of Rahner's rule: one in the strong sense of interpretation of Rahner's rule, the other in a weaker sense (Olson 1990: 197).

While Moltmann and Jüngel follow the 'strong sense of identity, Kasper holds 'the weaker sense of the identity in the God of Jesus Christ' (Olson 1990: 189). Kasper interprets 'Rahner's rule as affirming that the immanent Trinity is truly present in the economic Trinity by free, gracious, kenotic choice' (Olson 1990: 189). The immanent Trinity is not found 'behind the economic Trinity, nor can it simply be deduced from it. Rather it is to be affirmed as the apophatic mystery of God's real presence in the event of salvation-history' (Olson 1990: 198). Pannenberg, as with Moltmann and Jüngel follows not only 'the strict identity of immanent and economic Trinity', but also the weaker sense of Kasper 'in holding to the "priority" of the immanent Trinity so that it is not reduced to a contingent historical process' (Olson 1990:200). As Sanders (2005: 100) points out, 'Pannenberg's doctrine of God is determined by the way in which he has interpreted the unity²⁰⁰ of the immanent and economic Trinity in terms of the logical structure of the free Infinite.'

The identification (or correspondence) of the immanent and economic Trinity²⁰¹ with 'from below' as their starting point weakens the reason of the incarnation of the Son of God in order to forgive the sins of men and to save human beings. The doctrine of the

²⁰⁰ Molnar (1989:388) comments on Pannenberg's identification between the economic and immanent Trinity: thus the immanent trinity is simply a metaphor signifying the universal religious attempt to distinguish reality from myth (Pre-existence); it cannot have any real significance here.

²⁰¹ Gerald Bray (1993:187) says about Rahner's view that 'One difficulty with this is that it opens up a gap between the immanent and the economic Trinity. It seems that Rahner is prepared to insist on the existence of a personal relationship between God and human, but not within the Godhead. This viewpoint is not new of course, but it has always been rejected in orthodox theology because it suggests that God requires a being outside himself in order to manifest his love, and that therefore he is not perfect in himself. It is most unlikely therefore, that his trinitarianism will survive long, since in so many ways it seems to be little more than a return to earlier positions which have long since been superseded.



Trinity of the four theologians stems from the economic Trinity which they based on the humanity of Christ in contrast to the so-called speculative notion of God, which is grounded in the traditional distinction between the immanent and the economic Trinity²⁰². Although they do not follow the Hegelian understanding completely, the ideas of the four leading 20th century theologians are based on the Hegelian Trinity. Gunton (2003: 25) points to, ‘Hegel’s Trinity as the clue to the meaning of history, but it was a Trinity marked by the abandonment of the classical distinction, based on the doctrine of creation, between God and the world.’ He adds that ‘Hegel’s view appears finally to abolish the distinction between Jesus and the rest of the human race by making him little more than an instance of a generally accessible human divinity’ (Gunton 2003: 25).

This identification raises the problem of pantheism and panentheism. Although they differ from each other, these ideas mix God and the world, or the Church and the world.

12.1.1.3 *filioque*

In the controversy surrounding the doctrine of the filioque, the problem of the doctrine of the filioque appeared in the time of Photius. The term ‘filioque’ was inserted into the Nicene-Constantinople Creed in 581. The filioque doctrine caused an official crisis in 867. Photius, who was a very noble man, pronounced Nicholas anathema and excommunicated him because of his adherence to the filioque doctrine (Walker 1985: 251). This followed Photius’s excommunication in 863 by Nicholas. Photius replaced Ignatius as the new Patriarch. Nicholas I, however, hesitated to register the approval of Photius. In 863, Nicholas I declared that Ignatius is still the patriarch, and excommunicated Photius.

²⁰² As Suh (1982:293) points out, ‘the contemporary elevation-theologians argue that the creation-mediator is only the earthly and glorified Jesus of Nazareth, thus rejecting the traditional application of this term to the eternal Son.’ They focus on the earthly Christ the crucified one, on the history of Jesus. and on the love of God, but ‘does not take into consideration sufficiently the reality of sin and guilt’ (Suh 1982:294).



Since Photius, the filioque became a reason for the division between the Western and Eastern Church. In Byzantine theology the Holy Spirit was regarded as proceeding only from the Father, because only the Father can become the origin of the hypostasis.²⁰³ For some eastern fathers, though, the Holy Spirit comes from the Father through the Son²⁰⁴, and for some byzantine fathers the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father only, although in the economic Trinity the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.²⁰⁵

The western Church holds that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, and that the Holy Spirit principaliter proceeds from the Father. Anselm²⁰⁶ was an exception. At the Council of Florence the westerners accepted the filioque formulated as ‘from the Father through the Son.’

In the modern understanding of the Eastern Church, Lossky (1995: 150-151) distinguishes between the terms theology and economy. He says

In order to reach “theology” proper, one therefore must go beyond the aspect under which we know God as Creator of the universe, in order to be able to extricate the notion of the Trinity from the cosmological implications proper to the “economy.” To the economy in which God reveals himself in creating the world and in becoming incarnate, we must respond by theology, confessing the transcendent nature of the Trinity in an ascent of thought which necessarily has an apophatic thrust (Lossky 1995: 151).

²⁰³ Orphanos (1981:22) says that ‘the Father, Photius emphasizes, is the unique cause of the mode of being of the Son and the Holy Spirit who are *aitia* and he by no means communicates his own particular property to the other two persons.’

²⁰⁴ Burgess (1984: 96) says that ‘by the fourth century the Greek Church already was teaching a procession from the Father through the Son.’

²⁰⁵ Palamas sustains this view (Bray 1983:133) and Photius mentions it [Orphanos 1981: 24].

²⁰⁶ Anselm denies Augustine’s idea that the Holy Spirit proceeds ‘principaliter from the Father,’ since for Anselm, God is the only ‘*aitia*’.



Lossky (1995: 151) believes that a human being cannot know the essence of God. According to his understanding, ‘the Father reveals himself through the Son in the Holy Spirit; and this revelation of the Trinity always remains ‘economic,’ inasmuch as outside of the grace received in the Holy Spirit no one could recognize in Christ the Son of God and in this way be elevated to knowledge of the Father’ (Lossky 1995: 151). Concerning the doctrine of the filioque, Lossky states

Against the doctrine of procession *ab utroque* the Orthodox have affirmed that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone- evk mo,nou tou/ Patro,j. This formula, while verbally it may seem novel, represents in its doctrinal tenor nothing more than a very plain affirmation of the traditional teaching about the monarchy of the Father as the unique source of the divine hypostases (Lossky 1995 a: 168).

According to Reid (1997: 73), ‘the filioque thus means for Lossky that the economic relationships between the Trinitarian persons are simply carried over into the territory of Qeologi,a: in other words, the western creed confuses the levels of Qeologi,a and Oivkonomi,a’.

Zizioulas (1991: 26) mentions that the whole problem of the filioque seems to have started with a linguistic confusion, and with the addition of the filioque to the Creed.

Greeks did not think of this as a ‘heresy’ until it was actually introduced into the Creed by Charlemagne and invested with the authority of Augustinian theology in its interpretation. Up to that time Greeks also had a kind of filioque expressed by St. Cyril of Alexandria, who provoked the strong reaction of Theodoret of Cyrrhus in that it could be understood as referring to the eternal procession of the Spirit and not simply to the Economy (Zizioulas 1991: 26)



Although the Creed is very important in building up the right faith, following Heron's criticism²⁰⁷ (1991: 37), Zizioulas' phrase indicates the idolization of the Creed. Therefore, the Byzantine critique of the filioque is just "historical scapegoating". Reid proposes that they (the West and the East) are in fact the same²⁰⁸.

The concerns of the two approaches, or the problems of which the two approaches are particularly aware, are because of these different theological contexts and presuppositions, themselves quite different. But the intention of the two approaches, however, is the same. It is to assert a proper doctrine of the Trinity (Reid 1997: 125).

According to Haudel (2006: 50), the central theological function of the doctrine of the Trinity simultaneously provides the basis for its constitutive ecumenical significance. It requires the necessity of trinitarian theological and ecclesiological as well as revelation-theological progress as its basis (Haudel 2006: 76). From this, Haudel treats western theology and eastern theology on the basis of the relation between 'immanent and economic Trinity (*filioque*)' and the concept 'person'. Haudel (2006: 521; 525; 526) says that the simultaneity of unity and distinction (*Einheit und distinctio*) in the relation between economic and immanent Trinity stands in opposition to the rational western tendency of a total identification between economic Trinity and immanent Trinity, and the apophatic eastern tendency of its division. So Haudel synthesizes both the western and the eastern view in the light of the perichoresis as '*Gegenüber und Nähe*'.²⁰⁹ But,

²⁰⁷ That process can be evaluated and its results justified in more than one way. For example, the tradition of the Eastern Orthodox Church would regard the early councils as divinely inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit, so that no serious critical question can be raised about or against the authenticity of their decisions and formulation... Councils simply clarified issues which heresy had obscured.

²⁰⁸ See Part I, the Nicene fathers did not attack the doctrine of the filioque, nor did they know it. However they supplied a similar concept with the doctrine of the filioque in their doctrine of the Spirit.

²⁰⁹ In the Cappadocians' doctrine of the Trinity their development of its wider deepness experiences, and arrives at an east and western 'synthesis' (Haudel 2006: 535). In the Cappadocians' plan of an innertrinitarian perichoresis with simultaneity of intra- and interpersonal dimensions, Cappadocians perceive a paradoxical divine mystery, which allows neither a division in the unity of the trinitarian



against Haudel, it should be said that originally the western and eastern view had the same understanding from different angles.

While Barth and Jüngel accept the doctrine of the filioque for their own theological purposes, Moltmann and Pannenberg reject it (see Part II). Although they all hold the identity between the immanent and economic Trinity²¹⁰, ‘from below’, they do not all agree with the doctrine of the filioque.

