

God For Us

*Reclaiming LaCugna's Contribution
for the Church*

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Abstract

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This thesis seeks to reclaim Catherine Mowry LaCugna's contribution to the ongoing development of Trinitarian thought for the life of the Church. Drawing her acclaimed work *God for Us* (1991) into dialogue with other thinkers, it offers both an analysis and defence of LaCugna's unique contribution. It reveals the potential of her project - namely, it demonstrates how LaCugna's doctrine of God might indeed ensure that the doctrine of the Trinity is relevant for every facet of the Christian life. It demonstrates how LaCugna's model of God's triune life may inform developing ecclesiologies, in many cases for the first time. The shape of the analysis is provided thematically, with six chapters focusing on some aspect of LaCugna's doctrine of God. Chapters 1 and 2 provide an examination of the so-called 'recession' and 'recovery' of the doctrine of the Trinity during the scholastic era for the former, and for the latter in the late twentieth century. Chapter 3 explains how doxological living draws us into God's-life-for-us, orientating us toward right relationship with God and one another. Chapter 4 brings to light the biblical justification for LaCugna's social doctrine of God. Chapter 5 draws on the exegetical discussion in Chapter 4, drawing out God's invitation to humanity to participate in God's triune life. Chapter 6 demonstrates how LaCugna's contribution might be of value for the Church in Wales, who in her centenary year, continues to respond to decline by developing and implementing new ministry practices in light of the so called *2020 Vision*. These and other insights shape the contribution of this thesis. It is offered as a celebration of LaCugna's significant and yet insufficiently appreciated bequest to the Church.

For my wife

The New Testament is not concerned with God in himself, but with God for us, as he acted on us through Jesus himself in the Spirit, on which the reality of our salvation depends.¹

¹ Hans Küng, *Being a Christian* (New York: Doubleday, 1976), p. 475.

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Ross J. Maidment
Trinity Sunday 2020

Abbreviations

AE	<i>Against Eunomius</i> (S. Gregory of Nyssa)
AH	<i>Against Heresies</i> (S. Irenaeus of Lyons)
AP	<i>Against Praxeas</i> (Tertullian of Carthage)
CCC	<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>
CD	<i>Church Dogmatics</i> (Karl Barth)
DAP	<i>Demonstration Against Preaching</i> (S. Irenaeus of Lyons)
DT	<i>De Trinitas</i> (S. Augustine of Hippo)
DSS	<i>De Spiritu Sancto</i> (S. Basil of Caesarea)
FG	<i>Fourth Gospel</i>
GL	<i>The Glory of the Lord</i> (Hans Urs von Balthasar)
NT	<i>New Testament</i>
OP	<i>Ordo Praedicatorum</i> ('Order of Preachers')
OT	<i>Old Testament</i>
SCG	<i>Summa Contra Gentiles</i> (S. Thomas Aquinas)
ST	<i>Summa Theologiae</i> (S. Thomas Aquinas)
TP	<i>Terita Pars</i> ('Third Part')
QH	<i>Quaestiones in Heptateuchum</i> (S. Augustine of Hippo)

Introduction

[The Church] is an icon of the Trinity, a visible image that represents in concrete form the ineffable and invisible mystery of triune life.²

Which model of the Trinity should the Church be an icon of? This is the problem that arises after such a statement. The Anglican Communion have been following the argument for at least fifty years that the doctrine of the Trinity is inherently relevant to a number of questions. Ecclesiology? Trinity.³ Mission? Trinity.⁴ Ecumenism? Trinity.⁵ Eucharist presidency? Trinity.⁶ Theologians and practitioners alike have risen to render obsolete Rahner's statement that if the doctrine of the Trinity were proved false, the bulk of Christian literature would remain largely unchanged.⁷ This emphasis on the Trinity arguably follows the broad theological consensus which began to emerge in the late twentieth century, namely that doctrine of the Trinity must offer radical practical implications for every aspect of the Christian life. This broadly defines the movement we have come to call *social trinitarianism*. Its advocates include Jürgen Moltmann⁸, Miroslav Volf⁹, Leonardo Boff¹⁰ and John Zizioulas¹¹. These thinkers often adhere to a simple, logical, proposition: God's triunity is profoundly social in nature, and therefore, offers us a profoundly social order for living. More recently, their project has attracted withering criticism from the likes of Karen Kilby¹² and Mark

² Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1993), p. 402.

³ ARICIC II, *The Church as Communion* (1990).

⁴ *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context* (London: Church House Publishing, 2004).

⁵ ARCIC, *God's Reign and Our Unity* (1984).

⁶ *Eucharistic Presidency: a theological statement by the House of Bishops of the Church of England* (1997).

⁷ Declan Marmion, 'Trinity and Salvation: A Dialogue with Catherine LaCugna', *Irish Theological Quarterly* 74 (2009), pp. 115-129, [p. 115]. Cf. Karl Rahner, *The Trinity The Trinity* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970).

⁸ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993).

⁹ Miroslav Volf, *God's Life in Trinity* (Minneapolis, Fortress, 2006).

¹⁰ Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society* (Marknoll: Orbis, 1988).

¹¹ John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd: London, 2004).

¹² Karen Kilby, 'Perichoresis and Projection: Problems with Social Doctrines of The Trinity', *New Blackfriars* Vol. 81, No, 956 (October, 2000), pp. 432-455.

Husbands,¹³ who suggest that their diverse and competing claims amount to nothing more than a projection of the social theorists vision onto God. Their concern is that there are seemingly as numerous social theologies of the Trinity as there are social trinitarians.

Despite this robust and often unrelenting criticism, social theories of the Trinity persist, and are still informing and shaping ecclesiological considerations within the Anglican Communion, particularly in the West. As numbers attending church continue to fall, the cost of traditional patterns of ministry has become increasingly unsustainable. There is an emerging consensus that the future of ministry is collaborative.¹⁴ This is the picture in the Church in Wales, who, in her centenary year¹⁵, aspires to respond positively to this challenge, by identifying new, creative and sustainable ways of ministering in a contemporary Wales. Once more, the doctrine of the Trinity is identified as an important theological theme: collaborative patterns of ministry are to reflect the collaborative life of God. This raises a second question. How should the Trinity inform the Church's ecclesiology?

This thesis seeks address these two questions. First, which model of the Trinity should the Church be an icon of? It has been argued elsewhere that Catherine Mowry LaCugna (1997) 'set the standard and, to a large extent, the parameters of Trinitarian debate before her untimely death.'¹⁶ LaCugna's thesis is succinctly expressed at the beginning of her pioneering book *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (1991): 'The life of God— precisely because God is triune—does not belong to God alone.'¹⁷ Her premise is that God's life is inherently relational and otherward, and God's relationality with us is who God truly is. The life of God is the proper source and basis for Christian theology: 'God's To-Be is To-Be-in-relationship, and God's being-in-relationship-to-us is what God is[...] this secures for Christian theology a basis for a theology of God that is inherently related to every facet of Christian life.'¹⁸ LaCugna's project is one of retrieval. She offers a critique

¹³ Mark Husbands, "The Trinity is *Not* Our Social Program: Volf, Gregory of Nyssa and Barth," in *Trinitarian Theology for the Church: Scripture, Community, Worship*, ed. Daniel J. Treier and David Lauber (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009), pp. 120-141.

¹⁴ See, in general, Stephen Pickard, 'A Collaboratively Shaped Ministry for the Coming Church', in *The Study of Ministry* ed. Martyn Percy (London: SPCK, 2019).

¹⁵ One hundred years ago, in 1920, after centuries of being part of the Church of England, the Church in Wales become an autonomous member of the Anglican Communion. The procedure was known as 'disestablishment' as it severed the link between Welsh churches and the state with the historic Welsh Church Act (1914).

¹⁶ Marmion, 'Trinity and Salvation: A Dialogue with Catherine LaCugna', pp. 115-116.

¹⁷ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 1.

¹⁸ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 250.

of the doctrine's historical development, arguing that it has been vague and esoteric, based in God's inward existence, that is, the self-relationship of Father, Son, and Spirit, or what has been termed the 'immanent Trinity.' LaCugna set out to restore 'the doctrine of the Trinity to its rightful place at the centre of Christian life and practice'¹⁹ by reuniting the mystery of God with the mystery of salvation. Thus statements about God's life *ad intra* must be rooted in the reality of the history of salvation, that is, God's life *ad extra*.

It is from this vista that LaCugna offers a model of the Trinity which is constituted by a 'shared rule of equal persons in communion, not domination by some persons over other persons.'²⁰ God's triune life exists without a hierarchy or subordination among persons, and thus offers the Church a Trinitarian vision of a community characterised by equality, mutuality, and reciprocity.²¹ LaCugna offers this model without speaking in absolutist terms about how it should inform ecclesial practice. A social doctrine of God does not offer a programme of governance to be rolled out in the Church, whatever the circumstances. This leaves room for creativity. For LaCugna, God's triune life is 'the proper source for *reflection* on [...] [the] communitarian life of the church.'²² This allows LaCugna's project to be of value for the whole Church.²³ LaCugna is clear. The Trinity does not offer a 'pragmatic principle' which 'furnishes an easy solution' to our problems.²⁴ Instead, the Trinity 'serves a critical theological function.'²⁵ For these reasons I have chosen LaCugna to be my primary dialogue partner. LaCugna does not overstate the potential of the Trinity, and so guards herself from the criticism so often levelled at social trinitarians²⁶:

¹⁹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 292.

²⁰ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 394.

²¹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, pp. 399-400.

²² LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 1.

²³ Others, such as Zizioulas and Peter Holmes suggest that God's triune life offers a basis for an episcopally governed church in the case of the former, and a congregationalist ecclesiology in the case of the latter. Not only does this more absolutist approach limit the reach of their projects, it more readily lends itself to the criticism of projection. See, Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*; Peter Holmes, *Trinity in Human Community: Exploring Congregational Life in the Image of the Social Trinity* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007).

²⁴ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 379.

²⁵ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 380.

²⁶ Jordan Hillebert has considered the pressures that the discipline of theology is facing, arguing that the insistence that 'abstract' doctrines should serve a 'strictly practical agenda' can leave us short changed: 'God is not to be *used*; God alone is to be *enjoyed*. Theology is the stubborn pursuit of the enjoyment.' See, 'An Apology for Theology', [Online], Available at: <https://livingchurch.org/covenant/2017/09/25/an-apology-for-theology/> [Accessed 14 May 2020].

The Christian who does not trust the fruitfulness of revealed truth, who consents to interest himself in it only to the degree to which he perceives the benefit in advance, who does not consent to let himself be grasped and modeled by it, such a Christian does not realise of which light and power he has deprived himself. Sometimes he even reaches the point of imagining he can no longer find any meaning in a hackneyed, 'out-of-date' concept, when in fact he is dealing with a mystery which has not yet been glimpsed.²⁷

This leads us to the second question for this thesis. How should the Trinity inform the Church's ecclesiology? The Trinity may inform the Church's ecclesiology insofar as it offers a lens through which we may critically measure and reflect on present institutional arrangements. LaCugna's doctrine of God is helpful for this project because it offers such a lens through which one may reflect on the forms and structures of ecclesial governance of any given ecclesial community, in this instance, the Church in Wales. LaCugna offers three criteria against which we can measure the administrative practices of the Church, arguing that each need be met if the Church is to be run like God's household: a domain of inclusion; a domain of interdependence, and a domain of cooperation.²⁸ Using these criteria, this thesis will offer a critique of the recommendations made in the Church in Wales Review (2012).

This thesis has six thematic chapters, each of which focuses upon some aspect of LaCugna's doctrine of God. There is a brief conclusion at the end of each chapter, pointing out the implications of the key findings for the claims of this thesis as a whole; at this stage, by way of preparation, it may be helpful to draw attention to the main themes under discussion in each case. To begin with, chapters one and two analyse the so called 'recession' and 'recovery' of the doctrine of the Trinity during the scholastic period in the case of the former, and in the late twentieth century in the case of the latter. Dividing the analysis here into two chapters makes it possible to do justice to the development of the social doctrine of the trinity, and thus better understand the rereception of trinitarian thought which will have influenced LaCugna's project. In chapter one, I consider LaCugna's claim that Aquinas, in prioritising the philosophical over the biblical, causes a separation between the *theologia* and *oikonomia*. I argue that LaCugna approaches Aquinas' treatise more carefully and sympathetically than her counterparts, and in her consideration, leads us away from a *God-for-God* towards the *God-for-Us*. In chapter two, I examine the extent to which Rahner might be credited with restoring the unity between the *theologia* and *oikonomia*, and thus, recovering the doctrine of the trinity itself. I argue that Rahner's doctrine of God is dependant on his doctrine of

²⁷ Henry de Lubac, *The Christian Faith: An Essay on the Structure of the Apostles' Creed* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), pp. 11-12.

²⁸ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 402.

soteriology, and thus, he leads towards a doctrine which has profound implications for the Christian life.

In chapter three, consideration is given to LaCugna's contribution to the wider field of social trinitarian theology, in her claim that doxology is the 'mode' and 'facilitator' of economic theology. I argue that LaCugna restores the relevance of the doctrine for the Christian life insofar as she restores unity between *oikonomia* and doxology. This chapter considers how the Christian, in living doxologically, is drawn into *God's-life-for-us*, and is so orientated towards right relationship *one-with-God* and *one-with-one-another*.

The fourth chapter argues for the priority of scripture as a normative voice for the Church and her theology. Indeed, if our theology is to be considered economic, it must find its basis in God's economic revelation of God in scripture. In this chapter, I seek to offer an account of the biblical basis for the claims of social trinitarian theology, that is, God's life is inherently social and otherward. I argue that scripture gives weight to the view that there is no subordination or hierarchy of persons within God's triune life. The fifth chapter builds on the exegetical discussion of the fourth chapter, and considers God's invitation to humanity to engage in God's triune life, as revealed in scripture. I argue that God is a God of dialogue - from God's invitation to Adam to participate in the creative process, to God's invitation to Mary to participate in the redemptive process - the God whose life is community is seeking ever more dialogue partners. This chapter concludes with a consideration of the high priestly prayer of Jesus, arguing that the ordering of the triune life of God provides the proper basis for the Church to reflect upon the ordering of her own common life.

Chapter six concludes this thesis with analysis of contemporary ecclesiological developments, and explores the extent to which such developments are indebted to a resurgent social doctrine of God. I will argue that LaCugna, in her ambition to offer a theology of the Trinity which is eminently practical, can be seen to have set the agenda of trinitarian debate within the life of the Church. Specifically, this chapter explores how LaCugna's project may be of value for the Church in Wales, who in her centenary year, seeks to develop and implement new patterns of ministry, in light of the so-called '2020 Vision'. In particular, I will focus on three areas: i. the ministry of bishops; ii. the ministry of the baptised; iii. the implementation of ministry areas. Each area of discussion will conclude by make a recommendation, which, it is hoped, may reenergise discussion within the Church in Wales about its structures and organisation, so that she may more fully be an icon of the trinity.

Thomas Aquinas

The Recession of Trinitarian Thought

It has, for modern theologians, become rather popular to claim that the doctrine of the Trinity experienced a decline in the scholastic period.²⁹ More often than not, the finger is pointed squarely at S. Thomas Aquinas O.P. (1225-1274), whose philosophically convoluted approach (one reads) is responsible for marginalising the doctrine, leading to it becoming (it is argued) irrelevant for the Christian life.³⁰ This is the view of Catherine LaCugna. This chapter will now consider LaCugna's assessment of Aquinas' theology, and her reading of the history of the doctrine of the Trinity. It will not offer, and indeed, it would not be possible to offer a full, and critical engagement with Aquinas' theology of the Trinity here. Indeed, LaCugna herself admits that such a task would be near impossible.³¹ Instead, this section seeks to map LaCugna's own argument (that the doctrine of the Trinity was marginalised by Aquinas' abstract theology) so as to offer the context from her own theology (and, indeed, the theology of other social Trinitarians) has developed. Following LaCugna, I will argue that the philosophical broadly supersedes the biblical in neo-scholastic thought. I will also argue that LaCugna, who contends that Aquinas causes a separation between *theologia* and the *oikonomia*, makes her case more sympathetically than other contemporary theologians. I will consider how LaCugna seeks to draw us from Aquinas' *God-for-God*, towards a *God-for-Us*. Finally, the chapter concludes by exploring how Aquinas could be seen to champion and strengthen LaCugna's vision in reminding us of the space of mystery in Christian thought.

The doctrine of the Trinity has often been perceived as an abstract theory, irrelevant and incomprehensible to the Christian, and their spiritual life. Marmion claims that, until recently, most

²⁹ Examples include: Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993); Paul S. Fiddes, *Participating in God: A Pastoral Doctrine of the Trinity* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2000); Colin E. Gunton, *Father, Son & Holy Spirit: Toward a Fully Trinitarian Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2003); Stanley J. Grenz, *Rediscovering the Triune God: The Trinity in Contemporary Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004); Miroslav Volf and Michal Walker, eds., *God's Life in Trinity* (Minneapolis, Fortress, 2006).

³⁰ Examples include: Rahner, *The Trinity*; R. Richard, *The Problem of Apologetical Perspective in the Trinitarian Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1963).

³¹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 144. Cf. Thankfully, others have done this work, and so we can turn to them for a full account of Aquinas' doctrine of the Trinity. For example, see, Giles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of St Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Christians could be described as ‘straightforward monotheists’ who prayed simply to ‘God’.³² LaCugna argues that the doctrine has a reputation for being philosophically convoluted, and suggests that this reputation forced the doctrine to adopt only a ‘peripheral role in Christian thought in the last fifteen centuries’.³³ In the late twentieth century, theologians began to ‘lament the neglect of trinitarian reflection in modern theology’.³⁴ Karl Rahner, the influential Catholic theologian himself lamented that it would be possible for the major part of religious literature to remain virtually unchanged, even if the doctrine of the Trinity were to be dropped as false.³⁵ But why, given that the doctrine of the Trinity is so essential to the Christian faith, was such lament necessary? For Barth, the doctrine can be described as essential as it is this doctrine which ‘distinguishes the Christian doctrine of God as Christian.’³⁶ In the recent revival of Trinitarian theology, a number of scholars have accused their forebears of tending towards the abstract by focusing on God’s intradivine life. Marmion suggests the excessive focus on God’s inner life is largely responsible for disconnecting the doctrine of the Trinity from the practice of the Christian faith.³⁷ The theologians who make this case very often place the blame with the scholastic thinkers. For example, Marmion argues that Rahner’s work can be understood as a reaction against the ‘rather unimaginative and rigid neo-scholasticism that presented the theology of the Trinity in a predominantly speculative and abstract fashion.’³⁸

In her own work, LaCugna questions the Trinitarian theologies of the Cappadocians, Augustine, Aquinas, and Gregory of Palmas. LaCugna claims that whilst each offers an important contribution, they each are somewhat responsible (unintentionally, perhaps) for the eventual ‘defeat’ of the doctrine of the Trinity. Their focus on God’s inner life—on the relationship within God between Father, Son and Holy Spirit—was predominantly speculative and abstract. LaCugna argues that this led to a doctrine of the Trinity which was ‘locked up in itself, related to itself, contemplating itself perfectly and eternally, but essentially unrelated to us.’³⁹ Following LaCugna,

³² Declan Marmion, ‘Trinity and Relationships’, *The Way* 43.2 (2004), pp. 104-118, [p. 104].

³³ Catherine LaCugna, ‘The Practical Trinity’, *The Christian Century* 109.22 (1992), pp. 678-682, [p. 678].

³⁴ Christopher Schwöbel *Trinitarian Theology Today* (ed. Christoph Schwöbel; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), p. 1.

³⁵ Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, pp. 10-11, cited by LaCugna, *God for Us*, pp. 6, 8.

³⁶ See, Karl Barth, *CD I/1*, p. 301.

³⁷ Marmion, ‘Trinity and Relationships’, p. 104.

³⁸ Marmion, ‘Trinity and Relationships’, p. 104.

³⁹ LaCugna, ‘The Practical Trinity’, p. 681.

the metaphysical approach to the Trinity reached its height in medieval scholastic thought when the philosophical superseded the biblical. LaCugna argues that the classical attributes of God—infinity, immutability, impassability, incorporeality—‘overtook the biblical presentation of God as someone who initiated a relationship with a people, was open to prayer, petition and lament, suffered on account of the suffering of people, became enfleshed in Christ, and as Spirit is working to bring about the reign of God.’⁴⁰ It would, of course, be possible to occupy an entire study considering LaCugna’s assessment of each of these personalities. This chapter, however, will focus on LaCugna’s criticism of Thomas Aquinas as he is considered by LaCugna and other contemporary theologians to be particularly responsible for the marginalisation of the doctrine: ‘it must be acknowledged that one of the fruits of Thomas’ theology was the marginalisation of the doctrine of the Trinity, something which Thomas himself assuredly would have protested vigorously as contrary to his intention and to his own religious experience.’⁴¹

1.1. Theologia over Oikonomia

Following the Fathers of the Church, LaCugna distinguishes between the *theologia* (the mystery of God’s inner life) and the *oikonomia* (economy, *lit.* housekeeping). The Catechism of the Catholic Church offers the following definition:

“‘Theology’ refers to the mystery of God’s inmost life within the Blessed Trinity and “economy” to all the works by which God reveals himself and communicates his life. Through the *oikonomia* the *theologia* is revealed to us; but conversely, the *theologia* illuminates the whole *oikonomia*. God’s works reveal who he is in himself; the mystery of his inmost being enlightens our understanding of all his works. So it is, analogously, among human persons. A person discloses himself in his actions, and the better we know a person, the better we understand his actions.”⁴²

In the *ST*, Aquinas offers an account of intradivine persons, processions and relations which is steeped in the metaphysical thought and method of Aristotle. For Aristotle, ‘God is one of the subjects of the science alternatively called metaphysics, first philosophy and then theology.’⁴³ Incorporating this method in his work, Aquinas places ‘God in himself’ at the centre of his study.

⁴⁰ LaCugna, ‘The Practical Trinity’, p. 681.

⁴¹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 167.

⁴² See, CCC 236.

⁴³ W. J. Hankey, *God in Himself: Aquinas’ Doctrine of God as expounded in the Summa Theologiae* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 24.

Following Hankey, a shift takes place within Aquinas' *ST*, whereby theology is primarily treated as an 'objective' or 'scientific' discipline.⁴⁴ LaCugna argues that Aquinas' treatise on the Trinity is *theologia* 'in the strictest sense possible because it is a study of "God in Himself."⁴⁵ Quoting Rahner, LaCugna argues that Aquinas' treatise on the Trinity as a 'paradigm example' of the separation between *theologia* and *oikonomia*:

[T]his separation [in the *Summa Theologiae* of the the treatise *On the One God* and *On the Triune God*] took place for the first time in St. Thomas, for reasons which have not yet been fully explained. Here the first topic under study is not God the Father as the unoriginate origin of divinity and reality, but as the essence common to all three persons. Such is the method which has prevailed ever since. Thus the treatise of the Trinity locks itself in even more splendid isolation, with the ensuing danger that the religious mind finds it devoid of interest. As a result the treatise becomes quite philosophical and abstract and refers hardly at all to salvation history.⁴⁶

This chapter will now consider the cogency of LaCugna's treatment of Aquinas. It will offer a summary and assessment of her argument, in light of Aquinas' treatise, and the treatment of other scholars who both support LaCugna, and defend Aquinas. The question which LaCugna would have us ask, is thus: '[is] there a breach between the *theologia* and *oikonomia* both in [the] structure and substance [of the *Summa*].'⁴⁷ LaCugna reviews six areas of Aquinas treatise which have been considered problematic by contemporary theologians: (1) the presupposed priority of *theologia* over *oikonomia*; (2) the priority of the one divine *esse* over the Trinity of persons; (3) the subdivision of the treatise, *On the One God* and *On the Triune God*; (4) an insufficient integration between Trinity and Incarnation; (5) the bypassing of the historical economy of redemption; (6) the defunctionalising of the divine persons in the account of creation. LaCugna addresses each of these issues in turn in order to address her primary question.

First, then, LaCugna argues that Aquinas presupposes the priority of the *theologia* over the *oikonomia*. The doctrine of the Trinity is not prepared from the standpoint of human experience (*oikonomia*) but rather, from 'God's standpoint' (*theologia*). With reference to Congar, LaCugna argues that his treatise is prepared according to the *ordo doctrinae* (the order of teaching), and as such, it is neither 'historical' or 'christological.'⁴⁸ Aquinas is accused of considering the Trinity in-

⁴⁴ Hankey, *God in Himself*, p. 24. Cf. LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 148.

⁴⁵ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 148.

⁴⁶ Rahner, *The Trinity*, pp. 16-17.

⁴⁷ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 146.

⁴⁸ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 148.

and-of-itself apart from its economic manifestation in salvation history. Indeed, the Trinity precedes the Incarnation in Aquinas treatise, and Aquinas himself suggests that a proper understanding of the Trinity is essential to a proper understanding of creation and salvation.⁴⁹ For Aquinas, in understanding the Trinity, we understand why the Son became flesh. Aquinas justifies beginning with the Trinity in-and-of-itself as he writes:

To know the divine persons was necessary for us for two reasons. One in order to have a right view of the creation of things. For by maintaining that God made everything through his Word we avoid the error of those who held that God's nature compelled him to create things [...] The other and more important reason is so that we may have the right view of the salvation of [humankind], accomplished by the Son who become flesh, and by the gifts of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁰

LaCugna does not accuse Aquinas of completely separating the *oikonomia* from the *theologia*, or of disregarding the *oikonomia* all together. Indeed, LaCugna is convinced that 'the structure of the *ST* makes it plain that Trinity and Incarnation, *theologia and oikonomia* belong together as the two central mysteries of the faith.'⁵¹ In the *TP* of the *ST*, Aquinas considers the life of Christ and the meaning of the Incarnation. LaCugna points to this section of his work as an explicit example of the *oikonomia*. In the *TP*, Aquinas' Christology depends on the theology of the Trinity.⁵² The problem, then, as LaCugna perceives it, is that the same is not true conversely. That is, Aquinas' treatment of the Trinity does not depend on his Christology. LaCugna argues that theology is the contemplation of the divine *oikonomia*, and as such, our understanding of the Trinity should be prepared through God's activity in the world. As such, LaCugna would have us reverse Aquinas' approach: '*Oikonomia* would precede *theologia*. Incarnation would precede Trinity. God 'for us' would precede God 'in Godself.'⁵³ It is Aquinas' approach from God 'in Godself' to God 'for us' which constitutes for LaCugna a 'weak point of Thomas' ground place.'⁵⁴

⁴⁹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 149.

⁵⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, Ia, 32, 1 ad 3.

⁵¹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 149.

⁵² LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 149.

⁵³ LaCugna, *God for Us*, pp. 148, 169.

⁵⁴ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 150.

1.2. One Divine *esse* over Trinity of Persons

Secondly, LaCugna considers the claim that Aquinas prioritises the one divine essence over the Trinity of persons. It is argued that such a priority can lead one to conclude that belief in God as Trinity is secondary to a belief in God as one divine essence. To the creature, God's oneness precedes God's threeness. Reason precedes that which the creature can only know through revelation. LaCugna writes, 'We know *the one God* on the basis of creation but *we do not know the Trinity* on this basis. On the basis of reason we know that one God is the source of all beings.'⁵⁵ Aquinas' theology is prepared from 'God's standpoint' rather than on the basis of 'the creature's knowledge of God.' Aquinas explicates his understanding of the divine essence in questions 2-11 of *De Deo Uno*. According to Aquinas, one cannot distinguish between God's 'act-of-being' and God's being-itself as they are identical. He explains in qq. 2-3 that God *is* existence. There is no composition in God, for God simply *is* the divine nature. Further, God does not *possess* an essence, but God *is* an essence. LaCugna explains, '*Esse* is the to-be of a nature, and the to-be of God is to-be-in-act. Strictly speaking only God *is*; everything else exists by participation in God's act of being.'⁵⁶ Aquinas then moves to a consideration of the divine attributes in qq. 4-11, for example, God is perfection, goodness, immutable, and so on.

Only following his thorough consideration of the divine essence is Aquinas ready to 'discuss that which pertains to the trinity of persons in God (*in divinis*).'⁵⁷ Having established that God is 'absolutely simple' in *De Deo Uno*, Aquinas attempts to explain how God exists in threefold personhood in *De Deo Trino*. He does so by introducing the idea of processions within God.⁵⁸ Following LaCugna, a procession can be understood as something that proceeds from another, for example, 'a word is a procession from the intellect.'⁵⁹ However, in the case of divine processions, Aquinas explains that which proceeds remains interior. Within God, there are two internal, and eternal processions. These processions account for the origin of the divine persons from another, that is, the Father. The Father begets the Son, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son in love. Aquinas continues by elaborating on the nature of the processions, and his thinking can

⁵⁵ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 152.

⁵⁶ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 150; Cf. Aquinas, *ST*, Ia, 4,2, ad 3.

⁵⁷ Aquinas, *ST*, Ia, 27, prol.

⁵⁸ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 151.

⁵⁹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 151.

be summarised with the formula 5-4-3-2-1; God is five notions, four relations, three persons, two processions, and one nature/essence.⁶⁰ All of this is understood and explained at the level of *theologia*, from within God's own intradivine life. Indeed, Aquinas argues that the creature can only know the name of each of the divine persons because of the processions, and relations within God — rather than God's economy in salvation history: 'The term 'fatherhood' applies to God first as connoting the relation of the one person to another, before it applies at connoting the relation of God to creatures.'⁶¹ LaCugna writes, 'Thomas is thinking about the Trinity from an intradivine standpoint, the naming of God, since it must correspond to God's way of knowing God, is likewise *intratrinitarian*, or "*in divinis*.'"⁶²

1.3. The Subdivision of the Treatise

Thirdly, LaCugna considers the accusation against Aquinas of causing a subdivision within the treatise on God, into two further treatise, *On the One God* and *On the Triune God*. This, it is argued, can create the 'impression that the trinitarian formulations are secondary to the Christian faith.'⁶³ On this point, LaCugna comes to Aquinas' defence. She begins by examining the overall structure of the *ST* before sharpening her focus on this supposed structural separation. LaCugna argues that the '*exitus-reditus* characteristic of neo-Platonism: everything comes from God and everything returns to God' informs the overall plan of the *Summa*.⁶⁴ This pattern is widely recognised amongst Thomists, and other scholars who have carefully engaged with his work. For example, Stephen Pope writes: 'The overarching structure represents Aquinas's creative adoption of the Neoplatonic emanation and return (*exitus-reditus*) motif within his Christian depiction of the emergence of all creatures from God the Creator and the return of creatures to God the Redeemer.'⁶⁵ LaCugna demonstrates that this pattern can be discerned in Aquinas' work following only but a brief outline

⁶⁰ The five notions are: innasibility or ingenerateness; paternity; filiation; spiration; procession. The four relations are: Father > Son (Paternity); Father < Son (Filiation); Father and Son > Holy Spirit (Active Spiration); Father and Son < Holy Spirit (Passive Spiration).

⁶¹ Aquinas, *ST*, Ia, 33,3.

⁶² LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 155.

⁶³ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 145.

⁶⁴ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 146.

⁶⁵ See Stephen J. Pope, *The Ethics of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2002), p. 30. Cf. M. D. Chenu, O.P., *Towards Understanding St. Thomas* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co, 1963), cp. 11.

of each of the three parts of the *ST*: (1) the *Prima Pars* considers the nature of God and God’s work in creation; (2) the *Secunda Pars* explores the human being as one created in God’s image, and their movement back towards God; (3) the *Tertia Pars* treats Christ as the one who unifies the divine and human as the way back to God.⁶⁶

Following Weisheipl, LaCugna proceeds to argue that Aquinas’ approach is largely shaped by the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, the received text of the theological of the period.⁶⁷ However, LaCugna suggests that Aquinas departs from the structure set by Lombard as he organises his work around the ‘Dionysian cycle of emanation and return.’ Indeed, LaCugna argues that, ‘Thomas went beyond Peter by dividing *De Deo* into two parts: *De Deo Uno* and *De Deo Trino*. This division had roots in the Dionysian division of treatises on the divine names: one on names belonging to the unity of persons, another on the plurality of persons.’⁶⁸ LaCugna’s structural comparison is as follows:⁶⁹

<i>ST: On the One God</i>	<i>ST: On the Triune God</i>
qq. 2-11 the divine to-be	qq. 27-28 the divine to-be-related
qq. 12-13 knowing and naming God	qq. 29-32 naming and knowing God
qq. 14-26 the divine operation	qq. 33-43 the divine persons

LaCugna defends Aquinas, arguing that the separation which takes place neither signifies a split between faith and reason, nor between belief in God as One and God as Trinity:

In sum, Aquinas’ treatment of divine unity and plurality takes place according to the structure of three sets of questions: on the nature of being, on the nature of language about being, and on further implications for the manner of that being. These parallel sets of questions provide a point of entry into Aquinas’ theology of God. there are not two theologies separable into two domains (reason and faith). Faith and revelation do not suddenly enter with q. 27, nor do they provide mysterious information superadded to natural knowledge of God.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 146.

⁶⁷ LaCugna, *God for Us*, pp. 146-147; Cf. J. Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas d’Aquinio: His Life, Thought and Works* (New York: Doubleday & Co, 1974), pp. 258-265.

⁶⁸ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 147; Cf. Hankey, *God in Himself*, p. 12.

⁶⁹ LaCugna, ‘The Relational God: Aquinas and Beyond’, *Theological Studies* 46 (1985), pp. 647-663, [p. 651].

⁷⁰ LaCugna, ‘The Relational God’, p. 653.

The whole of Thomas' enterprise was to set forth the essentials of the Christian faith from the perspective of faith. Viewed from the perspective of the whole work, *De Deo Uno* and *De Deo Trino* are 'one book', not two.⁷¹

LaCugna suggests that those who argue that such a separation has had a negative impact on the reception of Trinitarian theology overstate their case. LaCugna demonstrates here that she is far more careful and subtle in her approach and engagement with the scholastics than many other contemporary theologians. LaCugna does not appear, like others, to seek to find fault at every turn in the work of the scholastics in order to support her position. Karen Kilby argues that Rahner, who represents the 'most influential' articulation of the view that Aquinas' *ST* is where trinitarian theology went wrong, embodies the typical 'sweeping rejection of a Western approach to the Trinity.'⁷² In doing so, she renders herself less vulnerable to the criticism offered by Kilby against contemporary social trinitarians. Kilby contends that the portrayal of Aquinas offered by contemporary theologians often bears little resemblance to the portrayal of Aquinas offered by classical theologians, such as Emery, Williams, and Torrell: 'True, he discussed God as one before he comes to the three persons, and true, he is influenced by Augustine's analogy, but beyond this, there is little in what one might call the standard portrait and the standard critique of Aquinas, as set out by the likes of Rahner and Moltmann, that turns out to have any purchase on the actual Thomas.'⁷³ As previously discussed, LaCugna's difficulty with Aquinas is his starting point with the divine essence, and the exploration of the divine essence apart from its manifestation in triune personhood. In other words, the perceived separation between *theologia* and *oikonomia*.⁷⁴

1.4. Trinity and Incarnation

The fourth issue which LaCugna identifies, arises as a consequence of the division of *De Deo* into two parts, as we have just discussed. LaCugna observes that for some, such as Rahner, Congar, and Chenu, amongst others, this division can be seen to lead to an 'insufficiently integrated

⁷¹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 147.

⁷² See, Karen Kilby, 'Aquinas, the Trinity and the Limits of Understanding', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* Vol. 7 Num. 4 (October, 2005), pp. 414-427, [p. 415].

⁷³ See, Kilby, 'Aquinas, the Trinity and the Limits of Understanding', pp. 416-417.

⁷⁴ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 147.

relationship between Trinity and Incarnation.⁷⁵ On this point, LaCugna's discussion is closely related to the first issue discussed. That is, she examines the strength of the relationship between Trinity and Incarnation in Aquinas' *ST* as she considers the extent to which a separation between *theologia* and *oikonomia* takes place. As noted previously, Aquinas teaches us that knowledge of the of God as three-fold is essential to a proper understanding of the Incarnation. The apparent lack of integration can perhaps be explained, once again, by Aquinas' theological method. Following Martelet, LaCugna explains that 'the order of salvation history and revelation is not the order of theological *Wissenschaft* (knowledge) "which must concern itself with the knowledge of things as such, thus with how God sees them, that is, how they are in themselves."'76 In adhering to this theological method, that is, in beginning with the order of *Wissenschaft*, the Trinity naturally precedes Incarnation in Aquinas' *ST*. LaCugna summarises, as she writes: 'This is the strictly theological point of view: beginning with the Trinity, while remaining 'systematically silent' about the *oikonomia* in Christ.⁷⁷ For Aquinas, LaCugna argues, the order of *Wissenschaft* is revealed as follows: divine essence, processions of persons, creation, Incarnation.⁷⁸

Whilst LaCugna does not doubt that Aquinas' focus is on the 'essence or substance of God', she does not support her contemporaries, such as Rahner, who claim that his theology is 'static', that is, it remains 'within God'. These criticisms, she would assert, might be better directed towards Aquinas' 'neo-scholastic and baroque interpreters than to his own work.'⁷⁹ Nevertheless, LaCugna does still argue that the Trinity eclipses the Incarnation in Aquinas' *ST*, albeit more carefully and subtly than her contemporaries. Again, for LaCugna, the key issue is the way that the lack of a sufficiently integrated relationship between Trinity and Incarnation causes a separation between the *theologia* and *oikonomia*: 'what remains open to question is the placement of the whole of De Deo at the beginning of dogmatic theology. This move emphasises the priority of *theologia* over *oikonomia*.'⁸⁰

⁷⁵ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 145.

