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

By

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Dissertation

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree:

Philosophiae Doctor

Department of Systematic Theology
In the Faculty of Theology
Pretoria University

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April 2008
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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Supervisor: Professor Conrad J Wethmar
Department: Dogmatics and Ethics
Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

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)
Acknowledgement

First of all, I give thanks to God who gave me the sufficient grace to live and to write the dissertation titled by ‘a reformed assessment of the revitalization of the doctrine of the Trinity by four leading twentieth century protestant theologians’.

I attribute this dissertation to my parents, my wife (Jeong Ran, Park) who has prayed for me, supported me, and had patience till finishing the dissertation, and two sons (Tae Jung and Ho Jung). And I give thanks to my sisters (Su Yeol, Hyo Yeol, and Ji Eun), Brothers-in-law (Hyo Shin, Yim; Young Doo, Hwang) who have supported me to study, and father-in-law and mother-in-law (Bundang).

I give thanks to my promoter Prof, Dr. C J, Wethmar who is my Doctorvater. And I give thanks to Dr. Chul Won, Suh who is the foundation of my theology, Dr. Yong Man, Park and Dr. Jong Tae, Choi who have taught me the true faith and prayer. Especially, I give thanks to Dr. F S, Malan who corrects my English and other languages (German, Greek, and Latin) and is willing to become my counterpart and mentor for this dissertation.

I give thanks to Jeongeup Seonkwang Church, especially, senior Pastor, rev. Gi Cheol, Kim, all elders, all church members, other pastors and evangelists. And to my friend, Medical Dr. Dong Jin, Hwang and Pastor, rev. Euy Haeng, Jeong and his wife. And I give thanks to Pastor, rev. Hun Bok, Lee who is the senior pastor of ChangHunDae Church, and Pastor, rev. Sang Gi, Kim who is the senior pastor of ShinJeonJu Church.

Finally, I thank all my colleagues and pastors who studies in South Africa: alphabetically, S M, Kang; Jae Soon, Kim; Jun Seop, Kim; Y J, Kim; P G, Choi and his wife H Y, Kwon; W M Choo and his wife K H, Choi; J Y, Moon; H, Park; J K, Park; J W, Shin; Joshua(Y J), Song.
## Abbreviation

### Book

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>Ad Ablabium (Quod non sint tres Dei)</td>
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<tr>
<td>AEus</td>
<td>Ad Eustathium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Adversus Macedonianos</td>
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<tr>
<td>AS</td>
<td>Ad Serapionem</td>
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<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Contra Arianos</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEu</td>
<td>Contra Eunomium</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIV</td>
<td>De Incarnatione Verbi</td>
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<td>DSS</td>
<td>De Spiritu Sancto</td>
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<tr>
<td>Or</td>
<td>Oratio</td>
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<td>PG</td>
<td>Patrologia Graecae</td>
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### Journal

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<tr>
<td>ATJ</td>
<td>The Ashbury Theological Journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>CTJ</td>
<td>Calvin theological Journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>EQ</td>
<td>Evangelical Quarterly</td>
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<tr>
<td>ET</td>
<td>Evangelische Theologie</td>
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<tr>
<td>GOtR</td>
<td>The Greek Orthodox theological Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>IJST</td>
<td>International Journal of Systematic Theology</td>
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<tr>
<td>JCTR</td>
<td>Journal for Christian Theological Research</td>
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<td>JTS</td>
<td>Journal of Theological Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>KUD</td>
<td>Kerygma und Dogma</td>
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<tr>
<td>NZfsTuR</td>
<td>Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie und</td>
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<td>Religionsphilosophie</td>
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<tr>
<td>NZsT</td>
<td>Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie</td>
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<tr>
<td>SiR</td>
<td>Studies in Religion</td>
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<tr>
<td>SJT</td>
<td>Scottish Journal of theology</td>
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<tr>
<td>WTJ</td>
<td>Westminster Theological Journal</td>
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<td>Old Testament</td>
<td>New Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gen. Genesis</td>
<td>Mt. Matthew</td>
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<td>Ex. Exodus</td>
<td>Mk. Mark</td>
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<td>Lev. Leviticus</td>
<td>Lk. Luke</td>
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<td>Num. Numbers</td>
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<td>Deut. Deuteronomy</td>
<td>Acts Acts</td>
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<td>Jos. Joshua</td>
<td>Rom. Romans</td>
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<td>Jdg. Judges</td>
<td>1 Cor. 1 Corinthians</td>
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<td>1 Sam. 1 Samuel</td>
<td>Gal. Galatians</td>
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<td>2 Sam. 2 Samuel</td>
<td>Eph. Ephesians</td>
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<td>1 Ki. 1 Kings</td>
<td>Phil. Philippians</td>
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<td>Col. Colossians</td>
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<td>1 Thess. 1 Thessalonians</td>
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<td>2 Chr. 2 Chronicles</td>
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<td>1 Tim. 1 Timothy</td>
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<td>Neh. Nehemiah</td>
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<td>Est. Esther</td>
<td>Tit. Titus</td>
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<td>Job Job</td>
<td>Phlm. Philemon</td>
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<td>Ps. Psalms</td>
<td>Heb. Hebrews</td>
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<td>Prov. Proverbs</td>
<td>Jas. James</td>
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<td>Eccl. Ecclesiastes</td>
<td>1 Pet. 1 Peter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cant. Song of Songs</td>
<td>2 Pet. 2 Peter</td>
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<td>Isa. Isaiah</td>
<td>1 Jn. 1 John</td>
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<td>Jer. Jeremiah</td>
<td>2 Jn. 2 John</td>
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<td>Lam. Lamentations</td>
<td>3 Jn. 3 John</td>
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<td>Ezek. Ezekiel</td>
<td>Jude Jude</td>
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<td>Dan. Daniel</td>
<td>Rev. Revelation</td>
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<td>Hos. Hosea</td>
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<td>Joel Joel</td>
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<td>Amos Amos</td>
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<td>Obad. Obadiah</td>
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<td>Jon. Jonah</td>
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<td>Mic. Micah</td>
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<td>Nah. Nahum</td>
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<td>Hab. Habakkuk</td>
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<td>Zeph. Zephaniah</td>
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<td>Zech. Zechariah</td>
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