12.1.2 The concept of ‘the divine Person’

The four modern protestant theologians’ understanding of a person focuses on human life according to its identification with the humanity of Jesus who is God or one of the Trinity. Therefore, their understanding of the Trinity is closely connected with the human society and the human situation, that is, that every general statement about God is already a statement about man (Jüngel 1971: 382). This forces the doctrine of the Trinity to respond to the orientation of the post-modern society, that is, on its practical and ethical relevance. Thompson says that

Among the many characteristics of the emerging post-modern or post-critical consciousness is the preference to view reality in more dynamic and relational terms in remonstrance of the objectivism and individualism of the modern “critical consciousness.” It is no coincidence that a more dynamic and relational doctrine of God has ranked high on this century’s theological

Persons, nor a mixing of each One’s particular hypostatic personality (Haudel 2006: 536). Haudel focuses on the intra- or interpersonal concept, that is, the relation between ‘Gegenüber und Nähe’, and the proper order between the immanent and the economic Trinity.

²¹⁰ Oberdorfer (2002[a]: 88) gives the reasons for the eastern rejection of the doctrine of the filioque: firstly, that changing the text of the Nicene Council is illegitimate. Secondly, the addition of the filioque is also ecclesiologically illegitimate, thirdly, the filioque is theologically illegitimate because it destroys the trinitarian balance and order, and fourthly, the filioque displays an illegitimate theological theory of knowledge as it is based on the assumption of a strict correspondence between the immanent and the economical order of the trinitarian relation.



agenda; nor is it surprising that such reconstruction would eventually be worked out in explicit trinitarian terms. This is precisely what is taking place in the current renaissance (Thompson 1997:19).

In the recent controversy surrounding the concept of person, Leftwo (1999: 203-249) differentiates between the concepts ‘social trinitarianism’ and ‘latin trinitarianism’. In his article, he criticizes the concept ‘social trinitarianism’. According to Tuggy (Trinitarian Dilemma)(2003:25) ‘the two most popular approaches to understanding the doctrine of the Trinity’ are standardly called ‘latin trinitarianism(LT)’ and ‘Social trinitarianism (ST)’. According to Tuggy (2003: 26), the community of ‘social trinitarianism’ is ‘composed of three different personal parts-the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In this way ST completely clears up the most obscure relations in traditional trinitarian theorizing: the relations between the individual persons, and the relations between God and the persons collectively.’ However, Davis (2003: 35-52) defends a ‘social theory of the Trinity’. For him ‘there definitely is a disjunction in contemporary theological and philosophical discussions of the Trinity, with people like Richard Swinburne, Cornelius Plantinga, and Edward Wierenga defending ST and people like Kelly James Clark and Brian Leftow defending LT.’ He adds that part of his aim is ‘to show how the two emphases captured by what he is calling ST and LT can be united, or at least nearly so’ (Davis 2003: 38). According to Davis, ‘perichoretic Monotheism rests upon six claims’:

1. God is like a community,
2. Each of the three persons equally possesses the divine essence,
3. The three persons are all equally and essentially divine, metaphysically necessary, eternal (or everlasting), uncreated, omnipotent, omniscient, and perfectly good,
4. In the immanent Trinity, the basis of all differentiation among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is their relation to each other,
5. All three Persons are involved in all extra-Trinitarian acts,
6. The persons are related to each other by perichoresis (Davis 2003:42- 46).



Vincent Brümmer (2005: 97-112) criticizes ‘social trinitarianism’ on the basis of the so-called ‘latin trinitarianism’. For Brümmer (2005: 100), following Wiles ‘if such Platonist ways of thinking are “so foreign to our way of thought”, this platonist argument used by the Cappadocians, is no longer available to present-day social trinitarians when defending themselves against the charge of tritheism. The question is therefore whether such present-day social trinitarians can still claim to be monotheists if they are to abandon the Platonist assumptions of the Cappadocians. Some contemporary social trinitarians simply abandon the claim to be monotheists.’ He adds

Thus social trinitarians often interpret the inner-trinitarian relation as one of perfect love between the Father, the Son and the Spirit. For this view they appeal to St Augustine who held that the relation between the Father and the Son is one of perfect love and that the Spirit is the bond of love that binds them together. The trouble with this view is that it seems to depersonalise the Spirit. The Spirit becomes a relation between the Father and the Son rather than a third Person in the divine triad. In the twelfth century Richard of St Victor held that the loving relation should be extended to include the Spirit as a third party. He argued that love, to be perfect, must be shared by a third person. In God we find not merely an I-thou relation of mutual love between the Father and the Son but it also includes the Holy Spirit as co-beloved.’(Brümmer 2005: 101).

He confirms

Clearly, then, contemporary social trinitarians are faced with an insoluble dilemma: either they interpret the inner- trinitarian relation as a union of love, in which case they cannot avoid the charge of tritheism, or they interpret it as an internal relation of unity, in which case they can no longer maintain the claim that the Trinitarian Persons are discrete ‘divine individuals’ who together form a social community. What Plantinga calls ‘social monotheism’ can be social or it can be monotheism, but in cannot be both (Brümmer 2005: 105).



Brümmer (2005: 108- 111) says that ‘there are especially two serious objections that contemporary social trinitarians often raise against all such Latin forms of trinitarianism’: 1) Latin trinitarianism is often dismissed as a form of modalism, a Western heresy in the early third century 2) It cannot account adequately for the claim that ‘God is love’.

The four protestant theologians, Barth, Moltmann, Jüngel, and Pannenberg also criticize the concept of the ‘divine person’ as individual and static, since the concept of ‘person’ as ‘individual’ causes tri-theism (See Part II). Barth (1940: 379) does not see the term ‘person’ as ‘individual’ and ‘static’, but the term the mode of being (*Seinsweise*) as ‘relative’. Johnson (1997:44) indicates that in contrast to classical abstractions, Barth reconceived God as dynamic and relational in character. For Barth, the concept ‘person’ is grounded in a Boethian concept: *intellectualis essentiae (vel natura) incommunicabilis substantia*. The concept ‘person’, for Barth, implies three individuals, which causes tri-theism (Thompson 1991: 21). Jansen (1995: 77) points out that ‘Barth’s contribution to the discussion of divine relationality cannot be doubted,’ although his understanding of person ‘is not founded on the modern relational understanding of person (Jansen 1995: 79). However, his understanding became the background of modern relational understanding.

For Jüngel (1990: 237), being a person (*Personsein*) names a being in relationship (*Beziehung*), an event, and history (*Geschichte*). The relations, in whom a person exists, are not relations, which exist independent of the life of the person, but they are the life of the person. The ‘relation is one of total harmony, the “differentiation between God and God” within God “can never be understood as contradiction in God’ (Zimany 1994:107).

Moltmann criticizes the concept ‘person’ (hypostasis) in both the Western and Eastern Church. Moltmann (1994[1980]: 189) regards the concepts ‘person’ and ‘relation’ as a reciprocity-relation. There are no persons without relationship, but also no relationship without persons. Person and relationship react complementary to each other (Moltmann 1994[1980]: 189).



As with Moltmann, Pannenberg rejects the traditional understanding of the concept of a 'person' as 'subjectivity'. Pannenberg argues that the induction into the plurality of persons from the concept of the essence of God leads into the difficulties of both 'modalism' and 'subordinationism' (1988: 325; 330). For Pannenberg, since Augustine, the structure of the Father, and the Son and the Spirit as person 'has been contested repeatedly because it appeared to express too great an individual independence of the three' (1975[1968]:181).

Actually, the concept 'person' as a relationship (including a reciprocal relationship or society) in the four theologians, Barth, Jüngel, Moltmann, and Pannenberg is in line with both 'Hegel and Feuerbach'²¹¹.

12.1.3 Conclusion

The doctrine of the Trinity is closely connected, not with 'a speculative or theoretical doctrine,' but with 'the eternal salvation' of human beings (Wiley & Culbertson 1946: 110). As in the patristic view (Part I), the doctrine of the Trinity is closely connected with Christology. Admittedly, in patristic thought (Athanasius, the Cappadocians) the doctrine of the Trinity implies the relation of the Son to the Father or of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son: One essence, three Persons, since all three persons must be

²¹¹ According to Jansen (1995: 77), Barth occupies a place analogous to that of Hegel in philosophy. For Hegel(1986[1969]: 234), The Trinity is used for the relationship between the Father, Son and Spirit (*Die Dreieinigkeit ist in das Verhältnis vom Vater, Sohn und Geist gebraucht worden*). According to Powell (2001:230), the relationality that is essential to God as this perfect mutual love is closely connected not only with the Trinitarian persons, but also with God's relation to the world. And for Feuerbach (1989: 234), persons are mere relationship. The son is not without the Father, the Father not without the Son. For him, the idea of the person is here only a relative idea, the idea of a relationship (Feuerbach 1989: 235). In this understanding, for Feuerbach (1989: 232), 'the Trinity is therefore originally the sum of essential fundamental distinctions which man perceives in the human nature', since theology becomes anthropology. This has natural consequences for the understanding of the term 'person'. For Feuerbach (1989: 233), 'independent existence, existence apart from others, is the essential characteristic of a person, of a substance'. This is essential to God. Therefore three Persons imply three Gods or gods.



equally, and co-glorified. Actually, in this regard, their interest in the equality of persons is essential for the salvation of human beings. Wiley & Culbertson (1946:110) point out:

The early Christians saw that if Christ was not divine they could not worship Him without becoming idolaters. On the other hand, He had saved them, and through Him had come the gift of the Holy Spirit. They recognized, therefore, that He must be divine. This brought the question of the deity of Christ and His relationships in the Trinity to the Church at a very early period. These and other vital questions concerning the Trinity did not arise from philosophical speculation, and they cannot be settled in this manner. They are truths of divine revelation, and we must turn to the Scriptures for our authoritative teaching on this important subject (Wiley & Culbertson 1946:110).

Although they (Athanasius, and the three Cappadocian theologians) fought with the Arians about the deity of the Son and the Holy Spirit, the reason why they argued vigorously to protect the deity of both is the salvation of human beings because they cannot save themselves. The focus of their argument is on how man can be saved by such a human being (Arians) or energy or angel (Pneumatomachians and Arians-Eunomians). Therefore the Son must also be God (Berkhof 1991[1937]: 86).