⁷⁶ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 149.

⁷⁷ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 149.

⁷⁸ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 149.

⁷⁹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 150.

⁸⁰ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 149.

1.5. The Historical Economy of Redemption

Fifthly, LaCugna turns to the supposed bypassing of the historical economy of redemption. Aquinas' method of explicating the divine life, through processions, relations and persons is developed through an understanding of the relationship between creator and created. The problem in Aquinas' method is that it does not link *theologia* with *oikonomia*. Aquinas' understanding of the divine life is not sufficiently grounded in the historical economy of redemption 'except insofar as the human person is the addressee in the economy of redemption.'⁸¹ Aquinas' method remains *ad intra* (towards the inside) to *ad extra* (towards the outside). Following Rahner, it is clear that LaCugna would have us reverse this order. Indeed, Rahner's well known and widely discussed axiom, 'the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity and the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity', suggests that what has been revealed to us of the divine *ad extra* in the economy of redemption will be true also of the divine *ad intra*.⁸²

LaCugna exemplifies a theism of relation, arguing that God is known to be "for us" in Christ through the Spirit in the economy of salvation: 'she dismisses the notion that God in himself (*ad intra*) is "more real" than the God who stoops, shows, and saves in the economy (*ad extra*).'⁸³ It is for this reason, therefore, that LaCugna finds problem with Aquinas' treatise; he does not, as far as LaCugna is concerned, develop a doctrine of God that is sufficiently inseparable from soteriology.

Turning directly to Aquinas' treatise, it will be possible to demonstrate how LaCugna might have arrived at her position, and, in my view, to support her case. Aquinas treats the issues of processions, relations and persons individually in qq. 27-29 of the *ST*. In discussing the processions that take place within God, Aquinas makes it plain that he is predominately working from a perspective that is *ad intra*. In q. 27, he justifies his method by referring to an axiom which, in contrast to Rahner's rule, remains static, depending completely on that which is true within God: 'whatever is in God is God.'⁸⁴ Indeed, Emery argues that Aquinas considers the processions 'not as an action *ad extra*, but as an *immanent* [*ad intra*] action.'⁸⁵

⁸¹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 157.

⁸² Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 5.

⁸³ See, in general, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Demythologising Theology: Divine Action, Passion, and Authorship* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 118-121.

⁸⁴ Aquinas, *ST Ia*, 27, 7 ad 2.

⁸⁵ Giles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of St Thomas Aquinas*, p. 57.

In the case of an action which remains within the agent himself, one observes a procession which comes about *ad intra*. One observes above all (*maxime patet*) in the intellect, whose action, that is, intellection, remains in the knowing subject. For whenever we understand, by the very fact of understanding there proceeds something within us, which is a conception of the object understood, a conception issuing from the intellectual power and proceeding from our knowledge of the object.⁸⁶

According to Emery, Aquinas' key concern here, in explaining the processions that take place within God, is to secure a 'roundly Trinitarian monotheism' which enables one to 'grasp the divine person.'⁸⁷ In other words, an exposition on procession prepares the way for an orthodox understanding on relations, and persons. Aquinas teaches that the processions within God remain within God, that is, the two processions, of word and spirit, are to be understood as *intra-trinitarian* processions. Aquinas argues that the processions of word and spirit in the world are of a different order to those that take place *in divinis*.⁸⁸

But in God, the 'circle' is completed within himself: for when God understands himself, he conceives his Word which is the 'rationale' of everything known to him, since he understands all things by understanding himself; and through this Word, he 'proceeds' to the love of all things and of himself... And the circle, being completed, nothing more can be added to it: so that a third procession within the divine nature is impossible, although there follows a procession towards external nature.⁸⁹

LaCugna argues that Aquinas' *intra-trinitarian* account of processions, relations and persons has been reduced in catholic education to mnemonic device which aids the memory of that which is essential to the Trinity: God is five notions, four relations, three persons, two processions, and one nature.⁹⁰ She argues that Aquinas bypasses the historical economy of redemption by offering an exposition of Trinity which not only remains *in divinis*, but is also unchanged by its encounter with the created world in the economy of redemption.

⁸⁶ Aquinas, *ST I*, q. 27, a. 1.

⁸⁷ See, in general, Emery, *Trinitarian Theology*, pp. 51-53.

⁸⁸ Emery, *Trinitarian Theology*, p. 74.

⁸⁹ Aquinas, *De potentia*, q. 9, a. 9.

⁹⁰ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 168.

1.6. Defunctionalising of Divine Persons

This draws us to our final area of consideration, namely, the defunctionalising of the divine persons in Aquinas' account of creation. LaCugna believes that the 'deleterious effects of treating the Trinity 'in itself' and of denying any real relationship between God (Trinity) and creation become even clearer when we examine the relationship between the Trinity and creation.'⁹¹ Again, LaCugna argues that Aquinas' discussion takes place from God's standpoint, pointing to what she claims to be his most important remark in q. 32 as an example of this: 'To know the Trinity is necessary if we are to have a correct view of creation as utterly free.'⁹² Working from this standpoint, Aquinas attributes the act of creation to the divine persons acting in one common essence. Whilst the act of creation is often attributed to the Father, Aquinas argues, it is properly common to the whole Trinity; it is the Trinity that creates.⁹³ It follows, therefore, according to LaCugna, that the name 'Creator' can be said of the whole Trinity, and attributed to any of the divine persons, or of the divine essence.⁹⁴ It is in this way, LaCugna argues, that Aquinas' account of the Trinity's action in creation depersonalises the divine persons:

Thomas' position here is inconsistent with the biblical and creedal statements that God the Father creates *through* the Son. Thomas' position also depersonalises the creative act of God by linking in generically with the divine nature rather than identifying it as the *proprium* of a particular person. The same logic allows Thomas to say that when we pray the Lord's prayer and say God "Our Father," we address the whole Trinity! Neither can this view be supported by the economy.⁹⁵

Since the creative power of God which is shared by the whole Trinity displays the unity of divine nature and not the distinction of persons, creation is cut off from the divine missions, from the economy of salvation in which God is revealed through Christ and the Spirit. In other words, the 'immanent' Trinity, *theologia*, is severed—for the sake of upholding the absolute freedom of God—from the 'economic' Trinity, *oikonomia*.⁹⁶

⁹¹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 158.

⁹² LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 159.

⁹³ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 165; Cf. Aquinas, *ST Ia*, 45, 6.

⁹⁴ See, in general, Aquinas, *De div. Nom.* 2, lect. I.

⁹⁵ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 166; Cf. Aquinas, *ST III*, 23, 2.

⁹⁶ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 167.

LaCugna's second criticism is the depersonalising of the divine persons in their encounter with the created world. LaCugna asserts that Aquinas' *intratrinitarian* theology of creation concerns itself with God's freedom, and with God's own intradivine life. His account, she claims, rests on the presumption that God is divinely immutable. LaCugna argues that Aquinas offers a view of God who is completely self-sufficient: 'God did not require the world to be God, and God remains unchanged by the relation of creation.'⁹⁷ For Aquinas, God creates out of will, and out of goodness; but his act of creating was neither necessary or required. Ultimately, God's divine will, and not God's divine goodness, causes God to create — God creates out of divine goodness, but his goodness does not cause God's will to create.⁹⁸ Conversely, LaCugna argues that a trinitarian doctrine of creation understands the relations within God *ad intra* in light of their acts in the economy of salvation *ad extra*: 'Taking refuge in an intratrinitarian self-communication that is altogether unrelated to creation, as a way of upholding divine freedom, rests on questionable presuppositions about divine immutability in relation to divine freedom...God truly comes to be God in creation which is united with God and also diverse from God.'⁹⁹ LaCugna offers an alternative vision, in which freedom is conceived as a freedom of relationship, and of love, rather than a freedom of autonomy and self-sufficiency. Her vision, is a splendid vision of a God who is by nature a *God for us*:

In this history of redemption God's freedom mysteriously is the freedom of love that it includes humanity and all creation as beloved partner. The claim that all this is incidental to God, or that it need not have been so, is no mistake because it offends human conceit but because it domesticates the mystery of God by restricting divine freedom to an *a priori* idea of what it means to be free. The freedom of the God of Jesus Christ is the freedom of the triune God. The mysteries of God's covenant with Israel, of the cross and resurrection of Jesus, of new life in the Spirit, form the only solid basis for pondering the nature of God. That is, theology is the contemplation of the divine *oikonomia*.¹⁰⁰

1.7. The Importance of Mystery

Having traced LaCugna's argument against Aquinas, this chapter now moves to consider how Aquinas could, in one respect, could be considered a champion of her claim. That is, I believe that

⁹⁷ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 161; Cf.

⁹⁸ See, in general, Aquinas *ST Ia*, 9, 3.

⁹⁹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 168.

¹⁰⁰ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 169.

Aquinas would stand by LaCugna in her claim that the ‘doctrine of the Trinity, properly understood, is the affirmation of God’s intimate communion with us.’¹⁰¹ Even if, as this chapter has shown, this is not always explicit in Aquinas’ work. However, LaCugna’s project could be strengthened further by taking note of what Aquinas has to say concerning the Trinity and natural reason. Whilst Aquinas does, as LaCugna asserts, begin by exploring the doctrine of the Trinity through an understanding of God’s *esse*, he is completely explicit in stating that we can only obtain knowledge of God through revelation. Aquinas argues that one cannot know God as Trinity through natural reason, and therefore, he argues that the *oikonomia* reveals the *theologia*. In this respect, one could see Aquinas as a champion of LaCugna’s claim:

It is impossible to attain to the knowledge of the Trinity by natural reason. For [...] man cannot obtain knowledge of God by natural reason except from creatures. Now creatures lead us to the knowledge of God, as effects do to their cause [...].¹⁰²

In this regard, LaCugna is in danger of subscribing to a disobedient cataphatism.¹⁰³ It could be argued that if on the one hand, Aquinas’ doctrine of God separates *theologia* and *oikonomia* to the extent that ‘the religious mind finds it devoid of interest’¹⁰⁴, that on the other, LaCugna leaves little room for mystery. I would like to argue that a fine balance must be struck between what we can claim to know because of revelation, and what remains unknown, unrevealed. Williams argues that Aquinas strikes this sort of balance: ‘This characterisation of otherness as both knowable and unmasterable, like and unlike, is what Thomas wants us to think about as we think of the life of God.’¹⁰⁵ This chapter has argued that Aquinas does seem to overstate the abstract, and therefore, cannot be credited with striking this balance perfectly. Aquinas does, however, recognise the need for mystery when contemplating God’s intra-divine life, and this is something LaCugna could credit him for. Whilst I affirm with LaCugna that we should begin with our own experience of God when trying to express who God is as Trinity, I also want to suggest that what remains as *mystery* is also important for the practice of Christian life, and spirituality. Recognising that which is mystery in

¹⁰¹ LaCugna, *God For Us*, p. ix.

¹⁰² Thomas Aquinas, *ST* 1, q. 32. a. 1.

¹⁰³ See, Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 22; Cf. LaCugna, *God For Us*, pp. 211-213. I offer a definition of ‘obedient/disobedient cataphatism on pp. 57-58.

¹⁰⁴ Rahner, *The Trinity*, pp. 16-17.

¹⁰⁵ Rowan Williams, ‘What does love know? St Thomas on the Trinity’, *New Blackfriars* Vol. 82 No. 964 (2007), pp. 260-272, [p. 266].

God is important as it allows the believer to get caught up into that which is immeasurably other.

Williams suggests that when we pray, we should:

[...] ask God to bring [us] into that mystery of love, to bring [us] into that pouring out and pouring back of love between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁶ As we are called up into the mystery of the Trinity, we can say, 'There is no comparison. Your goodness, your love, your abundance, your generosity are so immense that I cannot hold a light to them - I know how awful it must look.'¹⁰⁷

1.8. Conclusion

Following LaCugna, I have argued that we must not separate the *theologia* from the *oikonomia* if we are to truly understand the doctrine of the Trinity. However, it is also vital to ensure that the correct balance is struck. Aquinas is guilty of beginning with the *theologia*, and perhaps giving more weight to it than the *oikonomia*, rather than separating the two completely, as others have claimed. Conversely, whilst we might want to affirm with both LaCugna, and Aquinas, that we can only properly understand the doctrine of the Trinity through God's intimate communion with us, that is, through *oikonomia*, we should be aware of the danger of overstating what can be known about God's intradivine life because of the *oikonomia*. In other words, what has been revealed may not be all that there is to know about God's intradivine life: 'For we know in only in part, and we prophesy only in part' (1 Corinthians 13.9). It is worth noting that LaCugna does recognise this danger for herself. Indeed, she claims that we must hold to an obedient apophaticism: 'It is not just God who is both known and unknown, but everything that exists is known through unknowing [...] One hurls oneself into the heart of mystery enshrouded in darkness, and *there* is found the resplendent light, the brilliance of God's glory.'¹⁰⁸ In the next chapter, I turn to consider LaCugna's assessment of Karl Rahner's contribution, exploring the extent to which he may be seen to have aided the recovery of the doctrine of the Trinity.

¹⁰⁶ Rowan Williams, 'Sermon at St Alphege, Seasalter', accessed November 3, 2015, <http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2586/archbishop-rowans-sermon-at-st-alphege-seasalter>.

¹⁰⁷ Williams, 'Sermon at St Alphege, Seasalter.'

¹⁰⁸ See, LaCugna, 'address given upon receipt of the Charles E. Sheedy Award for Excellence in Teaching at the University of Notre Dame, October 18, 1996', cited by Elizabeth T. Groppe, 'Catherine Mowry LaCugna's contribution to Trinitarian Theology', *Theological Studies* 63 (2002), pp. 730-763 [pp. 759-760].

Karl Rahner

The Recovery of Trinitarian Thought

If it was once necessary, as Schwöbel has claimed it to be, to lament the decline of the doctrine of the Trinity, '[such], lamentation and apology would [now] seem out of place in today's theological situation.'¹⁰⁹ At least, this is now the commonly espoused position of many contemporary theologians, who would claim that there has unquestionably been a revival of Trinitarian theology.¹¹⁰ Indeed, even among the sternest critics of the modern project is the revival of interest acknowledged, as Fred Sanders demonstrates: 'Modern Trinitarian theology has been all abuzz for decades about how everything is radically different now and we have revived and renewed and reimagined and reoriented the whole mass of Trinitarianism.'¹¹¹ As we have just considered, LaCugna, among others, believed that the doctrine of the Trinity was marginalised by the abstract scientific theology of the scholastics, most notably, Thomas Aquinas:

In Scholastic theology, the doctrine of the Trinity was identified with the science of God's inner relatedness. The result of this was a one-sided theology of God that had little to do with the economy of Christ and the Spirit, with the themes of Incarnation and grace, and therefore little to do with the Christian life... Hence the defeat of the doctrine of the Trinity.¹¹²

Following LaCugna, I have so far argued that the doctrine of the Trinity was marginalised as a result of the separation which takes place between *oikonomia* and *theologia* in Aquinas' theology. This chapter now moves to consider the 're-awakening' of the doctrine. LaCugna argues that the doctrine of the Trinity could only be restored to its rightful place at the centre of the Christian life by 'maintaining the essential identity between *oikonomia* and *theologia* in a way that makes soteriology decisive for theology of God and does not banish the Trinity of persons to an intradivine sphere, unrelated to the creature.'¹¹³ LaCugna's advocates and critics alike support her claim that,

¹⁰⁹ Schwöbel, *Trinitarian Theology Today*, p. 1.

¹¹⁰ See, in general, Stephen R. Holmes, *The Holy Trinity: Understanding God's Life* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2012), ch. 1.

¹¹¹ Fred Sanders, 'Redefining Progress in Trinitarian Theology: Stephen R. Holmes on the Trinity', *The Holy Trinity Revisited: Essays in Response to Stephen R. Holmes* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005), p. ?

¹¹² LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 210.

¹¹³ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 210.

within the field of Catholic theology, ‘no one has done more than Karl Rahner to reawaken interest in trinitarian theology.’¹¹⁴

Today, however, the theological scene is quite different. There has been a renewal of theological interest in the Trinity. This can be traced back to two giants of twentieth century theology: Karl Rahner and Karl Barth.¹¹⁵

Where Rahner once lamented the lack of trinitarian thought in Christian piety, now it seems that almost every area of ethics and piety is determined directly by a commitment to the social Trinity.¹¹⁶

LaCugna credits Rahner, and views his work to have been particularly influential for the present flourishing of Trinitarian theology, because of the way he maintains a unity between the *oikonomia* and *theologia*. ‘His theology as a whole’, LaCugna writes, ‘is a profound meditation on the essential unity of ‘theology’ and economy, premised on the idea that God is by nature self-communicating.’¹¹⁷ This section of the thesis will now focus on LaCugna’s reading of Rahner, and her claim that his work restores the doctrine of the Trinity by restoring the unity of *oikonomia* and *theologia*:

The great merit of Rahner’s theology is the principle that no adequate distinction can be made between the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of the economy of salvation. This affirms the essential unity of the *oikonomia* and *theologia*. As for the nature of the unity, there cannot be a strict identity, either epistemological and ontological, between God and God for us.¹¹⁸

LaCugna’s argument is rooted in a particular reading of Rahner’s famous rule, or axiom: ‘*The “economic” Trinity is the “immanent” Trinity and the “immanent” Trinity is the “economic” Trinity.*’¹¹⁹ This fifteen word formula has already been widely discussed, provoking both critics and advocates to spend copious ink on identifying its exact meaning. Unsurprisingly, they have offered readings which compete with one another. Theologians on the one hand have commended Rahner’s Rule as one of the most radical proclamations in contemporary theology, whilst on the other hand,

¹¹⁴ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 210.

¹¹⁵ Marmion, ‘Trinity and Relationships’, p. 104.

¹¹⁶ Stephen R. Holmes, ‘Three Versus One? Some Problems of Social Trinitarianism’, *Journal of Reformed Theology* 3 (2009), pp. 77-89, [p. 81].

¹¹⁷ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 210.

¹¹⁸ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 221.

¹¹⁹ Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 22. (Rahner’s own emphasis)

theologians have argued that the formula is either untrue, dangerous, or both. For example, Wesley Hill argues that Rahner's Rule 'encapsulates' the renewal of trinitarian theology.¹²⁰ Bruce Marshall has argued that Rahner's Rule is false, and self-contradictory. He has also warned against theologians becoming preoccupied with the formula, at the expense of considering the unity of God. LaCugna suggests that it might be possible for someone to argue that the scholastics, in assuming the economic, still offer a sufficient theology of the Trinity, which adheres to Rahner's Rule.¹²¹ Indeed, Rahner's Rule has been used to justify an approach exactly opposite to that of LaCugna, as we shall come to consider.¹²² This chapter will argue that Rahner can be said to restore the *theologia* and the *oikonomia* in offering a theology of God for which soteriology is decisive. It will consider the importance of Rahner's "*umgekehrt*", arguing that it assumes the immanent life of God, insisting on a mode of theology from the ground up. In this regard, Rahner strengthens LaCugna's claim, that the immanent life of God can only be understood in light of God's economic life. It will also argue that Rahner's qualified insistence on the term 'persons' is important for the overall aims of this project. It will conclude by arguing that such a theology leads us towards a doctrine of God which is eminently practical.

2.1. The Economic Trinity and the Immanent Trinity

Before engaging more deeply in this discussion, it will be necessary to first explain how this chapter understands Rahner's Rule. In order to do this, it would be helpful to briefly consider how Rahner himself defines the terms "economic Trinity" and "immanent Trinity." Rahner uses the terms "economic Trinity" and "immanent Trinity" as a way of speaking of God's life and activity within God's-self, and within the world. The phrase "economic Trinity" refers specifically to the revelation of the divine persons through God's activity in the world. Following LaCugna, the phrase "economic Trinity" might be understood to mean that which the scholastics meant in speaking of the two missions: 'economic Trinity denotes the missions, the being sent by God, of Son and Spirit

¹²⁰ See, Wesley Hill, *Paul and the Trinity: Persons, Relations, and the Pauline Letters* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2015), p. 37. Cf. LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 210.

¹²¹ See, in general, Bruce Marshall, *Trinity and Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Marshall, 'The Unity of the Triune God: Reviving an Ancient Question', *The Thomist* 74 (2010), pp. 1-32. See also, Randal Rauser, 'Rahner's Rule: An Emperor without Clothes?' *International Journal of Systematic Theology* Vol. 7 No. 2 (2005), pp. 81-94; Fred Sanders, 'Entangled in the Trinity: Economic and Immanent Trinity in Recent Theology', *A Journal of Theology* Vol. 40 No. 3 (2003), pp. 175-182.

¹²² LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 217.

in the work of redemption and deification.’¹²³ This interpretation is widely shared. Paul Fiddes understands the term “economic” as referring to ‘the activity of God in ordering the household of the world’, which he, like LaCugna, translates as *oikonomia*, and relates closely to the ‘missions’ of God.¹²⁴ Similarly, Vincent Battaglia advocates an understanding of the “economic Trinity” which refers to ‘God’s action and presence in the economy of salvation (*oikonomia, οἰκονομία*) or God *ad nos* (‘God-for-us’).¹²⁵ Rahner himself points us to the mission of God the Son, the one who assumed human nature in the Incarnation, as an economic activity:

The “economic” Trinity is the immanent Trinity, according to the statement which interests us. In one way this statement is a defined doctrine of the faith. Jesus is not simply God in general, but the Son. The second divine person, God’s Logos, is man, and only he is man. Hence there is at least *one* “mission”, *one* presence in the world, *one* reality of salvation history...Here something occurs “outside” the intra-divine life in the world itself.¹²⁶

The phrase “immanent Trinity” requires a little more care in unpacking, as the word ‘immanent’ has more than one meaning.¹²⁷ First, ‘immanent’ can mean *close* or *present*, and within Christian theology, the word is used to describe ‘the omnipresence of God in His universe.’¹²⁸ In this first sense, it describes the opposite of the parallel doctrine of ‘Divine transcendence.’¹²⁹ Second, ‘immanent’ (*immanēre*) can mean *stay* or *remain in*. LaCugna suggests that ‘immanent’ means ‘interior or inherent, as in, “the immanent activities of knowing and loving.”’¹³⁰ It is this latter definition which is intended by Rahner’s phrase ‘immanent Trinity.’ Thus, ‘immanent Trinity’ refers specifically to the *inter-trinitarian* relationships of the Father, Son, and Spirit *to each other* God *in se*, that is, ‘considered apart from God’s activity in the world.’¹³¹ For Rahner, the ‘immanent

¹²³ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 211.

¹²⁴ See, Fiddes, *Participating in God*, pp. 6-7.

¹²⁵ See, Battaglia, ‘An Examination of Karl Rahner’s Trinitarian Theology’, *Australian eJournal of Theology* 9 (2007), p. 4. Cf. LaCugna, *God for Us*, pp. 23-30.

¹²⁶ Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 23.

¹²⁷ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 211.

¹²⁸ F. L. Cross, ed. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), ‘immanence’, p. 681.

¹²⁹ F. L. Cross, ed. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), ‘immanence’, p. 681.

¹³⁰ LaCugna, *God for Us*, pp. 211-212.

¹³¹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 212.

Trinity' is the 'intradivine' self-communication of the Father to the Son and Spirit, as existence from all eternity:

The "procession" of the Son as self-communication of the divine reality of the Father is two things at ones. It is first of all, for us, the economic, free self-communication of the divine reality to Jesus as the "absolute bringer of salvation." It is also necessary "immanent" self-communication of the divine reality, the Father expressing himself in such a way that this utterance exists from all eternity and of necessity, as the Word of such a possible free self-expression to the world. The "immanent" self-communication becomes perceptible, and its meaning, although remaining mysterious, becomes intelligible, in the "economic" self-communication.¹³²

Therefore, Rahner's Rule expresses something of the following: God *for us* is God *in se* and God *in se* is God *for us*. In others words, who God is in the world, through the economy of salvation, is truly who God already is *in se*. LaCugna expresses this as follows: 'God's saving activity through Jesus Christ and the Spirit fully expresses what God is already "in Godself." More accurately, God's actions reveal who and what God is.'¹³³ Rahner's Rule emphasises the economy of salvation, as his formula begins with the 'economic Trinity' as that which is also the 'immanent Trinity.' Following LaCugna, this emphasis on the economy of God means that the possibility of a "*dues absconditus*" (hidden God) is defeated by Rahner's Rule: 'There is no God who might turn out to be different from the God of salvation history, even if God's mystery remains absolute.'¹³⁴

2.2. "Umgekehrt"

Rahner's emphasis on the economy of salvation might be implicit in the English translation of his Rule, which begins with the economic, before moving to the immanent, but the original German wording makes this explicit. Surprisingly, whilst much ink has been spent discussing the English translation of Rahner's Rule, far less attention has been afforded to the German original. Rahner originally expressed his Rule consciously, in just nine words: 'Die ökonomische Trinität ist die immanente Trinität und umgekehrt.'¹³⁵ That is, 'The "economic" Trinity is the "immanent" Trinity and *vice versa*.'¹³⁶

¹³² Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 64.

¹³³ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 211.

¹³⁴ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 211.

¹³⁵ Karl Rahner, *Der dreifaltige Gott als transzendenter Urgrund der Heilsgeschichte*, p. 328.

¹³⁶ Own emphasis.

Here, the relationship between the economic and the immanent is more tightly focused. Rahner's use of "*umgekehrt*" allows for no ambiguity in the relationship between the economic and the immanent; the economic Trinity reveals fully who God is, and who God *is* is revealed in all fullness in the economic Trinity. David Lincicum argues that Rahner's "*umgekehrt*" ensures that there can be 'no distinction between the two conceptions of the Trinity.'¹³⁷ Dallavalle has also recognised the importance of this difference in translation, arguing that the original reveals that 'it is highly characteristic of Rahner to emphasise that his focus is on the real presence of the triune God in salvation history.'¹³⁸ Scott Harrower suggests that the original German wording 'allows for no equivocation in terms of how the economy of salvation was related to God's inner taxis,' noting that Rahner's methodological principle is explicit elsewhere in his work.¹³⁹ For example, in *Foundations of Christian Faith*: '[T]he salvation and revelation-historical Trinity *is* the immanent Trinity.'¹⁴⁰ I want to suggest that Rahner's "*umgekehrt*" is significant for two reasons. First, because it suggests that the relationship between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity is fully reciprocal. In contrasting Barth and Rahner on this point, Colin Gunton sheds light on the significance of the "*umgekehrt*" in Rahner's Rule:

Barth's view is that in the order of knowing we may move from what God (economically) shows himself to be to a corresponding conception of what God is in himself. If God is what we are given in the economy, then we may conclude that the economy is a reliable guide to what God is, eternally and in himself. There is, however, an asymmetrical relationship between knowing and being, and we are not obliged to accept the apparent view of Rahner that the thesis 'the Economic Trinity is the Immanent Trinity' is also true 'reciprocally' (*umgekehrt*).¹⁴¹

2.3. Barth vs. Rahner: "Modes of Being" vs. "Persons"

Gunton's criticism of Rahner's thesis, in contrast to that of Barth's, indicates the subtle, but significant differences between the two modern theologians. There is always a danger, in any given study of Rahner's work, of focusing so sharply on his Rule, that little space is made for any

¹³⁷ David Lincicum, 'Economic and Immanence: Karl Rahner's Doctrine of the Trinity', *Euro Journal of Theology* (2005) 14:2, pp. 111-118, [p. 114].

¹³⁸ Nancy A. Dallavalle, *Saving History and the Salvation of History in Karl Rahner's Trinitarian Theology* PhD (University of Notre Dame, 1993). Cited in Scott Harrower, *Trinitarian Self and Salvation: An Evangelical Engagement with Rahner's Rule* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2012), pp. 61-62.

¹³⁹ Harrower, *Trinitarian Self*, pp. 61-62.

¹⁴⁰ Karl Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1978), p. 136.

¹⁴¹ Colin E. Gunton, *Theology Through the Theologians: Selected Essays, 1972-1995* (London: T&T Clark, 1996), p. 127.

discussion of his theology of the Trinity beyond this. I would like to suggest that we could elucidate more clearly some of the differences between Rahner, and Barth, by considering and contrasting their accounts of Divine and human personhood. I would also like to argue that such a contrast illuminates in a greater light how Rahner offers more than Barth for LaCugna's project, and therefore, for this thesis.

Karl Rahner suggests that subjectivity is one of the central principals of the Christian doctrine of God: 'The statement that God is a person, that he is a personal God, is one of the fundamental Christian assertions about God.'¹⁴² Karl Barth argues that God's being is 'being in person', that is, 'God exists as *the* knowing, willing and acting "I".'¹⁴³ Though fundamental for both Barth, and Rahner, subjectivity raises numerous theological difficulties, as Scott identifies: 'How does one distinguish between personhood vis-à-vis God's singular subjectivity versus the three persons of the Trinity, for example? Is there a correspondence between God's generic personhood and God's Trinitarian personhood?'¹⁴⁴ Both Barth and Rahner identify the problems raised in using the language of person, particularly when distinguishing between the 'personality of God' and the 'personality' of the divine 'persons'. Barth outlines the difficulty the language of 'person' raises for the doctrine of God as follows:

If we accept the concept of the personality of God, we must be conscious of a certain lack of clarity arising from the fact that right up to modern times most people have spoken of divine 'persons' in relation to the doctrine of the divine Trinity.¹⁴⁵

Barth's account of divine and human personhood might be considered inadequate. His driving concern for the essential unity of God, coupled with his sense of *unease* with the person language for Trinitarian relations, leads his critics to conclude that his account of the 'divine persons' is compromised. Barth's account of divine personhood permits us to ask whether the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit are distinct persons at all, or whether they are just merely windows through which we can catch a glimpse of the one divine person, that is, the *Person* of God. Indeed, Barth actually abandons the language of person for the Trinitarian relations altogether, proposing 'modes of being' (*Seinsweisen*) as a suitable alternative. This is a translation of what the Cappadocian Fathers

¹⁴² Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, p. 73.

¹⁴³ Karl Barth, *CD II/I*, p. 268. Cf. Mark S. M. Scott, 'God as Person: Karl Barth and Karl Rahner on Divine and Human Personhood', *Religious Studies and Theology* 25.2 (2006), pp. 161-190, [p. 164].

¹⁴⁴ Scott, 'God as Person', p. 169.

¹⁴⁵ Barth, *II/I*, p. 269.

referred to as *tropoi hypraxeos* ('modes of existing').¹⁴⁶ He argues that the term "person" is misleading, as it can, particularly within our modern context, lead us to think of distinct centres of consciousness. Since, Barth argues, there can be no material distinctions in God, the concept of "persons" must be abandoned, lest we espouse a kind of tritheism.¹⁴⁷ Barth would exchange the classical Trinitarian expression, captured and so often sung, in the hymn written by Reginald Heber (†1826) 'God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!', for the phrase 'God in Three *modes of being*, blessed Trinity!' Barth writes:

In view of the history of the concept of Person in the doctrine of the Trinity one may well ask whether dogmatics is wise in further availing itself of it in this connection. It belongs to another part, namely, to the doctrine of God proper, and as a deduction from the doctrine of the Trinity. It follows directly from a Trinitarian understanding of the God revealed in Scripture that the one God is to be regarded not only as an impersonal lordship, i.e. as power, but as the Lord, and so only only as absolute Spirit but as a Person, i.e. as an I existing in and for Itself with thought and will proper to It... We prefer to let this source rank even externally as the primary one and therefore, at least preferably, to say not "Person" but "modes of being", with intention if expressing by this concept the same thing as should be expressed by "Person", not absolutely but relatively better, more simply, and more clearly.¹⁴⁸

Following Barth, therefore, when we encounter any given *mode of God's being*, we encounter not a 'person' of God, but the whole 'Person' of God singular. Barth would argue that the God who meets us in Christ, is the very same God as he is in himself. Torrance summarises Barth's account as follows: 'When we meet God's revelation, or are met by the revelation of God, we are met not by a part of God, not by instantiations of the divine, but with the *Person* of God, the identical divine Subject in his singular totality.'¹⁴⁹ Barth's emphasis on the *Person* of God, singular, follows a similar pattern established by classical theologians, such as Aquinas. That is to say, his primary concern is divine *unity*, rather than divine *TRIunity*. Barth's account of divine personhood is considered, amongst social trinitarians, to be inadequate, as it fails to offer a truly full throated account of personhood *per se*. Indeed, LaCugna has criticised Aquinas for suggesting that when Christian's pray "Our Father", they address the whole Trinity.¹⁵⁰ LaCugna's concern, here, is Aquinas' reluctance to identify the *proprium* of a particular person. LaCugna criticises Barth more

¹⁴⁶ See, in general, William Hasker, *Metaphysics and the Tri-Personal God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 85-96.

¹⁴⁷ Barth, I/I, p. 403.

¹⁴⁸ Barth, I/I, p. 412.

¹⁴⁹ Alan Torrance, *Persons in Communion: Trinitarian Description and Human Participation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), p. 214.

¹⁵⁰ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 166; Cf. Aquinas, *ST III*, 23, 2.

sharply, and accuses him of offering an account of divine personhood which tends towards a form of modalism:

Barth equated the divine essence revealed in these three modes [Revealer, Revelation and Revealedness] with God's sovereignty or Lordship. The result is a form of modalism; whether this modalism is Sabellian could be debated... For Barth, the essence of God is uni-personal. The God who 'distributes' the divine essence in three modes of being in the Sovereign Subject.¹⁵¹

Rahner too is conscious of the infelicitous consequences the use of the word 'person' causes in Trinitarian language; in agreement with Barth, he suggests that 'person' language can lead all too easily to tritheistic heresy. He remarks that in contemporary thought, the word 'person' almost necessarily denotes a distinct 'centre of consciousness and activity.'¹⁵² Employing the word 'person' in an account of Trinitarian relations, therefore, conjures 'the idea of three centres of consciousness and activity, which leads to a heretical misunderstanding of the dogma.'¹⁵³ Rahner contends (*concentus* Barth) that other concepts might be better suited to defending divine unity than the word 'person', stating that: 'There are not three consciousnesses; rather, the one consciousness *subsists* in a threefold way.'¹⁵⁴ According to Scott, Rahner opts for the expression 'distinct manners of subsisting' over Barth's 'manners of being' because it more closely approximates 'the traditional language of the Church.'¹⁵⁵ However, Rahner also asserts (*pace* Barth) that the language of 'person' has been 'consecrated by the use of more than 1500 years', and so there is 'no really better word, which can be understood by all and would give rise to fewer misunderstandings.'¹⁵⁶ Rahner argues against Barth's suggestion that the word should be replaced in Trinitarian dialogue: 'We do not agree with Karl Barth that the word "person" is ill adapted to express its intended reality and that it should be replaced in ecclesiastical terminology by another word which produces fewer misunderstandings.'¹⁵⁷

¹⁵¹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 252.

¹⁵² Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 57.

¹⁵³ Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 57.

¹⁵⁴ Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 107. (Own emphasis)

¹⁵⁵ Scott, 'God as Person', p. 186, Cf. Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 110.

¹⁵⁶ Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 44.

¹⁵⁷ Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 44.

Scott argues that Rahner does not, like Barth, ‘seek to introduce a new Trinitarian vocabulary to replace the Church’s concept of person in the Trinity’, even though Rahner does admit that the phrase ‘distinct manners of subsisting’ is semantically preferable to person in guarding against tritheistic insinuations.¹⁵⁸ Following Scott, Rahner simply seeks to render the word ‘person’ more intelligible through careful theological explanation: ‘Rahner affirms the legitimacy of the ecclesiastical idea of person and seeks to render it intelligible by conveying its implicit Trinitarian meaning using a more lucid and theologically precise expression.’¹⁵⁹ Rahner himself writes that the task of the theologian is not to replace the word ‘person’, but to adequately explain what the Church means by the word ‘person’ in this particular context: ‘He has to explain the word. He must say what is and what is not meant *here* by the word, he must distinguish it from its changing profane meaning, and thus, on account of these changes in meaning, his situation and task if forever a new one.’¹⁶⁰

In accord with Rahner, LaCugna believes that the meaning of the word ‘person’ has been somewhat corrupted in the West, where there is a tendency to conceive of a ‘person’ as a ‘self’. Understood in this way, LaCugna argues, the word ‘person’ is then further defined as ‘an individual centre of consciousness, a free intentional subject, one who knows and is known, loves and is loved, an individual identity, a unique personality endowed with certain rights.’¹⁶¹ This explanation of personhood, she suggests, sits neatly with the Christian understanding of a God who is personal, but does not at all fit with the idea that God is three persons. LaCugna identifies that such an account of personhood can lead us into tritheistic heresy, as noted by both Barth and Rahner: ‘Three persons defined in this way would amount to three gods, three beings who act independently, three conscious individuals.’¹⁶² Nevertheless, despite the infelicitous consequences the word ‘person’ causes in Trinitarian language, LaCugna argues that it must remain a part of the Church’s vocabulary.