Modern theologians on the contrary weaken the meaning of the traditional doctrine of the Trinity which is closely connected to the doctrine of Atonement²¹². Bray (2006:51)

²¹² According to Brümmer (2005: 81), 'For the Fathers it was their views on salvation that provided the grounds for their claim that Christ was both divine and human. Thus the divinity of Christ follows from the claim that only God can save: The underlying conviction of the genuinely religious man about salvation is that its source can only be God himself. This fundamental axiom was a basic criterion of orthodox thought in all the great fourth-and fifth-century controversies (following Maurice Wiles, *The making of Christian Doctrine*). This axiom was entailed by their views on salvation.' He adds that 'thus the patristic ideas on salvation entailed the divinity of Christ. But divinity is not enough. Their ideas on salvation also required them to claim the full humanity of Christ. Apart from the axiom that 'only God



says that ‘people often criticized this belief [atonement]’ as ‘penal substitutionary atonement’. However, Bray (2006: 51) says that ‘at the heart of the atonement lies the relationship between the Son and the Father within the Godhead without which his saving act could not have occurred.’ Gunton (2003: 25) indicates that [in the Hegelian tradition] they changed ‘Christ into a world principle at the expense of Jesus of Nazareth, and often construed his cross as a focus for the suffering of God rather than as the centre of that history in which God overcomes sin and evil. That is to say, the doctrine of the Trinity must not be abstracted from the doctrine of the atonement.’ Suh (1989: 294) points out that modern theologians (elevation line) focus on the earthly Christ (the crucified one or on the history of Jesus) and on the love of God which ‘does not take into consideration sufficiently the reality of sin and guilt’.

The apologetic function and the understanding of identification in the Trinity play important roles in modern trinitarian theology. However, the concept ‘patripassionism’, or the passion or ‘death of God’ as apologetic, functions differently in Christian theology. The identification between the immanent and the economic Trinity ‘from below’ led it to pantheism or panentheism, Christomonism, and the weakening of the soteriological understanding of atonement as forgiveness of human sin. It causes universalism, and the social concept of the person of God has the danger of tri-theism.

12.2 A Reformed assessment

Although Barth, Jüngel, Moltmann, and Pannenberg revitalized the doctrine of the Trinity, they differ from the tradition of Reformed theology. While modern protestant theologians interpret the doctrine of the Trinity in the light of Hegelian and other philosophical influences on the human situation, Calvin interpreted it in the light of the Bible (Emmen 1935:15; Baars 2004: 670²¹³) and of the ‘Nicene theologians’²¹⁴ (and of

can save’, their ideas on salvation entailed a second axiom that Gregory of Nazianzus formulated as follows: ‘What Christ has not assumed he has not healed’.

²¹³ Baars says that ‘voor Calvin is de Schrift bron en norm van alle spreken over God.’

²¹⁴ Owen (2000: 271) says that ‘Calvin’s theology at this point is plainly rooted in the earlier teaching of



the Church Fathers). Baars (2004: 639; Koopmans 1955:41) indicates that Calvin developed his doctrine of the Trinity with the background of the old church dogma. This implies that the confession of the ancient church was their confession (Das Bekenntnis der alten Kirche war ihr Bekenntnis) (Koopmans 1955: 100). Especially, in regard to the doctrine of the Trinity, Calvin follows the church fathers- Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Cyril of Alexandria (Torrance 1990a : 172).

In this regard, it is true that the Nicene theology interprets the doctrine of the Trinity on the basis of the Bible. Reformed theology (Calvin, Bavinck, L. Berkhof) interprets this doctrine on the basis of the Bible and Nicene theology in the conviction that the Nicene theology interprets the Bible.

The Korean Church has been strongly influenced from not only by Calvin, but also by the Reformed tradition as expressed by H. Bavinck, C. Hodge, B. B. Warfield, and L. Berkhof. In this regard, a reformed understanding will help the Korean Church to be confirmed in the orthodox understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity..

12.2.1 The relation between the immanent and the economic Trinity

The Nicene theologians distinguished between the economic and immanent Trinity on the basis of the priority of 'theology'. According to Anatolios (1998: 122), for Athanasius, the term 'theology' takes priority over the term 'economy.' It is the priority of divine generation over creation' (Meyer 2000: 397-398). Noeds (1999: 2; Coffey

Augustine, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Athanasius. It is also rooted in the trinitarian doctrine contained in the Nicene Creed(325), which expresses the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father through the homoousion clause, and the statement that the Son of God was begotten "from the substance(ousia) of the Father." Choi (1996:53) says that 'Zo verklaart hij zich een aanhanger van de leer van Nicea.' Baars(2004: 639) says that 'We mogen hieruit concluderen dat Calvijns triniteitsleer binnen de Niceense traditie staat en een Westers karakter heeft. For this, Warfield(1974: 249) indicates that Calvin basically is 'as fully convinced as the Nicene Fathers themselves'.



1999: 25) notes that the Cappadocians continued to develop the distinction between ‘theology’, which implies the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit, and ‘economy’, which implies the temporal mission of the Spirit. Gregory of Nyssa’s teaching, according to Ritschl (1981: 57.), ‘presupposes an immanent concept: God is ἡ ζωοποιος, ὁ δὲ πατήρ (du, namij de. tou/ Patro.j o` Ui`o.j, duna, mewj de. pneu/ma to. Pneu/ma [Agion’]. Noeds (1999: 17) says that ‘the Greek Fathers established the full divinity, personhood, and the unity of the Holy Spirit, and laid the foundation for a discussion of both his origin as a procession and his mission into the world. Yet for the most part they stopped at the scriptural words and images.’

Calvin ‘himself would be positioned close to the Greek fathers such as Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus and Cyril of Jerusalem, as well as to the frequently-quoted Augustine from the Latin Fathers’ (McIntyre 1997: 109). According to Choi (1996: 73), although Calvin emphasises the unity (eenheid) of the ‘essence (wezen)’ and the work (werk) of God, both the divine Person and immanent Trinity is kept safely through it. Baars (2004: 670) says that although Calvin clearly puts the economic Trinity in the foreground in the majority of cases, it does not mean that in substance, he will have reservations with regard to the immanent Trinity. The orthodox doctrine of the immanent Trinity is everywhere presupposed in Calvin’s works. In his thematic reproduction of the doctrine of the Trinity he explicitly expresses the principle aspect of this side of the trinitarian dogma. For Calvin, as Warfield (1974: 200) says, ‘he conceived it not only as the essential foundation of the whole doctrine of redemption, but as indispensable even to the vital and vitalizing conception of the Being of God itself’.

Both Bavinck and Berkhof followed Calvin. Bavinck (1997[1951]: 317) says, ‘interpersonal relations existing within the divine essence are also revealed outwardly. To be sure, outgoing works always pertain to the Divine Being as a whole.’ He follows the Church Fathers (Bavinck 1997[1951]: 320). Bavinck (1997[1951]: 317) says that ‘the ontological trinity is reflected in the economical trinity.’ The ‘generation’ and ‘the procession’ indicate the ‘arch-type’ of the incarnation of Jesus Christ and the outgoing of the Spirit (Bavinck 1997[1951]: 320). For Berkhof (1996[1938]: 89), ‘the ontological



Trinity and its inherent order is the metaphysical basis of the economical Trinity'. He adds that 'it is natural that the order existing in the essential Trinity should be reflected in the opera ad extra that are more particularly ascribed to each one of the persons'.

12.2.2 The divine person as metaphor of distinction

The second assessment is connected with the modern 'social understanding' or 'I - You' relation of persons. This indicates why modern protestant theologians criticize the traditional concept of the person as an individual or static concept and the cause of tri-theism. However, this social relationship differs from that of the tradition.

For early Christian writers, the word 'person' is 'an expression of the individuality of a human being, as seen in his or her words and actions' (McGrath 1994: 209). The term 'person' was derived from the Latin word 'persona' that means mask and would imply the role of an actor in a play in the Roman theatre (Rudman 1997: 125)²¹⁵. According to Stanley Rudman (1997: 127), Tertullian primarily uses the term '*persona*' in his refutation of the Sabellian heresy. Like the term *prosopon*, the term '*persona*' had the connotation of a dramatic role or, more precisely a mask worn by an actor in playing a role (Muller 1993: 223). McGrath (1994: 209) points out that for Tertullian, 'a person is a being who speaks and acts'. In addition, Rudman (1997: 127) indicates that 'it is more likely that Tertullian used 'persona' of God because of its ability to suggest individual identity without more specific overtones which he wished to avoid.' The Greek Church interpreted 'the Latin word '*persona*' in the sense of the term '*prosopon*,' 'in turn the Latin Church understood hypostasis to mean substantia' (Bavinck 1997: 299). Although the terms *persona* and the term *prosopon* differed in meaning, they referred to the same idea to explain God. The Cappadocians in particular constructed the new theological concept 'three hypostaseis and one *ousia*' which was called the Cappadocian settlement.²¹⁶

²¹⁵ See Bavinck, p. 299.

²¹⁶ See Lienhard's (1999: 99-121) article 'Ousia and Hypostasis: The Cappadocian Settlement and the



Prestige (1981: 174) indicates that ‘hypostasis thus comes to mean a positive and concrete and distinct existence, first of all in the abstract, and later, as will be seen, in the particular individual’. Prestige (1981: 179²¹⁷) confirms that ‘although the terms ‘*hypostasis*’ and ‘*prosopon*’ are not equivalent to each other, they have the same meaning in different spheres. The terms ‘*hypostasis*’ and ‘*prosopon*’ are both used to describe the individual. The term ‘*hypostasis*’ is a more or less metaphysical term for an independent object. On the other hand, the term ‘*prosopon*’ is a non-metaphysical term.’

Patristic writers did not see the person as the reciprocal relationship (*wechselseitige Beziehung*) analogous to the human person as a social being. They concentrated on the distinction between three persons according to the Bible and the equality of three persons (hypostaseis) for the salvation of men on the basis of *homoousia*, *perichoresis*, and *koinh. th/j fu, sewj* (Part I –Athanasius, Basil, two Gregories).

Even in modern theology, the concept ‘*perichoresis*’ plays an important role in the understanding of the social doctrine of the Trinity. This term, however, has at times been regarded as a very dangerous one. One of the problems with the term ‘*perichoresis*’ is that it tends to lead one into an understanding of three Gods. In modern understanding it differs from its patristic understanding and from its understanding in a reformed theology. Heppes supplies the following definition of perichoresis

The oneness, or the *communio personarum divinarum* is to be considered as o`moousi,a , as ivso, thj and as pericw, rhsij evna, llhloj.- “ the o`moousi,a or consubstantialitas or coessentialitas of the divine persons is that whereby the three persons are of one and the same substance or essence, but singular and sole numerically; or whereby they are one thing according to essence,

theology of ‘One hypostasis’

²¹⁷ According to Prestige (1981: 179) ‘it (hypostasis) was by no means equivalent at this stage to the Latin persona. It (hypostasis) was not even equivalent to prosopon, although in practice it amounted to much the same, in as much as it was applied to the same objects; but, strictly speaking, prosopon was a non-metaphysical term for “individual”, while hypostasis was a more or less metaphysical term for “independent object”’



the essence of all of them is one, and by no means one for the Father, another for the Son and another for Holy Spirit. 1 Jn 5.7; Jn 10.30. ivso, thj of the divine persons is that by which the three persons are equal to each other by the essential attributes of Deity, by the act of subsisting, and in works and dignity and honour.-Pericw, rhsij or evmpericw, rhsij evna, llhloj in the divine persons is the completely close union, whereby one person is in another, not like an accident in a subject, but in the way in which one person permeates and embraces in every direction the whole of another always and inseparably because of the numerically one and same essence, the whole of which the separate persons possess, Jn 1.1 10.38 (Heppe 1950: 113).

With Heppé's definition, it is true that as O'Donnell (1983: 149) points out, 'since the time of Augustine and the Cappadocians, Christian theology has emphasized the unity of the divine essence.' Through the ages, Hilary, Ambrose, Athanasius, the Cappadocians, Dydimus and John of Damascus have used this term for their understanding of the Trinity and Pneumatology, implicitly or explicitly: especially to affirm the unity of the Deity²¹⁸. The Cappadocian theologians used the three Persons as

²¹⁸ St. Hilary, De trinitate 4.42: "Unum sunt, non unione personae sed substantiae unitate; Ambrosius (Migne 16, III, ii, 10, 811, 812) says that 'Cum ergo Filius et missus et datus sit, Spiritus quoque missus et datus sit, habent utique unitatem divinitatis, qui habent operis unitatem'; It is clear that he does not use the term perichoresis but it is possible to deduce it from his sentences. See Bail of Caesarea, 18, 45, p. 208 Uì`o.j ga.r evn tw/| Patri,(kai. Path.r evn tw/| Uì`w/|\ evpeidh. kai. ou-toj toiou/toj(oi-oj evkei/noj(kavkei/noj oi`o,sper ou-toj\ kai. evn tou,tw| e[n. [Wste kata. me.n th.n ivdio,ta tw/n prosw,pwn(ei-j kai. ei-j\ kata. de. to koino.n th/j fu,sewj(e[n oi` avmfo,mteroi. Gregory of Nazianzus, Or, 31, 9. p. 290. i[na to. avsu,gcuton sw/|zhtai tw/n triw/n u`postasewn evn th/| mia/| fu,sei te kai. avxi,a| th/j qeo,tthoj. Greogry of Nyssa(1958: 46) says that Kai. eiv me.n fu,sewj h=n h` th/j qeo,tthoj proshgori,a(ma/llon a;n ei=ce kairo.n kata. to.n proapodoqe,nta lo,gon e`nikw/j ta.j trei/j u`posta,seij perilamba,nein kai. e[na qeo.n le,gein dia. to. th/j fu,sewj a;tmhto,n te kai. avdiai,reton; p. 57.- h` de, qei,a fu,sij avpara,llakto,j te kai. avdiai,retoj dia. pa,shj evnnoi,aj katalamba,netai(di,a tou/to kuri,wj mi,a qeo,thj kai. ei-j Qeo,j kai. ta. a;lla panta tw/n Qeoprepw/n ovnoma,twn monadi,kwj evxagge,lletai. Dydimus(Migne 39, 36) says that 'consortium naturae' and Joannis Damasceni(Migne 94, I. viii, 829) says kai. th.n evn avllh,laij pericw,rhsin .



their starting point. However, because of this starting point, they were misunderstood as advocating tri-theism (See, part I- Gregory Nyssa). The Cappadocian theologians tried to explain that their understanding was not that of Three Gods (Prestige 1981[1936]: 282). Hence they confessed that God is one in the divine essence, even though they worried about using a numerical concept. The Cappadocian theologians, however, emphasized the one essence or one nature (*mi,a fū,sij or koinh. th/j fū,sewj*) dwelling in three Persons (See part I). In the works of the Cappadocian theologians, they implicitly use the concept perichoresis to explain the *Mi,a fū,sij or koinh. th/j fū,sewj* (see Part I, two Gregories). The Cappadocians, especially Gregory of Nyssa, uses this term explicitly for the Christological concept in its verbal form. In its substantive form, Maximus is a first Greek Father. Maximus cites Gregory's teaching on the perichoresis of the two natures of Christ (Lawler 1995: 337.).

Gregory of Nyssa (AA 39-40) states that God does not have three deities, but '*koinh. th/j fū,sewj*' which implies the term '*perichoresis*' or '*homoousia*.' He did not use the noun *perichoresis* but for the Christological concept he used the verb '*perichoreoo*'. The verb describes the relationship between the two natures in one person. With it he describes the two natures of Christ, his divine nature and his human nature. However, as Behr (2004: 425) points out, there is no modern 'trinitarian perichoresis' in the writings of Gregory of Nyssa (See Part I, Nyssa). According to Prestige

When therefore he comes to apply perichoresis to the problems of Christology, we find that it means reciprocity of action. He takes as illustrations the interchange in the moment of giving utterance between the spoken word and the conception which it expresses, both called *logos* in Greek, and, commonly, the reciprocal actions of cutting and burning which are performed by a red-hot knife. His object in employing the term was not to explain the unity of the one Christ, but the singleness of action and effect, which proceeded from the two natures united in His Person. And it should be added that he always calls the process a perichoresis of the two natures 'to' one another, never a perichoresis 'in' one another or 'through' one



another. The idea in the background is simply the metaphor of rotation from a fixed point back to that point again (Prestige 1981:293-294).

In Christology, the term '*perichoresis*' describes the reciprocal penetration of two different natures: divine and human, in the God-man Christ (Louth 2002: 174).

In John of Damascus' *Fidei Orthodoxae*, 1,8, 829, *perichoresis* is expressed as '*kai. th.n evn avllh,laij pericw,rhsin*'. It does not mean that the three Persons are in each other, but rather that one deity is in the other or in the three Persons. According to him (1. 8. 829), we never say three Gods, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Rather one God, the Holy Trinity (*Triad*), from one *aition* (cause, origin) for the Son and the Holy Spirit, not put together, or joined together which was the heresy of the Sabellians. They are not mixed, but inhabited in one another. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are called one God, not because the Persons are in one other, but it is one nature in three Persons. For John of Damascus (Migne 95, 1), in his book '*De Sancta Trinitate*', the Trinity of *homoousion*²¹⁹ and vivification is of one nature, one will, one energy, one power, one authority and one ruler, because of one deity, three *hypostaseis* or three *prosopa* guarding each '*prosopon*.' As Jonker (1981: 19) points out, John of Damascus's *perichoresis* is just trying to make an end to any possible tri-theism conception²²⁰, because the eastern theology had the danger of Tri-theism. Otto (2001: 370) points out, 'John's emphasis on the unity of God is based on the identity of essence and ensured by the *perichoresis* of the three Persons, 'made one, not so as to

²¹⁹ John of Damascus (95. 9). Peri. me.n th/j avgi,aj Tria,doj th/j o`moousi,ou(zwopoiou/(mi,an fu,sin o`molo,gei(mi,an qc,lhsin(mi,an evne,rgeian(mi,an du,nami,n te kai. evvxousi,an(kai. kurio,thta(o[ti kai. mi,a qc,othj trei/j u`posta,seij(h;toi tri,a pro,swpa(fulassome,nhj e`ka,stw| prosw,pw| th/j ivdio,tthoj)

²²⁰ As dit op God van toepassing gemaak word, neig die voorstelling van die drie-eenheid vanself na 'n tritheistiese opvatting. Ons vind dit deur die eeue as 'n gevaar in die Oosterse denke, sodat Johannes Damascenus nog in die sewende eeu daarteen moet polemiseer en deur die leer van die perigoresis of wedersydse deurdringing van die drie hupostaseis probeer om vir eens en altyd 'n einde te maak aan enige moonlike triteistiese voorstellings.



commingle, but so as to cleave to each other, and they have their being in each other without the presupposition or commingling.’

Although the term ‘perichoresis’ was applied to Christ’s position in the Trinity, it can be regarded as the unity of the essence and *o`moousi,a* of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Florence council²²¹ decided on the full symmetry between the three divine Persons.’ In this, the Florence council emphasized the phrase ‘*propter hanc unitatem*’ (because of that unity). The word ‘unitas’ means the phrase ‘*unitas naturae aut essentiae*’ (unity of nature or essence).

In summary, in the patristic writings the concepts ‘person’ and ‘hypostasis’ are only used to distinguish God as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the doctrine of the Trinity. Patristic writers need some substitutional terms for these distinctions in the Bible. They used the term ‘person’ with ‘perichoresis’ and the term ‘homoousia’ for the *confirmation of the unity of the nature or essence* of persons.

Actually these terms do not indicate any reciprocal–relational community in one God, but the distinctions and unity in which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is one God as triune God (See Part I, Gregory of Nyssa). This understanding is closely connected with human salvation since the key to the doctrine of the Trinity is Jesus Christ with his two natures, that is, both divine nature and human natures in one person. In my view the criticism and rejection of the term ‘person’ by the four modern protestant theologians discussed in this thesis is illegitimate since it only indicates the distinction in one God as the Triune God.

Calvin (Institutes I, xiii, 2) says that God is unique (one) and distinguished in three persons. This does not mean that the three persons are three Gods. Calvin uses the term

²²¹ Denzinger, Henricus (1965)1973. *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, p. 338. *Decretum pro Iacobitis in Florentium*. “ *Propter hanc unitatem Pater est totus in Filio, totus in Spiritu Sancto; Filius totus est in Patre, totus in Spiritu Sancto; Spiritus Sanctus totus est in Patre, totus in Filio. Nullus alium aut praecedit aeternitate, aut excedit magnitudine, aut superat potestate.*”



‘person’, which is very useful to understand God, and which both Latin and Greek fathers use to protect the Trinity from tritheism or monotheism. Warfield (1974: 212-213) indicates that ‘Calvin finds the term “person” in the *ὑποστάσις* of Heb. i. 3; and insists, therefore, that it, at least, is not of human invention (*humanitus inventa*). He adds that in Heb i. 3. ‘The Son shares the Divine essence: hence hypostasis here cannot mean essence. It must be taken then in its alternative sense of “person” (Warfield 1974: 213). This indicates that ‘the Father and Son are numerically one in essence, and can be represented as distinct only in person’ (Warfield 1974: 215).