¹⁵⁸ Scott, ‘God as Person’, p. 186.

¹⁵⁹ Scott, ‘God as Person’, p. 186.

¹⁶⁰ Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 57. (Gender exclusive language original to text. Emphasis is the authors own.)

¹⁶¹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 250.

¹⁶² LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 250.

2.4. Modes of Subsisting

However, whilst Rahner's commitment to the vocabulary preferred by social trinitarians can be of benefit to LaCugna's project, his account of divine personhood is insufficient. Rahner conceived that there were, within God, three modes of subsisting (*Subsistenzweisen*) in accordance with the Latin scheme, proposed by Aquinas: 'The one and the same divine essence subsists in each of the three distinct manners of subsisting.'¹⁶³ He describes the modes of subsistence as subsisting through their 'relative opposition to one another; it is real through its identity with the divine essence.'¹⁶⁴ Therefore, following Rahner, to subsist in a distinct manner is necessarily differentiated from subsisting as 'to be' as the divine essence subsists in each person. The first mode of subsisting is the Father, behind whom there is no Godhead.¹⁶⁵ Rahner closely identifies the divine essence with the person of the Father, who is the chief communicator of the divine essence through the event of his own self-communication:

There is real difference in God as he is in himself between one and the same God insofar as he—at once and necessarily—the unoriginate who mediates himself to himself (Father), the one who is in truth uttered for himself (Son), and the one who is received and accepted in love for himself (Spirit)— and insofar as, *as a result of this*, he is the one who can freely communicate himself... That which is communicated, insofar as it makes the commutation into an authentic self-communication, whilst not suppressing the real distinction in God as communicating and as communicated, may rightly be called the divinity, hence the "essence" of God.¹⁶⁶

LaCugna acknowledges that Rahner's proposal is ultimately considered to be inadequate amongst social trinitarians:

Walter Kasper finds "distinct manners of subsisting" unsuitable for preaching and opaque to all except those training in the subtleties of scholastic theology. Moreover, Kasper and Jürgen Moltmann think that modalism or a weak theism, not latent tritheism, is the dominant danger in today's theology of God.¹⁶⁷

LaCugna agrees with Rahner's critics, suggesting that his account of divine personhood tends in the direction of modalism. More importantly (for our own discussion) is the fact that Rahner's proposal

¹⁶³ Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 114.

¹⁶⁴ Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 114.

¹⁶⁵ Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 112.

¹⁶⁶ Rahner, *The Trinity*, pp. 101-102.

¹⁶⁷ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 254.

fails to offer a full, robust account of divine personhood. Rahner, in the footsteps of Barth, attempts to offer an account of divine personhood which rejects the extreme individualism of the ‘Cartesian centre of consciousness.’¹⁶⁸ Ultimately, their solution is to conceive of the one divine essence of God as the one centre of self-consciousness, subsisting in three modalities. LaCugna argues that both Barth and Rahner worked within too narrow an interpretation of person as centre of consciousness, and thus failed to take account of other philosophical and cultural notions of personhood available in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹⁶⁹

For Rahner, the one divine essence of God comes prior to God’s tri-personhood; divinity originates with substance, and moves into relationship. The ‘persons’ of God are understood on account of their share in the one divine essence. The ‘persons’ of God are understood *in* relation to one another, not *as* relation. Social trinitarians would have us reverse Rahner’s *taxis*, arguing that personal identity comes prior to essence or substance; divinity originates on account of personhood. The divine essence of God is understood on account of the tri-personal relations. The ‘persons’ of God are understood *as* relation. Robert Jenson articulates the view that relationship and personal identity constitute the first fact about God:

In God, personal identity is prior to essence. God the Father is first of all Father of that the other personal identity the Son and he has that nature we call divine only in and by and on account of that relationship. The relationship and the personal identity given in the relationship—Father to Son—*that* is the first fact about God...In God the personal identities are constituted by each one’s relationship to the other two. And then, in that one of the those three is one of us; our life together has a structure determined by the structure of the divine life. We have something in common by which we hold together, through which we can come together.¹⁷⁰

2.5. The Problem of Projection

Here, then, we encounter a ‘parting of ways’ between Rahner himself, and those who credit him with brining the doctrine of the Trinity into the foreground of Christian Theology. However, I would argue that Rahner has offered both scholars and practitioners a way of approaching the manner of God’s trinitarian life which naturally leads us to a social doctrine of the Trinity, even if Rahner, as we have seen, did not arrive at this conclusion himself. At this point, I would like to return to Rahner’s Rule, and suggest that the second reason we might consider Rahner’s “*umgekehrt*” to be

¹⁶⁸ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 254.

¹⁶⁹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 255.

¹⁷⁰ Robert Jenson, *A Theology in Outline: Can These Bones Live?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 67, 70-71.

significant is that it *assumes* the immanent life of the Trinity. Rahner's axiom leads us to assume the immanent Trinity, as God's inner life is only considered from our perspective of God's interaction with us through the economy of salvation.

Rahner's critics would argue that his axiom, if interpreted in this way, leads us to commit the precise opposite crime which Aquinas is accused of by social trinitarians. That is, whilst Rahner might assume God's inner life, he does not permit us to treat the topic as an activity of *theologia* in the strictest sense. Karen Kilby argues that social theorists have built human projection into their approach by refusing to consider the doctrine of God apart from our perception of God's relationship with the world: 'it is not just that as it happens social theories of the Trinity often project our ideals onto God. Rather it is built into the kind of project that most social theorists are involved in that they *have to be* projectionist.'¹⁷¹ LaCugna argues, 'given Thomas' starting point 'in' God, the economy of redemption is not the primary or obvious basis for *theologia*. Thomas "assumes the events of history [but] he does not treat them *historically*."¹⁷² I want to suggest likewise, that Rahner's starting point, in the economy of redemption, God's life *in se* is not the primary or obvious basis for the *economy*. This is no accident of Rahner's part. For Rahner, we can say very little, if anything, concerning God's life *in se* apart from God's interaction with the world *ad extra* in the economy of salvation: '...our study of Rahner's axiom, [reinforces the view] that to think of God's personhood apart from the sphere of God's activity in the world is an impossibility.'¹⁷³

This particular reading of Rahner's axiom is crucial to LaCugna's project as it permits her to address her critics in no uncertain terms. LaCugna's response to those who would claim her theology is weakened by its failure to consider God's immanent life, prior to, and beyond the context of our relationship with God, would be to argue that the theologian is faced with an impossible task, should they attempt to do anything other. For LaCugna, not only is it impossible to consider God's life apart from the economy, any other consideration is nothing more than speculation: 'To theorise about God as if God were *not* in relationship (*dues in se*), or to postulate about nonrelationship with the world as the primordial truth about God's nature, is a fantasy about a God who does not exist.'¹⁷⁴ Nevertheless, it must be noted that LaCugna does not herself consider

¹⁷¹ See, in general, Kilby, 'Perichoresis and Projection: Problems with Social Doctrines of The Trinity', pp. 439-443.

¹⁷² LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 148.

¹⁷³ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 259.

¹⁷⁴ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 230.

the significance of the “*umgekehrt*” in the original German, and as such, she misses the opportunity to strengthen her case, that Rahner restored the tight relationship between the economic, and the immanent, and in doing so, restored the doctrine of the Trinity to the centre of the Christian life.

2.6. Restoring the Theologia and the Oikonomia

Having articulated how this thesis understands Rahner’s Rule, we can now turn with confidence to LaCugna’s own reading of Rahner, and her assessment of his contribution. LaCugna credits Rahner with achieving the following: (1) offering a theology of the Trinity which depends on salvation history; (2) offering a theology of the Trinity which has practical consequences for the Christian life; (3) restoring the relationship between the *oikonomia* and the *theologia*.¹⁷⁵ For LaCugna, these outcomes are interdependent on one-another; that is to say, it is both the restored relationship between the *oikonomia* and the *theologia*, and the dependance on salvation history, which ensures that Rahner’s theology of the Trinity has practical consequences for the Christian life. This chapter shall now conclude its consideration of Rahner’s contribution by briefly articulating and engaging with LaCugna’s own assessment.

The project of restoring the doctrine of the Trinity to the centre of Christian theology requires that the relationship between the *oikonomia* and the *theologia* be maintained in such a way that depends on the events of salvation history.¹⁷⁶ Rahner asserts that the proof of the identity between the *oikonomia* and the *theologia* is the Incarnation. The scholastics, such as Aquinas, maintained that any of the divine persons could have become incarnate.¹⁷⁷ Indeed, this thesis has already argued that Aquinas failed to sufficiently integrate the Trinity with the Incarnation. Rahner rejects this position as both unproved and false, arguing that we can only claim to know anything about who God is *ad intra* on account of God is in Christ *ad extra*:

The rejected thesis is false. Should it be true, and not merely mentioned at the fringe of theological thinking, but really presented in earnest, it would create havoc with theology. There would no longer be any connection between “mission” and the intra-trinitarian life. Our sonship in grace would in fact have absolutely nothing to do with the Son’s sonship, since it might equally be brought about without any modification by another incarnate person. That which God is for us would tell us absolutely nothing about that which he is in himself, as triune.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ See, in general, LaCugna, *God for Us*, pp. 210-231.

¹⁷⁶ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 210.

¹⁷⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *ST IIIa*, 3, 5.

¹⁷⁸ Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 30.

Arguing that only the Logos, and not any other person, might have become Incarnate, allows Rahner to maintain the essential identity between the *oikonomia* and the *theologia*: ‘Then we can assert, in the full meaning of the words: here the Logos with God and the Logos with us, the immanent and the economic Logos, are strictly the same.’¹⁷⁹ LaCugna describes Rahner’s approach as theology from the ground up, arguing that this can be the only starting point in Christian Theology:

We might call Rahner’s approach a trinitarian theology ‘from below’, analogous to a christology from below that begins with soteriology, with the events of saving history. The economy of salvation, the historical missions of Christ, and the Spirit, are the only valid starting point for a Christian theology of God. This does not mean that the Trinity exists only in our experience. In Rahner’s view the distinctions among God, Christ, and Spirit that are experienced in the history of salvation “must belong to God ‘in himself’, or otherwise this difference, which undoubtedly exists, would do away with God’s self communication.”¹⁸⁰

2.8. Conclusion

LaCugna is clear that the doctrine of the Trinity is a practical doctrine with consequences for Christian life. LaCugna begins her book with this claim: ‘The doctrine of the Trinity is ultimately a practical doctrine with radical consequences for the Christian life. That is the thesis of the book.’¹⁸¹ According to LaCugna, the theologian is charged with the responsibility of spelling out the practical implications of the doctrine; practical implications which are made explicit when the doctrine is reconceived in light of the mystery of salvation history.¹⁸² Rahner’s doctrine of the Trinity depends on the events of salvation history, and likewise suggests that there is a natural progression from conceiving the doctrine in this way, to understanding the practical implications of the doctrine for Christian life.

This view is contested, and some scholars have questioned whether or not the doctrine of the Trinity needs to be relevant, arguing that belief alone is sufficient. This is the view of Karen Kilby, who argues: ‘...one could say that as long as Christians continue to believe in the divinity of Christ and the Spirit, as long as they continue to believe that God is one, then the doctrine is alive and

¹⁷⁹ Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 33.

¹⁸⁰ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 216.

¹⁸¹ See, *God for Us*, p. 1.

¹⁸² LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 8.

well.¹⁸³ This is wholly insufficient. The life of God belongs not only to God, but to each and every creature — for God is always divesting himself, and is by nature intrinsically other-ward. God’s life is also *our* life, and in our *life* we seek to be united with God in Christ. Faith in God’s triune-life, isolated from action, is dead (James 2.17). Rahner argues that a trinitarian theology ‘from below’ offers an articulation of God’s triune life which takes us beyond mere theoretical concept: ‘When a true statement about the Trinity is correctly understood and translated into our life, the correctly understood theory points quite naturally towards real life, as lived faith and in grace, in which the mystery of the triune God himself holds sway and which is not simply constituted by its conceptual objectification.’¹⁸⁴ This is the heart of LaCugna’s thesis; that God’s triune life has radical practical implications for every aspect of the Christian life, and as such, it is the Church’s only source for reflection: ‘This ongoing revelation and action of God is the proper source for reflection on theological ethics, spirituality, ecclesiology, and the liturgical and communitarian life of the church.’¹⁸⁵ This chapter has argued that Rahner can be said to have recovered the relevance of the doctrine of the trinity insofar as he restores the unity between the *theologia* and the *oikonomia*, thus offering a mode of theology “from below”. In the next chapter, I will explore LaCugna’s development of this mode of theology in light of her understanding of doxology as that which maintains the unity between *theologia* and *oikonomia*.

¹⁸³ Kilby, ‘Perichoresis and Projection’, p. 443.

¹⁸⁴ Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 48.

¹⁸⁵ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 1.

Doxology

A Mode of Economic Theology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
 Praise him, all creatures here below;
 Praise him above, ye heavenly host:
 Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.¹⁸⁶

In the previous two chapters, I have traced LaCugna's argument concerning what might be described as the 'recession' and the 'recovery' of Trinitarian theology. During the so-called 'recession', LaCugna argues that scholastic thinkers, such as Aquinas, fractured the relationship between the *oikonomia* and the *theologia*, thus blurring the relevance of the doctrine for Christian life, leading to its eventual marginalisation. In the late twentieth century, LaCugna argues that the relationship between the *oikonomia* and the *theologia* was restored by Rahner's work in claiming that the immanent Trinity was indistinguishable from the economic Trinity. Whilst in some respects a disciple of Rahner, LaCugna seeks to move beyond Rahner's axiom, claiming that it guides us towards an understanding of the connection between the *oikonomia* and the *theologia* which is inseparable from doxology: 'Rahner's axiom on the identity of economic and immanent Trinity operates as a "grammatical rule" that guides theology towards doxology: If the economic trinity *is* the immanent Trinity and vice versa, then worshipping God for us is indistinguishable from worshipping God.'¹⁸⁷

The God we encounter in worship, the God who first moves towards us, is truly who God is. This is the essence of LaCugna's contribution to the field of social trinitarianism; that *oikonomia* is intrinsically linked with doxology. God is revealed to us in God's self-revelation and self-invitation to participate in God's life: 'To know, love and worship God-for-us, is to know, love and worship God[...] The mystery of God, indeed, the mystery of all existence, is the mystery of communion of God with all, all with God. The heart of Christian life is the encounter with a personal God.'¹⁸⁸ This chapter explores LaCugna's claim that '... the form of language that best serves and illumines

¹⁸⁶ Thomas Ken, *A Manual of Prayer for the Use of the Scholars of Winchester College* (1674)

¹⁸⁷ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 361.

¹⁸⁸ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 319.

God's economy is *theology in the mode of doxology*.¹⁸⁹ I argue that following the 'recession' and 'recovery' of the doctrine of the trinity, LaCugna's work in grounding the doctrine in doxology ensures that its relevance for the Christian life is 'reclaimed'. In this chapter, I will argue that Christian doxology is an act of God that is mediated through the Son, in the power of the Spirit, towards the Father. In this respect, doxology actuates true relationship between people and God.

3.1. Theology in the 'mode' of Doxology

LaCugna develops Rahner's axiom, arguing that 'doxology' is that which gives purchase into God's life for us. Doxology is the proper 'mode' of Trinitarian theology. It is given expression in Christian life through the rite of baptism, in the creeds, the eucharistic prayer and doxologies:¹⁹⁰ 'Thus the creeds and the reasoning which produced them are not the forces which produced baptism. Baptism gave rise to the trinitarian creeds. So too the eucharist produced, but was not produced by, a scriptural text, the eucharistic prayer, or all the various scholarly theories concerning the eucharistic real presence'.¹⁹¹ Jürgen Moltmann argues, 'real theology, which means knowledge of God, finds expression in thanks, praise, adoration. And it is what finds expression in doxology that is the real theology [...] Here we know in order to participate. Then to know God means to participate in the fullness of the divine life.'¹⁹²

There is, then, an inseparable and necessary correspondence between doxology and theology; doxology is the 'mode' and 'facilitator' of theology, and theology culminates in doxology. LaCugna argues that Rahner's axiom (though helpful) can appear to misleadingly suggest that there are two Trinities which must in some way be related to one another.¹⁹³ Consequently, the doxological character of theology is impeded: '[it] can become an intellectual exercise in thinking about two reified Trinities rather than an act oriented to the worship of the unobjectifiable and incomprehensible God.'¹⁹⁴ LaCugna's axiom offers an alternative paradigm, which maintains the unity between both *oikonomia* and *theologia*, and *God-for-God* and *God-for-us*: 'doxology is the

¹⁸⁹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 320.

¹⁹⁰ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 196.

¹⁹¹ Adian Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology* (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1984), p. 92.

¹⁹² Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, p. 152.

¹⁹³ Catherine LaCugna, *God for Us Review Symposium*, in *Horizons* 20 (1993) pp. 135-142, [p. 139].

¹⁹⁴ Elizabeth Groppe, *Theology and Conversation: towards a relational theology* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), p. 241.

‘practice’ of the unity of *oikonomia* and *theologia*; all knowledge, love, and worship of God must be routed through Christ by the power of the Spirit.’¹⁹⁵ In the act of doxology, the Christian finds the reflective language required to speak faithfully of God: ‘Doxology, which is the living language of faith in which praise is offered in gratitude for the abundance of God’s generous love, is the proper response to the revelation of God’s ineffable existence as self-imparting love and communion.’¹⁹⁶ In the act of doxology, the Christian discovers that there is no distinction between the ‘worship of God’ and the ‘worship of God-for-us’, and thus, doxology maintains the unity of *theologia* and *oikonomia*. The praise of God is rooted in *oikonomia* and reaches to *theologia*:

Praise is always rendered in response to God’s goodness to Israel, or God’s majesty in creation, or God’s faithfulness to the covenant, or God’s peace-making in the heart of the sinner, or God’s face seen in Christ. Praise is offered because in the concrete aspects of God’s life with us we experience God’s steadfast love, God’s gracious and everlasting presence [...] The praise of God is possible *only if* there is a real correspondence between “God” and “God for us” [...] The God of saving history is the same God from all eternity, and the God of our future. There is no reason to think that by recounting God’s deeds, anyone other than God *as* God is intended as the object of praise [...] The close relationship between soteriology and doxology, between salvation and praise, confirms the proper connection between *oikonomia* and *theologia*, essence and energies, which are inseparable in theology.¹⁹⁷

3.2. Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi

LaCugna’s account of the necessary correspondence between doxology and theology, can, of course, trace its origin back to an altogether more ancient adage; *lex orandi, lex credendi*. Indeed, if we are able to grasp something of this perplexing adage, we will, in turn, find that we can bring some clarity to LaCugna’s proposition — that doxology informs theology, and theology inspires doxology. It does this in two ways. First, it demonstrates that LaCugna’s proposition has a scriptural basis — as does Proper’s original adage. Second, it prevents a confusion of boundaries — ensuring that the interrelationship between ‘prayer’ and ‘belief’, or ‘doxology’ and ‘theology’, is maintained as such that neither one exclusively informs the other.

‘*Lex orandi, lex credendi*’ is a principle which originates in an argument made by Prosper of Aquitaine (c.390 - c.445) against the Pelagians:

¹⁹⁵ LaCugna, *God for Us*, pp. 15-16.

¹⁹⁶ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 324.

¹⁹⁷ LaCugna, *God for Us*, pp. 337, 348-349.

In addition to these inviolable decisions of the blessed Apostolic See, by which our mostly holy fathers, rejecting the arrogance of this harmful novelty, have taught [us] to attribute to the grave of Christ both the first steps of a right will and the necessary progress to a praiseworthy ardor and even the perseverance in these efforts until the end, let us consider equally the rites of the priestly supplications which, transmitted by the apostles, are celebrated in the same manner in the entire world and in the whole catholic Church, in such a way that the order of supplication determines the rule of faith.¹⁹⁸

The final clause of Prosper's argument - 'that the order of supplication determines the rule of faith' - is expressed in Latin as: '*ut legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi.*' Traditionally, scholars have interpreted this to mean that there is a synonymy between the content of prayer, and the faith of the one praying. An interpretation which suggests a 'simple' relationship between supplication and faith, is, however to be avoided. For example, an interpretation which understands 'lex orandi' (supplication) to be the exclusive theological lens for interpreting 'lex credendi' (doctrine). Hughes argues that such interpretations stretch the credibility of the adage.¹⁹⁹ Indeed, it was not Prosper's intention to 'propose a general rule in which prayer trumped belief.'²⁰⁰ Instead, Proposer more likely intended that we should understand supplication and belief to be mutual informers, as Austin Farrer explains: 'prayer and dogma are inseparable, they alone can explain each other. Either without the other is meaningless and dead.'²⁰¹

For Farrer, Prosper's adage is more accurately expressed when dogma and prayer are seen as mutual informers: '[Farrer] would also insist that it works [both ways]: the way we believe [also] determines the way we pray. Belief (dogma) can prayer are neither identical nor independent. They cannot be collapsed into each other, but neither does one (prayer) have precedence over the other (belief).'²⁰² In this context, we can affirm with LaCugna that doxology is the mode and facilitator of theology - but we can equally affirm that theology is the mode and facilitator of doxology. In this way, δόξα not only exclusively provides the language required to λογία faithfully of God, but our λογία provides the inspiration for further δόξα. This might be expressed as follows:

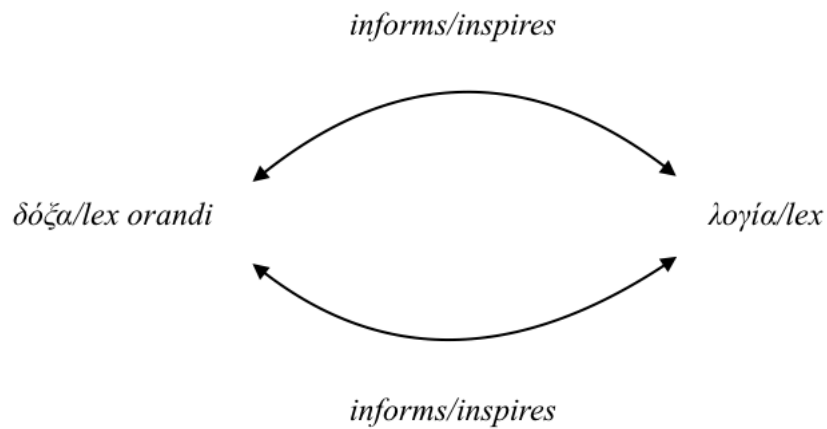
¹⁹⁸ Prosper of Aquitaine, *Capitula Coelestini* 8 in Paul De Clerk, "'Lex orandi, lex credendi': The original sense and historical avatars of an equivocal adage". Trans by Thomas M. Winger, *Studia Liturgica* 24 (1994), p. 181; Cf. PL 51:209-210.

¹⁹⁹ See, in general, Graham Hughes, *Worship as Meaning: A Liturgical Theology for Late Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008)

²⁰⁰ Alexander Y. Hwang, 'Prosper' Cassian and Vincent: The Rule of Faith in the Augustinian Controversy', in *Tradition & the Rule of Faith in the Early Church*, ed. Ronnie J. Rombs and Alexander Y. Hwang (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), p. 82.

²⁰¹ Austin Farrer, *Lord I Believe: Suggestions for Turning the Creed into Prayer* (London: SPCK, 1958), p. 9.

²⁰² Robert MacSwain, 'Above, Beside, Within: The Anglican Theology of Austin Farrer', *Journal of Anglican Studies* 4 (2006), p. 45.



LaCugna’s own proposition, that prayer is to be considered foundational for belief, and vice versa²⁰³, can be said to find its conceptual basis in Prosper’s historical adage, and in turn, therefore, in the inspiration of scripture. Prosper’s adage has scriptural pedigree. In this regard, scholars such as Geoffrey Wainwright and Paul De Clerck have argued that Prosper’s teaching is inspired by Paul’s first epistle to Timothy: ‘the apostolic injunction to pray for the whole human race - which the church obeys in its intercessions - proves the obligation to believe with the holy see, that all faith, even the beginning of good will as well as growth and perseverance is from start to finish a work of grace.’²⁰⁴

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings should be made for everyone, for kings and all in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and human kind, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself a ransom for all — this was attested at the right time (1 Timothy 2. 1-6).

Whilst Prosper is thought to have been theologically dependant on Augustine²⁰⁵, his argument turns first to scripture. Prosper insists that liturgical formulas, which may in turn inspire belief, must be rooted in the prior authority of scripture.²⁰⁶ In other words, *lex orandi* is *lex credendi* only insofar as it embodies the prior revelation of scripture. De Clerk writes:

²⁰³ Catherine LaCugna, ‘Can Liturgy Ever Again Become A Source For Theology’, *Studia Liturgica* 19 (1989), pp. 1-13.

²⁰⁴ Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The praise of God in doctrine, worship and life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 225. Cf. Paul De Clerck, “Lex orandi, lex credendi”, pp. 178-200.

²⁰⁵ Paul De Clerck, “Lex orandi, lex credendi”, p. 187.

²⁰⁶ Paul De Clerck, “Lex orandi, lex credendi”, p. 192.

In [Prosper's] mind, one may have recourse to the prayers of the Church in order to resolve the controversy on grace because they correspond to a biblical mandate, and are the expression of the living tradition of the Church... The liturgy is a "theological locus" to a degree that it is founded on scripture and gives of the living tradition its peculiar echo, which is poetic, symbolic, and existential much more than rational.²⁰⁷

3.3. Glory

The term 'doxology' ('δοξολογία') is, of course, derived from the Greek words 'δόξα' (doxa) meaning glory, and 'λογία' (logia) meaning saying. In Christian theology, doxology is the 'ascription of glory (Gk. δόξα) to the Persons of the Holy Trinity.'²⁰⁸ LaCugna specifically understands doxology as the summit of soteriology. God is a 'walking God', who 'walks' towards us and alongside us as a 'pilgrim people'.²⁰⁹ God moves to become *God-for-us* in creating and redeeming the cosmos in the power of the Holy Spirit through the eternal Word incarnate in Jesus Christ.²¹⁰ In response, the created and redeemed cosmos ascribes glory to God (doxology), which becomes the means to participate in the life of God through Jesus Christ and the Spirit:

Praise is offered because in the concrete aspects of God's life with us we experience God's steadfast love, God's graciousness and everlasting presence among us [...] Although we cannot name God, we can pray the name of God given to us, thereby activating relationship with the God who names Godself. Soteriology culminates in doxology.²¹¹

LaCugna argues that in the act of doxology, one discovers a dynamic movement of *theologia* towards God's other in *oikonomia*, and that all things 'exitus' from God through Christ in the Spirit will be brought together in God and 'reditus' to God in the Spirit through Christ.²¹²

Doxology not only maintains the essential unity between *oikonomia* and *theologia*, it is also the means by which we are invited and drawn into God's life. Theology should not be understood primarily as an act of speaking ('λογία') about God ('Θεός'), but rather an expression of the relationship of *God-with-us*, which reaches its climax in our worship of *God-for-us*: 'Theology

²⁰⁷ Paul De Clerck, "Lex orandi, lex credendi", pp. 192-193.

²⁰⁸ F. L. Cross, 'doxology', *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 421.

²⁰⁹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 321.

²¹⁰ Groppe, *Theology and Conversation*, p. 244.

²¹¹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 335-337.

²¹² LaCugna, *God for Us*, pp. 222-223.

culminates in the *actuation* of creation's being-towards God in the act of praise and thanksgiving.²¹³ LaCugna writes, 'The doctrine of the Trinity is an attempt to say something not only about God, or only about the recipient of the divine self-communication, but about the encounter between God and humankind and indeed with everything that exists.'²¹⁴ In this regard, doxology does not simply speak 'about' God or 'to' God — it is not simply descriptive, but it is dialogical. In doxology, we are caught up and invited to participate in the doxological life of *God-with-God*, and thus *God-for-us*. For LaCugna, 'God is not a third party *about whom* we speak; rather God is a "Thou" *to who* we speak.'²¹⁵

Normally doxology is associated with public worship. However, I would wish to argue that doxology should, in fact, involve every single aspect of Christian life; the way we think, speak, interact with others, and so on. Doxology is our response to the revelation of who God is. God has revealed God in salvation history. Our doxology is our response to that revelation. Pannenberg argues: '[Theological statements] express adoration of God on the basis of his works. All biblical speech about God, to the extent that its intention is to designate something beyond a particular deed, namely, God himself and what he is from eternity to eternity, is rooted in adoration and is in this sense doxological.'²¹⁶ The whole of the Christian life, then, should be lived doxologically. That is, the Christian life should be lived as a response to God's revelation of God's self in salvation history. Claus Westermann writes, 'There cannot be such a thing as true life without praise. Praising and no longer praising are related to each other as are living and no longer living. Praise of God, like petition, is a mode of existence, not something with may or may not be present in life.'²¹⁷ Following the Faith and Order Commission (a study of the historic creeds) LaCugna argues that 'doxology lies at the root of every aspect of Christian life.'²¹⁸

Doxology is not merely the language of direct prayer and praise, but all forms of thought, feeling, action and hope directed and offered by believers to God. Doxological affirmations therefore are not primarily definitions or ascriptions. There are performative and ascriptive,

²¹³ Groppe, *Theology and Conversation*, p. 247.

²¹⁴ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 320.

²¹⁵ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 359.

²¹⁶ Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Analogy and Doxology", in *Basic Questions in Theology* (London: SCM, 1970), p. 215.

²¹⁷ Claus Westermann, *The Praise of God in the Psalms* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1965), pp. 159-161.

²¹⁸ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 336

lines of thought, speech and action which, as they are offered, open up into the living reality of God himself.²¹⁹

Doxology is, for LaCugna, the process by which we are restored to right relationship: ‘[T]he giving of praise to God has the power to bring about our union with God, to put us back in right relationship with God. By naming God as a recipient of our praise, we are redirected away from ourselves towards God.’²²⁰ Doxology is the very fabric of God’s inner life. It is the nature of the social order, and the pattern for the relationship of *God-with-us* and *us-with-God-and-each-other*. In ascribing glory/praise to God, we mirror the doxological life of God *in se* revealed in God’s life *ad extra*. The term ‘glory’ (δόξα/*doxa*) is not only helpful for facilitating our understanding of LaCugna’s axiomatic inseparability of *oikonomia* and *theologia*, but it also reflects God’s life towards-us in light of God’s acts in salvation history, and in turn, therefore, it reflects God’s life within God. Firstly, each person of the Trinity seeks to glorify the other persons of the Trinity. In this way, God’s triune life can be said to be doxological. This is demonstrated in the witness of scripture. The Son glorifies the Father and the Holy Spirit glorifies the Son:

I glorified you on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. (John 17.4)

He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. (John 16.14)

This is called ‘mutual glorification’, and it reflects the deeper reality of the indwelling of the three persons in one Godhead, as Gregory of Nyssa poetically describes:

You see the revolving circle of the glory moving from Like to Like. The Son is glorified by the Spirit; the Father is glorified by the Son; again the Son has His glory from the Father; and the Only-begotten thus becomes the glory of the Spirit. For with what shall the Father be glorified, but with the true glory of the Son: and with what again shall the Son be glorified, but with the majesty of the Spirit? In like manner, again, Faith complete the circle, and glorifies the Son by means of the Spirit, and the Father by means of the Son.²²¹

At this point, it would be fruitful to briefly consider what this thesis might understand by the term ‘glory.’ Most simply put, ‘glory’, from the latin *gloria* (fame, renown) describes something of great beauty or splendour. In Christian theology, thinkers have often thought there to be a certain amount

²¹⁹ “The Filioque Clause in Ecumenical Perspectives”, in *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ: Ecumenical Reflections on the Filioque Controversy*, World Council of Churches Faith & Order Paper 102, ed. L. Vischer (London: SPCK, 1981), p. 10. Cited by LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 336.

²²⁰ LaCugna, *God for Us*, pp. 338-339.

²²¹ Gregory of Nyssa, *Dogmatic Treatises* 5:324.

of consonance between ‘glory’ and ‘beauty’. Von Balthasar, for example, carefully develops a ‘theological aesthetics’ based on ‘seeing the form’ of Christ — the ‘glorious’ form which breaks out with unsurpassable ‘splendour’ in every aspect of his life, death, and resurrection.²²² Similarly, Calvin uses the metaphor of theatre to assist his conveyance of the correspondence between the beauty of the natural world and the glory of God: ‘[every human being is] formed to be a spectator of the created world and given eyes that he might be led to its author by contemplating so beautiful a representation.’²²³ In this regard, ‘glorification’ can only make sense in community - it is, by nature, a fundamentally social enterprise. It begins, of course, in the mutual glorification of the divine persons. The Father glorifies the Son, that is, the Father delights in the beauty and splendour of the Son, and *vice versa*. God’s impulse to create the world arises, Lane argues, from this interior pattern of mutual glorification, as the ‘persons of the Trinity reach for more and more dance partners in an ever-expanding celebration of God’s glory.’²²⁴ “Glory,” as one commentator on Balthasar’s work defines it, is “that splendour thrown off at the encounter of God with His world.”²²⁵ Lane continues, ‘We ought never to speak of God’s beauty without reference to the form and manner of appearing which he exhibits in salvation-history.’ In the same way, LaCugna argues that we ought never to attempt to speak of God’s life *in sae* without reference to God’s life *ad extra*.

Of course, our rendering of glory to the triune persons can only mirror, and indeed point to, the perfect ascription of glory offered between the divine persons for one another: ‘In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven’ (Matthew 5.16). The Christian life ought to be one which seeks to glorify God in such a way that others may be compelled by the splendour and beauty of Him who is Glory, to join with us in glorifying God.²²⁶ Lane argues, ‘In extolling God glory, the praise of the faithful helps restore the earth to its original order and wholeness.’²²⁷ In the Christian life, there is then a connection between praise/worship and glory. Our praise of God makes known the glory of God, the glory to

²²² Hans Urs von Balthasar, “Earthly Beauty and Divine Glory,” *Communio* 10:3 (1983), p. 202.

²²³ Comm. Romans 1:19. CO 49:23. Translation by William Bouwsma in John Calvin: A Sixteenth-Century Portrait (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 103

²²⁴ Belden Lane, *Ravished by Beauty: The Surprising Legacy of Reformed Spirituality* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 2011), p. 62.

²²⁵ Raymond Gawronski, “The Beauty of the Cross: The Theological Aesthetics of Hans Urs von Balthasar,” *Logos* 5:2 (Summer 2002), p. 194.

²²⁶ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 338.

²²⁷ Belden Lane, *Ravished by Beauty*, p. 67.

which our praise is rendered, and from which it is inspired: ‘Followers of Christ are exhorted to be icons of Christ and therefore icons of God.’²²⁸ However, it would be an over simplification to exclusively equate glorification with the rendering of praise in liturgical acts of worship. Von Balthasar, drawing from the context of his theological aesthetics, draws three inferences of ‘glorification’ which are relevant for Christian living.²²⁹ First, ‘glorifying’ involves the whole self, rendering praise as bearers of God’s glory (*imago dei*): ‘we must praise him through our existence, inasmuch as this is an existence that is in him and therefore what it truly ought to be.’²³⁰ LaCugna concurs, arguing: ‘mutuality refers to the common ground of every person in the origin of the personhood, God (Father), and the common *telos* of glorifying God and eternal union with God.’²³¹ Secondly, that we glorify God in light of our future eschatological glory: ‘the entire horizon of human existence has been disclosed.’²³² Finally, divine glory is more than an object of praise, but ‘its inner principle, since through grace we are drawn into the glorious love made visible in Jesus Christ, his dying and rising.’²³³ In other words, glory is the very fabric of God’s triune life.

The fabric of God’s inner triune life, reflected in *God’s-life-for-us*, establishes then the right social pattern of relationship for *us-with-God-and-each-other*. Whitfield argues, ‘because the Trinity is the ground of all reality, the mission of the triune God is the mission for everything. The church is redeemed for this purpose, and the church’s mission is to participate in this God-glorifying mission.’²³⁴ LaCugna argues that God created us to live as God lives, that is, to live doxologically. In other words, human persons are not only invited to mirror the pattern of mutual glorification and praise giving of God’s inner life, but were created for this very purpose:

We are most fully human when we praise God, since this is the purpose for which we were made: “We who first hoped in Christ have been destined and appointed to live for the praise of God’s glory [...] We were created for the purpose of glorifying God by living in right

²²⁸ LaCugna, *God for Us*, pp. 338, 346.

²²⁹ Here, I must express my gratitude to Aidan Nicholls, for directly me so succinctly, to the heart of Von Balthasar’s thoughts on glory/glorification. See, in general, Aidan Nichols, *The Word Has Been Aboard: A Guide Through Balthasar’s Aesthetics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), pp. 244-253.

²³⁰ *GL VII*, p. 397.

²³¹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 347.

²³² *GL VII*, p. 397.

²³³ Aidan Nicholls, *The Word Has Been Aboard*, pp. 244-245.

²³⁴ Keith Whitfield, ‘The Triune God: The God of Mission’, in *Theology and Practice of Mission* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), p. 27.

relationship by living as Jesus Christ did, by becoming holy through the power of the Spirit of God, by existing as persons in communion with God and every creature.²³⁵

It is for this reason that LaCugna argues ‘theology in the mode of doxology’ is the best form of language for illuminating God’s economy. LaCugna would prefer us to conceive of God’s life as self-fulfilling, rather than self-sufficient: ‘God is not self-contained, egotistical and self-absorbed but overflowing love, outreaching desire for union with all that God has made.’²³⁶ Accordingly, God’s own Trinitarian life does not belong to God alone, but rather relates to us in His eternal glory revealed through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit: ‘Trinitarian life is therefore also our life.’²³⁷ God’s triune life is self-fulfilling, because it is doxological, and doxology, that is the rendering of praise/glory is self-fulfilling. LaCugna argues God’s inward doxological life, and God’s doxological life for-us is contagious: ‘Praise works by overflow and contagion; it invites others to join in.’²³⁸ God becomes *God-for-us* when we participate and ‘join in’ with God in this pattern of praise rendering: ‘God is made *our* God when creation and humanity render praise to God.’²³⁹ For LaCugna, this has profound implications for the Christian life. The doctrine of the Trinity is relevant when it is doxological, for this is when it comes to life. Christians are invited to encounter and participate in God, and this pattern of encounter and participation sets the agenda for our relationship with each other: ‘Christian life is indeed an ongoing encounter with a personal God who brings about both our union with God and communion with each other. Union with God and communion with each other are actualised through doxology.’²⁴⁰

3.4. Actuating Relations with-God

Doxology actuates our relationship with God. The relationship between God and creature is actualised when, in response to God’s creative and redemptive acts, the creature renders praise to God. Fred Sanders writes: ‘Trinitarian praise points back to that triune source. This is the matrix of Trinitarian theology: wonder, love, and praise that God has done for us and salvation something that

²³⁵ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 342.

²³⁶ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 15

²³⁷ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 228

²³⁸ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 338.

²³⁹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 338.

²⁴⁰ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 345.

manifests and enacts what he is in himself.’²⁴¹ Praise is rendered in response to God’s works in salvation history: ‘Moved by the extravagance of God’s love, by the abundance of God’s good gifts in creation...the heart full of delight or wonder expresses itself in an outpouring of praise.’²⁴² In rendering praise, the praise giver, being drawn into the life of God, discovers more of God: ‘Doxology is the animating power not only of right relationship but also of right knowledge of God (orthodoxy).’²⁴³ There is, then, a reciprocity between knowing and praising, between theology and doxology. Our knowing leads us to praise, which leads to further knowing, leading to further praise, and so on: ‘Praise generates more praise; glory adds to glory.’²⁴⁴

Creation, in ascribing glory to God, reflects the divine-human relationship in view of God’s activity in salvation history. Sanders writes: ‘To join in the ancient Christian prayer called the *Gloria Patri*, directing praise to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is to come into alignment here in the world “as it is now” with triune glory “as it was in the beginning.”’²⁴⁵ The doxological life of the Trinity *in se* flows outward and manifests itself in the doxological life of the Trinity *ad extra*. The Father has always glorified the Son, and the Son the Father, and so on: ‘There was never a time when God was not glorious as Father, as Son, and as Holy Spirit. But there was a time when that singular glory... has not yet disclosed itself so as to invite creatures to its praise.’²⁴⁶ In the economy of salvation, the Son glorifies the Father through Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. As the Father reveals himself through the Son, in the Spirit, so our praise is offered to the Father in the same. Moltmann suggests that there is a tight fit between soteriology and doxology, between God’s acts in salvation history and God *in se*:

The principle that the doctrine of salvation and doxology do not contradict one another is founded on the fact that there are not two different Trinities. There is only one, single, divine Trinity and one, single divine history of salvation. The triune God can only appear in history as he is in himself, and no other way. He is in himself as he appears in salvation history, for it he himself who is manifested, and just what he is just what he manifested as being.²⁴⁷

²⁴¹ Fred Sanders, *The Triune God*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), p. 27.

²⁴² LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 335.

²⁴³ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 348.

²⁴⁴ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 338.

²⁴⁵ Fred Sanders, *The Triune God*, p. 25.

²⁴⁶ Fred Sanders, *The Triune God*, p. 25.

²⁴⁷ Jürgen Moltmann, *Trinity and Kingdom*, p. 153.

Christians are called to render praise and glory to God the Father through Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit: ‘Blessed be God the Father, who has blessed us in the Beloved and sealed us with the Holy Spirit of promise’ (Ephesians 1.3-16, condensed). Robin Parry argues:

When we say “Glory to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit” we are describing the way in which God deals with creation. The Father comes to creation through the Son, in the Spirit and creation comes to the Father through the Son and in the Spirit. The doxology beautifully captures what Chris Cocksworth calls the “Trinitarian geography” of God’s interaction with creation, describing the route by which our worship ascends to God.²⁴⁸

This so called ‘Trinitarian geography’ was mapped earlier in the tradition by S Irenaeus:

Now this God is glorified by His Word who is His Son continually, and by the Holy Spirit who is the Wisdom of the Father of all: and the powers of these, (namely) of the Word and Wisdom, which are called Cherubim and Seraphim, with unceasing voices glorify God; and every created thing that is in the heavens offers glory to God the Father of all. He by His Word has created the whole world...²⁴⁹

Christian doxology, is therefore, an act of God that is mediated through the Son, in the power of the Spirit, towards the Father. In this respect, doxology actualizes true relationship between people and God.

3.5. Actuating Relations with-one-another

Furthermore, ‘doxology actualizes communion among persons.’²⁵⁰ Human beings are created in the image of God, and the likeness of God. As such, human beings are to live in such way that conforms to who God is for us. Medley writes: ‘Humanity’s vocation is thus to participate in God’s communion by becoming *imago Trinitatis*.’²⁵¹ Human persons participate in God’s life and become, therefore, *imago Trinitatis* when they render praise to God the Father, through Christ, in the power of the Spirit.²⁵² In rendering praise, not only is the relationship between *person-and-God* restored, but so to is the right relationship between *each-of-us-with-each-other*. For LaCugna, doxology is

²⁴⁸ Robin A. Parry, *Worshipping the Trinity: Coming Back to the Heart of Worship*, (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2013), p. 83.

²⁴⁹ Irenaeus, *DAP*

²⁵⁰ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 344.

²⁵¹ Mark Medley, *Imago Trinitatis: toward a relational understanding of becoming human* (Oxford: University of America Press, 2002), p. 46.

²⁵² Medley, *Imago Trinitatis*, p. 46.

inextricably related to good 'social order'. God is glorified when human persons relate to one another after the example of Jesus Christ: 'Everything that promotes fullness of humanity, that builds up relationships based on charity and compassion, glorifies God. Actively resisting injustice, prejudice and hatred can glorify God. Right relationship is every sphere, according to that which God has ordained, everything that brings human persons closer to the communion for which we were made, glorifies God.'²⁵³

Christians are to be known by the way they relate to one another: 'I give you a new commandment, just as I have loved you, you should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another' (John 13.34-35). LaCugna writes: 'We were created for the purpose of glorifying God by living in right relationship and by living as Jesus did, by becoming holy through the power of the Spirit of God, existing as persons in communion with God and every other creature.'²⁵⁴ Christians are exhorted to glorify God by lives of holiness, service, and living sacrifice:

Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and power forever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4. 9-11)

The act of ascribing praise to God has the capacity to unite persons: '[To praise God is] to route all one's relationships through God, and to open them up to [God's] future for them. Praise actualises the true relationship between people as well as with God.'²⁵⁵ Each member of Christ's body, the Church, is unique, representing different backgrounds, races, genders, ages, appearances, and socioeconomic strata. In living doxologically, that is, in pursuing unity with God, members of the Church can be united with one another, despite difference of opinion: 'People who might not otherwise agree with each other or even like each other can be genuinely united with each other in the praise of God.'²⁵⁶ Our unity with God has potential not only to bring unity within the Christian community, but by extension, to human kind. This unity is realised in our praise of the triune God,

²⁵³ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 343.

²⁵⁴ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 342.

²⁵⁵ Dietrich Ritschl, *Memory and Hope: an inquiry concerning the presence of Christ* (London: Macmillan, 1967), p. 169.

²⁵⁶ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 344.

in whom we discover ‘mutual love between between persons-in-relationship who recognise the equality and value the differences of “the others.”’²⁵⁷

3.6. Conclusion

The doxological life of the triune God is to be our life. In mirroring that life, albeit dimly, relationships between persons are actualised:

We were created for the purpose of glorifying God by means of the whole network of our relationships... We are in right relationship to other persons when we see them not as means to an end, nor as creatures designed to meet our relational needs, but persons in their own right who share the same destiny of glory... Our bond with others is anchored in divine life. Our communion with other persons is an aspect of our communion with God. This makes possible a genuine bond with those to whom we might not natively be attracted or kindly disposed.²⁵⁸

Doxology, then, as we have discussed, actualises our relationship with-God and with-one-another. However, our relationships with-one-another can never quite reach of the unity found in the relationship between the triune persons. They are but a dim analogy. Zizioulas suggests that the Christian community can be described as ‘an image or a sign of the Trinity’²⁵⁹, whilst Gunton writes ‘through the work of Christ and the Spirit to create, in time and space, a living echo of the communion God is in eternity.’²⁶⁰ LaCugna is clear that the relationships between God and creature, between creature and God, and between creature and creature are of a ‘qualitatively different character.’²⁶¹ LaCugna’s theology of relation is developed in terms of both communion and distinction. God, LaCugna argues, ‘belongs to the sphere of infinite relatedness, infinite capacity for relationship, infinite actuality of relationship, both to past, present, and future reality.’²⁶² Human persons, in contrast, relate to one another in light of their ‘historical-cultural-linguistic

²⁵⁷ Parry, *Worshipping the Trinity*, p. 44.

²⁵⁸ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 347.

²⁵⁹ Zizioulas, “The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today: Suggestions for an Ecumenical Study,” in *The Forgotten Trinity*, vol. 3, *A Selection of Papers Presented to the British Council of Churches Study Commission on Trinitarian Doctrine Today*, ed. Alasdair I. C. Heron (London: British Council of Churches, 1991), p. 29.

²⁶⁰ Gunton, *Father, Son and Holy Spirit*, p. 198.

²⁶¹ Groppe, *Theology and Conversation*, p. 249.

²⁶² LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 292.

conditions.²⁶³ In God alone, there is a full correspondence between personhood and being. LaCugna argues that there is a full correspondence between God's way of '*being*' in relationship with us (*God-for-us*) and God's '*personhood*', which is a perfect expression of God's being as God. She relates the terms '*being*' and '*personhood*' to an understanding of '*hypostasis*' and '*ousia*'.²⁶⁴ Personhood and relationality is imperfectly realised in human persons, who are continually being perfected in the image of the relational God: 'Human beings are created in the image of a relational God and gradually are being perfected in that image (*theosis*), making more and more real the communion of all creatures with one another.'²⁶⁵

LaCugna is explicit that the doctrine of the trinity is not the most 'speculative of doctrines', but rather the 'most practical', as its focus is the saving presence of God in human history. In Roger Haight's words: 'The point of the doctrine of the Trinity is therefore soteriological... The doctrine is not intended to be information about the internal life of God, but how God relates to human beings.'²⁶⁶ LaCugna grounds her revitalised doctrine by closely restoring the relationship between liturgy and theology, and more importantly, in arguing that both properly proceed from doxology.²⁶⁷ In doing so, LaCugna reclaims the relevance of the doctrine for the Christian life. Doxology is not only 'the precondition of theological speech, particularly speech about God', but it is the language of participation. Velti-Matti Kärkkäinen defines 'doxological response' as 'participation in and transformation into God rather than an attempt to know God *in se*'.²⁶⁸ Doxology, is therefore, the context for living out trinitarian faith. LaCugna argues that it is the vocation of every Christian to render glory to God, and so doxology must be a way of life — in other words, the Christian life is thoroughly trinitarian, and it is trinitarian because is doxological, that is, rooted in the continuous praise of the God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.²⁶⁹ Theology in the mode of doxology, LaCugna suggests, allows the theologian to maintain the balance between *apophatic* and *cataphatic*, between *theologia* and *oikonomia*, between *contemplative* and

²⁶³ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 292.

²⁶⁴ LaCugna, *God for Us*, pp. 304-305.

²⁶⁵ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 292.

²⁶⁶ Roger Haight, 'The Point of Trinitarian Theology', *Toronto Journal of Theology* 4 (1988), p. 199.

²⁶⁷ Catherine LaCugna, 'Can Liturgy Ever Again Become a Source for Theology?', pp. 1-13.

²⁶⁸ Velti-Matti Kärkkäinen, *The Trinity: Global Perspectives* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), p. 113.

²⁶⁹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, pp. 342-348.

speculative, whilst also being *practically oriented*. The doxological mode of theology is ‘economic’ mode of theology:

The doxological mode of theology keeps together the primary and secondary theology, reaffirming both the centrality of the narratives of Christian experience for Christian theology, and the appropriateness of theological reflection on the divine ‘actor’ in the narratives.

Trinitarian theology is inherently doxological. Its goal is to understand something of what it means to both confess and live out faith in the God of Jesus Christ. Its central theme is the mystery of persons in communion. Theology itself is the fruit of communion with God and also can be a means of union with God. Pursued in the mode of doxology, the scope of trinitarian theology appears to be without boundaries. Understood as a way of rendering praise to God, trinitarian theology of God reconnects spirituality with theology, orthodoxy with orthopraxis, the contemplative with the speculative, apophatic with cataphatic, the pastoral with the academic.²⁷⁰

This chapter has argued that LaCugna can be said to have reclaimed the relevance of the doctrine of the trinity insofar as she restores the unity between *oikonomia* and doxology. For LaCugna, God’s doxological life is a fundamentally social enterprise; in doxology, the Christian is drawn into *God’s-life-for-us*, and is so orientated towards right relationship with-God and with-one-another. Doxology is, for LaCugna, the mode and facilitator of ‘economic’ theology. In the next chapter, I argue that scripture is God’s revelation of *God’s-life-with-us*, and as such, it offers the most penetrating vista into God’s life *ad intra*. In this regard, I will attempt to offer a biblical basis (and defence) of the LaCugna’s presentation of God’s co-eternal, co-equal, and co-collaborative life, operating without subordination or hierarchy.

²⁷⁰ LaCugna, *God for Us*, pp, 358, 368.

Scripture

A Economic Defence of the Social Trinity

Virtually every recent discussion on the Trinity refers to, and depends on Karl Rahner's assertion that the *immanent trinity* is the *economic trinity*, *und umgekehrt*.²⁷¹ Indeed, the debate around social trinitarianism seems, very often, to centre around issues of ecclesial tradition/experience, and systematic/philosophical theology. Whilst offering valuable insight, they cannot, in isolation, be determinative for the Church in understanding who and what God is. Horrell argues that a key question in any discussion of divine ontology, has to be whether or not any proposed understanding of who or what God is corresponds with the witness of scripture.²⁷² This will be especially true of a project such as this one, which hopes to be of value for a Church (in Wales) which takes the three-fold witness of scripture, tradition and reason seriously. Richard Hooker's so-called *three-legged stool*, which balances the authorities of scripture, reason and tradition, is often appealed to as a hallmark of Classical Anglicanism. Hooker writes: 'What Scripture doth plainly deliver, to that the first place both of credit and obedience are due; the next whereunto, is what any man can necessarily conclude by force of Reason; after this, the voice of the Church succeedeth'.²⁷³ This chapter asserts that the witness of scripture offers us an accurate picture of the economic trinity, which truly reflects who God is *in se*: 'the terms [in scripture] used for the relationship between the members of the economic Godhead provide our most penetrating vista for understanding the immanent Trinity'.²⁷⁴ In other words, the witness of scripture is God's revelation of God's triune economic activity in salvation history, which is in turn, the window through which we may catch glimpses of God's life *in se*.

Few social-trinitarians sufficiently address these criticisms. Perhaps the most significant attempt at such a response has been offered by J Scott Horrell. Indeed I shares Horrell's concern that conceptions of God's inner life have 'often been distanced from Scripture'.²⁷⁵ However, whilst

²⁷¹ J. Scott Horrell, 'Toward a Biblical Model of the Social Trinity: Avoiding Equivocation of Nature and Order', *Journal of the Evangelical Society* 47/3 (September 2004), pp. 399-421, [p. 400, n. 3].

²⁷² Horrell, 'Toward a Biblical Model of the Social Trinity', p. 400.

²⁷³ Richard Hooker, *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* 5,8,2

²⁷⁴ Horrell, 'Toward a Biblical Model of the Social Trinity', p. 405.

²⁷⁵ Horrell, 'Toward a Biblical Model of the Social Trinity', p. 398.

Horrell seeks to offer a biblical basis for a social doctrine of the trinity, he concludes that the witness of scripture offers a corrective to some of the classical hallmarks of social trinitarianism. For example, he affirms the eternal subordination of the Son.²⁷⁶ In this chapter, I will argue that a clear and critical engagement with scripture leads us towards, rather than away from a social model of the trinity as more broadly understood. That is, scripture offers an account of God's co-eternal, co-equal, and co-collaborative triune life. It is the vista through which we catch a glimpse of the activity of the economic trinity in salvation history.

As this project seeks to be of value to the Church in Wales, this chapter begins by defending the primary role of scripture as a normative voice in theological discussion. Following the Catechism of the Church in Wales, I argue that scripture may inform theology in three ways: i. as a source of revelation; ii. as a source of authority; iii. as a source of transformation.

4.1. The Normative Voice of Scripture for the Church

4.1.1 A Source of Revelation

What is the Bible?

The Bible is the record of God's revelation of himself to mankind through his people of Israel, and above all in his Son, Jesus Christ.²⁷⁷

The concept of revelation is central to the Christian faith, which asserts that God has uniquely revealed himself to humanity by entering human history as a specific point in the person of Jesus Christ. However, the *weight/necessity* of revelation for faith is disputed. This chapter asserts that the economic activity of God in the world, that is, God's revelation of himself in the human story, is the *only* means through which we can know God as Trinity. As such, Christian theology should ground itself in the economic acts of revelation of the triune God.²⁷⁸ Barth's doctrine of revelation is deeply related to his doctrine of scripture, which understands scripture not as *direct* revelation, but as an inspired human testimony of God's revelation in human history, which becomes the Word of God by the work of the Holy Spirit: 'Barth's conviction [is] that the Bible ought to be treated as

²⁷⁶ Horrell, 'Toward a Biblical Model of the Social Trinity', p. 420.

²⁷⁷ The Church in Wales, *The Catechism: An Outline of the Faith* (2013) [ONLINE] Available at: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/cinw/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Catechism-English-Text-A4.pdf> [Accessed 19 October 2018].

²⁷⁸ John R. Frank, *Barth for Armchair Theologians* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 163.

testimony to God's self-revelation in history.²⁷⁹ For Barth, revelation begins and ends with the self-revealing triune God: 'the same God who is unimpaired unity is revealer, revelation, and revealedness.'²⁸⁰ Put more simply, God reveals God. The revealed God is what scripture calls the Word of God. For Barth, the Logos is the Word of God. Scripture witnesses to the Word revealed. The witness is reliable but human, thus it is a creature, thus it is fallen, however it is God breathed and thus most sufficient. Following Barth, the scriptures relate to revelation in that they 'witness to revelation' — as God's word the scriptures point to God's Word:

The Bible is not in itself and as such God's past revelation [Gottes geschene Offenbarung] ... But, speaking to us and heard by us as God's Word, the Bible bears witness [bezeugt] to past revelation ... Therefore the decisive relation of the Church to revelation is its witness by the Bible. Its witness *Uhre Bezeugung!*²⁸¹

[T]he Bible is real witness only in its relation to the past revelation attested in it, i. e., the factual recollection of past revelation!²⁸²

According to Barth, the 'content' of revelation is God. God is both the *subject* of and *object* of revelation. God, as the *subject* of revelation, self-discloses God. Though what God self-reveals and self-discloses by entering and engaging in human history, most prominently in the person of Jesus Christ at the Incarnation, is not definitive for God. There is always more to God. Understanding what is meant by revelation is important for understanding scripture, particularly if we advocate a relationship, as does this thesis, between revelation and scripture. If revelation is God's indefinite self-disclosure of God, then scripture is the human testimony of God's indefinite self-disclosure. This thesis agrees with LaCugna, who argues that scripture accurately reflects and portrays the economic Trinity, but that this portrayal is limited. In other words, the thesis is committed to an '*obedient*' cataphatism; scripture gives permission to truthfully claim who God is, but it does not say all that there is to say. Cataphatic theology is a theology which uses positive statements when describing God. This is in contrast to apophatic theology which uses negative statements. This thesis asserts that for cataphatic theology to be considered '*obedient*' it needs to take seriously the

²⁷⁹ Mark Smith, *Testimony to Revelation: Karl Barth's Strategy of Biblical Interpretation in Die Kirchliche Dogmatik* (University of Sheffield, 1997), p. i.

²⁸⁰ Barth, *CD I/1: The Doctrine of the Word of God*. Trans. Bromiley, G. W., 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956), p. 344.

²⁸¹ Barth, *CD I/1*

²⁸² Barth, *CD I/1*

apophatic. Pseudo-Dionysius believed that apophatic theology, and cataphatic theology belong together. As such, he would often pair the two. If a theology over-stresses the cataphatic or apophatic, we may consider it ‘*disobedient*’.²⁸³ LaCugna writes:

While there may be a hiddenness, incomprehensibility, and even (in apophatic theology) *darkness*, there are no masks—as the incarnation and the cross powerfully demonstrate. God is honest, true, and genuine in communicating himself. I presuppose that the economic Trinity as revealed in the Bible accurately represents to finite creation who and what God is, but that the economic Trinity is by no means all that is God.²⁸⁴

I therefore argue that scripture is a source of revelation in so far as it is the testimony that communities of faith have offered about revelation. The Gospel writers themselves speak of bearing witness to that revelation, to the things they have seen and heard of God:

The is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true. But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written (John 21.24-25).

He testifies to what he has seen and heard, yet no one accepts his testimony (John 3.32).

Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed (Luke. 1.1-4).

And he answered them, ‘Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the good news brought to them (Luke 7.22).

The *subject* of revelation is God, the *pointer* toward that revelation is scripture:

To be sure, scripture is not itself the Word. Christ is the one living Word that God speaks to us, and that Word is communicated to the church through, by, and with the instrumental humanity of the words of scripture. Once again, scriptural reading is not about nervously evacuating the text of its humanity, but reading for the text’s deepest reality. To read scripture under the Word is therefore to allow oneself to be conflicted by the question this reality raises: *what difference does God’s activity of revelation make to understanding scriptural readers and reading?*²⁸⁵

²⁸³ For a key discussion on the complementarity of the apophatic and cataphatic, see, Dionysius, ‘The Mystical Theology’, *The Complete Works* trns. by Colm Luibhéid (New York: Paulist Press, 1987) § 3.

²⁸⁴ J. Scott Horrell, p. 400.

²⁸⁵ Angus Paddison, ‘Scriptural Reading and Revelation: A Contribution to Local Hermeneutics’, *International Journal of Systematic Theology* Vol. 8 No. 4 (October 2006), pp. 433-448, [p. 437].

The reason why Christians love the Bible is that it speaks to us of Jesus Christ. We are not bibliolaters, we do not worship the Bible. But we worship Christ, and the Bible points us to him.²⁸⁶

4.1.2. A Source of Authority

How was the Bible given to us?

The Bible was given to us by the Holy Spirit who first inspired and guided the writers, and then led the Church to accept their writings as Holy Scripture.²⁸⁷

Following Barth, this chapter has so far argued that scripture is the ‘word of God’ which points us to the ‘Word of God.’ Scripture is a human testimony, and as such we should steer from applying the categories ‘inerrant’ (without error) and ‘infallible’ (incapable of error) to scripture. This is not to say that scripture is without authority. On the contrary, this chapter has and will argue that ‘all scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work’ (2 Timothy 3.16-17). Scripture is a reliable witness to revelation, and as such, it carries authority. Indeed, Barth argues that the authority of scripture is directly related to the function of scripture and its relationship to revelation. It is authoritative because it points to God:

Why and wherein does the Biblical witness possess authority? Precisely in this, that it claims no authority at all for itself, that its witness consists in allowing that Other Thing to be itself and through itself the authority. Hence we do the Bible a misdirected honour, and one unwelcome to itself, if we directly identify it with this Other Thing, the revelation itself. This can happen... in the form of a doctrine of the general and uniform inspiration of the Bible.²⁸⁸

The nature of scriptures authority, and how this is expressed in practice is contested. This thesis asserts that scripture is a unique source of authority (in that it is a unique testimony of God’s self-revelation) amongst a cloud of authorities, namely tradition and reason. Scripture has priority amongst the three-fold sources of authority. The thirty-nine articles of religion give voice to the authority of scripture for Anglicans. Article VI claims, ‘Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary for salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that is should be believed as an article of Faith, or be though requisite or necessary to salvation.’ Further, article VIII commends that the creeds as provable by scripture.

²⁸⁶ John Stott, *The Anglican Communion and Scripture* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1996), p. 49.

²⁸⁷ Church in Wales, *The Catechism: An Outline of the Faith* (2013)

²⁸⁸ Karl Barth, *Die kirchliche Dogmatik*, quoted by John Baillie, *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), pp. 34-35.

Article XX tasks the Church with being ‘the keeper of Holy Writ’, and article XXV promotes the authority of scripture in advocating the sacraments of baptism and communion. For Anglicans, therefore, scripture has authority in that is ‘complete’ — it contains everything we *need* to know. At the same time, scripture is limited as it does not contain everything that there *is* to know — there is still more to God.

In practice, the authority of scripture must be tripled with the authorities of tradition and reason. This chapter rejects the sole and isolated authority of scripture (*Sola Scriptura*) arguing that such a position can lead to a departing from the catholic faith: ‘when they and their Bibles were alone together, what strange fantastical opinion soever at any time entered into their heads, their use was to think that the Sprit taught it them.’²⁸⁹ Instead, whilst Anglicans ‘affirm the sovereign authority of the Holy Scriptures’, they are to be ‘translated, read, and understood, and their meaning grasped through a continuing process of interpretation... to be understood and read in the light afforded by the contexts of “tradition” and “reason.”’²⁹⁰ That said, Hooker argues scripture has priority amongst the other authorities, and as such, scripture should be the test of the other authorities. Aquinas argues that which one might reason, should not contradict the witness of scripture: ‘Therefore God does not instil into man any opinion or belief contrary to natural knowledge... This is confirmed also by the authority of Augustine who says (Gen. at lit. ii) : That which truth shall make known can nowise be opposition to the holy books whether of the Old or of the New Testament.’²⁹¹

This chapter argues that scripture is a source of authority insofar as it both bears witness, and therefore somehow carries the authority of God himself. The scriptures are authoritative inasmuch as they are revelatory. They are revelatory as they point toward the *subject* of revelation. They are authoritative insofar as the one who has authority has invested authority in them. The authority of the word of God is secondary, therefore, to authority of the Word of God: ‘And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age”’ (Matthew 28.18-19).

²⁸⁹ Hooker, *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, 8.

²⁹⁰ *The Virginia Report* (1997), §3.

²⁹¹ Thomas Aquinas, *SCG*, §7, 8.

4.1.3. A Source of Transformation

How should we read the Bible?

We should read the Bible with the desire and prayer that through it God will speak to us by his Holy Spirit, and enable us to know him and do his will.²⁹²

Finally, this chapter argues that the Christian should, recognising scripture as a source of revelation and authority, read scripture expecting and indeed hoping for transformation. In reading scripture, the Christian expects to be caught up through its invitation into God's life — to be transformed by the God to whom scripture bears witness. In this way, the Church understands scripture to be a living testimony of a historic people which can speak into and transform the lives of people in our own time and our own context: 'Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart' (Hebrews 4.12).

John Webster argues that the authority and witness of scripture is related to the transforming power of scripture, that is, the scriptures can be called authoritative because they transform thought and practice: 'The authority of Scripture lies in its reference to the church's God and his gospel. Scripture is authoritative because it is instrumental in bringing the word of God to bear upon the thought and practice of the church.'²⁹³ In other words, the authority of scripture is none other than the testimony of a peoples experience of God, and God's redemption of God's people in the person of Jesus Christ. Scripture, in bearing witness to the story of God, invites the reader to be drawn into and transformed by God's ongoing story. Kevin Vanhoozer argues that scripture becomes the word of God when the Spirit enables it to be efficacious:

The word of God is God in creative, communicative and self-communicative action, doing things in and with the word written and the word made flesh. The Bible, as comprised of divinely authorised illocutions, *is* the word of God, and that it *becomes* the word of God if and when the Spirit renders it perlocutionarily efficacious. In its fullest sense the 'Word of God' is something that God *says*, something that God *does*, and something that God *is*. The Scripture is the word of God because it is the chosen means through which the triune God presents Christ, ministers and administers the covenant of grace, and makes all things new through the ministry of the Word in the power of the Spirit.²⁹⁴

²⁹² Church in Wales. 2013. *The Catechism: An Outline of the Faith*.

²⁹³ John Webster, *Dictionary of Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (London: SPCK, 2005), p. 275.

²⁹⁴ Kevin Vanhoozer, "Word of God", *Dictionary of Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (London: SPCK, 2005), p. 854,

This chapter argues, therefore, that scripture offers the Church an ‘economic’ vista through which to encounter the story of God’s economic activity in salvation history. Having traced LaCugna’s account of the ‘recession’ and ‘recovery’ of the doctrine of the Trinity, and engaged with her mode of economic theology, that is, doxology, this thesis will now argue that LaCugna’s social doctrine of the Trinity would be strengthened if it were yet more ‘economic’. That is to say, LaCugna does not offer, in the view of this thesis, a sufficient biblical basis for her proposals. This thesis believes that LaCugna’s (and social-trinitarians more broadly) lack of engagement with scripture has offered a somewhat open-goal for critics of social trinitarianism. Giles Emery insists, against the claim of numerous social-trinitarians, that Aquinas’s classical trinitarian theology is thoroughly scriptural: ‘[there are] deep Biblical and Patristic foundations of [Thomas’s] trinitarian doctrine’ which aims ‘to manifest the deep sense of the Gospel...[it] starts from Scripture in order to return to Scripture.’²⁹⁵ Meanwhile, Kevin Giles argues that social-trinitarians misinterpret scripture with their proposition. Giles claims that scripture witnesses to the life of Christ rather than the internal and eternal life of God as pattern for Christian life:

The way in which the three divine persons relate to one another in eternity is neither a model for nor prescriptive of human relationships in the temporal world. God’s life in heaven does not set a social agenda for human life on earth. Divine relations in eternity cannot be replicated on earth by created human beings, and fallen beings at that. What the Bible asks disciples of Christ to do, both men and women, is to exhibit the love of God to others and to give ourselves in self-denying sacrificial service and self-subordination, as the Lord of glory did in becoming one with us in our humanity and dying on the cross. In other words, the incarnate Christ provides the perfect example of Godly living, not the eternal life of God.

Specifically, appealing to the doctrine of the Trinity, a three-fold perfect divine communion, to support either the equality of men and women or their hierarchical ordering, is mistaken and to be opposed.²⁹⁶

4.2. Defining our Terms

Before it will be possible to critically engage with the biblical material, it will be necessary to first define our terms, and situate them within their historical variations. Definitions of “person” and “nature” are significantly problematic in discussions about God. Since the birth of the Church, much ink has been spilt, and unresolved disputes in this area ultimately led to the schism between

²⁹⁵ Gilles Emery, *Trinity in Aquinas* (Ypsilanti: Sapientia Press, 2003), pp. 317, 319.

²⁹⁶ Kevin Giles, *Jesus and the Father: Modern Evangelicals Reinvent the Doctrine of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), p. 228.

East and West in 1054. This is where our discussion begins, with an observation of the similarities and differences between East and West in their account of Trinitarian relations.

Eastern Fathers begin with *hypostasies* ('person') primary, and with *ousia* ('substance/essence') secondary, in their account of the Trinity. The Eastern employment of *hypostasies* caused great confusion among Western theologians, whose translation of ὑπόστασις equated with οὐσία. They understood the Easterns, in speaking of three *hypostasies* to mean three *ousia* ('substances') and therefore suspected them of tritheism. The influence of the Cappadocian Fathers led to the eventual clarification of the term, and by the Council of Constantinople (381) the formula 'Three *Hypostasies* in One *Ousia*' standardised the terminology, and came to be 'everywhere accepted as the epitome of the orthodox doctrine of the Holy Trinity.'²⁹⁷ Gregory of Nazianzus (c.329-390) understood the divine nature to be comprised of three *hypostasies* which may each be called God; yet the *hypostasies* of the Son and the Spirit derive their divine nature from the from the *hypostasies* of the Father. The unity of God is preserved in this way, 'a one eternally changes to a two and stops at three—meaning the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In a serene, non-temporal, incorporeal way, the Father is parent of the 'offspring' and originator of the 'emanation'—or whatever name one can apply when one has entirely extrapolated from things visible.'²⁹⁸ In other words, following Horrell, 'the deity of the Son and the Spirit, eternal and full as it may be, is received from the Father.'²⁹⁹ Here, we encounter a crucial parting point between the Eastern and Western Church. More importantly, for this project, it is here that we also encounter a separation between the *Oikonomia* and *Theologia*. This thesis will shortly come to argue that an understanding of Trinitarian relations rooted in the economy, as revealed in scripture, strengthens the case for the *filioque* clause.

However, other Eastern Churches, such as the Greek Church, argued that the divine *ousia* was held in common among the three persons co-equally, rather than deriving directly from the Father. It was the Greek Church which first coined the term 'perichoresis', the buzz word among social trinitarians today. The term describes the indwelling, or 'interpenetration' of each person in the other, in an eternal sharing of the divine *ousia*, as the centre of divine unity.³⁰⁰ It is claimed that the term was first used by Gregory of Nazianzus, and that it closely relates to the term

²⁹⁷ Cross, 'Hypostasis', p. 673.

²⁹⁸ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 29.2.

²⁹⁹ Horrell, 'Toward a Biblical Model of the Social Trinity', p. 401.

³⁰⁰ Horrell, 'Toward a Biblical Model of the Social Trinity', p. 402.

‘circumincession’ which translates literally as ‘proceeding around.’³⁰¹ The term will be important for the thesis as it has come to describe, for LaCugna and other contemporary social trinitarians, the deep and intimate relationship in which the persons of the Trinity are eternally engaged. LaCugna herself offers the following definition:

Perichoresis means being-in-one-another, permeation without confusion [...] to be a divine person is to be *by nature* in relation to other persons. Each divine person is irresistibly drawn to the other, taking his/her existence from the other, containing the other in him/herself, whilst at the same time pouring self out into the other.³⁰²

In summary, Horrell suggests that this amounts to two models for understanding the divine persons and the divine nature; the divine *ousia* is directly derived from the Father; the divine *ousia* is the sum of attribute held in common by the Godhead, shared equally by all three persons. Horrell suggests that one or the other of these Eastern perspective is fundamental to a social theory of the Trinity.³⁰³ This thesis agrees with Horrell, in so far as the Eastern Church offers us the vocabulary of *perichoresis*, where three persons are primary, each wholly sharing in the divine essence. I will argue that the second model is preferable, as it is the most consistent with the biblical witness of the activity of the Trinity in the economy of salvation; through which the persons of the Trinity collaborate as co-equal partners.