For Calvin (Institutes I, xiii, 5), the term ‘person’ is the distinction of the three hypostaseis. The term ‘person’ as distinction is very useful (*potissimum usu*) against accusers (*adversus calumniatores*) (Institutes I, xiii, 4)’. The term ‘person’ is not the cause of the argument, because the Church Fathers also differed from each other (Institutes I, xiii, 5). This term implies distinction, not division (Institutes I, xiii, 17). Calvin (Institutes I, xiii, 6) says that ‘person, I therefore call a “substance” in God’s essence, which, while related to the others, is distinguished by an incommunicable quality. By the term “subsistence” we would understand something different from “essence”’. However, for Calvin, ‘this relation is here distinctly expressed’. Bavinck (1997[1951]: 300) says that in the doctrine of the Trinity the word “person” simply expressed the truth that the three persons in the Deity are not modes of manifestation merely, but have distinct and actual existence.’ Calvin is in line with Augustine (Koopmans 1955: 75). He rejects the term ‘individuum’ as individual personality (Choi 1996: 51; Koopmans 1955: 75). Torrance (1990a: 172) indicates that ‘Calvin follows Richard of St. Victor’s concept of incommunicable subsistence or existence instead of Boethius’s notion of individual substance’. As Baars points out, Calvin’s use of this meaning of the term ‘person’ is closely connected with his rejection of modalism and patripassianism. However, following Gregory of Nazianzus, the relation of the persons does not imply the modern relational understanding (and social understanding)



for Calvin, but is ‘homoousion’²²²(Institutes I, viii, xix)’ and perichoresis²²³, since Calvin ‘strongly affirms the unity of the three’²²⁴ (Fortmann 1972: 241). Warfield says

...and it was in fact in order to obtain it that he entered upon the defence, which fills the first sections, of the term and conception of “person” as applied to the distinctions in the Godhead.... What he has to prove, therefore, he conceives to be that in the unity of the Godhead there is such a distinction of persons; or as he phrases it, in a statement derived from Tertullian, that “there is in God a certain disposition or economy, which makes no difference, however, to the unity of the essence”; or, as he puts it himself a little later on (§ 2, ad init.), that “there is understood under the name of God, a unitary and simple essence, in which we comprise three

²²² Warfield(1974:232) says ‘Calvin’s main interest among the elements of this simple doctrine of the Trinity obviously lay in his profound sense of the consubstantiality of the persons’

²²³ Calvin (I, xiii, 17) quotes from Nazianzus and translates into Latin from the Greek: ‘ouv fqa,nw to. e[n noh/sai(kai. toi/j trisi. perila,mpomai\ ouv fqa,nw ta. tri,adiclei/n(kai. eivj to. e[n avnafc,romai: non possum unum cogitare quin trium fulore mox circumfundar; nec tria possum discernere quin subito ad unum referar.’ Koopmans(1955: 69) says that ‘Calvin legt – wiederum ohne das betreffende Wort zu nennen- den Nachdruck auf the Perichw,rhsij der Personen in den göttlichen Wesen „ Der Vater is ganz im Sohn, der Sohn ganz im Vater“. According to Choi (1996:56; McIntyre 1997: 116) ‘Calvin borrows the idea about the ‘Perichoresis’ in the Three-oneness from Gregory of Nazianzus.’. Although he does not use the term perichoresis itself, he goes on to clarify the nature of the divine unity by means of strikingly similar concepts (Butin 1995: 43). Baars (2004: 659) says ‘Want hoewel Calvijn het begrip perichorese(circumincessio) niet gebruikt, kent hij ‘de zaak’ die met dit begrip wordt uitgedrukt wel.’

²²⁴ Warfield (1974: 257) says that ‘The principle of his doctrine of the Trinity was not the conception he formed of the relation of the Son to the Father and of the Spirit to the Father and Son, expressed respectably by the two terms “generation” and “procession”: but the force of his conviction of the absolute equality of the Persons. He adds that [in regard to relation], ‘his idea seems to be that the Father, Son and Spirit are one in essence, and differ from one another only in that property peculiar to each, which, added to the common essence, constitutes them respectively Father, Son and Spirit; and that the Father is Father only as Father, the Son, Son only as Son, or what comes to the same thing, the Father begets the Son only as Son, or produces by the act of generation only that by virtue of which He is the Son, which is, of course, what constitutes just His Sonship’(1974: 258).



persons or hypostases” (Warfield 1974: 225-226).

He adds that “this distinction in no way impedes the absolutely simple unity of God”- since the conception is that the “whole nature (*natura*) is in each hypostasis” while “each has its own property.” “The Father is *totus* in the Son, and the Son *totus* in the Father” (Warfield 1974: 229). Therefore, for Calvin ‘the essence is without principium; but the principium of the Person is God Himself’ (Warfield 1974: 243).

For Bavinck (1997[1951]: 298), the persons of the Trinity are “distinct” but not “separate” and persons are “same in essence, one in essence, consubstantial”. ‘In the Christological struggle against Nestorianism and Monophysitism’, Bavinck (1997[1951]: 299) says that ‘the definition of “Person” is regarded as “the individual substance of a rational nature”’. This definition ‘indicates self-existence and rationality or self-consciousness. This definition occurs in ‘works of scholastic and of the older Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed dogmaticians’ (1997[1951]: 300). Bavinck (1997[1951]: 302), however, says that ‘the distinction between being and person and between the persons severally, is not one of substance but one of mutual relationship’. He adds that ‘the distinction was held to be one of relation, and not one of substance; nevertheless, this distinction was considered real and objective, based on divine revelation’ (1997[1951]: 302). However, for Bavinck, this mutual relationship implies that in God there is neither separation nor division, but distinction (1997[1951]: 304). ‘Of the three persons each is “distinct but not different from the other”; the trinity exists in, through, and unto the unity; the unfoldment of the being takes place within the being; hence, the latter’s unity and simplicity remain unimpaired... inasmuch as all three are God, they all partake of one divine nature. Hence there is one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, worthy of eternal praise.’

Louis Berkhof (1996[1938]: 87) indicates that ‘in God there are only personal self-distinctions within the Divine essence, which is not only generically, but also numerically, one’. He adds that ‘consequently many preferred to speak of three hypostases in God, three different modes, not of manifestations, as Sabellius taught, but of existence or subsistence’ (Berkhof 1996[1938]: 87). Here Berkhof (1996[1938]: 87-



88) quotes Calvin's sentence: 'By person, then I mean a subsistence in the Divine essence.- a subsistence which, while related to the other two, is distinguished from them by incommunicable properties'. However, about the relation between the essence and persons, Berkhof (1996[1938]: 88) says that 'the persons in the Godhead have a numerical unity of essence, that is, they possess the identical essence'. Because 'the divine nature is indivisible and therefore identical in the persons of the Godhead.' 'It is numerically one and the same, and therefore the unity of the essence in the persons is a numerical unity' (Berkhof 1996[1938]: 88).

12.3 Implications for practical church life

In Korea, Pastors (Church leaders) and Church members are not interested in the intricacies of the doctrine of the Trinity. They enjoy church music and prayer for their spiritual life. However, they do not realise the importance of the Trinity and faith in the triune God for their spiritual life.

Bavinck (1978[1977]: 158-160) states three important aspects of the doctrine of the Trinity. 1) Both the unity and the diversity in the being of God (1978[1977]: 158) 2) the church in maintaining this confession, takes a strong position over against the heresies of deism and pantheism (polytheism) and of Judaism and paganism (1978[1977]: 159) 3) this confession of the church is also of the greatest importance for the spiritual life (1978[1977]: 159). In this section, the focus is on the third aspect, on its importance in practical life (Bavinck 1997[1951]: 333)²²⁵ on the doctrine of the Trinity as true *analogia fidei*, as *analogia scripturae*.

²²⁵ The doctrine of the Trinity, as Bavinck (1997[1951]: 330-334) displays, has significance in three categories: 1) The doctrine of the Trinity reveals God to us the truly Living one (Bavinck 1997[1951]: 330) 2) the doctrine of the Trinity is full of significance for the creation. Creation presupposes a triune God (Bavinck 1997[1951]: 331) 3) the doctrine of the Trinity is of the utmost importance for practical religion (Bavinck 1997[1951]: 333).



12.3.1 The problem of a concept of the church based on the modern social concept of ‘person’

The church is simply called ‘the community of the saints, that is, the community of those who believe and are sanctified in Christ, and who are joined to Him as their head’ (Berkhof 1996[1938]: 564). Volf (2005: 158) uses ‘the social model of the trinitarian relations, particularly as proposed by Jürgen Moltmann²²⁶ (though also by Wolfhart

²²⁶ For Moltmann (1993[1977]: 6), ‘a consistent theological doctrine of the Church is by its very nature an eminently political and social doctrine of the church as well. So, ‘the image of Christ and the image of the church also always reflects “the spirit of the age”, the political and economic circumstances, and the cultural and social conditions, in which the churches are living’ (Moltmann 1993[1977]: 66). Moltmann (1993[1977]: 66) says that ‘ecclesiology can only be developed from Christology, as its consequence and in correspondence with it’. This indicates that ‘the being of the church is described through the activities of Christ, who ‘chooses, gathers, protects and upholds’. The church has its true being in the work of Christ (Moltmann 1993[1977]: 67). However, the activity of the Son of God is universal (Moltmann 1993[1977]: 69). This indicates that ‘this redeeming and renewing kingdom of God is universal’. And ‘like God himself, it is universal and without limitation’ (Moltmann 1993[1977]: 100). On the basis of this universalism, for Moltmann the Church must begin ‘from below’ (Moltmann 1993 [1977]:21). The ‘from below’ is closely connected with his social understanding of the church. The church of Jesus Christ is ‘the people of the kingdom of God’ (Moltmann 1993[1977]: 196). Moltmann (1993[1977]: 105) defines the Church as ‘the fellowship of those who owe their new life and hope to the activity of the risen Christ.’ He adds that ‘the use of its new freedom in this world ought to correspond to the rule of Christ and to reflect this physically and politically. Every human community corresponds to its environment and reflects it. The church is no exception. In its concrete form it corresponds to its social environment and reflects the conditions which govern the society in which it lives’.²²⁶ He adds that ‘for when society was Christianized the Christian church took over the functions of the socially essential “state religion”. The community of Christians and the community of citizens coincided’ (Moltmann 1993[1977]: 224). This indicates that Moltmann’s understanding of church is based on the social concept. As Kärkkäinen (2002: 128) says, ‘for Moltmann, the church is a free society of equals, an open fellowship of friends.’ His panentheism which comes from identification between immanent and economic Trinity, he applies to the Church. For Moltmann, the Church must be involved with the poor. Moltmann (1993[1977]: 127) says that ‘the hidden presence of the coming Christ in the poor therefore belongs to ecclesiology first of all, and only after that to ethics.’ Moltmann says more concretely ‘the church is not as yet sanctified by poverty if it does not become “the church for the poor” and especially honor alms given for the poor. If it



Pannenberg²²⁷), developing those aspects that help illuminate correspondences between the Trinity and the church’.