Typically, a Western account of the Trinity reverses the priorities of an Eastern understanding. That is, for Western thinkers, divine *ousia* is primary and *hypostasies* secondary. Augustine and Aquinas both understand God’s triunity on account of a single divine essence expressed in the subsistent relations of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In others words, ‘the divine essence, or single nature, has a reality concurrent with its manifestation in the three persons—this without admitting a quanternity.’³⁰⁴ The problem with the Western account ‘proper’ is, as this thesis had already alluded previously, that it often begins with an robust defence of divine unity, followed by an extended consideration of the divine attributes, before any serious time or attention is given to the Trinity of Persons (*see chapter one*). This thesis has already identified the problems with Aquinas’ approach, and others identify Augustines’ approach to be similarly problematic. Indeed, Colin Gunton accuses both Augustine and Aquinas of over philosophising about the ‘one God’ at

³⁰¹ Cross, ‘circumincession’, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 292.

³⁰² LaCugna, *Gor For Us*, p. 241.

³⁰³ Horrell, ‘Toward a Biblical Model of the Social Trinity’, p. 402.

³⁰⁴ Horrell, ‘Toward a Biblical Model of the Social Trinity’, p. 402.

the expense of true trinitarianism.³⁰⁵ A more generous view would be that the traditional Western account, seeks to understand the divine nature as an ‘actual substance that is primary in uniting the three persons of the Godhead’, rather than ‘merely a unifying set of properties’.³⁰⁶

One possible explanation for the lack of a full and robust account of the Trinity of Persons with Western Theology, is the problematic nature of the term ‘person’ in Western thought. Horrell suggests that as difficult as the term ‘nature’ might be when speaking of God, the term ‘person’ is all the more complex.³⁰⁷ This thesis has already briefly touched upon the difficulty posed by the term ‘person’ in Western trinitarian discussion (*see chapter two*). Hans Urs von Balthasar comments:

Few words have as many layers of meaning as person. On the surface it means just any human being, any countable individual. Its deeper senses, however, point to the individual’s uniqueness that cannot be interchanged and therefore cannot be counted. The complexity of the word’s history, almost impossible to unravel, corresponds to this multiplicity of meanings, and almost from the beginning this history reflects the word’s various aspects of meaning that cannot be synthesised.³⁰⁸

Indeed, there is no single Western definition of the term ‘person’ so to speak — as the definition offered by some of the greatest Western thinkers, such as Augustine and Aquinas differ significantly.³⁰⁹ This difference of conception varies even more greatly within modern and postmodern Western thought.³¹⁰ This chapter will argue that ‘persons’ can only be understood on account of their relationships with others persons. This is what Christ speaks of when he says to Philip, ‘Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’’ (John 14.9). The person of the Son can only be understood on account of his relationship to the persons of the Father, and the Spirit. There is more that can be said here, but having considered the definitions of ‘nature’ and ‘person’

³⁰⁵ Colin E. Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many: God, Creation, and the Culture of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

³⁰⁶ Horrell, ‘Toward a Biblical Model of the Social Trinity’, p. 402.

³⁰⁷ Horrell, ‘Toward a Biblical Model of the Social Trinity’, p. 402.

³⁰⁸ Hans Urs von Balthasar, “On the Concept of Person”, *Communio* 13:1 (1986), p. 18.

³⁰⁹ See, in general, Stephen A. Hipp, “Person” in *Christian Tradition and in the Conception of Albert the Great: A Systematic Study of Its Concept and Illuminated by the Mysteries of the Trinity and Incarnation* (Münster, Aschendorff, 2001).

³¹⁰ See, in general, Stanley J. Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self: A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001).

within their historical and contemporary variations, this chapter now moves to the presentation of the economic Trinity within Scripture.³¹¹

4.3. The Collaboration of Persons in the New Testament

It is often surmised that the doctrine of the Trinity emerged after the NT was written. Few scholars, if any, would attempt to suggest that the NT offers a formal Trinitarian formula. Indeed, even Arthur Wainwright, whose seminal work argues that the doctrine of the Trinity emerges from nowhere else, other than the NT, contends that ‘there is no formal statement of the doctrine of the Trinity in the New Testament.’³¹² The early Christian apologist, Tertullian (c.155 - c.240) is heralded as the author of the first extant Trinitarian formula, and the Church Father first to use the phrase *Trinitas*³¹³: ‘the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; three, however not in condition, but in degree; not in substance, but in form; not in power, but in aspect; yet of one substance, and of once condition, and of one power, inasmuch as He is one God, from whom these degrees and forms and aspects are reckoned, under the name Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’³¹⁴

It is, therefore, sometimes argued that the Trinity is a speculative doctrine, which finds no roots in the thought and worship experience of the earliest Christians.³¹⁵ As such, the question is raised as to whether the Trinity need have any practical relevance for the Christian life today.³¹⁶ Following Wainwright, and others, this chapter argues the contrary; that the Trinity emerges in the NT as reflection of the thought and worship experience of those earliest of Christians, who encountered the living God as Father, as Son, and as Holy Spirit:

The *problem* of the Trinity was being raised and answered in the New Testament. It arose because of the development of Christian experience, worship, and thought. It was rooted in experience, for men were conscious of the power of the Spirit and the presence and Lordship of the risen Christ. It was rooted in worship, because men worshipped in the Spirit, offered their prayers to

³¹¹ In considering LaCugna’s narrative on Eastern/Western Trinitarianism I recognise that the historical literature has complicated this distinction. See, in general, Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

³¹² Arthur Wainwright, *The Trinity in the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 1962), p.vii.

³¹³ Kelly D. McRoberts, ‘The Holy Trinity, in *Systematic Theology* (ed. Stanley M. Horton, Springfield: Logion, 2010), p. 157.

³¹⁴ Tertullian, *AP*, §6

³¹⁵ Wainwright, *The Trinity in the New Testament*, p.vii.

³¹⁶ Kilby, ‘Perichoresis and Projection’, p. 442.

God the Father through Christ, and sometimes worshipped Christ himself. It was rooted in thought, because the writers tackled first the Christological problem, and then, at any rate in the Fourth Gospel, the threefold problem. The whole matter was based on the life and resurrection of Jesus himself, who received the Spirit during his earthly life and imparted the Spirit to others after his resurrection.³¹⁷

Wainwright himself suggests that there about forty instances of the three divine persons together mentioned in the New Testament.³¹⁸ Others argue that there are, in fact, considerably more references. Horrell suggests that there are at least seventy. It is not within the scope of this chapter to consider all of these references, but rather to highlight those texts which will underpin and aid our move towards a social model of the Trinity which is thoroughly biblical. In the following pages, our consideration of the NT will be focused around three areas: i. the collaboration of the Trinity; ii. the eternal order of the Trinity; iii. a call to participate in the life of the Trinity.

Earlier I suggested that for LaCugna (and, indeed, this would be true more broadly within social trinitarian thought), that the collaborative ethos God's intradivine life offers Christians an ethos for a collaborative *life together*: 'living as persons in communion, in right relationship is the *meaning of salvation* and the *ideal* of Christian faith.'³¹⁹ For LaCugna, the Church is called to model its life together after the collaborative life of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Building on LaCugna's work, this thesis will argue that there are three necessary aspects for collaborative life which are demonstrable in the collaborative life of the Father, with the Son, and the Spirit. First, collaborative life is only possible amongst 'distinct persons': '*A person is an ineffable, concrete, unique, and unrepeatable ecstasis of nature.*'³²⁰ Second, collaborative life begins in ordered 'personal' relationships between 'distinct persons': '*Persons are essentially interpersonal, intersubjective.*'³²¹ Finally, collaborative life is perfected by the interpenetration of 'distinct persons' — that is, the indwelling of persons in one another: 'Speaking of God must always mean the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the presence of one another, in total reciprocity, being one for another, by

³¹⁷ Emphasis added. Wainwright prefers to use the word "problem" to the word "doctrine" because the New Testament, he argues, raises and attempts to answer the "problem" of the Trinity, a "problem" which is established as a "doctrine" in later writings. Wainwright, *The Trinity in the New Testament*, p. 267.

³¹⁸ Wainwright, *The Trinity in the New Testament*.

³¹⁹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 292. (original emphasis)

³²⁰ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 289. (original emphasis)

³²¹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 288. (original emphasis)

another, *in and with* another.³²² We shall now explore the evidence in the NT for each of these three aspects of collaborative life.

4.3.1 distinct persons

Wainwright argues, ‘although the biblical writers never used the terms “person”, “individual”, “personality”, which occur frequently in discussions of biblical thought, they were aware of the ideas which underlie these terms. They spoke of people and of God as if there were persons in the sense they had thought, feeling, will, and individuality.’³²³ The same is true of the ‘persons’ of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit — neither of whom are referred to as ‘persons’ anywhere in the NT. Nevertheless, this thesis agrees with Wainwright, who contends that ‘God was regarded as a person.’³²⁴ The OT records numerous occasions of God speaking of himself in the first person: ‘God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” He said further, “This you shall say to the Israelites, “I AM has sent me to you.”’ (Exodus 3.14) God reveals himself to Israel as the divine “I” and God is therefore encountered by Israel as a person bearing the marks of individuality: ‘You are my witnesses, says the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no saviour’ (Isaiah 43.10-11).

In the NT, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit speak in the first person, as the divine “I”, echoing the OT declarations of God to Moses. The Father says to the Son:

And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; who you I am well pleased” (Mark 1.11).

In S. John’s Gospel, the Son speaks of himself as the divine “I” on at least seven occasions:

Jesus said to them. “I am the bread of life.” (John 6.35a).

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world.” (John 8.12a).

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me (John 10.14).

Jesus say to her, “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11.25a).

³²² Leandro Boff, *Trinity and Society* (Marknoll: Orbis, 1988), pp. 133-134. (emphasis added)

³²³ Wainwright, *The Trinity in the New Testament*, p. 11.

³²⁴ Wainwright, *The Trinity in the New Testament*, p. 11.

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14.6a).

“I am the vine, you are the branches” (John 15.5a).

The Holy Spirit speaks as the divine “I” in calling, and setting apart:

While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the word to which I have called them.” (Acts 13.2)

This raises an important question, at least, for the Christian, about the relationship between the OT and NT. How should we approach the OT, in light of the NT? How are we to understand the God who was regarded as ‘person’ *singular* in the OT in light of the revelation of a God who reveals himself as ‘persons’ *triunal* in the NT? The way in which one might answer such questions would largely depend upon their understanding of revelation, and how this in turn should inform our hermeneutics. The early apostolic Church argued that God’s actions in the Old Covenant prefigured what was to be accomplished in the incarnation of the God-man Jesus Christ: ‘These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come.’ (1 Corinthians 10.11) This pattern has since long been established in the Church’s tradition, which encourages her members to read the OT in the light of Christ’s death and resurrection: ‘the New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old Testament in unveiled in the New.’³²⁵ Barth developed a perspective on the interrelationship between the OT and the NT which was firmly rooted within his own Christological reflections on the activity of God in human history. For Barth, Scripture is ‘one long celebration of the fact that God speaks, and that as God speaks he opens himself up to us, giving us a share in his life through Christ and the Spirit.’³²⁶ According to Barth, the OT is to be spoken of in terms of expectation, that is, the witness of the OT, which takes place in a ‘pre-time’ is to be understood in light of ‘fulfilled time’ — the time of Jesus Christ. Barth writes:

We cannot speak of the time of revelation without also speaking of its pre-time. It, too, is revelation time, although in the sense of the time of expecting revelation. Genuine expectation of revelation does not exist without that latter; as expected, revelation is also present to it.

³²⁵ Augustine, *Quaest. in Hept. 2*, 73: PL 34,623; Cf. DV 16.

³²⁶ Joseph Mangina, *Karl Barth: Theologian of Christian Witness* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), p. 29.

Where exception is genuine, “previously” does not mean “not yet”; just as where recollection is genuine, “subsequently” does not mean “no longer.”³²⁷

Perhaps, then, when encountering the God of the singular “I” in the OT, in the light of fulfilled time, we can rightly speak of a Trinity of “I’s” acting in salvation history. The “I” of the Father, the “I” of the Son, and the “I” of the Spirit are encountered in the OT, even though they appear without distinction prior to revelation. In the witness of the OT (pre-time) offers an account of a God who is distinctly personal, in the singular.

The NT offers us, in (apparent) contrast to the OT, an account of a God who is distinctly tri-personal. The God who strikes up conversation with Israel is the same God who continues that conversation in the Incarnation of the God-man, Jesus Christ. Jenson argues that both creation and Creator exist on account of the ongoing conversation between and within God *ad extra* and *ad intra*. In other words, God is a *trialogue*, within which all that is *is*: ‘The Trinity [as] such [is] a conversation, the only one that can never collapse into dialogue or monologue, because the three who make its poles *are* the conversation. Creatures occur as in this discourse others are commandingly mentioned or addressed beyond the three who conduct it. So and only so there are entities that truly are and are truly other than God.’³²⁸ As God’s people continued to participate in this ongoing conversation, they discovered that God was not a person, but rather a trinity of persons. William Hasker argues, ‘The trinitarian Persons are persons. That is to say, they are “distinct centres of knowledge, will, love, and action.”’³²⁹ In the NT, the distinct persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are encountered as divine “I” — ‘each of the trinitarian Persons is a person, and [they do not] in some way literally constitute a “super-person.”’³³⁰ Hasker proceeds to argue, therefore, that it is improper for Christians to conceive of God as a single person, suggesting (albeit indirectly) that it would also be improper to refer to God using personal pronouns.³³¹ Here, Hasker draws us towards a fundamental assertion of social trinitarianism. God is not a person, but rather a community of distinct persons. Opponents of social trinitarianism have argued that ‘the suggestion that the Christian God is not a person is most unusual, to say the

³²⁷ Barth, *CD 1/2*, 70.

³²⁸ Jenson, *The Triune God*, p. 26.

³²⁹ William Hasker, p. 193.

³³⁰ Hasker, *Metaphysics & the Tri-Personal God*, p. 196.

³³¹ Hasker, *Metaphysics & the Tri-Personal God*, p. 196.

least.³³² The difference of opinion here may rest in how one sees the OT and NT declarations of the divine “I” fitting together.

There is clear and obvious progression. The singular divine “I” of the OT is encountered as a Trinity of divine “I’s” in the NT. The language shifts. The people of Israel, who had encountered God, the singular divine “I” as Creator:

Then the LORD God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner (Genesis 2.18).

The singular divine “I” as Redeemer:

It was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath the he swore to your ancestors, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt (Deuteronomy 7.8).

The singular divine “I” as Sustainer:

The spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life (Job 33.4).

Began to encounter the “I” of the Father, as Creator:

For we are what he made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life (Ephesians 2.10).

The “I” of the Son, as Redeemer:

Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn that world, but in order that the world might be saved through him (John 3.17).

The “I” of the Spirit, as Sustainer:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1.8).

³³² Daniel Howard-Snyder, “Trinity Monotheism,” *Philosophia Christi*, 5/2 (2003)

As we now encounter the economic Trinity, through the writings of the NT, we are able to attribute the names *Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer* to the each of the divine “I’s” (persons) by appropriation.³³³ LaCugna argues, for example, ‘By virtue of the doctrine of appropriations, creation is *attributed* to the Father.’³³⁴ In some cases, the doctrine of appropriation has led to an re-appropriation of the Trinitarian formula. For example, in the new prayerbook of the Anglican Church in New Zealand (1989), for formulation “Creator, Redeemer and Giver of Life” is offered as an alternative to “Father, Son and Holy Spirit” in the prayer of blessing. Now, a brief word of caution is necessary here. It is not the intention of this thesis to suggest that such re-appropriations can adequately express the trinitarian faith. The Father, for example, is not exclusively *Creator*. Indeed, Gail Ramshaw criticises such re-appropriations as a ‘contemporary formulation of modalism which naively equates one function each to one person each, an idea wholly denied by classical theology.’³³⁵ LaCugna rightly insists that such exclusive re-appropriations of the divine “I’s” is inconsistent with the biblical and creedal statements: ‘yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom all things are and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things are and through whom we exist’ (1 Corinthians 8.6; cf. John 1).³³⁶ However, this is not to say that such re-appropriations are unhelpful. On the contrary, they allow us recognise something of the personality of each of the divine “I’s” as they are revealed in the economy of salvation. They help us express, in a real, and practical way, our faith in each of the divine “I’s” of Father, Son and Spirit as “distinct centres of knowledge, will, love, and action.” Horrell argues:

‘[The New Testament] evidence includes the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each exercising intelligence (creating, instructing), volition (choosing, commanding), even emotion (joy, grief, anger), sometimes in relation to one another as well as creation... The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit appear as all that is God is by nature yet also all that is personal as distinct centres of self-consciousness.’³³⁷

³³³ Msgr. Antonia Miralles, ‘The Validity of Baptism’, *Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith*, accessed 13 December, 2017, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20080201_validity-baptism-miralles_en.html.

³³⁴ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 165

³³⁵ Gail Ramshaw, *Worship: Searching for Language* (Portland Oregon, Pastoral Press: 1988), p. 207.

³³⁶ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 166

³³⁷ Horrell, ‘Toward a Biblical Model of the Social Trinity’, p. 405.

4.3.2. persons in relation

Horrell argues, ‘not only is the personal reality of each member of the Trinity discernable, but the divine persons also appear in unique relationship with one another.’³³⁸ This thesis would wish to go further, and argue that the divine personal reality of each member of the Trinity is dependant upon the unique relationships between the divine persons, and that the unique relationships between the divine persons are dependant upon the personal reality of each member of the Trinity. Colin Gunton suggests that Trinitarian theology is very often driven by two concerns: ‘first is a concern to avoid what we can fairly call individualism... the second is a correlative concern for the particularity of the persons in God as a way by which there is expressed that distinctiveness in unity which is such a marked feature of the *biblical characterisation* of the divine being and action.’³³⁹ In maintaining the interdependence of ‘distinctive personality’ and ‘unique relationship’, we are able to address these two concerns, and express a united Trinity of distinct persons, without falling into the trap of tritheism, and ‘straightforward monotheism’. Marmion uses this term to describe those whose Trinitarian theology lacks a robust account of divine personhood.³⁴⁰ Gunton argues that there is, ‘a movement [within trinitarian theology] towards a relational concept of the persons in God which maintains their distinctiveness in a way that is absent from Augustine.’³⁴¹ Moltmann expresses something of this, as he argues that an ‘adequate conception of [divine] personhood’ in relation allows us to affirm without hesitation that there are three Persons in the Godhead.³⁴² Moltmann moves us towards an understanding of the divine “I” which depends on an understanding of the divine “Thou.” He argues:

The critical question which has to be asked here is directed towards the modern concept of person. What Rahner calls ‘our secular use of the word person’ has nothing in common with modern thinking about the concept of person. What he describes is actually extreme individualism: everyone is a self-possessing, self-disposing centre of action which sets itself apart from other persons. But the philosophical personalism of Hölderin, Feuerbach, Buber, Ebner, Rosenstock and others was designed precisely to overcome this possessive

³³⁸ Horrell, ‘Toward a Biblical Model of the Social Trinity’, p. 405.

³³⁹ Colin Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, pp. 93-94. (emphasis added)

³⁴⁰ See, ‘Trinity and Relationships’, *The Way* 43.2 (2004), pp. 104-118, [p. 104].

³⁴¹ Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, p. 95.

³⁴² Hasker, *Metaphysics & the Tri-Personal God*, p. 99.

individualism: the “I” can only be understood in light of the “Thou” — that is to say, it is a concept of relation. Without the *social relation* there can be no *personality*.³⁴³

The “I—Thou” pattern is discernable in the witness of the NT, particularly in S. John’s Gospel, which offers an account of the divine persons in unique relationship. Indeed, this chapter shares the view of Wainwright, who contends that the Fourth Gospel provides the most explicit trinitarian witness within the NT: ‘The supreme biblical pattern of trinitarian thought is found in the Fourth Gospel. Other writers touched on parts of the problem but the Forth Evangelist sees it in its threefoldness.’³⁴⁴ This view is further supported by Horrell, who identifies twenty-six NT passages which refer to the unique relationship of the divine persons — of which, twenty-three are to be found within the Fourth Gospel. Horrell argues that a dynamic relationship between the divine persons is communicated through the shared acts of “seeing”, “hearing”, and “doing.”

Jesus sees the Father (John 1.18; 3.11, 32; 5.19, 29, 37; 6.46; 8.38), hears the Father (3.32, 34; 5.30, 37; 7.17; 12.49-50; 14, 10) and does what the Father does (5.19-20; 6.38). The Spirit speaks what he hears, and gives what is the Sons’s (and the Father’s) to the disciples (16.13-15; cf. 1 Cor 2.10-13). Whatever “seeing”, “hearing”, and “doing” may imply regarding the immanent Trinity, the terms at least convey dynamic relationship each with one another.³⁴⁵

The unique relationship between the divine persons is perhaps most explicitly expressed in their “knowing” and “testifying” of one another. Jesus knows the Father because he is from the Father, and the Father sent him: “I know him, because I am from him, and he sent me” (John 7.29). Horrell argues, ‘Jesus knows the Father not because he is the Father, but rather because he enjoys deep affiliation with the Father.’³⁴⁶ The divine persons “know” and “testify” of one another intimately; each divine person indwells in the other: ‘All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him’ (Matthew 11.27). Tasker suggests that the depth of relationship between Father and Son is contained here within the phrase “*all things*”, which he argues comprises the entire truth about Jesus’ nature as the revealer of the Father.³⁴⁷ Irenaeus expresses something similar, as he comments on the Matthean Jesus’ account of himself, as the full revelation of God:

³⁴³ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, p. 145. (emphasis added)

³⁴⁴ Wainwright, *The Trinity in the New Testament*, p. 260

³⁴⁵ Horrell, ‘Toward a Biblical Model of the Social Trinity’, pp. 405-406.

³⁴⁶ Horrell, ‘Toward a Biblical Model of the Social Trinity’, p. 406.

³⁴⁷ R. V. G. Tasker, *Matthew: New Testament Commentaries* (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1961), p. 121.

Through the Word, made visible and palpable, the Father was revealed, though not all equally believed in him. But all saw the Father in the Son, for the Father of the Son cannot be seen, but the Son of the Father can be seen. The Son preforms everything as a ministry to the Father, from beginning to end, and without the Son no one can know God. The way to know the Father is the Son. Knowledge of the Son is in the Father, and is revealed through the Son.³⁴⁸

This “interiority” of the divine persons is developed further in John’s Gospel, as Volf explains: ‘the Johannine Jesus repeatedly refers: “so that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father” (John 10.38; cf. 14.10-11; 17.21).’³⁴⁹ The relationship, therefore, between the Father, and the Son, and the Father and Spirit, and so on, appears to be constitutive for the being of each divine person. The Son does not merely “know” and “testify” of the Father, but rather, the Son’s “knowing” and “testifying” of the Father, constitutes who the Son is; in “knowing” and “testifying” of the other divine persons, the divine persons are carried within one another: ‘Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, “Show us the Father?” Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works’ (John 14.9-10). Volf unpacks this, as he reflects on the Johannine witness: ‘The one divine person is not only itself, but rather carries within itself also the other divine persons, and only in this indwelling of other persons within it is the person it really is. The Son is Son only insofar as the Father and the Spirit indwell him; without the interiority of the Father and the Spirit, there would be no Son. The same applies to the Father and to the Spirit.’³⁵⁰

4.4. A Biblical Presentation of the Eternal Order of the Godhead

4.4.1. processions and relations

This chapter has already highlighted that there are at least seventy texts in the NT which present the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together. It has also argued that each person of the Trinity has a different function or role in relating to the world, for example, in creating, in sustaining, and in redeeming. This chapter has so far concerned itself with the biblical presentation of distinct

³⁴⁸ Irenaeus of Lyon, *AH*, (Lib. 4, 6, 3.5.6.7: SC 100, 442-446. 448-454).

³⁴⁹ Miroslav Volf, *After our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), p. 208.

³⁵⁰ Volf, *After our Likeness*, p. 209. Cf. 1 Corinthians 2.11; Ephesians 2.18.

personhood, personal relations, and the interpenetration of distinct persons. Attention will now be given to how this relates to our understanding of the Eternal Order in the Godhead.

One of the strongest criticisms levelled against social trinitarians, is the accusation that their treatment of God's inner life is merely a projection of ones own prior viewpoint. However, it could be said that social trinitarianism (that is, a theology of the trinity committed to the interplay between the economic life and immanent life of God) offers an understanding of the eternal order within the Godhead which is far more consistent with the biblical witness than many classical presentations. This is why, for example, LaCugna takes objection with Aquinas' suggestion that any of the divine persons could have become incarnate. For LaCugna, What-You-See-Is-What-You-Get. The same was true for the Cappadocian Fathers, who attempted to use the witness of scripture to describe the eternal relational order of the Godhead: the Father is the Father on account of begetting the Son; the Son is the Son on account of being begotten. For both Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus the uniqueness of each *hypostasis* resides in their unique relationships with each other:

For the Father is not Son, and yet this is not due to either deficiency or subjection of Essence; but the very face of being Unbegotten or Begotten, or Proceeding has given the name of Father to the First, of the Son to the Second, and of the Third, Him of Whom we are speaking, of the Holy Ghost that the distinction of the Three Persons may be preserved in the one nature and dignity of the Godhead. For neither is the Son Father, for the Father is One, but He is what the Father is; nor is the Spirit Son because He is of God, for the Only-begotten is One, but He is what the Son is.³⁵¹

LaCugna writes: 'The *hypostasis* of each divine person is solely defined in relation to each other *hypostasis*.'³⁵² Jenson similarly concludes that for the Cappadocians: 'deity is common to the three *hypostases*, who are identified over and against each other by "being unbegotten", "being begotten", and "proceeding."³⁵³ John Zizioulas' is a leading contemporary advocate of the Cappadocian pattern, which he labels relational ontology: 'Relational ontology contains in its very nature a dimension of transcendence, an openness of being, pointing beyond the self, to seeking communion with the Other.'³⁵⁴

The traditional language used by the Church Fathers to describe the eternal order of the Godhead was largely drawn from the language used in the scriptures; "begetting/procession",

³⁵¹ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orations*, 31.9. Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *AE*, 1.227, 278-280.

³⁵² LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 62.

³⁵³ Robert Jenson, *Systematic Theology: The Triune God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 105.

³⁵⁴ John Zizioulas, 'Relational Ontology: Insights from Patristic Thought', *The Trinity and an Entangled World: Relationality in Physical Science and Theology* (ed. John Polkinghorne, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2010), p. 155.

“sent”, “comes/came.” The scope of this chapter does not require an extensive commentary of these key terms, and so our discussion here will by no means be extensive. However, it will be helpful to spend some time briefly mapping out those passages within scripture which have informed our understanding of the eternal order of the Godhead. This will later help us address one of the major questions that arises out of a social model of the Godhead; that is, the Father as originator and monarch, and the so-called subordination of the Son.

4.4.2. begotten of the Father

Technically speaking, the phrase “begotten” does not actually occur anywhere in the Gospels. It only appears four times in John’s Gospel in the KJV, NASB and NKJV, as a mistranslation of the Greek word μονογενής (*monogenes*) which, according to the *Greek-English Lexicon*, has two primary definitions: ‘pertaining to being the only one of its kind within a specific relationship’ and ‘pertaining to being the only one of its kind, or class, unique in kind.’³⁵⁵ Horrell suggests that the early Church Fathers often made a similar mistake, and much like these more contemporary translators, they confused μονογενής with μονογέννητος (*monogenetos*): ‘In John’s Gospel, God is designated the Father (121 times) and Jesus the Son. One thinks of a father *generating* or *begetting* a son; thus it might be natural that *monogenes* (“one of a kind”) was confused by the Fathers with *monogenetos* (from *gennaō*, “beget, bear”).’³⁵⁶ Therefore, it would be more accurate to translate μονογενής as ‘*only*’, ‘*one of a kind*’, or ‘*unique*.’ Such a translation would also, actually, be far more consistent with wider use of μονογενής within the NT. The word μονογενής appears nine times in the NT. Luke uses the term three times (7.12; 8.42; 9.38) and most English translations rightly render μονογενής as ‘*only*’. It also appears in Hebrews 11.17. In all of these occasions, the word is used either to denote that the subject is literally the ‘*only*’ son, or, in the case of Isaac, that the son is ‘*unique*’ as the ‘*only*’ son Abraham conceived with Sarah.

John is the only NT writer to use the word μονογενής to reveal something to us concerning Jesus’ identity. Therefore, an accurate translation is essential in order to understand what John is trying to convey regarding Jesus’ identity by his use of the word μονογενής. The implied theology in the all too often (mis)quoted John 3.16 concerns itself with Jesus’ designated relationship with the Father. John’s use of μονογενής highlights that Jesus is the ‘*only*’, ‘*one of a kind*’, ‘*unique*’ Son of

³⁵⁵ *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (BAGD, 3rd Edition)

³⁵⁶ Horrell, ‘Toward a Biblical Model of the Social Trinity’, p. 411.

God, sharing fully in the very same divine nature of the Father: ‘Οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλ’ ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον’ (John 3.16; cf. 1.14, 18; 3.18; 1 John 4.9).

It is worth unpacking here, at least briefly, the prologue to John’s Gospel. The fourth gospel is arguably both the most christocentric, and jewish of the four gospels.³⁵⁷ It offers us an account of distinction and unity, and portrays a sense of the eternal unoriginated relationship between the Son and the Father. The Word was with God from the beginning: ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.’ (John 1. 1-2) The way in which the prologue to the FG achieves this is also significant, as it offers the most profound example of appropriation. For indeed, ‘God has left traces of his Trinitarian being in his work of creation and in his Revelation throughout the Old Testament. But his inmost Being as Holy Trinity is a mystery that is inaccessible to reason alone or even to Israel’s faith before the Incarnation of God’s Son and the sending of the Holy Spirit.’³⁵⁸ In the light of fulfilled time, the author of the FG has access to these traces, and is therefore able to identify the activity of the λόγος in the OT with the activity of the second person of the Trinity. C. H. Dodd argues, ‘[there is] a very strong case to be made out, stronger than has sometimes been recognised, for the view that the Logos of the Prologue is the [OT] Word of the Lord.’³⁵⁹ Indeed, from the very first sentence of the prologue one can hear echoes of the creation account of Genesis 1. In Greek the FG begins with the words ‘en arche.’ In the Greek Septuagint (LXX) the book of Genesis begins with these same words. This connection demonstrates immediately that the author is familiar with the Jewish texts, and here, is seeking to mirror the creation account.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the prologue to the FG reaches its climax in its proclamation of the Word, the Logos incarnate, as the μονογενοῦς (‘monogenous’) ‘only/one of a kind’ Son of the Father. This thesis believes, therefore, that an understanding of Jesus as the *only begotten* of the Father which is consistent with John’s witness, does not imply a beginning of Jesus’ Sonship from the Father as the Unoriginated, but rather Jesus’ own unoriginated relationship with

³⁵⁷ Jerome H. Neyrey argues, ‘John has a very high Christology...[and this the] most significant [of] the differences on content [the the synoptic tradition].’ See, Neyrey, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible, ‘The Gospel According to John’* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 1879.

³⁵⁸ CCC, 237.

³⁵⁹ C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), p. 273.

the Father: ‘Christ did not *become*, but necessarily and eternally *is* the Son.’³⁶⁰ This understanding of the Son’s *begottenness* of the Father is important for this project, as it underpins a social theology of the Trinity. It does so by offering an account of Divine begottenness and procession from the perspective of God’s economy in salvation history; that is, the revelation of God’s activity in the scriptures. From this perspective, we encounter a trinity of persons who share co-equally in the divine *ousia*, which is the sum attribute of the Godhead, in contrast to those perspectives which have sought to present the Father as the one from who the divine *ousia* is derived.

4.4.3. “sent” and “comes”

The most repeated phrase in John’s gospel is that the Son is “sent by/from” the Father (44 times).³⁶¹ Throughout his earthly ministry, Jesus repeatedly refers to himself as the one who was “sent” by the Father for the salvation of the world: ‘Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgement, but has passed from death to life’ (John 5.24, cf. 37-38; 6.38-39). In the economy of salvation, the “sent” (Son) offers the creature a unique purchase into the activity of God’s inner life, as the one who reveals the “sender” (Father). To see and believe in the “sent” is to see and believe in the “sender.” The order of the economy, observed in the divine missions, is the lens through which was gaze (albeit dimly) into the eternal order of the Godhead: ‘Then Jesus cried aloud: “Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me sees him who sent me”’ (John 12.44-45, cf. 49; 16.5; 17.21-25).

LaCugna argues: ‘what transpires *in divinis* is implicitly tied to the economy inasmuch as intradivine processions are the ground of extradivine missions. The intradivine processions indicate, however obliquely, God’s relation to the creature, a relation that follows from God’s inner life.’³⁶² Rahner’s principle demands that the ‘identity of economic and immanent Trinity’ is underpinned by a ‘commensurability between mission and procession.’³⁶³ In other words, the mission of the sent (Son) in the economy of salvation is tied to the procession of the sent from the sender (Father) within the immanent trinity. Rahner argues that if it were not so, ‘that which God is for us would

³⁶⁰ W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger and William White, Jr., *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1996), p. 447.

³⁶¹ Horrell, ‘Toward a Biblical Model of the Social Trinity’, p. 411.

³⁶² LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 157.

³⁶³ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 213.

tell us absolutely nothing about that which he is in himself, as triune. These and many similar conclusions go against the whole sense of holy Scripture.³⁶⁴

Here, we encounter a parting of ways between classical scholastic theology, and those who propose a social model on the Trinity. Augustine, for example, addresses the question of distinction between the divine persons from an intradivine prospective: ‘persons are distinguished by their immanent processions.’³⁶⁵ The starting point is *in divinis* in the same way that it is for Aquinas: ‘the fact that there are missions follows from suitability: from there being two processions *in divinis*, not from the twofoldness of the events in the economy.’³⁶⁶ This thesis, following LaCugna, would argue that in reversing this *taxis*, that is, in grounding our theology in the economy, we are more faithful to the witness of scripture.³⁶⁷ It is for this reason, that the evidence offered here, and elsewhere, centres around the activity of the economy Godhead. Horrell defends this *taxis*: ‘some may argue, but all this evidence merely speaks of the economic Godhead. My point, simple, is that no texts indicate any other order, such as, for example, the Father being sent by the Son.’³⁶⁸

The second most repeated phrase in John’s gospel is that the Son “comes/came” from the Father (22 times).³⁶⁹ Jesus identifies himself as the one who has “come” in response to the Father, as the one who sends. The pattern is very often two fold. Jesus has “come”, because he is “sent”: ‘because I have come from heaven, not to do my own will, but to do the will the one who sent me’ (John 6.38). Not only is this pattern two-fold, but there is a suggestion that within this pattern, something is revealed about the nature, at least within the economy, between the Son and the Father. Jesus “comes” not only because he is “sent”, but he “comes” not because it is his will that he should “come”, but because it is his Father’s will that he should be “sent”: ‘Jesus answered: “If God were your father, you would love me, since I have come from God; yes, I have come him; not that I came because I chose, no, I was sent, and by him’ (John 8.42). Indeed, the verbs themselves could be said to point to something about the nature of the relationship between the Father and the Son. The verb “sent” seems to imply command, and so resonates with a sense of authority. On the other hand, the verb “come/came” could indicate passivity. The Father actively “sends” and the Son “comes”.

³⁶⁴ Rahner, *Trinity*, p. 30.

³⁶⁵ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 90. Cf. Augustine, *DT*, V-VII.

³⁶⁶ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 157.

³⁶⁷ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 101.

³⁶⁸ Horrell, ‘Toward a Biblical Model of the Social Trinity’, p. 412.

³⁶⁹ Horrell, ‘Toward a Biblical Model of the Social Trinity’, p. 411.

This apparent imbalance of power is problematic for the social trinitarian, particularly as it arises from the economic life of the trinity within salvation history. Here (and elsewhere within the economy of salvation) the Son is seen to submit to the will of the Father. The biblical pattern appears to point towards a divine hierarchy within the Godhead. Pannenberg comments, ‘the lordship of the Son is simply to proclaim the lordship of the Father, to glorify him, to subject all things back to him. Hence the kingdom of the Son does not end (Luke 1.33) when he hands back lordship to the Father. His own lordship is consummated when he subjects all things to the lordship of the Father and all creation honours the Father as the one God.’³⁷⁰ Horrell explains that there is no unified perspective on this matter amongst those who espouse a social model: ‘social models of the immanent Trinity vary substantially, the greatest historical tension existing around whether there is eternal monarchy under the Father or whether the trinitarian persons exercise ultimately equal communal roles.’³⁷¹ In many ways this is true, though it does seem that the vast majority of social models propose equal communality amongst the divine persons with few exceptions.³⁷² In supporting this view, this thesis could be accused of doing the very thing which it so strongly argues against; separating the *theologia* from the *oikonomia*. Horrell argues: ‘Certainly enough is said in Scripture to affirm the equal deity of the Son and the Spirit to the Father. But the hierarchy of the economic Godhead appears largely inviolable in the Bible itself...the burden of proof rests with those who contend something other...’³⁷³ That is the challenge that this thesis now accepts, as we turn our attention to defending a model of equal communality amongst the divine persons as consistent with the economic revelation of the trinity in salvation history.

4.5. Divine Monarchy and Subordinationism

Those who teach subordination and talk about first, second, and third, ought to realise they are introducing erroneous Greek polytheism into Christian theology. We will be content with the order established by the Lord... Subordination cannot be used to describe persons who *share the same nature*.³⁷⁴

³⁷⁰ Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 1.313.

³⁷¹ Horrell, ‘Toward a Biblical Model of the Social Trinity’, p. 413.

³⁷² Those who support of model of equal communality include, among others: Catherine LaCugna, Jürgen Moltmann, Leonardo Boff, Colin Gunton, Paul Fiddes, Robert Jenson, Miroslav Volf, Elizabeth Johnson and Ted Peters. Those who, as social trinitarians support divine monarchy include: John Zizioulas, and J. Scott Horrell.

³⁷³ Horrell, ‘Toward a Biblical Model of the Social Trinity’, p. 415.

³⁷⁴ Basil, *DSS*, 18,47. (emphasis added)

Basil of Caesarea (†379) offers a defence of the Father as divine monarch which, this thesis believes, is not only wholly consistent with a model of equal communality amongst the divine persons, but is, more importantly, consistent with the witness of scripture. Although Basil insists that the Father is the source of everything, he does so whilst also insisting that there is no subordination (or hierarchy) within the Godhead. For Basil, the Father shares his nature with the Son, and the Son shares in nature with the Father, and so, in some way, the Father shares the property of monarch with the Son and the Spirit. The language used by Basil is common to that used by a greater cloud of witnesses (for example, the other Cappadocian Fathers) who speak of the Father's indwelling in the Son, and the Son's indwelling in the Father: '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 in is the Unity. So that according to the distinction of Persons, both are one and one, and according to the community of Nature, one.'³⁷⁵ Here, Basil suggests that the Father and the Son are both interdependent and mutually internal through the action of mutual giving and receiving.³⁷⁶ This pattern is consistent with Jesus' own testimony concerning intradivine relations: 'Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves' (John 14.10-11). Volf explains that, 'this mutually internal abiding and interpenetration of the trinitarian persons, [has] since Pseudo-Cyril ... been called *περιχώρησις*.'³⁷⁷ Understood as reciprocal *interiority*, Perichoresis enables Volf to contend that whilst the Son and the Spirit are constituted by the Father, who is divine monarch, they share with the Father in his property as monarch, as full coequals, without any trace of hierarchy or subordinationism:

With regard to the immanent Trinity, salvation history thus allows us to infer the fundamental equality of the divine persons in their mutual determination and their mutual interpenetration; even if the Father is the source of the deity and accordingly sends the Son and the Spirit, he also gives everything to the Son and glorifies him, just as the Son also glorifies the Father and gives the reign over to the Father (see Matt. 28.18; John 13.31-32; 16.14; 17.1; 1 Cor. 15.24). Moreover, within a community of perfect love between persons who all share the divine attributes, a notion of hierarchy of subordination is inconceivable. Within *relations* between the divine persons, the Father is for that reason not the one over against the others, not "the First", but rather the *one among the others*. The structure of trinitarian relations is characterised neither by a pyramidal dominance of the one (so Ratzinger) nor by a hierarchical bipolarity between the

³⁷⁵ Basil, *DSS*, 18,45.

³⁷⁶ Volf, *After our Likeness*, p. 208.

³⁷⁷ Volf, *After our Likeness*, p. 208.

one and the many (so Zizioulas), but rather by a polycentric and symmetrical reciprocity of the many.³⁷⁸

LaCugna supports this view, arguing as I have, that it is rooted within the theology of the Cappadocian Fathers, and their starting point in divine *hypostasis* over divine *ousia*:

The Cappadocian doctrine of the Trinity had secured the precedence of person of substance. This drastically altered not just the metaphysical but also the political options. Gregory of Nazianzus' idea that the divine monarchy is not the sole possession of 'God the Father' but is *shared equally* among the divine persons, contained the seeds of a vastly different conception of social order.³⁷⁹

According to LaCugna, the Cappadocians made three crucial moves, which, taken together, enabled them to 'avoid polytheism, and avoid subordinationism, and modify the meaning of monarchy, yet [at the same time] furnish a theology of God that was philosophically coherent.'³⁸⁰ Firstly, it was necessary to affirm the 'equality of Christ with God' in such a way which would be consistent with the christology of the early first centuries: 'this required specifying the basis for the equality of Christ and God: equal in *ousia*, distinct in *hypostasis*.'³⁸¹

Second, the Cappadocians reversed the prevailing *taxis* of the time, as discussed earlier in the chapter, as they argued that *hypostasis* was 'predicated and prior to and constitutive of' *ousia*: 'the whole point of the original doctrine of the Trinity was that God (God's *ousia*) simply does not exist except as three persons. Vice versa, the divine persons are none other than the divine *ousia* they *are* the *ousia*.'³⁸²

Finally, the Cappadocians insisted that *hypostasis* implied relationship to the other out of necessity. The Father could only be Father in relationship, and could not exist in isolation. Gregory of Nyssa responds to Eunomius' claim that the Father was complete without the Son with the following answer: 'For when we hear the title "Father" we apprehend the meaning to be this, that the name is not understood with reference to itself alone, but also by its special signification indicates relation to the Son. For the term "Father" would have no meaning apart from itself, if "Son" were not connoted by the utterance of the word "Father. When, then, we learned the name "Father" we were taught at the same time, by the selfsame title, faith also in the Son.'³⁸³ LaCugna

³⁷⁸ Volf, *After our Likeness*, p. 217.

³⁷⁹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 17.

³⁸⁰ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 389.

³⁸¹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 389.

³⁸² LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 389.

³⁸³ Gregory of Nyssa, *AE*, 2,2.

comments: ‘Father is the name of a relation: Father of the Son. Because of this the *ousia* of God cannot be seen to exist except hypostatically. Apart from the divine persons there is no divine nature, and there is no God.’³⁸⁴ LaCugna surmises, therefore, that the property of divine monarch both rightly belongs to the Father, and is rightly shared amongst all divine persons as coequals:

Taken together these moves provided a way to think of the two divine *hypostases* of Father and Son as coequal, but not two *archai* (principles); this would have compromised monotheism. Rather, the one *arche*, the Father, generates the Son and Spirit from the Father’s *ousia*. God the Father remains cause (*aitita*) and source (*pege*) of the divinity of the Son and the Spirit, but this is understood to be altogether without subordination. These two ideas, a monarch belonging properly to only person (Father) but belonging also to other persons (Son and Spirit) through self-communication, appeared to be logically incompatible. The great innovation of the doctrine of the Trinity was to establish *monarch as the property of a person, not of a substance*. As such, the *arche* could be communicated to and shared by more than one person.³⁸⁵

4.5.1. the coequality of persons

However, those who espouse the eternal subordination of the Son argue that there is a consistency in respect of the relationship between the Father and the Son *in divinis* and *ad extra* — especially in relation to the divine will. They argue that the apparent subordination of the Son’s will in the Gospels, that is, Jesus’ obedience to the Father in the economy of salvation, must reflect something of the Son’s obedience to the Father in the Godhead. This view has particular traction among a number of contemporary Evangelical scholars, who argue that it is consistent with the witness of Scripture.³⁸⁶ Micheal Ovey offers a vigorous defence of the eternal subordination of the Son, focussing in particular on Jesus’ words in Gethsemane, from which his book takes its title: “‘Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done.’” (Luke 22.42; cf. Matthew 26.29; Mark. 14.36) Ovey asserts:

Moving to the question of blurring the economic trinity and the eternal, immanent trinity, minimally passages like John 1:18 and 14:9 mean one must say that the economic trinity reveals the eternal immanent trinity and its relationships, not exhaustively, but truly. If we do not say that, then the question is what we know about God in eternity at all. Jesus strikingly links his obedience to his Father here on earth to the revelation of his, Jesus’, love for the Father (John 14:31).

This means if we ask what reveals Jesus’ love for his Father, Jesus’ answer is his obedience here on earth. To say Jesus’ love for his Father in eternity does not feature obedience risks not so much distinguishing economic from eternal trinities but of severing them from each other. After

³⁸⁴ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 390.

³⁸⁵ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 390.

³⁸⁶ Michael Ovey, *Your Will Be Done: Exploring Eternal Subordination, Divine Monarchy and Divine Humility* (London: The Latimer Trust, 2016); Horrell, ‘Toward a Biblical Model of the Social Trinity’.

all, the point would be that what we see on earth is precisely what does not happen in eternity, even though the incarnation is allegedly a revelatory event.³⁸⁷

The problem then, for social trinitarians, wishing to avoid a separation or fraction between the economic or immanent trinity, is that the Son evidentially submits to the will of the Father in the incarnation, through the person of Jesus Christ: “for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.” (John 6.38) The problem is further exaggerated because, whilst the Son’s submission to the Father in salvation history is undisputed, the impact this may or may not have on the intradivine life of God is not sufficiently addressed amongst social trinitarians. It is regrettable that LaCugna, amongst others, fails to challenge the notion of the Son’s eternal subordination to the Father without committing the very crime of which they so sternly accuse others. That is to say, the case is made for co-equality of persons *in divinis* with little or no consideration of how this seemingly contradicts the operation of persons *ad extra*. The lazy move would be to associate equality of essence with the immanent Trinity, and subordinationism with the economic Trinity. This argument has tempted many, yet it fails to adequately grasp how God’s life *ad extra* reveals something true (albeit through a mirror dimly) of God’s life *ad intra*. Kevin Giles argues: ‘This distinction between the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity allows that there is more to God than what is revealed to us but that what is revealed is true and accurate. God is not other than he is in revelation.’³⁸⁸ How then, are we hold together a theology of eternal co-equality with the revelation of ‘temporal’ submission in salvation history? Horrell argues that this is not possible: ‘hundreds of biblical texts affirm the *monarchia* of the Father, no text sufficiently stands against it; such a view corresponds in the deepest way with God’s own self-disclosure as immanent Trinity.’³⁸⁹

This thesis disagrees. Those who argue that the economic activity of the Son in salvation history, demonstrates the Son’s eternal subordination to the Father, advance both a confused theology of will, and take too narrow an approach, limiting the economic operation of the Son. Following Augustine, the Son, whilst appearing subordinate to the Father during the Incarnation, was also at the same time subordinate to himself. In other words, the Son, whose will and power is equal to that of the Father, is *actively* obedient (subordinate) to the Father during the Incarnation.³⁹⁰

³⁸⁷ Michael Ovey, *Should I Resign?*, (2016) [ONLINE] Available at: http://oakhill2.ablette.net/blog/entry/should_i_resign/. [Accessed 13 July 2018].

³⁸⁸ Kevin Giles, *The Trinity and Subordinationism* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002), p. 28.

³⁸⁹ Horrell, ‘Toward a Biblical Model of the Social Trinity’, p. 400.

³⁹⁰ Augustine, *DT*, IV.20.27.

The Son's subordination to the Father during the Incarnation is an *active* submission of will, rather than an eternal *passive* reality. As such, Augustine is able to claim that during the Incarnation, the Son was subordinate even to himself, and in making this case, he strengthens his broader position concerning the eternal equality of persons:

...the Son of God is both understood to be equal to the Father according to the form of God which He is, and less than the Father according to the form of a servant which He took; in which form He was found to be not only less than the Father, but also less than the Holy Spirit, and not only so, but less even than Himself — not than Himself who was, but than Himself who is; because, by taking the form of a servant, He did not lose the form of God, as the testimonies of the Scriptures taught us, to which we have referred in the former book: yet there are some things in the sacred text so put as to leave it ambiguous to which rule they are rather to be referred; whether to that by which we understand the Son as less, in that He has taken upon Him the creature, or to that by which we understand that the Son is not indeed less than but equal to the Father.³⁹¹

In another place, Augustine insists that that which the Father subjects to himself, the Son also subjects to himself:

But when anyone hears the Apostle saying: 'But when he shall say that all things have been subjected to him, undoubtedly he is expected who subjected all thing to him,' then him not think that the words, 'He has subjected all things to the Son,' are to be understood of the Father in such a way as to think the the Son has not subjected all things to Himself.³⁹²

Concerning the economic operation of the Son, one must take care to not take too narrow an approach, and thus limit the Son's economic activity to the Incarnation. This is the view Nancy Hedberg, who argues that those who espouse the eternal subordination of the Son on the ground of the economic activity of the Son in the Incarnation, fail to take into consideration the economic activity of the Son preceding and following the Incarnation.

Although the incarnation has a prominent place in God's revelation regarding redemption, and we all understand the Son submitted to the Father during his time on earth, God's revelation to us regarding the operations of the Son within the economic Trinity goes well beyond that. When we consider what the Bible reveals to us about the role of the Son in creation (Col 1:15–20), sanctification (Eph 5:26), judgment (2 Tim 4:1), and mediation (Heb 4:14–16), we can say with some assurance that the function of the Son within the economic Trinity as revealed through God's work in creation and redemption is larger in scope than Jesus' time on earth during his incarnation. The function of the Son is not limited to his submission as fleshed out in the incarnation, and the economic Trinity as a whole is not necessarily distinguished by a hierarchy of roles.³⁹³

³⁹¹ Augustine, *DT*, II.2.

³⁹² Augustine, *DT*, I.15.

³⁹³ Nancy Hedberg, 'One Essence, One Goodness, One Power', *Priscilla Papers* 25.4 (2011), p. 9.

That the economic activity of the Son in salvation history is evident both preceding and following the Incarnation is, in the view of this thesis, not only a widely accepted doctrine, but an essential one. Indeed, one can make a strong case that Incarnation itself would not have been possible if it were not for the prevenient grace of the Incarnation. Donald Baillie describes this process (of prevenient grace) as the ‘paradox of grace’, arguing that ‘every good thing in [the believer], that every good thing in him, every good thing he does, is somehow not wrought by himself but by God.’³⁹⁴ He further argues that the believer becomes a ‘mystery of the Incarnation’ when they, in co-operation with the prevenient grace of the Incarnation, enact a good deed.³⁹⁵

If this is true, then it would prefigure that the Incarnation was made possible by the prevenient grace of the Incarnation reflected in Mary’s *fiat* — her great yes. In other words, the economic activity of the Son, manifest most supremely in the Incarnation, evidently precedes and indeed follows the historic event of the Incarnation itself. This is the view of Rahner: ‘Now, as regards our case here of Christ’s salvific act having an effect which anticipates it, we can begin by noticing something distinctive about it: here Christ’s action has a retroactive effect in *a particular reality* that in turn is the cause or condition of that action of his: Mary brings through her word of faith the incarnation, the incarnation by which she herself is redeemed and her ‘yes’ made possible.’³⁹⁶ It is therefore regrettable that some social trinitarians, such as Horrell, wishing to offer an account of trinitarian life which is deeply tethered to the economic activity of the trinity, restrict the economic activity of the Son to a moment in human history. In doing so, they not only erroneously teach that the Son is eternally subordinate to the Father, but they also fall into the trap of separating (albeit unintentionally) their immanent doctrine of the Trinity from the economic reality of the Trinity, experienced in salvation history.

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter has argued that scripture offers the Church an ‘economic’ vista through which to encounter the story of God’s economic activity in salvation history. As such, any theology which claims to be dependant on the economy (that is, a theology which depends on the ‘economic’ as a most accurate revelation of the ‘immanent’) must take seriously the witness of scripture. The

³⁹⁴ Donald M. Baillie, *God Was in Christ* (London: Faber and Faber, 1948), p. 114.

³⁹⁵ Baillie, *God Was in Christ*, p. 114, 117-118.

³⁹⁶ Karl Rahner, ‘The Fundamental Principle of Marian Theology, trans. Phillip Endean’, *Mary: The Complete Resource* ed. Sarah J. Boss (London: Continuum, 2009), pp. 292-299 (p.297).

witness of scripture is none other than God's own revelation of God's triune economic activity in salvation history, and it is, therefore, the window through which we may catch glimpses of God's life *in se*. This chapter has offered and pointed towards a biblical basis (and defence) of the LaCugna's presentation of God's co-eternal, co-equal, and co-collaborative life, operating without subordination or hierarchy, arguing that those who espouse a theology of eternal subordination take too narrow a view of what constitutes economic revelation. In the next chapter, I will argue that God is a God of dialogue, and that the invitation to participate in God's triune life runs as a thread throughout scripture. It will seek to defend the view that God's own life properly offers a model for the right ordering of human relationships.

Scripture (contd.)

An Invitation to Participate in God

God's beauty is the actual living exchange between Father, Son, and Spirit, as this exchange is perfectly simply as exchange, as it *sings*...Correspondingly, our enjoyment of God is that we are taking into the triune singing. Perhaps we may say that we are allowed to double the parts.³⁹⁷

In the previous chapter, I proposed a social model which understands the collaborative life of the Trinity to be a shared life between three distinct eternally ordered persons, sharing a common life without hierarchy or subordination. I began by offering a presentation of the collaboration of the Trinity (a life of collaboration which takes place between distinct persons who share in ordered 'personal' relationships perfected by the interpretation and indwelling of one person in the other) according to the biblically witnessed economic activity of the Trinity in salvation history. I then argued that a social model of the eternal order of the Godhead, which is rooted in the witness of scripture, offers a corrective to the view that the monarchy of the Father implies hierarchy, and in turn, the subordination of the Son: 'The three most ancient opinions concerning God are Anarchia, Polyarchia, and Monarchia. Monarchy is that which we honour: not a monarch limited to a single person but a monarch constituted by *equal dignity of nature, accord of will, identity of movement and the return to unity of those who come from it.*'³⁹⁸

In this chapter, I now turn to consider what is arguably the most significant move made by the school of social trinitarian thought; that is, the social life of the Trinity is not exclusively God's own life, but it is also our life — it is a life which we are called to participate in and to mirror. Jenson writes: 'God can... accommodate other persons in his life...God, to state it as boldly as possible, is *roomy*. Indeed, if we were to list divine attributes, roominess would have to come next after jealousy.'³⁹⁹ This chapter seeks to demonstrate that the witness of scripture offers an invitation to humanity to participate in, and be transformed by God's inner life. I argue that the pattern of relationship between the three divine persons in eternity offers a model for the right ordering of

³⁹⁷ Jenson, *The Triune God*, p. 235.

³⁹⁸ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orations*, 29,2.

³⁹⁹ Jenson, *The Triune God*, p. 226.

human relationships. God's eternal life *does* set a social agenda for human life on earth. Here, I argue against Giles, who asserts the opposite.⁴⁰⁰ The *manifesto* for this social agenda is found within scripture, which calls us time and again back into covenant relationship with God. To turn and turn again: 'Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect' (Romans 12.2).

The doctrine of the trinity is a living doctrine which comes alive when it becomes a lived reality and a form of life. LaCugna argues: 'Confessing faith is incomplete unless it becomes a form of life. Living faith in the God of Jesus Christ means being formed and transformed by the life of grace of God's economy: becoming persons fully in communion with all; becoming by the power of the Holy Spirit what God is: love unbounded, glory contained.'⁴⁰¹ I will make this case by exploring key passages in scripture in which God invites human persons to share in his life; moving from God's invitation in Genesis to participate in the process of creation, to God's invitation to participate in the process of redemption in Luke's Gospel. This chapter will conclude by considering Jesus' high priestly prayer, arguing that the ordering of God's triune life offers the Church the proper source for reflecting on the ordering of its own common life.

5.1. The Invitation in Scripture

Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. (Isaiah 55. 1-3)

God is a very inviting God. God is inviting in that God is a pleasant and attractive God. God's invitation is enticing. God is inviting for God longs for us to dwell with him; to sit, to listen, to be satisfied. This is the vivid description of God's generous invitation offered by the author of Isaiah. God desires for God's life and our life to be one.⁴⁰² S Paul echoes this picture of God's invitation and God's longing for a shared life with humanity in his letter to the Ephesians: God chose us before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before God in love (Ephesians 1.4).

⁴⁰⁰ See, Giles, *Jesus and the Father*, p. 228.

⁴⁰¹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 377.

⁴⁰² LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 377.

God's revelation of God, and God's invitation to share in God's life begins in creation and reaches its climax in God's redemptive work in Christ, and the birth of the Church at Pentecost: 'God's face and name are proclaimed before us in creation, in God's words and deeds on our behalf, in the life and death of Jesus Christ, in the new community gathered by the Holy Spirit.'⁴⁰³

5.1.1. In the beginning

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."
(Genesis 1.26)

God creates as God speaks, and God speaks in conversation. Creation takes place within the context of a conversation amongst the divine persons. God speaks within God's self, inviting shared participation in the creative process. John Paul II writes: 'It is significant that the creation of man is preceded by this kind of statement in which God expresses the intention to create man in his image, rather "in our image", in the plural (in harmony with the verb "let us make"). According to some interpretations, the plural would indicate the divine "we" of the one Creator...This would be...a first distant trinitarian indication.'⁴⁰⁴ God creates humankind in community ("let us make") to reflect God life of community ("in our image...our likeness"). Humankind is created in the image of God in order to be the image of God in the world. God invites his image-bearing creation to participate and share in God's dominion over the other created beings. God gives the community created in his likeness ("let them") dominion over that which God has created in community.

Indeed, it is especially worth noting that the creative speech language of God shifts at the creation of human kind. God now speaks in the first person plural: "Let us make..." Green argues that the shift from the third person to first reveals, 'God is talkative, but also [...] God talks about us, and then talks to us, so that we might talk about and to him in response. In a word, therefore, it is precisely our answer-ability to God that makes us what and who we are.'⁴⁰⁵ Created in God's image, humankind reflects God's social and relational nature. God speaks about humankind and to humankind, and humankind can speak back to God. Humankind is different to all else that God creates because humankind is created to live in community, and with the ability to speak in

⁴⁰³ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 378.

⁴⁰⁴ John Paul II, General Audience, *Humans are Created in the Image of God* (9 April 1986)

⁴⁰⁵ Chris Green, *The End is Music: A Companion to Robert W. Jenson's Theology* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2018), p. 67.

conversation to and about God, and to and about one another. This, Jenson argues, is the heart of Trinitarian dogma:

God rightly identified... is to and from all eternity both subject and object of an address and its response; indeed, his being is identifiable as *conversation*. Thus the more precise form of the claim that all but God is by God's word is the claim that all but God is by and in its place in the triune conversation. Stated metaphysically, the final Christian insight into reality is that all reality is intended in a consciousness and a freedom and that this personhood is not abstract but constituted in address and answer, as are all persons.⁴⁰⁶

5.1.2 It is not good that man should be alone

Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name... So the Lord God... [made] a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken." (Genesis 2.18-23)

God observes and participates with God's creation, and shares deeply the experience of that which God has created. Again, God speaks, and God invites humanity to participate in the ongoing creative process by inviting humanity into a shared conversation. Once again, the invitation begins with, 'The Lord God said...' It is striking that it is God who says "it is not good" of his creation, and not the human being. God experiences, it seems, that things as they are are "not good", without any suggestion from the human being. God is moved by this recognition to collaborate with the human being in a further creative process in order to move the situation from God's view of "not good" to the human being's view of "good" when he can declare, "This is at last bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh." The human being is invited by God to participate in this further creative process. God creates the animals and the birds, and God invites the human being to name them. God agrees to accept "whatever" name the human being gives to each creature and participates in the creative process that God has already started in naming the nonliving creatures, i.e. the air, the land, the sea.

⁴⁰⁶ Robert Jenson, 'The Praying Animal', *Journal of Religion and Science* (1983) 18.3, pp. 311-325, [p. 319]. (original emphasis).

5.1.3. God's persists in calling Moses

Then the Lord said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey... The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt. (Exodus 3. 7, 8a, 9-10.)

God once again is caught up in the experience and reality of God's creation. God once again strikes up a conversation, and God seeks to include God's creation in God's work of redemption and liberation. God invites Moses to share in God's mission, 'Then the Lord said...' Moses is busying himself with the care of his father-in-laws flock when God begins speaking to Moses out of a burning bush. God begins his conversation with Moses in the same way that he begins his conversation with Adam in the garden; by revealing that God has shared in the experience of his creation. Just as God declared it was "not good for man to be alone", God now declares that it is not good for the people of Israel to remain in Egypt, "I know their sufferings." Just as God invites Adam to participate with God in moving the situation from "not good" to "good", God now invites Moses to do the same for the people of Israel. God reveals that he intends to liberate his people, and deliver them to a land flowing with milk and honey. God calls and commissions Moses to carry out God's task of liberation. Moses objects, and repeatedly resists God's call. Moses is offered the space to enter further into conversation with God. God speaks and Moses speaks back. God persists in calling Moses, responding to the objections and the questions he raises. God promises Moses that he will journey with him. Moses is, therefore, no mere passive servant, but a fully active collaborator with God in God's mission of liberation and redemption.

5.1.4. God is always striking up a conversation

The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: 'Now that this had touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.' Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I; send me!' And he said, 'Go and say to this people... (Isaiah 6. 7,-9a)

God continues to invest in God's people. God again speaks, and in speaking, God invites individuals to share and participate in God's mission. The talkative God, who creates in conversation, and strikes up a conversation with his creation, expects to be heard, and expects to be answered. In calling prophets, God seeks to draw his people back into the conversation. Leithart argues it is 'obvious from scripture' that God is a God of speech, and claims that "talkativeness" is the nature of who God is, rather than merely an attribute of God: 'God is the Word, the Word is

God; the Father is never speechless, never silent, never lonely or taken aback, never at a loss for words.⁴⁰⁷ More simply put, Jenson writes: ‘The God of Israel is a talkative one. There is a *terrible* hymn that talks about the silence of eternity. It cannot be right, for the Jewish God cannot keep his mouth shut! He is talkative! And he moreover expects to be answered!’⁴⁰⁸ Throughout the OT, and particularly in the prophetic literature, God calls individuals to speak on God’s behalf: because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God (2 Peter 1:21).

Most biblical prophets have a story of their call into the service of God: ‘Logically and chronologically the prophet’s career begins with a call.’⁴⁰⁹ Farley argues that the essential mark of a prophet is ‘a consciousness of a divine call.’⁴¹⁰ These call narrative share features in common which mark them as a particular literary genre. One example is the call of Isaiah (6.1-13), where the pattern of the narrative is similar to the narrative of several prophetic calls: i. vision or audition (“I saw the Lord”, “I heard the voice of the Lord saying”); ii. commission (“Go and say to this people”); acceptance (“Here am I; send me!”). God speaks to Isaiah. God commissions Isaiah. Isaiah responds and speaks back to God, accepting God’s commission. Isaiah’s response, “Here am I” (*‘hinni’* or *‘hinneni’*) is echoed throughout the OT in the response of others to God’s call, from Abraham (Genesis 22.1), to Jacob (Genesis 31.11), to Moses (Exodus 3.4), to Samuel (1 Samuel 3.4). It is, of course, the response which prefigures Mary’s great *fiat* at the annunciation: “Here am I, the servant of the Lord” (Luke 1.38a).

H. Wheeler Robinson asserts that an account of a prophet’s call is given ‘to be a primary document for the understanding of the man and his message.’⁴¹¹ I believe that that message is ultimately an invitation to be part of the divine conversation; to hear what God is saying to us, and to speak back. God calls prophets to nudge humankind back into right relationship with God. That is the witness of the ‘greater’ prophetic tradition. Jenson suggests that in the OT, the people of Israel might be conceived as a ‘prophet’, for their purpose is to be a people which enables God to draw all people into the conversation with the talkative triune God: ‘It is as if Israel were one huge prophet;

⁴⁰⁷ Peter Leithart, *Revelation 12-22* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), p. 86.

⁴⁰⁸ Jenson, *A Theology in Outline*, p. 15.

⁴⁰⁹ Lindsay B. Longacre, *A Prophet of the Spirit* (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1922), p. 92

⁴¹⁰ W. J. Farely, *The Progress of Old Testament Prophecy* (New York: Fleming H Revell, n.d.), p. 14.

⁴¹¹ H. Wheeler Robinson, *Two Hebrew Prophets* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1948), p. 80.

the blessing of listening to God is not given to Israel for Israel's own sake but for the sake of opening up a *conversation* between the human race and this lively, talkative God.⁴¹²

5.1.5. Mary's great YES to God

Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.'
The the angel departed from her. (Luke 1.38)

So far, this and the previous chapter has journeyed both with and beyond LaCugna, in considering how scripture tells the story of the triune God whose immanent life *is* as God's economic life *is*. God's economic activity, that is, God's involvement and participation in the human story, tells us who God *really* is. The trinitarian God of salvation history is the God of 'eternity'. Thus, Jenson argues, the God of scripture is 'identified by specific temporal actions and is known within certain temporal communities by personal names and identifying descriptions thereby provided.'⁴¹³ Following Jenson, God's story is ontological for God; God is God's story, and God is not God without his story. That story is one of deep participation in, and extensive collaboration with human history. The height of human-divine cooperation and collaboration is the Incarnation, made possible by the consent of a young virgin. Mary's *fiat*, her great YES to God, is without doubt the most perfect example of human participation with God in salvation history. Warner argues: 'In Christian theology, Mary's consent to the Incarnation, her *Fiat*, exemplifies the most sublime fusion of man's free will with the divine plan.'⁴¹⁴

Mary's response is far more significant than some have argued. Her consent to the divine plan should not be understood, as Morris suggests, as act 'of quiet submission...[for a] slave girl could not but do the will of her Master.'⁴¹⁵ Pelikan warns that such readings may permit Mary to 'be held up for women as a model of how they ought to behave, in submissive obedience to God, their husbands and to the clergy and hierarchy of the church.'⁴¹⁶ I have already elsewhere argued that Mary's consent to the divine plan represents a perfect synergy between human volition and divine will: 'Mary should not be described as a passive instrument, but as someone who freely consented

⁴¹² Jenson, *A Theology in Outline*, p. 16. Cf. Jenson, *The Triune God*, p. 302.

⁴¹³ Jenson, *The Triune God*, p. 46.

⁴¹⁴ Marian Warner, *Alone of Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London: Pan Books, 1985), p. 177.

⁴¹⁵ Luke Morris, *Luke* (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1984), p. 74.

⁴¹⁶ Jaroslav Pelikan, *Mary: Through the Centuries, Her Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 83-84.

to God's call through her *fiat* 'let it be so'. [Mary's 'yes' demonstrates] the dynamic relationship between human freedom and divine grace...grace always comes first...[and] human volition is no mere appearance—humans are morally responsible beings. In Mary's *fiat*, the 'paradox of grace' is made manifest, as her human will freely cooperates with divine grace.⁴¹⁷

To this end, we must conclude that just as Mary freely said 'yes' to God that she was free to say 'no'. Indeed, Jenson argues, 'It is the metaphysically fundamental fact of Israel's and the church's faith that its God is freely but, just so, truly self-identified by, and so with, contingent created temporal events. The Lord is the one who rescued Israel from Egypt. It is therefore proper to ask, What if the Pharaoh had held out?'⁴¹⁸ God is invested in and constituted by God's story with God's people. Throughout this story, God calls God's people to act on God's behalf - to draw the people back into conversation with God. Not only then, does God invite created beings to participate in God's life and in God's mission, but God *chooses* to depend on God's creation for the fulfilment of God's mission. At the Annunciation God invites a young girl to take part in the salvation of the world. It was as though all heaven and earth held its breath to see if Mary would say yes: 'The angel awaits an answer; it is time for him to return to God who sent him. We too are waiting, O Lady, for your word of compassion.'⁴¹⁹ God's invitation to Mary is none other than an invitation to be part of the recreation and the redemption of all creation. Mary's consent to the divine plan is that which enables this to come to fruition. Anselm writes:

Virgin, blessed above all creatures, through your blessing all creation is blessed, not only creation from its Creator, but the Creator himself has been blessed by creation...The whole universe was created by God, and God was born of Mary...He who could create all things from nothing would not remake his ruined creation without Mary. God, then, is the Father of the created world and Mary the mother of the recreated world. God is the Father by whom all things were given life, and Mary the mother through whom all things were given new life...Without God's Son, nothing could exist; without Mary's Son, nothing could be redeemed.⁴²⁰

In this most sublime act of divine-human cooperation, we discover a most penetrating vista into the 'functional collaboration' of the divine persons. The classical maxim of trinitarian theology credited to Augustine, (*opera trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*) 'the external works of the Trinity are undivided', is fully and perhaps most convincingly defensible in the doctrine of the Incarnation. In other words, the three divine persons of God are always involved in all that God does *ad extra*, that

⁴¹⁷ Ross J. Maidment, *Behold your Mother: Towards an Ecumenical Vision of the Virgin Mary* (unpublished: Cardiff University, 2016), p. 24.

⁴¹⁸ Jenson, *The Trinity*, pp. 47-48.

⁴¹⁹ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Homilies 4, 8-9: Opera omnia, Edit. Cisterc. 4* [1966], pp. 53-54.

⁴²⁰ Anselm, *Proslogium*, trans. by Matthew D. Walz (Sound Bend: St Augustine's Press, 2013), 52.

is, outside of God's self, in salvation history. Augustine argues: 'whatever this Trinity does must be thought to be done at the same time by the Father and by the Son and by the Holy Spirit.'⁴²¹ The three divine persons concur in every economic activity; they concur in every work of creating, redeeming, and sustaining. All three of the divine persons concur deeply in the Incarnation, made possible by the free consent of Mary. The Son and the Son alone was incarnate. The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is not the Father. The incarnation is *of* the Son and *of* the Son alone, but it is *by* the Trinity. The three divine persons of the Trinity concur in the work of the Incarnation, but only the second person is himself incarnate, becoming flesh in the man-Jesus. The Father wills that his Son from all eternity should be the Son of man in time. The Son, born of Mary, enables her response of faith by means of retroactive grace. The Holy Spirit comes upon Mary, bringing about the conception of the Son. Scripture bears witness to the concurring work of all three divine persons in the incarnation, attributing the incarnation to each of the divine persons; the Father (Hebrews 10.5, Galatians 4.4); the Son (Philippians 2:7); the Holy Spirit (Luke 1.35, Matthew 1.20).

5.1.6. Uniting Persons in Communion

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever...But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. (John 14.16, 26)

Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. (John 16.7)

Jesus promises the disciples that he will ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will be sent to teach and remind the disciples of Jesus' ministry, and for this reason, the Spirit is sent in Jesus' name. Neyrey suggests that the Holy Spirit is sent in order to keep the conversation alive. Up until this point in his ministry, Jesus has been their Advocate. He is the one who speaks. The Holy Spirit is sent in Jesus' name to speak on behalf of Jesus when he has returned to the Father: 'Now Jesus speaks, but the Advocate/Holy Spirit will speak later. The Advocate functions to link past and future, *reminding* them of Jesus' words and *teaching* all things. The Spirit, then, is Jesus' broker.'⁴²² The Spirit will do this by keeping the memory of Jesus' teaching alive within the Christian

⁴²¹ *Letter II* (Augustine to Nedbridius) 2. In *The Words of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, vol. 2. 1, tr. and notes Ronald Teske, SJ, ed. John E. Rotelle, OSA (New York: New City, 2001).

⁴²² Jerome H. Neyrey, 'John', *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) p. 1907.

community after he has returned to the Father. Further, the Spirit will disclose new insights and meaning of Jesus' life and actions (John 2.22; 12.16). Tasker argues: 'After Jesus has returned to the Father, the Holy Spirit which is His Spirit will continue to perform, in a manner unrecognisable by and unintelligible to the world, the same office He has Himself discharged for them so lovingly while He has been with them on earth.'⁴²³ The ministry of the Spirit is rooted in the life and ministry of Jesus, and includes revealing the life of Jesus to future generations. The Holy Spirit is sent to unite persons in communion with one another and with God. The Holy Spirit draws us into the very depths of God's inner-life, where 'creature' may participate in the perichoretic life of the triune 'creator'. For LaCugna, this is the very nature of the Spirit's economic activity:

The Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ brings about the true communion of God and creature. The Spirit is the animating power of the economy, making God's will and work known and realised in Jesus Christ and in each one of us. The Spirit humanises God, and also divinises human beings, making persons theonomous and catholic... The Holy Spirit incorporates us into the very life of God, into the mystery of perichoresis, the 'to and fro' of being itself which exists in personhood.⁴²⁴

At this point, we cannot avoid some discussion of the filioque clause, an enduring source of controversy between the East and the West. LaCugna argues that the entire filioque controversy can be explained as a misreading between the relationship of the economic and the immanent: 'The centuries-long dispute over the *filioque* (the Spirit proceeds from the Father and Son) originated with an improper understanding of the relationships between *oikonomia* and *theologia*.'⁴²⁵ The Eastern Church seems to have been motivated by the desire to safeguard the monarchy of the Father as the *fount divinis* (the origin and source of the Son and the Spirit).⁴²⁶ Meanwhile, the Western Church insisted that from the vista of the economy, the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son. LaCugna writes, 'It is impossible to think or speak of the Spirit except as the Spirit-of. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, Spirit of the community.'⁴²⁷ This thesis has argued for the deep unity of *oikonomia* and *theologia*, for the deep correspondence between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity. The processions in the economy of salvation reveal the eternal

⁴²³ R. V. G. Tasker, *John* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1960), p. 167.