Volf builds his concept of the Church on the basis of the social concept of person. He uses the sociological concept of the church. He derives it from the Trinity. Volf (2006:

only praises “the dignity of the poor in the church”, then it is not yet moving in this direction. Christ became poor in order through his poverty to make many rich. The disciples became poor in order to fill the world with the gospel. So the Church too will only be poor in this sense if it consecrates everything it has to the service for the Kingdom of God, investing it in the messianic mission to the world. It will be poor in a both spiritual and material sense if it becomes the church of the poor and if the real poor find themselves and their hope in the church. Poverty is not a virtue unless it leads to the fellowship of the really poor’ (Moltmann 1993[1977]: 356). However, although the Church has to distribute money to the poor, the church is not the church of the poor. The problem which the church has is that the church has gold for herself. Calvin (Institutes IV, iv, 8) says that ‘the church has gold not to keep but to pay out and to relieve distress.’ This does not imply that the church is the church of the poor.

²²⁷ According to Pannenberg (1998: 44), ‘the church is a sign of humanity’s future in God’s kingdom by its participation in the divine plan of salvation that is revealed in Jesus Christ, and it participates in this plan as it exists as the body of Christ.’ He adds that ‘as a sign and tool of the coming kingdom of God the Church has its end not in itself but in the future of a humanity that is reconciled to God and united by common praise of God in his kingdom’(Pannenberg 1998: 45). In other words, Pannenberg(1998: 46) says that ‘the messianic people of the coming kingdom is the church, but only in its function as an anticipatory sign of the destiny of humanity in the future of the kingdom of God that God alone will bring in.’ As Kärkkäinen(2002: 118) points out, for Pannenberg, ‘in keeping with the universal relevance of God’s reconciliation in Christ, the most fundamental truth about the nature of the church is its goal of all humanity being united under one God’.

Pannenberg says that ‘the church as the body of Christ is only a sign of future fellowship in God’s kingdom, and it is an instrument on behalf of our unity with God and one another only by means of its function as a sign- not by setting up the kingdom, not as an instrument by means of which the kingdom will become a reality in human history’ (Pannenberg 1998: 48).

Pannenberg (1998: 49) says that ‘the political order of society, not just the church, stands in a constitutive relation to the theme of God’s lordship and the future of his kingdom.’ Therefore the Church ‘has also the form of a social unit, first as a local congregation, then as an association of local congregations, which involves in turn common institutions and ministries that are responsible for maintaining the local congregation’(Pannenberg 1998: 432). Kärkkäinen (2002: 119) says that ‘Pannenberg does not deny the potential political implications of the church life.’



6) says that following the social trinitarians, the doctrine of the Trinity is not found in ‘the character of divine self-revelation’ or ‘self-communication, but ‘in the history of the mutual engagement of the persons of the Trinity in the economy of salvation’. In other words, it is that demands that we think in Trinitarian terms ‘the specific character of each actor in the drama of the divine self- revelation and the nature of their relations.’ He adds

The one God is a communion of three persons in that each dwells in the others and is indwelled by them. Because the Godhead is a perfect communion of love, divine persons exchange gifts- the gifts of themselves and the gift of the other’s glorification. The inverse is also true: Because they exchange such gifts, they are called a divine communion of love. So it is in God’s eternal life, apart from God’s relation to the world (Volf 2006: 11)

For Volf (2005: 155), ‘ecclesial and social reality, on the one hand, and Trinitarian models, on the other, are mutually determinative, just as ecclesial and social models and Trinitarian models are mutually determinative’. The church as social-model²²⁸ (1998: 180) is his point of view. His church model stems from Mt 18:20. “Where two or three are gathered in Christ’s name, Christ is present among them. Therefore, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the universal church. In other words, a person or individual can be the universal church, because in each Christian who believes in Christ, Christ is there through the Spirit of God (1998: 130). Through the Holy Spirit, the church becomes church. He emphasizes that in his definition Christ’s presence is promised, not directly to the believing individual, but rather to the entire congregation, and through the latter to the individual (Volf 1998: 162). It is closely connected with the trinitarian concept. The Trinity is one, and many. To Volf (1998: 162), the Church is a place where people gather together in the name of Jesus. His definition, though, is insufficient as it omits its confession and mission. According to Mt 16:16, the church is only constituted by the

²²⁸ The mixture of the social type that Max Weber called “church” into which a person is born, and the social type that he called “sect”, which a person freely joins.



confession that 'Christ is the Lord and the Son of the living God'. The church is not only defined by the phrase 'For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in their midst' but also by the phrase 'Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.'

Haudel studies 'the relationship of the doctrine of the Trinity and Ecclesiology as ecumenical challenge'. His understanding about the relationship between the doctrine of the Trinity and Ecclesiology leads to the concepts: missiology, and interreligion dialogue. For Haudel, the result of his investigation is also relevant for the understanding of mission, the Christian defence against the world and the relationship to other religions, since the self-revelation of the Triune God in creation, salvation and end perfection as integral to the understanding of reality (*Wirklichkeitsverständnisses*) includes the total reality (Haudel 2006: 592). For him, following D. Heller, mission belongs to the essence of being and of the church as communion (*Die Mission gehört zur Essenz des Wesens und des Seins der Kirche als koinonia*) (Haudel 2006: 592). A distinguishing doctrine of the Trinity proves the decisive simultaneity of communion and distinction (*Gemeinsamkeit und Differenz*) for the relationship between Church and Israel (Haudel 2006: 598). A distinguishing Trinitarian approach (*differenzierter trinitätstheologischer Ansatz*) would be helpful, which does not neglect both the distinction between the economic and immanent Trinity, and the simultaneity of the contraposition and nearness (*Gegenüber und Nähe*) of God grounded in God's intra-interpersonal being (Haudel 2006: 600).

Haudel's application [the concept 'simultaneity of intra or inner personality'] of the concept of the trinitarian person to the Church and other extended subjects (mission, inter-religious dialog), and Volf's social model of the church (with Moltmann and Pannenberg) are unacceptable. The doctrine of the Trinity must be connected to the Church since 'the church has its origin in the triune God' (Wethmar 1997: 418), but it is impossible to apply the concept 'divine person' to the Church, since the Church is not



constituted from the concept 'Person', but on the basis of the confession of Jesus Christ as the Son of God (Mt 16:16).

The controversy surrounding the Trinity arose from the confession that the Son is the same God with the Father. Jesus Christ promised that he will build his church (*ecclesiam meam*) on this rock, which implies Peter's confession (Mt 16:16). The church is based on the confession of the Triune God. Therefore, the church cannot be based on the concept of the 'divine person' as an inner or intra or interpersonal concept and on the simultaneity of the 'closeness and independence' of God, but only on the confession of the 'Triune God'. This is closely connected with 'the point of view of baptism and profession [of faith]'. With regard to the point view, Berkhof (1996[1938]: 563) says that 'the church has been defined as the community of those who are baptised and profess the true faith; or as the community of those who profess the true religion together with their children.'

Wethmar says that according to the reformed confessions, 'the church is actively and dynamically gathered by the Son of God, through the Spirit and his Word, from the beginning to the end of the world, and from among the whole human race as a congregation chosen for eternal life' (Wethmar 1997: 418). Wethmar confirms

The reformed line of argument clearly demonstrates that the church is a reality which operates within a soteriological context and not within the sphere of the doctrine of creation. No other social structure is linked to the salvation brought about by Christ in the same fundamental manner as the church is. Within all social structures only the church is called the people of God, the body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit. The church is a new creation and a new humanity... an eschatological reality of the reign of God (Wethmar 1997: 419).

12.3.2 The Implications for practical church life



The Triune God is the subject of Christian church life. It is very important to acknowledge that the Triune God is the reason of our faith, worship, preaching, mission and baptism.

12.3.2.1 *for the confession*

According to Wethmar (2005:2; 2002: 285), ‘a close study of the New Testament reveals the presence of what has been called *praesymbola* or prefigurations of doctrinal expressions.’ He adds that ‘quite often the presence of technical Greek terms like *paralambanein*, *paradidonai*, *homologein* and *pisteuein* may be indicative of the occurrence of such formulas. In other cases formulations that do not seem to fit well into a specific grammatical construction or even into the relevant context might reveal the presence of such a doctrinal formulation’ (Wethmar 2002: 285). Wethmar (2005: 2-3) shows that these *praesymbola* work ‘in a variety of contexts of which the most important were baptism, the liturgy of the worship service, situations of persecution, as well as in situations where heresies had to be opposed.’ For Wethmar (2002:287-288), there are two aspects of the Christian confession. According to Rom 10: 9, the first is ‘the confession as an enactment of Christian faith; as decision and commitment’, and the second is ‘that it provides a description of the saving work of Christ as the content of the Christian faith and as the basis of a commitment to Christ’. He indicates that ‘this distinction between *homologia* and *credo*, between a statement of commitment and a statement of content that was made with reference to an interpretation of Rom 10:9, proved to be applicable not only to the preliminary doctrinal material found in the New Testament, but also to later doctrinal statements’ (Wethmar 2002: 288).