⁴²⁴ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 298.

⁴²⁵ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 377, n. 66.

⁴²⁶ Thomas P. Rausch, *I Believe In God: A Reflection on the Apostles' Creed* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2008), p. 122.

⁴²⁷ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 298.

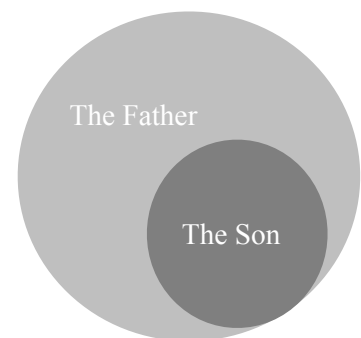
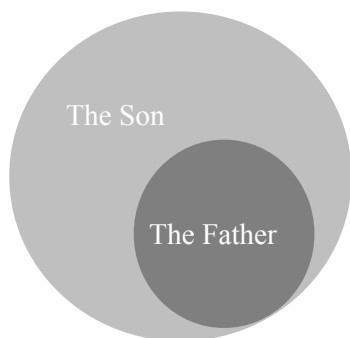
processions within God *ad intra*. In the economy of salvation, Christ sends the Holy Spirit (John 16.7). Therefore, the Spirit proceeds from the Father *and the Son*. In this regard, the Western tradition depends on a close relationship between the economic and the immanent.⁴²⁸

5.2. A Manifesto for Human Life

“I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

“Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.” (John 17.20-26)

At the conclusion of the Last Supper, and following a lengthy discourse, Jesus prays for his disciples be one. The prayer of Jesus in John 17, often called his high priestly prayer, offers a beautiful description of the trinitarian community. Jesus’ relationship with the Father is one of mutual indwelling and glorification. This is the hallmark of ‘ideal’ relationship: ‘Father, the hour has come; glorify you Son so that the Son may glorify you’ (John 17.1b).⁴²⁹ Jesus delights in his relationship with his Father, and his prayer is that the disciples (and the church of the future) will mirror the unity of his relationship with the Father.⁴³⁰ This unity is to be rooted in the mutual indwelling of the trinitarian persons. The Father indwells in the Son (John 17. 21, 23), and the Son indwells in the Father (John 17.21):



⁴²⁸ For example, Aquinas was an ardent proponent of the dual procession, arguing that we ought not say anything about God which is not revealed in scripture. See, *ST* 1, q. 36, a. 2, reply 1.

⁴²⁹ Neyrey, ‘John’, p. 1909.

⁴³⁰ Neyrey, ‘John’, p. 1910.

This pattern of mutual indwelling provides the basis of Jesus' petition to the Father. The unity of believers/the Church, is to be rooted in the mutual indwelling of believers with the Father and the Son (John 17.21), and the indwelling of the Son in believers (John 17. 23, 26). Kieffer argues: 'Their unity has its fountain-head in the Father and the Son; as their union is a prototype of later communities, these are also included in the prayer.'⁴³¹



Jesus' prayer, which at v. 20 extends to include those will come to faith through the witness of the eleven, reaches its climax at v. 21: 'that they all may be *one*. As you, Father, are in me.'⁴³² Jesus' prayer is structured around this twin petition. The desire is unity/oneness; may they be 'one'. The foundation for this pattern of relationship of persons is modelled by the triune God; may they 'as' we. It is significant that the word 'one' is repeated by Jesus several times in this chapter of John's Gospel. In the Greek, Jesus repeats the word 'εἰς/ἐν' (*one*) seven times - pointing perhaps to a sense that the unity of believers, mirroring the unity of the Father and the Son, is the perfect ideal of human relationships: 'ὅσιν τετελειωμένοι εἰς ἓν' (that they may be *perfected in unity*) (John 17.23).

Text	NRSV	Interlinear
1. John 17.11	And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be <i>one</i> , as we are <i>one</i> .	καὶ οὐκέτι εἰμι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ εἰσίν, καὶ γὰρ πρὸς σὲ ἔρχομαι. πᾶτερ ἅγιε, τηρήσον αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι σου ᾧ δέδωκάς μοι, ἵνα ὡσιν ἐν καθὼς ἡμεῖς.

⁴³¹ René Kieffer, 'John', *The Gospels: The Oxford Bible Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) pp. 230, 231.

⁴³² Emphasis added.

2. John 17.12	While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not <i>one</i> of them was lost except the <i>one</i> destined to be lost, so that scripture might be fulfilled.	ὅτε ἤμην μετ' αὐτῶν ἐγὼ ἐτήρουν αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου ᾧ δέδωκάς μοι, καὶ ἐφύλαξα, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀπώλετο εἰ μὴ ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας, ἵνα ἡ γραφὴ πληρωθῇ.
3. John 17.21	that they may all be <i>one</i> . As you, Father are in me and I am in you...	ἵνα πάντες ἔν ὧσιν, καθὼς σύ, πάτερ, ἐν ἐμοὶ κάγω ἐν σοι
4. John 17.21	...may they also be <i>one</i> in us, so that the world may believe you have sent me.	ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν ἡμῖν ὧσιν, ἵνα ὁ κόσμος πιστεύῃ ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας.
5. John 17.22	The glory you have given me I have given them, so that they may be <i>one</i> ...	κάγω τὴν δόξαν ἣν δέδωκάς μοι δέδωκα αὐτοῖς, ἵνα ὧσιν ἔν
6. John 17.22	...as we are <i>one</i> .	καθὼς ἡμεῖς ἔν
7. John 17.23	I in them and you in me, that they may become completely <i>one</i> ...	ἐγὼ ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ σύ ἐν ἐμοί, ἵνα ὧσιν τετελειωμένοι εἰς ἔν, ἵνα γινώσκῃ ὁ κόσμος ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας καὶ ἠγάπησας αὐτοὺς καθὼς ἐμὲ ἠγάπησας.

This passage of scripture is key. Rooted in the economy, it offers a vista into the pattern of relationships between the divine persons *ad intra*. Rooted in prayer, it offers a clear social agenda for human life. This thesis argues that Jesus' high priestly prayer permits the theological move from the economy of the Trinity *to* ecclesiological praxis. The relationship between the divine persons is the ideal pattern for relationships between persons, and persons and the triune God. In our mutual indwelling with one another, and our indwelling in God, and God in us, relationships are τετελειωμένοι ('perfected'). Jesus is to be made known to the world through the mirroring of the love and unity between the triune persons amongst believers: 'This unity, like the love which produces it, is supernatural; it is fundamentally the same as the unity which exists between the Father and the Son. This is why the world, when it sees such unity among believers, will be led to recognise the divine mission of Jesus.'⁴³³ This is central to LaCugna's own claim, that God's perichoretic life is, ultimately, *for* us. Trinitarian relationships are perichoretic, ergo, human relationships should be perichoretic: '*Perichōrēsis* is thus the intradivine model for persons in the

⁴³³ Tasker, *John*, p. 191.

human community. *Perichōrēsis* takes place within God, and the human community is supposed to mirror or imitate this *perichōrēsis* in its own configuration.⁴³⁴

5.3. Conclusion

This chapter has sought to demonstrate that God's invitation to humanity to participate in God's triune life runs like a thread throughout scripture. It has argued that God is a God of dialogue. Beginning with God's invitation to Adam to participate in the process of creation, in the naming of the animals and the choosing of a partner. Culminating in the most sublime act of human-divine cooperation, as Mary offers her *fiat* - her consent to partner with God in the recreation and redemption of the world. God's invitation to participate and join this dialogue, is an invitation to participate in the very life and activity of God. This chapter has concluded by considering Jesus' high priestly prayer, arguing that it offers a manifesto for human life - that the ordering of God's triune life offers 'blueprint' for the human community, and as such, it is the proper source of reflection for Church in considering its own common life.

The final chapter of this thesis now moves to explore how the social doctrine of God thus far explored may inform ecclesiological praxis. In particular, it will focus on the developing patterns of ministry in the Church in Wales, offering recommendations which may support the Church in Wales in implementing this new strategy as it enters its centenary year.

⁴³⁴ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 276.

God for Us

An Eminently Practical Doctrine

Following our critical consideration of LaCugna's social doctrine of God, and our analysis of the biblical basis for such a doctrine, this thesis concludes by arguing that LaCugna has been successful in her primary aim of ensuring that the doctrine of the Trinity 'has far reaching consequences for the Christian life.'⁴³⁵ This chapter will argue that LaCugna, in her desire to offer an inherently practical theology of the trinity, sets the agenda of trinitarian discussion with the life of the Church. In particular, this chapter considers how LaCugna's project can be of benefit to the Church in Wales, which in her centenary year is seeking to establish and introduce new patterns of ministry. I will concentrate in particular on three areas: i the ministry of bishops; ii. the ministry of the baptised; iii. the implementation of ministry areas. Each area of discussion concludes with a recommendation which, it is hoped, will reinvigorate the debate within the Church in Wales about its structures and organisation, so that she may be fully an icon of the trinity.

6.1 The Communion of the Church

That they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. (John 17:21)

Marmion argues that LaCugna's project 'set the standard and, to a large extent, the parameters of Trinitarian debate before her untimely death in 1997.'⁴³⁶ In this regard, I argue that LaCugna can be considered a catalyst for the increased reflection on how the doctrine of the Trinity should shape the ordered life of the Church. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that there has been a 'development in ecclesiality [which] has centred on the doctrine of the Trinity', as Ford suggests.⁴³⁷ This has not always been the case. For example, the House of Bishops have recognised that '[the] ecclesiology [...] in the Church of England (and in many other Churches of the Western tradition) has often paid

⁴³⁵ LaCugna, *God For Us*, p. ix.

⁴³⁶ Marmion, 'Trinity and Salvation', p. 116.

⁴³⁷ Martin Ford, 'Recent Directions in Anglican Ecclesiology', *Church Society*, accessed October 27, 2015, http://churchsociety.org/docs/churchman/115/Cman_115_4_Foord.pdf.

insufficient attention to the trinitarian character of God.⁴³⁸ However, no doubt influenced by LaCugna (and the wider school of social trinitarian thought) they argue that this neglect of Trinitarian theology has ‘resulted in some damaging consequences for ecclesiology.’⁴³⁹ In order to address this issue, the House of Bishops have sought to ground the ecclesiology of the Anglican Communion in a social theology of the Trinity. In doing so, they reference LaCugna (and others), drawing on the language used in her thesis. For example, they share with LaCugna the view that the shared life of the Church is a participation in the shared life of God: ‘The corporate life of the Church is thus ‘nothing less than a real participation in the life of the triune God.’⁴⁴⁰

Furthermore, their report emphasises the co-equality of all those who participate in the life of the Church, in the same way that the persons of the Trinity are co-equal: ‘in the communion of the Church, by virtue of our baptism into Christ and thus into the Trinity, there is no difference of value or worth of persons before God.’⁴⁴¹ As LaCugna, they affirm a definition of ‘person’ which only makes sense in relationship, arguing: ‘The Church can never properly be conceived as an assembly of individual believers [...] To be baptised into the Church is to be baptised into a community of persons who mutually constitute one another through their dynamic relations with each other.’⁴⁴² Therefore, as the persons of the Trinity work together to accomplish God’s mission in the world, ‘all Christians are called to a ministry and service as God’s fellow-workers.’⁴⁴³

LaCugna’s doctrine of the Trinity still has the capacity to inform and shape ongoing developments in ecclesiology. Owing to declining congregations, the Church in Wales has started to reconsider its own ecclesiology.⁴⁴⁴ What is beginning to emerge, is a vision of the Church, or rather, an ecclesiology which is profoundly (albeit perhaps subconsciously) Trinitarian.

⁴³⁸ *Eucharistic Presidency*, p. 13.

⁴³⁹ *Eucharistic Presidency*, p. 13.

⁴⁴⁰ *Eucharistic Presidency*, p. 16.

⁴⁴¹ *Eucharistic Presidency*, p. 18.

⁴⁴² *Eucharistic Presidency*, p. 18

⁴⁴³ *Eucharistic Presidency*, p. 23.

⁴⁴⁴ *The Church in Wales*, ‘Becoming a Ministry Area: Resourcing the Church in Ministry and Mission in the 21st Century’ (2013), accessed October 20, 2015, <http://cinw.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2014/10/Becoming-a-Ministry-Area-1303011.pdf>.

6.2. The Church in Wales Review 2012

The central vision of the Church in Wales Review is the hope of a re-energised and reinvigorated Church; one in which responsibility for the Church's mission and ministry to wider is shared among all the baptised.⁴⁴⁵

A number of reviews have been commissioned to examine and reflect on the life and witness of the Church in Wales, the most recent of which, 'The Church in Wales Review' was commissioned by the Bench of Bishops and the Standing Committee to the Governing Body in late 2010/early 2011.⁴⁴⁶ This most recent review was commissioned following a meeting of the Governing Body in September 2010, which was notable for the number of contributions from members with a common message: 'The Church in Wales cannot go on doing the same things in the same way; some things need to change and we are open to - and indeed encourage - that possibility.'⁴⁴⁷ In response, the Bench of Bishops and Standing Committee commissioned an external review of the Church, which was to pay particular attention to 'its structures and use of resources, to increase the effectiveness of the Church's ministry and witness.'⁴⁴⁸ The review does seem to be guided by some broad theological principles, which in view of this thesis, seem to point toward a more collaborative pattern of ministry, rooted in the collaborative life of the triune God:

The recommendations we make about structures and organisation are in order that the wonderful vision we share of what it is to be a human being, made in God's image and called to share his life, may be made more manifest [...] Membership of the Christian community not only takes us into a *koinonia* with other human beings, it takes us into the very *koinonia* of God. The church as an institution, its structures and organisation, only have a purpose in so far as they serve and achieve that aim.⁴⁴⁹

Furthermore, the reviewers understand the purpose of their report to be a tool for better enabling and facilitating the Church in Wales in its mission to reflect, and indeed draw others into the life of God:

⁴⁴⁵ *2020 Vision: Ministry Areas* (2013)

⁴⁴⁶ Lord Harries of Pentregarth, Professor Charles Handy, Professor Patrica Peattie, *Church in Wales Review* (2012), p. 36.

⁴⁴⁷ *Church in Wales Review*, p. i.

⁴⁴⁸ *Church in Wales Review*, p. i.

⁴⁴⁹ *Church in Wales Review*, pp. 2-3.

The purpose of our report is to make such recommendations as will enable the Church in Wales, as an institution persisting through space and time, better able to share the Gospel, and to draw people into our common life, that life of God made present in Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁵⁰

It is towards this ‘broad theology’ which both characterises the ambition and the recommendations made by the review, that I now turn. Indeed, the review was commissioned with the aim to enable the Church in Wales to develop patterns of Church life which are theologically coherent and sustainable in the long term.⁴⁵¹ In examining LaCugna’s claim that the doctrine of the Trinity should be eminently practical I aspire to assist the Church in Wales as it continues to reflect on the findings of the report - and in particular, as it considers the theological merit of its proposed recommendations. It is to be noted that some recommendations have very quickly been implemented, whilst others have seemingly been consigned to history. More worrying, perhaps, is that very little work has been undertaken to seriously consider the ‘theological coherence’ of the proposed recommendations. By no means do I seek to offer an exhaustive and conclusive view. However, it is hoped that as I now turns to reflect on some of those recommendations, in light of my consideration of LaCugna’s work, we can rekindle theological discussion within the Church in Wales.

6.2.1. Ministry of Bishops

Q. What is the different between the Roman Catholic Church, and the Church in Wales?

A. The Roman Catholic Church has only one Pope. The Church in Wales has six!⁴⁵²

The report considers the ministry of bishops, making reference throughout to the perceptions of episcopal ministry in Wales. The reviewers consider how the ministry of bishops in Wales might impact their endeavour for more collaborative patterns of ministry, offering pointed concern regarding a model of episcopacy which they find to be ‘characterised by a culture of deference and dependance.’⁴⁵³ The report argues that the ‘high authority of the bishops’ is stifling the ‘creative energy’ of others, particularly the laity. It is suggested that the pattern of ministry modelled by the

⁴⁵⁰ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 3

⁴⁵¹ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 43.

⁴⁵² I hope the reader will allow me this one colloquial reference, which, whilst it can not be attributed to any one written source, is a well known and well worn expression amongst Church in Wales clergy.

⁴⁵³ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 43.

bishops is unhelpfully carried over into the parishes, which are often characterised by a culture of “Father knows best”.⁴⁵⁴ Though not stated explicitly, the report suggests a reluctance on the part of the bench of bishops to delegate decision making, which in turn, suppresses the opportunity for debate: ‘As an example of what we mean, the Diocesan Conference in most Dioceses is used as an occasion when the Bishop shares his thoughts with this people [sic], in contrast to what happens in other churches when it is an occasion to debate motions that are put to it by parishes or other Diocesan bodies.’⁴⁵⁵ All of this, they argue, means that ‘bishops are often consulted about minor decisions that ought to be made elsewhere.’⁴⁵⁶

The reviewers highlight this to be a key issue, and whilst no particular section of the report is exclusively focused on the ministry of bishops in Wales, they argue that the leadership they model ‘is not of such a kind as to affirm and release the energy of those lay people who will need to play a key role in any future ministry.’⁴⁵⁷ In this regard, therefore, successfully reimagining models of episcopal ministry in Wales is vital to the success of the reviewers ambition for reimagining models of ministry in Wales. If the church hopes to truly release the potential of Ministry Areas, the church need to release the potential of the whole baptised community. If the church truly hopes to release the potential of the whole baptised community, inviting lay people to play a much more active participative role in the life of the church, the church needs seriously reconsider the ministry of its bishops, and the leadership that they model: ‘If leadership is to be collaborative it would not be appropriate to leave it to the Bishops alone.’⁴⁵⁸

Given, then, that this issue is integral to the other areas of the report, it is at best surprising, and at worst, rather disappointing and careless, that it has seemingly been ignored. I will later highlight some of the ways in which good progress has been made in responding to other areas of the report. There is much to celebrate. However, concerning the recommendations regarding the ministry of bishops, there is little evidence to suggest that these have been given serious consideration, let alone actioned. For example, the report recommends restructuring the province into three administrative centres (one in the North, and two in the South and South West), with a view to then evaluating after a period of three years whether the province would be best served by

⁴⁵⁴ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 4.

⁴⁵⁵ *Church in Wales Review*, pp. 4-5

⁴⁵⁶ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 4.

⁴⁵⁷ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 4.

⁴⁵⁸ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 34.

three dioceses, with three diocesan bishops, and a further four area bishops.⁴⁵⁹ Further, the report recommends the Diocese of Llandaff be designated the permanent Archiepiscopal See, and that the Archbishop appoint a suffragan with a legally delegated area of pastoral responsibility. Finally, the report advises that there be an elected Vice Chair of the Bench of Bishops to share chairing responsibilities.⁴⁶⁰ The report concludes by outlining a suitable time period in which such changes might be actioned: ‘The Church in Wales took three years to organise itself as a disestablished church. We believe there is a three year period of grace now to bring about changes of a similar magnitude.’⁴⁶¹ At the time of writing, the reality eight years after the publication of the report, is that there are still six diocesan bishops, serving six dioceses, no permanent Archiepiscopal See, no suffragan to assist the Archbishop, and no Vice Chair of the Bench of Bishops. There have been opportunities for change. In this same period, the province has elected four new diocesan bishops, and one new archbishop.

Though commendable, I believe that the recommendations of the report concerning the ministry of bishops in Wales requires further theological consideration and justification. Indeed, this thesis argues that LaCugna’s social model of the Trinity offers the Church in Wales the opportunity to work both with and beyond the recommendations of the report in reimagining patterns of episcopal ministry. Patterns which are both ambitious in their efforts to release the potential of the baptised community and are theological coherent. Before making this case, one might well ask, particularly in light of the social model of the Trinity advocated by this thesis, why Bishops? In some respect, in addressing this question, this thesis once more is able to address another question, why LaCugna? Indeed, within the school of social trinitarian thought there is a divergence of opinion. On the one hand, Zizioulas argues that the hierarchical patterns of relationship between the persons of the trinity, justify a hierarchical patterns of ministry: ‘Thus the Church becomes *hierarchical* in the sense in which the Holy Trinity is hierarchical: by reason of the *specificity of relationship*. The ministry, viewed in this way, creates degree of honor [sic], respect and true authority precisely in the way we see this in trinitarian theology.’⁴⁶² On the other hand, Boff argues that this model is contrary to the witness of scripture: ‘There are also those who say that just as there is only one God, there is only one Christ, so there ought to be only one religion and one

⁴⁵⁹ *Church in Wales Review*, pp. 18-19.

⁴⁶⁰ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 20-21.

⁴⁶¹ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 35.

⁴⁶² Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 223

religious head[...] Yet that is not how things are understood in the gospels; it is always the community that we see there, and within it are those who serve as coordinators to encourage all.⁴⁶³

As far as LaCugna is concerned, the trinitarian doctrine of God can only offer the Church a basis for trinitarian ecclesiology in so far as it has the capacity to provide the critical principle against which we can measure present institutional arrangements. In other words, it cannot specify the precise forms of structure/ecclesial governance appropriate to the Church: ‘many institutional arrangements are conceivable that would serve the twin purposes of communion among persons and the praise of the true and living God [...] The trinitarian doctrine of God [...] might not specify the exact forms of structure and community appropriate to the church.’⁴⁶⁴ Following LaCugna, therefore, it is not possible to make the case for an episcopal model of governance over alternative forms of church governance using any given theology of the trinity. At this point, one might feel that LaCugna is overly cautious. Having made the case that the doctrine of the trinity is ‘ultimately a practical doctrine with radical consequences’⁴⁶⁵, one might be forgiven for taking the view that LaCugna now fails to specify such consequences. Why is LaCugna seemingly so reluctant to specify how the doctrine of the Trinity might offer a particular form of ecclesial governance, contrary to the claims made by other social trinitarians, as outlined above? Once more, in addressing this question, I can restate my case *for* LaCugna.

LaCugna never seeks to contend that the doctrine of the trinity can specify any particular theological ethic, spirituality, ecclesiology, and so on, but rather that the doctrine of the trinity is ‘the proper source for *reflection* on theological ethics, spirituality, ecclesiology, and the liturgical and communitarian life of the church.’⁴⁶⁶ As such, LaCugna guards her self from the main criticism levelled at social trinitarian theologies. That is, the accusation that they are projectionist. Kilby argues, ‘Projection, then, is particularly problematic in at least some social theories of the Trinity because what is projected onto God is immediately reflected back onto the world, and this reverse projection is said to be what is in fact important about the doctrine.’⁴⁶⁷ LaCugna offers a similar analysis, and warns against projection:

⁴⁶³ Boff, *Holy Trinity, Perfect Community*, p. 8.

⁴⁶⁴ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 402.

⁴⁶⁵ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 1.

⁴⁶⁶ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 1. emphasis added.

⁴⁶⁷ Kilby, *Perichoresis and Projection*, p. 442.

In the desire to remedy some of the great problems of the day, the temptation is to use the doctrine of the Trinity as “an autonomous datum and even premise for theology” that is applied to a particular problem, for example, unequal distribution of resources. It is as if the goal is to figure out God “*in se*”—the number of persons, relations and processions and how they are configured—and then project this “intradivine” structure onto human community, or vice versa. But as we have seen, this strategy, whether it supports a hierarchical or egalitarian vision, inevitably appears to be a transcendental projection of human preferences onto God.⁴⁶⁸

However, LaCugna is clear that the Church requires some form of leadership, and that this leadership should be rooted in the ministry of service: ‘The trinitarian *arché* of God emerges as the basis for mutuality among persons: rather than the [...] clerical theology of privilege[...] *Therefore any theological justification for a hierarchy among persons also vitiates the truth of our salvation through Christ.*’⁴⁶⁹ Following LaCugna, I do not seek to argue for an episcopal model of governance over other possible forms of governance. Such a case can be made elsewhere in the tradition.⁴⁷⁰ My intention, rather, is to critique the present institutional arrangements of the Church in Wales in light of the doctrine of the Trinity. This is why LaCugna’s trinitarian doctrine of God is helpful for this project, and indeed for the wider Church. The theological principles offered provide a critical lens through which one can critique the forms and structures of any given church community, be they episcopally governed or not. LaCugna points us towards the questions one might wish to ask when reflecting on the present patterns of ecclesial governance within one’s own ecclesial community: ‘Very simply, we may ask whether our institutions, rituals, and administrative practices foster elitism, discrimination, competition, or any of several ‘archisms’, or whether the church is run like God’s household: a domain of inclusiveness, interdependence, and cooperation, structured according to the model of *perichōrēsis* among persons.’⁴⁷¹

Firstly, then, following LaCugna, and working with the findings of the report, this thesis can ask to what extent the Bench of Bishops of the Church in Wales might be considered a ‘domain of

⁴⁶⁸ LaCugna, *God for Us*, pp. 379-380. I have argued that LaCugna adequately takes this problem into account in her own constructive proposal.

⁴⁶⁹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, pp. 399-400.

⁴⁷⁰ In the Anglican Communion, of which the Church in Wales is a part, the three-fold order of bishop, priest and deacon has become established: ‘Although there is no single New Testament pattern, although the Spirit has many times led the Church to adapt its ministries to contextual needs, and although other forms of the ordained ministry have been blessed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, nevertheless the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter and deacon may serve today as an expression of the unity we seek and also as a means for achieving it. Historically, it is true to say, the threefold ministry became the generally accepted pattern in the Church of the early centuries and is still retained today by many churches. In the fulfilment of their mission and service the churches need people who in different ways express and perform the tasks of the ordained ministry in its diaconal, presbyteral and episcopal aspects and functions.’ See, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982), ‘Ministry’, par. 22.

⁴⁷¹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 402.

inclusiveness.’ The report seems to broadly commend the Bench’s efforts to work ‘more collaboratively.’⁴⁷² Whilst not wishing to dispute this, this thesis believes that the report could have identified ways for the Bench to build on this ethos. It is somewhat disappointing that an opportunity has been missed to make bolder recommendations. Thinking specifically about the issue of inclusion, one might commend the Bench’s efforts in this regard. The Governing Body, for example, committed to working towards greater gender parity (May 2019).⁴⁷³ Shortly after (September 2019), Cherry Vann was elected the eleventh bishop of Monmouth, resulting in a 50/50 gender split in the Bench. However, one could argue that the report misses the ‘elephant in the room’, namely that some clergy in the province share with the laity a sense that they are not fully being affirmed and released in their ministry. There is, for example, no formal provision in the Church in Wales for traditionalist clergy (that is, clergy who are unable to affirm the ordination of women), and practices vary from Diocese to Diocese, and Bishop to Bishop.

This can lead to a sort of ‘postcode lottery’ for some clergy and laity who hold a traditionalist view, with some dioceses modelling themselves more as ‘domains of inclusion’ than others. Indeed, the lack of formal provision can heighten ones sense of feeling undervalued, especially when their diocesan espouse views of their ministry which at best might be described as pastorally insensitive. For example, Bishop Joanna Penberthy has described the traditionalist view of ministry to be at the ‘thin end of the wedge of misogyny’, arguing that whilst such views are ‘seemingly harmless’ they are connected to that same wedge, which at the ‘thick end’ incorporates issues such as domestic violence against women.⁴⁷⁴ Further, at a meeting of the Governing Body of the Church in Wales in May 2019, Archdeacon Peggy Jackson presented a motion which, in affect, was an attempt to bar traditionalists from ordination in the province.⁴⁷⁵ The motion was overwhelmingly rejected, with sixty-three people voting against, twenty abstentions, and nineteen

⁴⁷² *Church in Wales Review*, p. 4.

⁴⁷³ Tim Wyatt, ‘Church in Wales: more work to do on gender parity’, *Church Times* (2019) available at: <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2019/10-may/news/uk/church-in-wales-more-work-to-do-on-gender-parity>, accessed 23 March 2020.

⁴⁷⁴ *The Hour* (2018), BBC One Television, 16 April. Cf., Joanna Penberthy, Address to the Llandaff and Monmouth Chapter of SCP, St Augustine’s Church, Rumney, 16 November 2017.

⁴⁷⁵ The Church in Wales, *Agendum 18* (2019)

voting in favour. Notably, however, two of the church's six bishops indicated their support for the motion — the bishops of Bangor, and St Davids.⁴⁷⁶

All those who spoke did so in opposition, sharing a view that the motion would be divisive, and many pointed towards new emerging cultures of mutual respect between traditions. Rosemary Hill (priest) 'spoke of the "pain" of having her vocation "denied" and that she would not want to "inflict that on anybody."' ⁴⁷⁷ Further, Caroline Woollard (lay) expressed concern that the motion would make 'traditionalist priest[s] feel marginalised.'⁴⁷⁸ This thesis wishes to argue with these voices, and suggest that there is another way forward. Indeed, following Gareth Erlandson (ordinand), who shared his findings of speaking to female ordinands about 'a culture change', it seeks to point to the provision made in other provinces, arguing that the adoption of such provision in Wales would further the aims of the report.⁴⁷⁹ For example, the thesis notes that the Church of England has published 'five guiding principles' as part of a commitment to enabling those who 'on grounds of theological conviction are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops and priests' to 'flourish within its life and structures.'⁴⁸⁰ To further this aim, the Church of England has appointed a number of 'traditionalist bishops', who are able to offer formal alternative pastoral oversight. This thesis argues, therefore, that in order to aid the reviews ambition of releasing the creative energy of all ministers, that further recommendations should be considered.

Recommendation I

- 1) The Governing Body should consider adopting a policy similar to that of the 'five guiding principles', making a formal commitment to mutual flourishing.**
- 2) There should be a provincial traditionalist bishop, to provide formal alternative pastoral oversight to parishes/clergy as required.**

⁴⁷⁶ Tim Wyatt, 'Jackson motion on traditionalists defeated in Church in Wales Governing Body', *Church Times*, (2019) available at: <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2019/3-may/news/uk/jackson-motion-on-traditionalists-defeated-in-church-in-wales-governing-body>, accessed 23 March 2020.

⁴⁷⁷ The Church in Wales, *Highlights* (2019) available at: https://churchinwales.contentfiles.net/media/documents/Highlights_-_May_2019.pdf, accessed 23 March 2020

⁴⁷⁸ *Highlights*

⁴⁷⁹ *Highlights*

⁴⁸⁰ Steven Ferns, *The Five Guiding Principles* (2004) available at: https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/the_five_guiding_principles.pdf, accessed 23 March 2020.

Secondly, following the report, the thesis can consider how the bench might operate as a ‘domain of interdependence and cooperation’. This thesis has already highlighted the reports findings that decisions are often taken by the bishops that ought to be made elsewhere. There is a sense amongst clergy that the Church in Wales is ‘top-heavy’, with a high proportion of diocesan bishops to clergy/laity compared to some large dioceses in the Church of England.⁴⁸¹ For example, and by way of comparison, there are, at the time of writing, six diocesan bishops in the province of Wales, which has an average Sunday attendance (aSa) of 26,110.⁴⁸² Meanwhile, the diocese of Oxford, where the aSa stands at 39,000, is served by one diocesan bishop, three area bishops, and eight assistant bishops.⁴⁸³ In some regards, the numbers are broadly similar. However, there is a difference. In the diocese of Oxford, (to a degree) the episcopacy of the diocesan is shared with their area and assistant bishops. The Church in Wales Review does make the case for fewer diocesan bishops, supported by a number of suffragans. Though this recommendation, like other aspects of the review, seems largely to be driven by practical factors, such as ‘savings of scale’, rather than by theology.⁴⁸⁴

This thesis argues that the form of episcopal ministry which the Church in Wales Review envisages, that is, one which ‘shared’ between persons, would reflect more fully the corporate life God, and the patterns of corporate ministry found in scripture. If the bench of bishops are to operate as a ‘domain of interdependence and cooperation’, their episcopacy needs to be shared: ‘It is clear from the NT and from developments in the apostolic age that ministry is corporate by definition. Therefore, it can be argued that a corporate episcopate at every level more truly represents the truth about the nature of ministry than the single bishop.’⁴⁸⁵ Indeed, in calling for new ‘more corporate’ styles of leadership, the report recognises the important role that the bishops will need to play in modelling these new patterns, in order that they may be reflected at parish level.⁴⁸⁶ If the ambitions of the report are to be realised, namely, that all forms of ministry might be collaborative, and that all the baptised might participate in shared patterns of ministry, then the bishops will need to ‘let

⁴⁸¹ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 17.

⁴⁸² The Church in Wales, *Membership and Finance* (2018) available at: <https://churchinwales.contentfiles.net/media/documents/Membership-Finance-2019.pdf>, accessed 23 March 2020.

⁴⁸³ The Church of England, *Statistics for Mission* (2018) available at: https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/2018StatisticsForMission_0.pdf, accessed 23 March 2020.

⁴⁸⁴ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 18.

⁴⁸⁵ *Resourcing Bishops: The First Report of the Archbishop's Review Group on Bishops' Needs and Resources* (Church House Publishing, London: 2001), p. 24.

⁴⁸⁶ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 4.

people participate fully in [the] decision making process and then trust them to own and implement those decisions.⁴⁸⁷ As this thesis comes to consider the ministry of the baptised, and the implementation of ministry areas, it would argue that these endeavours will be pursued in vain if the recommendations made concerning episcopal ministry are not also addressed. There is an opportunity for the bishops to model shared ministry within their dioceses, as they encourage their clergy to share their ministry within their ministry areas:

Just as all orders of ministry exist as signs to the whole Church of the meaning of its ministry, so episcopal teamwork exists as a sign to clergy and laity of the meaning of shared ministry. The importance of this witness to the Church (and to the world) should never be underestimated.⁴⁸⁸

Recommendation II

- 1) The Governing Body should now seriously consider the recommendations made to reduce the number of dioceses, and diocesan bishops**
- 2) Each diocesan bishop should appoint a suffragan/assistant bishop**

6.2.2. Ministry of the Baptised Community

Evangelise. Now this shouldn't be such a dirty word for most Anglicans. If you like a book or a boutique hotel, you tell people about it, don't you? Now let's get you doing that with Jesus Christ.⁴⁸⁹

The report, as this thesis has been outlining, calls for a much wider participation and inclusion of the whole people of God in the mission and ministry of the Church. In particular, it suggests that 'there is a great desire amongst lay people in the Church in Wales to have their ministry affirmed and more greatly used.'⁴⁹⁰ The report argues, therefore, that 'lay people' in particular will need to play a more participative role in the life of the church than they do at present if the Church is to realise and release its full potential, and to effectively communicate the Gospel to a contemporary Wales.⁴⁹¹ Unfortunately, the report suggests whilst there is a great willingness and talent among amongst the

⁴⁸⁷ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 4.

⁴⁸⁸ *Resourcing Bishops*, p. 24.

⁴⁸⁹ *Rev.* (2014) BBC Two Television, 24 March.

⁴⁹⁰ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 16.

⁴⁹¹ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 6.

wider baptised community, that this ‘resource’ is largely ‘untapped’. Again, the report argues that is largely a consequence of the ‘over clericalised’ culture of the Church in Wales, which both fails to encourage and utilise the gifts of its worshipping communities:

One of the major impressions we have received is from trained lay people, Readers and others, who feel that though being trained and willing, they are simply not being properly used. At the same time we recognise there are lay people who do not want to be involved and who in consequence look to the clergy to do everything. The key point however that is there is talent and willingness amongst many lay people to be used more fully in the ministry of the church[...] we believe that the church can only continue into the future if it taps into this human resource.⁴⁹²

The releasing of this ‘human resource’ is of fundamental importance to the reports wider ambition in reimagining ministry in Wales, with the formation of Ministry Areas, which this thesis shall explore in the final section of this chapter. Ministry Areas will only succeed in drawing people into the Christian community if they can radically change their perspective of ministry ‘from parish to a much larger area, and from a single priest, to a team with different gifts.’⁴⁹³ The report makes a number of recommendations to facilitate this broader participation in ministry, calling for a renewed focus on ‘lay training’, an effort to utilise ‘key lay persons’ in leadership roles, and a repurposed understanding of lay ministry. There have been some encouraging signs of progress in this regard. The formation of the St Padarn’s Institute has assisted the Church in Wales in realising its ambition to foster greater participation in ministry. For example, in 2018, there was an increase of 70% in those registered on a programme for disciples (those not preparing for licensed ministry).⁴⁹⁴ However, once more report lacks any sense of the theological imperative. Instead, the case for new patterns of ministry is made from the basis that current patterns are viewed to be unsustainable. Regrettably, therefore, there is no acknowledgement or discussion about the ‘priestly vocation’ in which all believers share by virtue of their baptism. Further, there is no reflection on how the baptised community might minister ‘in the world’ and ‘beyond the church’ - the report focuses exclusively on licensed ministries, or formal roles which ‘lay persons’ might hold. Indeed, Jeremy Duff has argued: ‘The Church always runs the risk of acting as if the valued ministry of lay people is within the Church’s internal activities, as some form of authorised ministers. [The Church needs

⁴⁹² *Church in Wales Review*, p. 6.