It can also be applied to the doctrine of the Trinity. In Mt 28: 19 Jesus Christ ordered his disciples to go to the people to baptize those who become disciples of Jesus Christ in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. According to Frank Stagg (1969: 252), it implies that ‘it is the earliest known explicit Trinitarian formula, although it is approached in the earlier writings of Paul.’ Stagg (1969: 252) says: ‘the earliest formula used by the church seems to have been “in the name of the Lord Jesus”. However, ‘it is significant that although a Trinitarian formula is employed, name is singular in Mt



28:19. Although God came to be known as the Father, Son, Holy Spirit, he remained one God. Name in biblical usage stands for the person himself' (Stagg 1969: 252).

In Mt 16:16, Peter confesses that 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God'. This confession became the foundation of the Church. This confession is the most representative confession as a *praesymbolon* in the Christian Church. Jesus Christ says that on this confession, his church will be built. Although Jesus Christ regards Peter's confession as precious, He emphasizes that Peter's confession does not stem from human beings but from heaven. Calvin (1972 184-185) is convinced that it is 'a brief confession, but one which contains the whole sum of our salvation.' He argues that 'the divine redemption was clear which God revealed by the hand of His Son. Therefore it was right that He who was to be the Redeemer should come forth from heaven marked with the anointing of God' (Calvin 1972: 185). He adds that 'in Matthew the term is clearly- 'the Son of the living God'. For although it may be that Peter did not yet grasp distinctly how Christ was begotten of God, yet he believed Him to be so excellent as to originate from God, not like the rest of men, but as the living and true Godhead clothed in flesh. By ascribing the epithet 'living' to God, he is indicating a distinction between Him and the dead idols which are nothing' (Calvin 1972: 185).

It is obvious that Peter is confessing the triune God. This confession plays an important role in connection with the 'church'. Jesus says that 'I constitute my church on this rock (confession)'. Nowadays, theologians apply the triune concept (the reciprocal relation concept or the social concept of person) to the model of the Church (Moltmann, Pannenberg, Boff, and Volf). However, the church is based on the confession of Jesus Christ as Lord and as the Son of God.

John the Baptist confesses, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world' (Jn 1: 29 RSV). According to Jn 1:34, the Lamb of God is the Son of God. This knowledge that Christ is the Son of God is revealed by God. John the Baptist says that 'I myself did not know him; but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the holy



Spirit. And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God' (RSV Jn 1:33-34).

It is work of the Holy Spirit that let people confess Jesus as the Son of God or Lord. In 1 Cor 12:3(RSV), Paul declares 'therefore, I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says, "Jesus be cursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit'. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, people confess that 'Jesus Christ is Lord and the Son of God'

The core of the Gospel occurs in Jn '3:16-18' (RSV): for God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God'. This indicates that the one sent by God is the Son of God. This confessing comes from 'faith alone'. In Rom 10: 10(RSV) it is stated 'for man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved'. This faith does not come from human beings, but '*ex auditu verbi Christi*'. The confession of Jesus Christ as Lord and the Son of God implies the Triune God, because the Father sends his Son and makes people believe or confess him as Lord through the Holy Spirit.

In the early Church, Christians confessed their faith according to a traditional confession. Phil 2: 5-11 is indicative of this traditional confession (praesymbola) of the Triune God. Jesus Christ was originally '*ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ*'. However, He emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant. This speaks of the confession of the triune God.

12.3.2.2 *for worship*

The triune God is the object of the worship service. Christ is 'the object of worship' (Wainwright 1962: 104). Wainwright (1962:93) ²²⁹says '[evidence is examined], much

²²⁹ He exams doxologies ascribed to Christ; Prayers offered to Christ; quotations from the Old



of which confirms the view that Jesus was worshipped by Christians of the first century'. In the church God's people worship the Triune God. Jesus tells us that God finds people who worship the Father in the Spirit and the truth (Jn 4:23). This indicates the triune formula, since Jesus says that 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me' (Jn 14:6 RSV). Without Jesus Christ, no one comes to the Father. If we worship the Father we must be through Jesus Christ. For Jesus is the truth. And the Holy Spirit is the helper whom the father sends in Jesus' name. He teaches us all things, and brings to our remembrance all things that Jesus says to us (Jn 14:26). It is impossible to separate Jesus Christ as truth (the word of God) and the Holy Spirit in the worship to the Father.

Moltmann regards worship as a feast²³⁰. Pannenberg basically agrees with Moltmann. Pannenberg (1998: 370) says, 'In Worship individual Christians are united with others in the church's fellowship by the "ecstatic" fellowship with Jesus Christ that lifts them above themselves.' He adds that 'only at worship does the fellowship of believers come to realization as a sign of our future fellowship in God's kingdom for the praising and

Testament which are transferred from Yahweh to Christ; the use of the Greek equivalents of the word "worship" in commention with Chrit'

²³⁰ He defines worship as follows: 1)Worship as a Messianic Feast(1993[1977]: 261) 2) Feast as Ritual(1993[1977]:262-264) – a) Every ritual creates historical continuity b) Every ritual has an indicative character c) Every ritual stands in a framework of social coherences and also establishes social coherences d) If, then, ritual has the function of temporal integration through the formation of tradition; of spatial integration through the forming of a social group; and of an overriding indicative character, it follows that the functions of ritual are primarily ordering functions. 3) The feast in the modern workaday world. 4) the feast of the history of God(1993[1977]: 267). 5) The Messianic Intermezzo'(1993[1977]: 272-275) – a) As ritual, divine service is a celebration b) The Christian service was originally and still is the feast of Christ's resurrection. c) The christian service of worship, as the feast of the risen one, is always at the same time the making present of the one who was crucified. d) Though worship in the name of the crucified and risen Christ makes a stand against life's inward and outward oppressions, its criticism of the state of the world is still none the less bound up with man's justification and the assent to creation. e) Through the presence of the risen Christ the feast of the resurrection always has elements of rapture. The new messianic life is not merely changed life; it is life with a new quality. f) the messianic feast is dependent on a fellowship which sees itself as a messianic fellowship.



glorifying of God to all eternity. But individual Christians as believers are not only lifted above themselves in Christ.’

The Triune God is worshipped, because the triune God instituted it. In Jn 4: 23-24(RSV), John defines a true worshipper, ‘But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth’. The worship does not depend on the worshipper’s way, but God seeks worshipper who worships the Father in spirit and truth. In Rom 12: 1, Paul counsels us to worship God with ourselves as a living sacrifice, that is, our reasonable service. This service by mind and heart is ‘worship to the Father in spirit and truth’ through our whole life. Therefore worship is not a feast or a fellowship, but constant giving of our life to God.

12.3.2.3 The subject of Preaching

The phrase ‘opera trinitatis ad extra sunt non divisa’ is indicative of the meaning of the Gospel for salvation. The early Church preached the Gospel on the basis of the triune formula for the salvation of mankind. Although the Gospel displays the economic work of the Son of God, the Trinity is never excluded. Whenever Jesus Christ works, the other persons in the Trinity work with him. For example, when Jesus was baptized by John the baptist, God the Father said that ‘this is my beloved Son’ and soon the Holy Spirit came upon him like a dove.

The persons in the Trinity always work together. In the early Church, the apostles and Paul preached about the work of the triune God in the name of Jesus Christ. Peter’s preaching follows the formula of the Triune God in his first sermon in Acts, which is the Lukan composition (Acts 2: 32-36). Peter said

³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. ³³ Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see



and hear. ³⁴ For David did not ascend into the heavens; but he himself says, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, ³⁵ till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet.' ³⁶ Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." (Acts 2:32-36 RSV)

The preaching of the good news indicates the formula of the doctrine of the Trinity: God, Jesus (Lord and Christ), and Holy Spirit. Here, it is obvious that the exalted Jesus received the Holy Spirit from the Father to pour him out on them. This formula was first sermon of Peter on the basis of the Gospel for the salvation of mankind. After this, they were baptised in the name of Jesus Christ and received the Holy Spirit as gift. Three thousand people were added to the church (Acts 2: 38-41).

In Acts 10: 38-43²³¹, Peter's preaching in Cornelius's home is also indicative of the triune formula. In his sermon Peter proves that Jesus is the Christ, the Lord, and the Son of God. This is the core of the gospel, and our confession of the triune God.

Paul's letters indicate the formula of the gospel and the formula of the Triune God. Fee points to the Trinitarian Texts in the works of Paul.

The remarkable grace-benediction II Corinthians 13:13 offers us all kinds of theological keys to Paul's understanding of salvation and of God himself.. The same fully trinitarian implications appear in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 and Ephesians 4: 4-6. In the former passage Paul urges the Corinthians to

²³¹ Acts 10:38-43 ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹ And we are witnesses to all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; ⁴⁰ but God raised him on the third day and made him manifest; ⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² And he commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that he is the one ordained by God to be judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ To him all the prophets bear witness that every one who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."



broaden their perspective and to recognize the rich diversity of the Spirit's manifestations in their midst...In Ephesians 4:4-6 one finds the same combination as in 2 Corinthians 13:13- a creedal formulation expressed in terms of the distinguishable activities of the triune God. That the work of the Trinity in salvation is foundational to Paul's understanding of the gospel is further evidenced by the many texts that formulate salvation in less explicit, but fully presuppositionally trinitarian terms. This is especially true of passages such as Romans 5:1-8; 2 Corinthians 3:1-4:6; Galatians 4:4-6; or Ephesians 1:3-14(cf Titus 3:4-7)"(Fee 1994: 41-42).

Phil 2: 5-11²³² is indicative the deity of Christ (Trinitarian talk about God) (Eckstein 2006: 97). Paul encourages the Philipians to follow Jesus' humility (Kenosis). This portion of scripture represents the early most beautiful witness of the pre-existence and incarnation of Christ, of his obedience till death on the cross and for his ascend to the highest dignity and his confirmation by God in the eschatological lordship (Eckstein 2006: 98).

It is possible to preach the triune God as the subject of preaching, since this Trinity is the doctrine of the New Testament (O'Neill 1995: 93). He adds

The New Testament in all its parts turns on the dogmas of the Trinity, and the Incarnation. There is no evidence that Christians ever were without these dogmas, no sign of the development that has cast such a spell over New Testament scholars since the eighteenth century. Nor is there evidence in the New Testament of controversy or of a new burst of creative thought.

²³² Phil 2:5-11 ⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross! ⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.



The beliefs were the stuff of their life (O'Neill 1995: 93).

In the New Testament, preachers preached the gospel of the Triune God.

12.3.2.4 The reason for Mission

The Christian mission is based on Jesus Christ' commission in Mt 28: 19-20. This mission is being fulfilled through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). To carry out the commission of the Lord the power of the Holy Spirit is needed. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, Christians should carry out the mission. In Mt 28: 19, Jesus Christ orders his disciples to go, to make disciples, to baptize in the name of the Trinity and to let them keep what Jesus Christ told them. "poreuq,ntej...." is the first word in this order (Mt 28: 19). In Greek, 'any emphasis on an element in the sentence causes that element to be moved forward' (BDF 472, 2). The phrase 'Go! (or going)' is the first order of our Lord Jesus Christ to the Church. Then in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit "maqhteusate" make disciples! And "baptizontej" baptize!(or baptizing) in the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit. Witherington (2002: 114) points to 'Mt. 28: 19... The noun "name" is in the singular. There is one God... Here indeed we see the beginnings of the explicitly Trinitarian expression about God.' According to Bjork (1999: 232) 'this trinitarian God can lead Christians to a fuller comprehension of the missionary's role', since in this trinitarian verse, missionary duty and order appear.

As indicated in Acts 1:8, the Christian Mission is powerless without the Holy Spirit. The Christian mission to the whole world as witness to Jesus Christ comes from the Holy Spirit who's power was promised by Jesus Christ. In Jn 15:26(RSV) Jesus says, 'But when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me'. The Paraclete comes from the Father and Jesus sends him to his people. There is a clear parallelism in this verse, but this verse is not meant as the subject of a theological argument, but to explain the role of the Holy Spirit. 1 Pet 2: 9(RSV) says 'But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful



deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.’ From this verse, it is clear why Christians are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation and a peculiar people. The Greek word ‘o[*pwj*’ can be translated as ‘that’ or ‘in order to’ to indicate ‘result’ or ‘purpose’. In this portion, it is better to use ‘purpose’ than ‘result’ although both lead to the same goal. Therefore, it can be translated as follows: “in order to proclaim the goodness (plural in the Greek text-moral excellences, powers or redemptive acts) of Him (who has) called you from darkness into his marvellous light. The most important part is ‘in order to proclaim the goodness.’ It surely is the purpose of the calling. The mission of the Lord belongs to the Christian’s three offices: universal kingship, priesthood, and prophethood. As Bjork (1999:232) says, ‘the faith revealed in the Scriptures begins with the heavenly conceived and initiated mission of the eternal Son of God, and it ends with our being sent, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to the ends of the earth’.

Moltmann (1993[1977]: 10) says that ‘the mission of Christ creates its own church. Mission does not come from the church; it is from mission and in the light of mission that the church has to be understood.’ He adds that ‘to grasp the missionary church theologically in a world-wide context means understanding it in the context of the *missio dei*. Mission comprehends the whole of the church, not only parts of it, let alone the members it has sent out’ (Moltmann 1993[1977]: 10). ‘The missionary concept of the church leads to a church that is open to the world in the divine mission, because it leads to a Trinitarian interpretation of the church in the history of God’s dealings with the world’ (Moltmann 1993[1977]: 11). For Moltmann, the term ‘messianic’ mission implies social redemption. He says that ‘under the influence of the messianic mission of the earthly Jesus, the poor were blessed, the sick healed and prisoners freed. Men were called to repentance and a new start into freedom’ (Moltmann 1993[1977]: 85).

However, Jesus Christ institutes both the church and the mission. Therefore ecclesiology must be extended to missiology and missiology must be in ecclesiology. Although mission is not ‘a mark of the church’, ecclesiology and missiology has a reciprocal relation. The social redemption, in which Moltmann developed his ecclesiology for others, is a partial understanding of the great commission of Jesus



Christ. When the gospel is spread world wide, it happens as result. But the main purpose of mission is to deliver the message of God's forgiveness of sin through the cross of Jesus Christ to unreached people. This is identical with the reason of Jesus' coming into the world (incarnation). Calvin (Institutes, II, xii, 4) says that Jesus Christ himself explained that the reason of his arrival is that he picks up us from the death into life in order to satisfy God. Calvin (Institutes II, xii, 4) confirms that the unique reason of this incarnation of the Son of God is the Sin of human being, that is, the salvation of polluted human being.

12.3.2.5 Baptism

In connection with mission, baptism plays an important role for understanding the triune God in the church, since Jesus ordered disciples to baptize people in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Actually, the concrete doctrine of the Trinity stems from this formula of baptism. The singular word 'name' indicates the unity and essence of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It indicates the particular attribute of the persons. In terms of the importance of Jesus' great commission, Protestant Christians regard baptism as a sacrament together with the Lord's supper.

With regard to 'infant baptism', Moltmann (1993[1977]: 228) says that 'infant baptism, as the attempts to justify it theologically show, is an open theological problem as long as the churches that practise it appeal to its origin in the history of Christ.' He says that 'the practice of infant baptism is also an open political problem connected with the form of the church in its particular society' (Moltmann 1993[1977]: 229). For Moltmann,

The baptism of the parents and their Christian responsibility for their children does not lead to any compulsive necessity for the children themselves, or to any justification of infant baptism either; though what it does lead to is undoubtedly the charge of proclamation to the children, prayer for them and the lived testimony of freedom in fellowship with them (Moltmann 1993[1977]:230).



He adds ‘but it cannot compel the sequel of baptism and does not justify the baptism of infants. Faith and baptism commit to service in the natural relations of life, but they are not themselves passed on through these natural relations’ (Moltmann 1993[1977]: 230). Moltmann (1993[1977]: 230) does not regard infant baptism as ‘a token of prevenient grace’, since ‘baptism cannot be without faith’. As Kärkkäinen (2002: 128-129) says, ‘Moltmann clearly opts for a “free church” model and is sharply critical of the state church model with infant baptism’. Moltmann concludes

Infant baptism should be replaced by the blessing of the children in the congregation’s service of worship and by the ‘ordination’- the public and explicit commissioning of parents and congregation- for their messianic service to the children. The baptism of parents is a call covering their family, social and political relationships as well. The Christian ought to follow his call in his secular profession too, and act accordingly. That is why it is important to make this call clear in the vocation of parenthood. Parenthood is a charisma, and becomes a living charisma in faith (Moltmann 1993[1977]: 240-241)

According to Pannenberg (1998: 257), ‘baptism and faith belong together. Faith fellowship with the destiny of the crucified and risen Lord is established by baptism.’ He adds that ‘baptism shows that the missionary proclamation of the church has been accepted, has met with faith. Conversely, the meaning of baptism is appropriated and set forth in faith. In a double sense, then, baptism is the “sacrament of faith”’

For Pannenberg (1998: 260), ‘the question whether infant baptism is right or wrong is not just a question apart. Deciding it involves concepts of the nature of baptism in general and its relation to faith.’ In the sense of ‘a simple expression and public confession of a turning to faith’, he rejects infant baptism. However, Pannenberg(1998: 262) says that ‘if baptism as a sacramental act aims at the faith of the recipients in what it signifies, but does not necessarily presuppose this, because in any case faith can only receive baptism, then, and only then, the baptism of children and infants is basically permissible according to the very nature of baptism.’



In reformed theology, baptism also plays an important role in relation to the church, since as Berkhof (1996[1938]: 563) says, ‘the Church is the community of those who are baptised and profess the true faith; or as the community of those who profess the true religion together with their children.’ Berkhof lies emphasis on the phrase ‘those who profess the true religion together with their children, since this opens the way for infant baptism.

Calvin says in the title of his Institutes book IV, xvi ‘infant baptism best accords with Christ’s Institution and the nature of the sign’. Calvin says that in the doctrine of infant baptism the right consideration of signs does not rest solely in external ceremonies, but depends chiefly upon the promise and the spiritual mysteries, which the Lord ordains the ceremonies themselves to represent’ (Institutes IV, xvi, 2). And He says that ‘Scripture declares that baptism first points to the cleansing of our sins, which we obtain from Christ’s blood; then to the mortification of our flesh, which rests upon participation in his death and through which believers are reborn into newness of life and into the fellowship of Christ’(Institutes IV, xvi, 2). In this regard, Calvin connects baptism with Abraham’s circumcision and the Lord’s covenant with Abraham. Calvin (Institutes IV, xvi, 3) says that ‘this [circumcision] corresponds to the promise of baptism that we shall be cleansed’, and ‘afterward, the Lord covenants with Abraham that he should walk before him in uprightness and innocence of heart. This applies to mortification, or regeneration.’ For Calvin, ‘for circumcision was for the Jews their first entry in to the church, because it was a token to them by which they were assured of adoption as the people and household of God, and they in turn professed to enlist in God’s service. In like manner, we also are consecrated to God through baptism, to be reckoned as his people, and in turn we swear fealty to him. By this it appears incontrovertible that baptism has taken the place of circumcision to fulfil the same office among us.’ In this regard, ‘baptism is properly administered to infants as something owed to them’ (Institutes IV, xvi, 5). Therefore, for Calvin, infant baptism is regarded of the same value as adult baptism in the name of the triune God as a sign of the salvation of God.



12.4 Conclusion

In the implication of the practical church life, the doctrine of the Trinity is regarded as the foundation of church life in both reformed and modern theology. However, they differ from each other in the following four points of view. 1) Modern theology as represented by the four theologians discussed in this thesis is strongly influenced from panentheism, that is, the identification of the immanent Trinity and economic Trinity. Therefore, modern theology does not distinguish between God and the world as well as the church and the world. 2) On the basis of the Trinitarian persons as social or relational, they regard the church as a social and political community. 3) So they criticize the traditional understanding of the church and doctrine of the Trinity both on the basis of panentheism and a social understanding of a person. 4) In this regard, they weaken the soteriological understanding of the church and change the church into a ‘place of dialogue’ between religions on the basis of universalism.



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