⁴⁹³ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 6.

⁴⁹⁴ Jeremy Duff, *St Padarn’s Report to the Governing Body* (2018), p. 2.

to avoid this trap], seeking to support lay people in their vocation in the world.⁴⁹⁵ The report falls into this trap.

This thesis argues that the Christian is invited to participate in the life of the revealed community of the trinity, which offers for the Church a pattern of relationship, both within and beyond the her walls. The Church is a gathered community of persons in full communion of *one-with-one-another* and *one-with-God*. In baptism, persons enter this community, in which they are given ‘a new way of being in the world.’⁴⁹⁶ LaCugna continues: ‘Putting on Christ in baptism becomes the authentic basis for a true communion among persons.’⁴⁹⁷ In this regard, the task of releasing the full potential of what the report call ‘lay persons’ is, in fact, the task of enabling the whole baptised community to reclaim the identity they have already been given in baptism. However, the report simply notes: ‘we recognise there are lay people who do not want to be involved.’⁴⁹⁸ This is alarming. There is a theological imperative for all baptised to ‘be involved’ in the mission and ministry of the Church: ‘lay persons do not *belong* to the Church; through baptism, they *are* the Church.’⁴⁹⁹

The Christian vocation is one of proclamation, proclamation of being as much as anything else. The Christian is one who continues to encounter the risen Christ in the complexities of their own life, yet by their very being (their ontology) they are in Christ and thus take Christ with them wherever they go: ‘The church is to be a sign in the world of this new existence.’⁵⁰⁰ This existence is a signpost to Christ, it is the purpose of the Church, it is the purpose of all Christians, and it is the heightened purpose, responsibility, and calling of the priest: ‘In baptism the Christian takes on the name of Jesus Christ as his or her own, and undertakes to live in *persona Christi*.’⁵⁰¹ The ultimate reality for the Christian, and thus the Church is to point to the one who died, is risen, and will return. In the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, ‘God wants to see human beings, not ghosts who shun the world.’⁵⁰²

⁴⁹⁵ Jeremy Duff, *St Padarn's Report*, p. 4.

⁴⁹⁶ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 263.

⁴⁹⁷ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 263.

⁴⁹⁸ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 4.

⁴⁹⁹ Tom Gillen, ‘The Laity in the Church Today’, *The Furrow*, Vol 37, No. 4 (1986), pp. 224-232, [p. 225].

⁵⁰⁰ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 263.

⁵⁰¹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 404.

⁵⁰² Quoted in Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), p. 114.

This thesis believes that the Church in Wales might better release and engage the potential of its gathered communities if it can rediscover and reclaim a robust theology of universal priesthood, which is firmly rooted in the sacraments of baptism and confirmation. In this regard, terms such as ‘laity’ need also be reclaimed. First, as shares by virtue of baptism in the ‘priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ.’⁵⁰³ Second, as persons with a particular vocation to ‘seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God.’⁵⁰⁴ Too often, the term is used simply to distinguish between ‘ordained’ and ‘non-ordained’ persons. Following Zizioulas, this thesis argues that not only should this be resisted, but that it is, theologically speaking, wholly inaccurate: ‘In the first place, it must be stated emphatically, that there is no such thing as “non-ordained” persons in the Church’.⁵⁰⁵

Further, Zizioulas argues that the sacraments of baptism and confirmation may be understood as a *type* of ordination: ‘The theological significance of this lies in the fact that *it reveals the nature of baptism and confirmation as being essentially an ordination*, while it helps us understand better what *ordination itself* means.’⁵⁰⁶ Here, Zizioulas presents the Church in Wales with a unique opportunity to reimagine the significance of confirmation, following the decision to admit all the baptised to holy communion.⁵⁰⁷ Candidates for confirmation should receive instruction, so that they might understand the sacrament of confirmation as the sacrament of mission. In this regard, the Church in Wales might reimagine confirmation as a kind of ordination, in which the bishop charges candidates with the duty of carrying on the apostolic mission. Such a move might help the laity to discover a renewed sense of value and purpose, and assist the Church in Wales in overcoming the perception of being too clerical. Pope Francis would urge the Church to ‘not see the laity as if they were members of a “second order”, at the service of the hierarchy and simple executors of higher orders, but as disciples of Christ who, by virtue of their Baptism and of their natural insertion “in the world”, are called to enliven every environment, every activity, every

⁵⁰³ *Lumen Gentium* (1964), §31.

⁵⁰⁴ *Lumen Gentium* (1964), §31.

⁵⁰⁵ Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, pp. 215-216.

⁵⁰⁶ Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, pp. 215-216.

⁵⁰⁷ David Pocklington, "Admission to Holy Communion – Church in Wales" in *Law & Religion UK*, 17 September 2016.

human relationship according to the spirit of the Gospel.⁵⁰⁸ Such a view is consistent with theology of the Trinity presented in this thesis, which has argued that there is no superiority of personhood: ‘there is no subordination of being within the triune God, nor, by extension, can there be difference of value of persons before God within the communion of the Church by virtue of our baptism in the triune name.’⁵⁰⁹

Recommendation III

- 1) The Church in Wales should reclaim and celebrate a theology of the universal priesthood, and clergy should ensure that they instruct all candidates for baptism and confirmation of their imperative to share in the mission of the Church.**
- 2) The Liturgical Commission should consider ways in which the sacrament of confirmation might be celebrated as a kind of ‘lay ordination’, at which members are charged to continue the apostolic mission.**
- 3) The Church in Wales should distance itself from using the term ‘laity’ as a descriptor of ‘non-ordained’ persons.**

6.2.3. Ministry Areas

The parish system, as originally set up, with a single priest serving a small community is no longer sustainable. It was put in place when people lived and worked in the same parish, when they did not travel except occasionally to the local market town and when it was assumed that church and nation were of one faith. All this has changed.⁵¹⁰

The review, in seeking to re-energise the Church in Wales, proposes a significant re-ordering of its ministerial structures; namely, the suspension of the historic parochial model, in favour of a new pattern of ministry which the review team term ‘Ministry Areas’. They suggest that each ‘Ministry Area’ would be formed of approximately twenty-five congregations or churches, be served by around three stipendiary clergy (one of whom would be designated team leader), with a wider team of non-stipendiary leaders (either ordained or a trained lay person) to be designated with a focal

⁵⁰⁸ Pope Francis, ‘Letter to the Pontifical Council for the Laity’ (2015), available at: http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20151022_messaggio-apostolicam-actuositatem.html, accessed 1 April 2020.

⁵⁰⁹ *Eucharistic Presidency*, p. 22.

⁵¹⁰ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 6.

ministry for each congregation.⁵¹¹ They argue that the present pattern is unsustainable, and note that some clergy have the administrative oversight for as many as ten individually constituted parishes. Once more, at the heart of the review teams vision, there is a desire for the responsibility of the Church's ministry to be shared among the whole baptised community. They are clear that those appointed to lead these newly formed Ministry Areas will need to hone an ability to work collaboratively.⁵¹² This is the key concept of Ministry Areas. That teams might be formed which can effectively reflect and serve a broader geographical area. These teams should enable specialisation in different types of ministry, and in particular, the report recommends nurturing the ministry of those with 'specialist gifts for relating to those outside the church in new ways.'⁵¹³

It is worth noting that where other areas of the report have received little attention, for example, the recommendations concerning episcopal ministry, that there has been a hive of activity regarding the formation of Ministry Areas. Indeed, it is the only recommendation made in the review which has been formally followed up with a supplementary report, including a provincial framework, and presented to the Governing Body for approval.⁵¹⁴ Further, it is the only recommendation which has been formally considered theologically. Despite, for example, the claim that Ministry Areas are being implemented because 'we can no longer afford to pay for the number of clergy we have been used to'⁵¹⁵, there has been an effort to assert that this is 'not an approach of last resort intended to reflect loss of members, clergy, wealth and confidence.'⁵¹⁶ On the contrary, there has been some expression that Ministry Areas embody a theology of universal priesthood:

Ministry Areas recognise the ministry of all baptised Christians as the people of God. They also recognise that some will be called to certain ministries—some permanently and some for a period of time. We need to recognise the gifts God has given each person and use them in his service.

Ministry Areas are incarnational in that they are rooted in local communities with local leadership. They are apostolic in having leaders with responsibility for teaching, fostering vocations and empowering others for ministry. They are missional in seeking new opportunities for ministry and evangelism. They are prophetic in that they recognise the signs of the times and plan for the future.

⁵¹¹ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 7.

⁵¹² *Church in Wales Review*, p. 7.

⁵¹³ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 7.

⁵¹⁴ *2020 Vision: Ministry Areas*

⁵¹⁵ *Becoming a Ministry Area*, p. 3.

⁵¹⁶ *2020 Vision: Ministry Areas*, p. 2.

They are visionary in that they require a new way of responding to God's call to extend his Kingdom.⁵¹⁷

There is also evidence that the Church in Wales has begun to consider how the collaborative life of the Trinity might inform the collaborative life of Ministry Areas. Indeed, the Trinity is identified as a 'key theological theme' in a document prepared by Monmouth Diocese, though beyond this, there is very limited consideration of how the doctrine may influence and shape ministerial practice.⁵¹⁸ This thesis would argue that the lack of a fully worked and expressed theology of Ministry Areas, and a less than robust provincial framework, has inevitably led to a disparate implementation. This concern was raised in the report: 'we believe it needs to be carried through systematically, across the whole church.'⁵¹⁹ This has not been the case. For example, the Diocese of St Asaph has formed what they have chosen to call 'Mission Areas' from 'the existing Deanery Structure.' This is contrary to the review, which suggests that 'Deaneries, as at present constituted, are not always a natural geographical unit.'⁵²⁰ The review calls for an imaginative approach, suggesting that Ministry Areas, if appropriate, might even cross existing diocesan boundaries, taking the catchment area of the local secondary school as a guide 'to the kind of area which the church should regard as a natural areas for ministry.'⁵²¹ Meanwhile, the Diocese of Monmouth (where the process of formation is still on going) is looking to establish several Ministry Areas within each Deanery, with a view to also preserving the existing Deanery structures, and with it, the office of the Area Dean. Again, this is contrary to the review: 'With the establishment of Ministry Areas served by leadership teams the office of Area Dean should no longer exist.'⁵²² Remarkably, in the case of these examples, the two dioceses have managed to interpret the recommendations both differently and inaccurately.

This thesis has argued with LaCugna that the Church has paid insufficient attention to the trinitarian character of God, especially in relation to its doctrine of the Church (ecclesiology). It shares the view offered in a report to the House of Bishops of the Church of England that this has

⁵¹⁷ *Monmouth 2020* (2015), p. 28.

⁵¹⁸ *Becoming a Ministry Area*, p. 12.

⁵¹⁹ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 6.

⁵²⁰ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 8.

⁵²¹ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 7.

⁵²² *Church in Wales Review*, p. 9.

had damaging consequences, ‘not least for the way in which ministry [...] [is] understood.’⁵²³ However, it has also sought to argue that the significant renaissance of trinitarian theology over the last few decades offers Church an opportunity to reenergise both its doctrine of God and its doctrine of the Church. In doing so, it is possible that the Church might restore the essential unity between these doctrines, recognising that ‘any theology of the Church must ultimately be rooted in the being and acts of God: the Church is first and foremost the people of God, brought into being by God, bound to God, for the glory of God.’⁵²⁴ LaCugna’s project restores this essential unity, and as such, her doctrine of God has the potential to assist the Church in Wales as it reconsiders its own ecclesiology, with the establishment of Ministry Areas. Something as significant as the future of ministry in Wales needs to be taken seriously, especially as the Church moves into its centenary year. Finally, therefore, this thesis moves to highlight some ways in which LaCugna’s doctrine of God might inform a future framework for Ministry Areas.

The Review Group express a clear commitment to unleashing the potential of the whole Church. In making the case for Ministry Areas, they argue that greater lay participation may assist the Church in shaking a perception that it is ‘top-heavy’ and ‘over clericalised’. However, if the Church is to be considered an ‘icon’, ‘pattern’, and ‘echo’ of the Trinity, then the ‘dynamic relatedness’ of its members should, to a greater or lesser extent, be an ‘icon’, ‘pattern’, and ‘echo’ of the ‘dynamic relatedness’ of Father, Son and Spirit: ‘To be baptised into the Church is to be baptised into a community of persons who mutually constitute one another through their dynamic relations with each other; individual members discover the identity through their membership of one another.’⁵²⁵ For LaCugna, the coequality of divine persons establishes a pattern for human relationships. There is no subordination between divine persons. By extension, there can be no difference of worth or value of persons before God:

Father, Son, and Spirit are coequal because they *are* the same thing, namely, God. No person is prior to another person, no person is the reason for another’s existence, and each person is equally interdependent on every other person. The divine persons are united by love, the perfect express of which is the Holy Spirit who is the bond of love between Father and Son. This is an attractive option for those whose full personhood as been diminished by patterns of hierarchy and inequality. It forcefully suggests that such patterns are ungodly, antithetical to trinitarian life.⁵²⁶

⁵²³ *Eucharistic Presidency*, p. 13.

⁵²⁴ *Eucharistic Presidency*, p. 13.

⁵²⁵ *Eucharistic Presidency*, p. 18.

⁵²⁶ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 273.

This thesis believes that hallmarks which characterise the relationships between the divine persons should characterise the relationships of persons within the communion of the Church. This reciprocal pattern of relating as expressed by LaCugna, might support the Church in Wales with the implementation of Ministry Areas in two ways. Firstly, it promotes flourishing. At present, a culture persists which ‘means in practice [...] that people look to the Bishops and clergy to take initiatives.’⁵²⁷ If the Church is able to fully affirm the equal and intrinsic value of every person, it may just be able to release the creative energy of the whole baptised community. Secondly, it offers an imperative for all to participate and share in the ministry of the Church. The Church is not (and can never rightly be considered) an assembly of individuals. Through baptism, all Christians are grafted into communion with-God and with-one-another, and in this, they share in the commission to ‘be Christ to each other so that the kingdom of God is made present for the sake of the transformation of the world.’⁵²⁸

Following LaCugna, whilst there may be no subordination between the divine persons, there is differentiation of function and relationship within the Trinity. LaCugna is clear that persons are unique and unrepeatable.⁵²⁹ LaCugna highlights the following *propia* in order to highlight Trinitarian self-differentiation as revealed in the economy of salvation: ‘The mission of the Son to become incarnate belongs properly to the Son as Son. The Spirit is the one sent to make the creature holy. Each of these is a *propium*, an identifying characteristic of a unique person, and as such cannot be appropriated. The Father’s role in *sending* the Son and Spirit belongs to the Father alone and cannot indifferently be appropriated to the Son or Spirit *or* to a generic Godhead.’⁵³⁰ In the same way, therefore, whilst there should be no difference of value of persons before God, there can and should be a diversity of responsibilities and functions: ‘Incorporation into the very life of God enables the requires radical transformation of those initiated into the mystery of Christ so that the community of the baptised might respect the full humanity and diversity of gifts of all persons and in its common life become a more genuine “icon of the Trinity.”’⁵³¹

Once more, the vision of the Review Group to establish team ministries, which invite persons to collaborate with one another, and offer their gifts and specialisms, can find a theological

⁵²⁷ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 4

⁵²⁸ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 346.

⁵²⁹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 289.

⁵³⁰ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 100.

⁵³¹ Mary Catherine Hilker, ‘The Mystery of Persons in Communion: The Trinitarian Theology of Catherine Mowry LaCugna’, *Word & World*, Vol. XVIII, No. 3 (1998), pp. 237-243, [p. 242].

precedence in the triune life of God. It is fitting that persons within the corporate body of Christ take a diversity of functions. It is likewise fitting that some persons should be appointed to leadership. This view is shared by the Review Group, who argue that collaborative ministry does not mean that there should be a collapse of ordered functionality. ‘On the contrary’, they argue, ‘there should be a small designated leadership team and designated leader for each congregation.’⁵³²

Lastly, it is important to remember that relationships are entirely relational and reciprocal within the Trinity: they are formed and constituted in *perichōrēsis*, in giving, and receiving. As previously argued, the obedience of the Son to the Father in the person of Jesus is an *active* submission of will, rather than an eternal *passive* reality. In other words, it is a freely given commitment. Likewise, the identity and role of the Father in the Trinitarian life is based upon the Son and the Spirit’s loving and free acceptance.⁵³³ LaCugna argues that the Church, which is to be considered an ‘icon of the Trinity’, should be characterised by equality and freedom. Relationships within the Church should reflect the dynamics of Trinitarian life, and as such, they should be mutual and reciprocal. Following Guorian, LaCugna argues that relationships of accountability and obedience between members of the Church may properly exist — so long as they mirror the practice of the free relationships of mutual giving and receiving which characterise trinitarian relationships:

The equality of such a communion, however, escapes being an impersonal equality of interchangeable participants because *it does not exclude a hierarchy*. Imaging the trinitarian life of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the conciliar life of the Church is hierarchical. Yet the hierarchy is not one of subordination (i.e., submission to an impersonal order). Rather, it is one of obedience founded in a free, loving, and perfectly communicative relationship among unique persons, equal in the fullness of their humanity, yet due a freely offered obedience according to the special gifts which they bring to the common life.⁵³⁴

Recommendation IV

- 1) The Doctrine Commission of the Church in Wales should prepare a Provincial Theological Framework on Ministry Areas which could be presented to the Governing Body for approval.**
- 2) A concerted effort should be made to ensure that the implementation of Ministry Areas is carried through systematically throughout the Province. Dioceses must be careful that this process does simply conclude with ‘rebranded’ deaneries.**

⁵³² *Church in Wales Review*, p. 7.

⁵³³ *Eucharistic Presidency*, p. 23.

⁵³⁴ V. Guorian, *Incarnate Love*, cited in *God for Us*, p. 286.

Conceived in this light, Ministry Areas should offer nothing less than an opportunity for the whole baptised community, both lay and ordained, to share and collaborate fully in the ministry of the Church. They should offer new and exciting possibilities, releasing the potential of a largely untapped human resource. That is, the worshipping communities in our parishes. This must mean that those other than the clergy are encouraged, prepared, and commissioned to take responsibilities for the life and ministry of their local church. The limited and reducing number of clergy clearly presents a challenge to Ministry Area Leaders, who are largely attempting to maintain patterns of worship which are becoming increasingly unsustainable. That is, the offering of the Eucharist in every parish, Sunday by Sunday. Of course, this picture offers the Church in Wales an opportunity to be creative in its response - to consider new ways of maintaining a pattern of worship - to release the talents and energy of willing lay persons to lead non-Eucharistic services.

Sadly, however, in most cases this has led to an increased demand being placed on non-stipendiary clergy to 'fill the gaps' in order to ensure that a Eucharist can be celebrated.⁵³⁵ This is not to diminish in anyway the important of the Eucharist. The Eucharist has rightly been at the heart of the worshipping life of the Church in Wales.⁵³⁶ However, the review rightly acknowledges that 'there is large and significant culture outside the church at the moment for whom present church services mean almost nothing.'⁵³⁷ If the Church is to release the potential of the wider baptised community, setting them to the task of mission in their places of residence, work, and so on, it must find ways to release their potential within the life of the local church. If the Church in Wales is to break free from the perception that 'it is all about the clergy' and 'Father knows best', ministry needs to be shared, and it needs to be shared visibly.⁵³⁸

Recommendation V

- 1) As Ministry Areas are formed, there should be at least one trained lay worship leader appointed to each leadership team.**

⁵³⁵ *Walking Together on the Way: Learning to Be the Church - Local, Regional, Universal* (London: SPCK, 2008), §97.

⁵³⁶ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 12.

⁵³⁷ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 12.

⁵³⁸ *Church in Wales Review*, p. 4.

6.3. CONCLUSION

LaCugna has set the agenda of trinitarian dialogue within the life of Church. Her voice stands as one which has significantly contributed to the rediscovery of trinitarian thought, and the inherently practical nature of God's triune life. Her thesis, that God's life should set the agenda for the Christian life, has become a catalyst for increased reflection within the Church on how the doctrine of the Trinity should inform her ordered life. This chapter has argued, therefore, that LaCugna has succeeded in her ambition to offer a doctrine of God which can properly be a source of reflection for the communitarian life of the Church. For example, this chapter demonstrated (albeit briefly) the influence of LaCugna's project in a report by the House of Bishops of the Church of England concerning lay presidency. LaCugna's project still has the potential to be a significant and influencing voice today. As the Church continues to respond to a changing cultural landscape, new patterns of collaborative ministry are emerging. These patterns often express a desire to rediscover something of the trinitarian character of ministry. In this chapter, I have argued that this is true for the Church in Wales, who, in her centenary year is seeking to establish new patterns of ministry in light of the so-called '2020 Vision'. I highlighted three areas of focus from the Church in Wales Review 2012, demonstrating how LaCugna's voice might reinvigorate debate and inform practice within the Province.

Firstly, reflecting on the ministry of bishops, I have argued that the triune life of God offers the proper basis for mutuality among persons. The triune life of God offers no theological justification for clerical privilege, or for a hierarchy among persons. On the contrary, episcopal ministry should reflect the corporate life of God, modelling the corporate patterns of ministry found in scripture. I have argued that episcopal ministry should be of the kind which releases the creative energy of others, and advocate for formal provision to be made for those of differing theological persuasions. Further, I have suggested that the present model of episcopal ministry in Wales (namely one-bishop-one-diocese) has led to a pervading culture of deference. The bishops should model patterns of shared ministry as they lead their clergy away from the one-priest-one-parish model of ministry.

Secondly, this chapter has argued that the Christian is caught up in the life of the triune God by virtue of baptism, through which, the Christian is charged with a new way of being in the world. As such, there is a theological imperative for all of the baptised to be involved in the mission and ministry of the Church. I have argued that terms such as 'laity' need to be reclaimed, suggesting that

the use of the word simply mean ‘non-ordained’ can lead to a kind of class system within the Church. Thirdly, this chapter has argued that Ministry Areas offer the Church in Wales nothing less than an opportunity to release the whole baptised community, both lay and ordained, to participate fully in the Church’s mission and ministry. Ministry Areas, firmly rooted in corporate life of God, offer fresh and exciting possibilities, unlocking the potential of a human resource that is currently untapped.

This chapter, therefore, arguably represents the most significant contribution of this thesis. It attempts to offer an original contribution to knowledge in its reflection on the changing patterns of ministry in the Church in Wales, in light of my own consideration of LaCugna’s social doctrine of God. In this regard, it represents the first sustained attempt to engage critically and theologically with the recommendations made in the Church in Wales Review 2012. It is hoped that this project might, in some small way, assist the Church in Wales in her endeavour to become more fully an icon of the trinity. Finally, this chapter aspires to be of value to the wider Church. In making an application of LaCugna’s social doctrine of God (which does not seek to specify any precise form of ecclesial governance) the principles offered in this project may speak equally to non-episcopally governed ecclesial communions, as well as to those which are episcopally led. All of that said, in seeking to identify my own contribution, a cautionary word from Bonhoeffer to all those (both writer and reader) who engage in the task of ecclesiology:

Innumerable times a whole Christian community has broken down because it had sprung up from a wish dream. The serious Christian, set down for the first time in a Christian community, is likely to bring with him a very definite idea of what Christian life together should be and to try to realise it. But God’s grace speedily shatters such dreams.⁵³⁹

⁵³⁹ See, in general, Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, pp. 27-28.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis has been to explore and analyse LaCugna's contribution to the shaping and informing of emerging Trinitarian ecclesiologies within the life of the Church. The exploration has not aimed to set out any concrete forms such a Trinitarian ecclesiology might take. The focus has rather been on LaCugna's efforts to give a theological rationale for such an ecclesiology, and to provide a critical framework for reflecting on existing forms and structures of church governance. This research has noted the potential of LaCugna's project for this new theological rationale with the increase in the wider trend of debate about ecclesiological concerns. However, it was also plain that LaCugna began to take up these concerns early and advocated the renewal of Trinitarian reflection before it was as widely promoted in various areas of concern as it is today. In this regard, it has been said that her work largely set the standard and parameters for Trinitarian debate (see chapter six).

Our consideration led us to observe that a Trinitarian ecclesiology was not explicitly defined by LaCugna, except that it needs to 'manifest the nature of God'.⁵⁴⁰ The survey of her wider theology suggested a broader, yet still simple description of the Church: since the members of the church exist 'perichoretically' together, the church is an icon of the Trinity in mutual giving and receiving, without separation or subordination or division. It was one that reassessed God's life with us and our life with God, and offered the framework through which we might reimagine our relationships with one another.

This research has treated LaCugna's work in a largely systematic way, not because it incorporates all of her work but in that it moves through much of her main areas of focus to gather themes for analysis by this thesis. The themes were selected on the basis of their potential to construct a theological framework that would help us facilitate a reflection on emerging Trinitarian ecclesiologies. They were addressed primarily with this purpose in mind, rather than addressing controversial problems related to the doctrine of the Trinity. The structure of the thesis followed LaCugna's view of the doctrine's development, moving from the 'recession' of Trinitarian thought in the scholastic period to a 'recovery' in the late twentieth century, before proceeding to consider the implications of LaCugna's doctrine of God.

⁵⁴⁰ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 403.

LaCugna's prolific writing career⁵⁴¹ was tragically cut short when she died from cancer in 1997 at the age of 44.⁵⁴² Debate and analysis of her research continues, and this thesis is but one contribution to that ongoing conversation. Each discussion has offered an in-depth treatment of LaCugna's work, followed by a thorough analysis of its strengths and weaknesses. This thesis has made careful use of secondary literature, especially those commentators who were concerned with LaCugna's passion for ecclesiological questions. It also identified aspects of her research which were an aid to discussions concerning a Trinitarian ecclesiology which she herself did not explicitly discuss in relation to this subject.

The adopted approach was constructive for several reasons. Tracing the 'recession' and 'recovery' of Trinitarian thought was a helpful benchmark in that it focused our attention on LaCugna's primary purpose of restoring the relationship between *oikonomia* and *theologia*: '[The] doctrine succeeds when it illumines God's nearness to us in Christ and the Spirit.'⁵⁴³ The systematic attention to LaCugna's work, namely her understanding of doxology as the 'mode and facilitator' of theology revealed the consistency of her thought. The scriptural scrutiny of LaCugna's doctrine of God added weight to her arguments, revealing their deep foundation, and provided the opportunity to consider the breadth of her thought. This exploration was particularly productive, and has allowed the project to be practically orientated. Considering the development of social construals of the Trinity has allowed this thesis to address certain possible criticisms of this position. For example, the apparent disconnect between the coequality of persons in God's immanent life, and the subordination of the Son to the Father in the economy of the salvation. This study has allowed a theological framework to emerge for ecclesiological reflection from LaCugna's work, as it revealed that she incorporated a theology of relationship into her theology of the Trinity: 'Trinitarian theology could be described as par excellence a theology of relationship.'⁵⁴⁴

The first two chapters commenced this thesis with an account of LaCugna's sense of the 'recession' and 'recovery' of the doctrine of the Trinity. LaCugna made two observations which contextualised the conceptual climate which she and other social trinitarians inhabited in the late

⁵⁴¹ LaCugna held the Nancy Reeves Dreux Chair of Theology and the University of Notre Dame, and her book *God for Us* was given a 1st place award for theology by the Catholic Press Association.

⁵⁴² At the time of her death, LaCugna was working on a book on the Holy Spirit in a sequel to *God for Us*, which has been described as an 'inestimable loss to the theological community and to the Church.' See, Gropp, 'LaCugna's Contribution to Trinitarian Theology', p. 731.

⁵⁴³ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 411.

⁵⁴⁴ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p.1.

twentieth century. Firstly, LaCugna discredited Aquinas and his Neoscholastic interpreters, whom, she argued, interpreted the doctrine of the Trinity in a largely theoretical and abstract manner. Secondly, LaCugna sought to enrich the churches tradition in commending Rahner's ressourcement ('a return to the sources') of Cappadocian thought. In the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century (especially after 1879 when Pope Leo XIII issued the encyclical *Aeterni Patris*), Roman Catholic thought was dominated by neo-scholastic thinking. This relied on a strict commitment to the thinking, practices and values of Thomas Aquinas, in reaction to modernist theology.⁵⁴⁵ This context undoubtedly shaped LaCugna's understanding. Juguilon argues, 'LaCugna is a post-Vatican II, post-Rahnerian, American Catholic feminist theologian writing in the time of Pope John Paul II.'⁵⁴⁶ In this regard, LaCugna counterbalanced 'the uniformity of identity' prevalent in the Church in this period.⁵⁴⁷

Chapter three then moved to LaCugna's reconceptualisation of the paradigm of the 'economic' and 'immanent' Trinity, which had been the predominant framework for Trinitarian theology following Rahner's seminal axiom. LaCugna's unique and significant contribution to the literature was her ressourcement of the tradition, which led to her proposed patristic distinction of *oikonomia* and *theologia* as an alternative and altogether better framework. She argued that the renewal of the doctrine depended on the inseparability of *oikonomia* and *theologia* — of soteriology and theology — and this led to her the formulation of theology in the mode of doxology. Theology in the mode of doxology maintains the unity between *oikonomia* and *theologia*, and is basis of LaCugna's relational ontology. The fabric of God's life is doxological, and doxology actualises our relationship with-God and with-one-another. This understanding underpins LaCugna's conviction that the doctrine of the Trinity is eminently practical with radical consequences for Christian life: 'Trinitarian theology is inherently doxological. Its goal is to understand something of what it means to both confess and live out faith in the God of Jesus Christ.'⁵⁴⁸

Following our consideration of LaCugna's conceptual context, chapter four offered a response to the accusation that social trinitarian thought lacks scriptural rigour, or worse, causes a separation between *oikonomia* and God's revealed life in scripture. God's life with us in salvation

⁵⁴⁵ See, in general, *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-Century Catholic Theology* ed. Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁵⁴⁶ Alex Juguilon, 'The Relational Ontology of Augustine's and LaCugna's Trinity', *Obsculta* Vol. 9 (2016), pp. 83-95, [p. 84.]

⁵⁴⁷ Juguilon, 'The Relational Ontology of Augustine's and LaCugna's Trinity', p. 84.

⁵⁴⁸ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 368.

history is revealed in scripture, and therefore, scripture bears witness to the economic activity of God. This chapter argued for the priority of scripture as a normative voice for the Church and her theology. It has offered a scriptural defence of the LaCugna's presentation of God's co-eternal, co-equal, and co-collaborative life, operating without subordination or hierarchy. Following Baillie, I proposed that the 'paradox of grace' enables us to widen the lens on that which constitutes the economic activity of Son. God's revelation to us regarding the activity of the Son within the economic Trinity reaches far beyond a single moment in history. This chapter engaged the contribution of secondary authors, many of whom have argued that such claims conflict with the economy. Their contribution has enriched this research, and their points of conjecture have been probed.

Chapter five investigated a further aspect of God's life *for us* in LaCugna's work, namely the divine invitation to participate in trinitarian *perichōrēsis*. The perichoretic purposes of God's relationship *with us* reflected the heights to which this bond reaches. The Trinitarian openness to brining the whole human community into a common life gives such relationships a mark of authenticity. God's life *for us* is not simply a matter observation. LaCugna's subsequent conclusion from this openness was that intradivine *perichōrēsis* is the idea pattern and configuration for the human community. This description of God's perichoretic has been shown to be consonant with God's dialogical and invitational life *with us* in salvation history, as revealed in scripture. Beginning with God's invitation to Adam to take participate in the creative process, naming creatures and selecting a partner, it culminates in the most majestic gesture of human-divine interaction, when Mary gives her consent to participate in the redemptive process. This, building on earlier chapters, continues to expand the basis that God's triune life offers a pattern for the human community to mirror, and as such, the proper source for reflecting on the Church and her common life.

Having completed the overview of the development of LaCugna's social doctrine of God, the discussion could move in chapter six to consider the value of LaCugna's project for the Church. It was shown that there persists a desire to respond changing cultural landscapes by rediscovering something of the trinitarian character of ministry. LaCugna has already proven herself to be a significant and influencing voice in this regard. In this chapter, three themes that emerged from the Church in Wales Review (2012) provided an opportunity for further reflection in light of the developed critical framework. First, God's triune life provides no excuse for clerical supremacy, or for a hierarchy between persons. Episcopal ministry should reflect God's corporate life, and model to the Church the corporate patterns of ministry. The Church in Wales should now seek to make

progress with the recommendation made in the review, which, concerning the ministry of bishops, have hitherto been neglected. Further recommendations were offered, such as making provision for traditionalists, and the appointing of suffragans. Second, God's life *for us* and our life *with God* offers a theological imperative for universal participation in the Church's mission and ministry. The Church in Wales should consider reclaiming terms such as 'laity', and find ways to celebrate a sense of the priesthood in which all share by virtue of baptism. Finally, Ministry Areas offer fresh possibilities for the Church in Wales to engage the whole baptised community in mission.

In this regard, chapter six has arguably offered the most significant and original contribution to knowledge. The application of LaCugna's project to this particular context is unique. It represents a continuation of her thought, and seeks to aid her ambition of ensuring that the doctrine of the Trinity remains relevant for every aspect of the Christian life. In doing so, it has aspired to bring her work to fore, making the case for its value for the Church today. The application of LaCugna's critical framework made in this thesis has offered but one example of how her project may continue inform and shape ongoing developments in ecclesiology in other ecclesial communions.⁵⁴⁹ Her voice once set the agenda, and this thesis commends it once more.

Given this significant contribution, it is somewhat surprising that LaCugna's work has largely been undervalued and ignored within her own ecclesial communion, that is, the Roman Catholic Church. LaCugna's seminal publication *God for Us* has attracted wide acclaim. Elizabeth Groppe has argued that it has 'proven to be a landmark work in the ongoing revitalisation of trinitarian theology.'⁵⁵⁰ According to Michael Downey, her work 'did more, perhaps, to stimulate thinking and discussion about the doctrine of the Trinity [...] than any theological work since Karl Rahner's *The Trinity*.'⁵⁵¹ Alan Torrance once described LaCugna as 'a prophetic theologian ahead of her time.'⁵⁵² Further, Marmion has suggested that LaCugna was 'a pioneer' in the renewal of trinitarian thought.⁵⁵³ Despite such wide acclaim, her name is either notably absent or merely a footnote number in some catholic encyclopedia which seek to offer a record of the contributions

⁵⁴⁹ Alan Torrance has argued that 'the potential of LaCugna's book for theological and ecumenical discussion is simply immense.' See, Alan Torrance, 'The Ecumenical Implications of Catherine Mowry LaCugna's Trinitarian Theology', *Horizons* 27/2 (2000), pp. 347-353.

⁵⁵⁰ Groppe, 'Catherine Mowry LaCugna's contribution to Trinitarian Theology', p. 730.

⁵⁵¹ Michael Downey, *Altogether Gift: A Trinitarian Spirituality* (New York: Orbis, 2000), p. 12.

⁵⁵² Torrance, 'The Ecumenical Implications of Catherine Mowry LaCugna's Trinitarian Theology', p. 347.

⁵⁵³ Marmion, 'Trinity and Salvation: A Dialogue with Catherine LaCugna', p. 115.

made to particular aspects of theology by significant catholic theologians.⁵⁵⁴ I share the view that the significance of LaCugna's insights have hitherto not been afforded sufficient appreciation.⁵⁵⁵

This thesis has offered something of a remedy to this unfortunate reality. It has offered its own unique contribution, which, far from being exhaustive, has celebrated the potential of LaCugna's social doctrine of God. It has made an addition to the ongoing consideration of her work. The conversation is just beginning. There is, of course, much more that can still be done. Perhaps an obvious avenue for further study, will be the extent to which LaCugna's social doctrine of God offers a suitable critical framework for reflection on the present and emerging ecclesiological issues within the Roman Catholic Church. Much work could be done to reclaim her voice from within the Church to which she belonged. And so one final word, if readers turn once more to LaCugna's own work for further consideration, this project will have been worthwhile.

⁵⁵⁴ John A. Hardon, *Modern Catholic Dictionary* (Bardstown: Eternal Life, 2004); Thomas P. Rausch, *Systematic Theology: A Roman Catholic Approach* (Collegesville: Liturgical Press, 2016).

⁵⁵⁵ Torrance, 'The Ecumenical Implications of Catherine Mowry LaCugna's Trinitarian Theology', p. 347.

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